Mythology, Ideology and Politics

by Cyril Morong

Douglass North and Robert Higgs on Ideology

North (1981) defined ideology as "intellectual efforts to rationalize the behavioral pattern of individuals and groups." This work is significant for the public choice literature on voting models because it in part inspired the work by McGuire and Ohsfeldt. He also cited Kau and Rubin (1979) as evidence that "ideology" does matter. Specifically, North was concerned with what causes institutional change in history. Ideology was assumed to be one of many factors that did. It was seen as something that could overcome the free rider problem and lead people to behave in a way that seemingly violated rational utility maximization (for example, why don't people litter the country side when there is no chance of being caught or punished?). Three aspects of ideology were stressed. The first was that "ideology is an important economizing device by which individuals come to terms with their environment and are provided with a "world view" so that the decision-making process is simplified." The second was that "ideology is inextricably interwoven with moral and ethical judgements about the fairness of the world the individual perceives." The third is that "individuals alter their ideological perspectives when their experiences are inconsistent with their ideology." This definition is similar, but not identical to, the Higgsian definition to be discussed below.

Briefly defined, ideology is, according to Higgs (1987), "a somewhat coherent, rather comprehensive belief system about social relations." We embrace various beliefs because knowledge is scarce, costly to acquire and uncertain. Ideology has four aspects. The first is the cognitive aspect, which determines our understanding and perception of the world. The second is the affective aspect, which tells us what is good or bad in a moral sense. The third and fourth aspects are the programmatic and solidary. These propel a person to "act in accordance with his cognitions and evaluations as a committed member of a political group in pursuit of definite social objectives." Higgs uses the last aspect, the solidary aspect, to justify the introduction of ideology into the standard utility function used by economists. These usually contain the commodities that people consume because of the selfish wants and desires that individuals are said to have according to neoclassical economic theory. But ideology is added because of two additional desires human beings have: the desire to belong to a group and to have a self image or identity that arises from group membership. Working on behalf of a group that you identify with and whose values you share accomplishes these goals. In other words, "to embrace an ideology is to join a community of like-minded people" or "people act politically both to get things done and to be someone." This view introduces a broader view of human nature that makes consuming ideology rational. Consuming ideology adds to utility to the extent it facilitates and supports group membership, which is often political. If certain costs are incurred in the process, such as donating time and money, they simply have to be weighed against the individual's perceived benefit from being a member in the group. For example, taking the time to vote in an election is not

irrational because the cost in terms of time and perhaps money spent on gas might be outweighed by the perceived benefit. Higgs's intention in defining ideology in this way was to actually strengthen public choice theory. (Higgs, 1987, p. 43)

How Ideology is Used to Control and Change Behavior

Ideology becomes important in times and situations where there is uncertainty. If conditions were certain, and the link between policy and outcomes were completely certain, ideology would not be a factor. Under conditions of uncertainty, however, rational action becomes more difficult. Ideological appeals to emotions and feelings then become effective means of social and political persuasion. How this may be done has been discussed by North (1981), Higgs (1987) and Stern (1990).

Stern (1990) argues that "issue entrepreneurs" use rhetoric and symbolic language to rally individuals in a group or who share an ideology to support changing or keeping social boundaries between different domains of the social system. When boundaries are changed, the rules govern our economic activity change. Stern (p. 39) has three key propositions:

1. Societies divide human activities into several domains. The economy is one of them.

2. The boundaries of domains of activity are always subject to redefinition. Societal debates about the existence and nature of particular social problems often function to renegotiate these boundaries, whether or not the boundary-setting element is made explicit. Resetting boundaries redistributes political power and, indirectly, economic power toward expanding domains at the expense of contracting ones.

3. In democracies, at least, values and norms have a significant role in boundary-setting debates. Appeals to values and norms help mobilize people-the key resource in democratic debate. Moreover, some values and norms have implications for boundary setting. For instance, applying altruistic norms to an action in a capitalist society usually places it at least partly outside the economic domain.

For Stern, "A domain of human activity is marked by a particular set of actors, roles, norms, and values." (p. 39) As it will be seen later in examining the thoughts of Douglass North, where the boundaries are set around domains helps determines the rules of the economic game according to Stern. "It matters where the boundaries of a domain of activity are drawn because placing an event or dispute within a particular domain determines the rules of action to which participants will be held and the ways in which they can legitimately pursue their interests." (Stern, p. 40) Furthermore, "Through boundary setting, debates over specific social issues participate in shaping a society's *ideology* (emphasis added) and in determining the power of various *institutions* (emphasis added) and interests." For North, ideology and institutions play a central role in explaining change in economies over time. In Stern's view, even after a boundary setting debate is over, the ideological struggle continues "because the potential stakes in shifting the boundaries between the economic and the political are so great." (Stern, p. 41) Power is shifted from one group to another. But future battles loom. Political resources will need to be rallied to gain back power lost to another interest group or win another debate. Ideology is a

key in galvanizing and unifying supporters. "It would be very difficult to change boundaries if people mobilized politically only around their interests." (Stern, p. 43) He sees people as being mobilized by values as well. This is, of course, consistent with basic socio-economic doctrine.

What is the driving force behind boundary setting debates? According to Stern these *protagonists* (emphasis added) are "issue entrepreneurs." (p. 43) There is great uncertainty in politics in the sense that "It is not always obvious to a citizen which political actions or inactions would do most to advance his or her social values or which values are likely to be affected by a particular political choice." (p. 43) What can the "issue entrepreneur" do then to sway voters and supporters to his or her position? They promote "packages" or "frames" that characterize and capsulize social issues in terms of condensing *symbols* (emphasis added). Packages boil down a complex set of phenomena to a framework that is easy to understand and that also has implications for how the issue is treated." (p. 43) These "issue packages work by drawing on cultural themes, that is broad frames and related *symbols* (emphasis added) that connote broad, widely shared world views." (p.43) Potential supporters need to be persuaded to act politically even though they might not ordinarily do so based on their own private-cost benefit analysis. That is, the symbolism and rhetoric used by the issue entrepreneurs is aimed at overcoming the free rider problem. A group may have much at stake in a boundary setting debate. It will lose if its members do not act. So, if an issue entrepreneur is capable, he will change people's behavior by emotional appeals. They will help out with money, letters to government officials, protests, voting, etc. because to do so would be what makes them a good and loyal member of their group. They will have their "altruistic norms" activated. (Stern, p. 45)

Stern sums up his views with:

> "The concept of boundary setting raises questions about economies that are not typically addressed by economists. Traditional economic analysis can shed light on the effects of market or alternative rules of exchange on output, income, and the distribution of goods and services. Analysis of boundary setting, in contrast, can illuminate the way those rules are established and changed and their effects on institutions, values, and the distribution of power. Boundary-setting processes are important to an understanding of the ways economies function because they concern feedbacks between economies and the societies in which they are embedded.
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> The boundary-setting concept also helps highlight some of the ways ideology enters social debate in the overtly nonideological U.S. political system. It suggests hypotheses about how ideological debates affect political and economic power about how people, even those uninterested in ideology, can be mobilized to participate in those debates.
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> Exploring the boundaries of economies may help improve understanding of how social changes and economic systems influence each other and of why economic systems with significant inefficiencies and inequities are sometimes maintained in the face of clear knowledge of these characteristics." (p. 45)

Nobel Prize winner Douglass North, too, has been concerned with how ideology influences the change in institutions (or what he calls the "rules of the economic game") and the weaknesses in the neoclassical economic model in explaining them. (North,

1981, p. 5) Given that we see individuals violate rationality and act to help some group to which they belong rather than act as a free rider, "there is no way for the neoclassical model to account for a good deal of the change we observe in history." (North, 1981, p. 11) He goes on further to ask "How do we account for *altruistic* (emphasis added) behavior?" (North, 1981, p. 11) It is essential to consider this question not only in the political sphere or domain, but in the economic as well because "the enforcement of any body of rules in the absence of individual restraint from maximizing behavior would render the political or economic institution nonviable-hence the enormous investment that is made to convince individuals of the legitimacy of these institutions." (North, 1981, p. 19) That is, some sense of values must be instilled in the minds of the citizens in order to assure that they will behave and cooperate in the social interest without having to devote too many scarce resources to rule enforcement and punishment. In North's own words:

> "Most crucially, any successful ideology must overcome the free rider problem. Its fundamental aim is to energize groups to behave contrary to a simple, hedonistic, individual calculus of costs and benefits. This is he central thrust of major ideologies, since neither maintenance of the existing social order nor its overthrow is possible without such behavior." (North, 1981, p. 53)

Therefore, "a theory of the structure of (and change in) political and economic institutions must incorporate a theory of ideology." (North, 1981, p. 19) He reached this conclusion partly by reading the public choice voting literature mentioned earlier. "We cannot predict the voting behavior of legislators where a large residual remains after incorporating interest group explanations." (North, 1981, p. 47)

But where do particular ideologies that induce people to overcome the free rider problem come from? According to North:

> "Ideologies can develop without the guidance of intellectuals (the IWW, for example), but they do so only exceptionally. I do not propose to analyze the reward system that produces what I call the *intellectual entrepreneurs* (emphasis added) of ideology; however, entrepreneurs spring up whenever there develop contrasting views of the world around us as a result of differential experiences.
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> The origins of differential ideologies are geographic location and occupational specialization. Originally, it was geographic location that confronted bands with the experiences that coalesced into languages, customs, taboos, *myths* (emphasis added), religions, and eventually ideologies differing from those of other bands. These survive today in the ethnic diversity that produces conflicting ideologies.
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> Occupational specialization and division of labor also leads to diverse experiences and differing and conflicting perspectives about reality. Marx made "consciousness" dependent upon one's position in the production process and this insight was an important contribution in explaining the development of 'class consciousness.'" (North, 1981, p. 51)

Once formed, ideologies need to "explain how the existing structure of property rights and terms of exchange are a part of a larger system" and "be flexible so that they can capture the loyalty of new groups or retain the loyalty of older groups as external conditions change." (North, 1981, p. 52)

Finally, North distinguishes between morality and ideology:

> "Moral and ethical behavioral norms are an essential part of the constraints that make up institutions. They are derived from the constructions of reality (ideology) that individuals developed to contend with their environment. Ideology is not the same as morality since it both encompasses a comprehensive way of perceiving the world and acts to economize on the costs of information; ideology does, nevertheless, incorporate a judgement about the justice or fairness of institutions and specifically of exchange relationships. Consensus ideologies evolve when the individuals of a universe have similar experiences; divergent ideologies stem from divergent and conflicting perceptions of reality. Consensus ideologies therefore are a substitute for formal rules and compliance procedures. As diverse ideologies evolve it is in the interest of rulers to invest in convincing other principals and agents that the institutions are fair or legitimate and hence to lower compliance costs. Moreover institutions that are viable within a consensus ideology are no longer viable as diverse ideologies evolve since rules must be formalized and compliance procedures developed with an eye to the costs of detecting and punishing violations.
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> It is the combination of the constitutional rules with the associated moral and ethical codes of behavior that underlies the stability of institutions and makes them slow to change. The combination produces ingrown patterns of behavior which, like the capital stock, tend to be changed only incrementally." (North, 1981, p. 205)

The views of Higgs on ideology are similar to those of Stern and North. His definition of ideology was given earlier. He also is concerned with how individuals acquire an ideology and how it works in society.

Higgs recognizes the element of uncertainty in ideology. When speaking of the possible distortions that an ideology might have due to uncertainty, he writes "But all [ideologies] contain unverified and-far more significant-unverifiable elements, including their fundamental commitments to certain values. In relation to these elements, which are neither true nor false, the allegation of distortion has little or no meaning. Ideologies have sources in the guts as well as the mind, and neither logic nor empirical observation can resolve visceral disagreements." (Higgs, 1987, p. 38) Although it was argued earlier that it could be rational to act based on ideology, here Higgs is saying that ideology is, in part, a result of irrational "gut feelings." In fact he sees ideology as a subset of culture. "Culture denotes a much wider system of *symbols* (emphasis added), beliefs, and behaviors to which ideologies belong as subsystems." (Higgs, 1987, p. 38)

Higgs also agrees with North that ideology helps overcome the free rider problem that would make collective action impossible. "It is irrational to bear any cost in an attempt to bring about what will happen no matter what one does. In the large-group context the only rational political action is no action at all. Rational people will always try to be "free riders," enjoying the benefits of collective gods without sharing the costs of their provision." (Higgs, 1987, p. 40) Yet the world is filled with examples of such irrational action. Just voting in an election is an example in most cases. Higgs is critical of the public choice theorist who refers to such action as irrational. This is why the definition given

earlier attempts to make ideology rational by putting it in the utility function. He is also critical of the homo oeconomicus metaphor or ideal type used in economics. "The idea of *homo oeconomicus*-"something more than Scrooge but a good deal less than the typical human being"-elicits only derision from those acquainted with art, literature, and history, not to mention psychology." (Higgs, 1987, p. 41) Homo oeconomicus is constantly finding the most efficient way to achieve an objective. But what defines the objectives for an individual? To Higgs, ideology and therefore self image or identity determine which objectives to seek. (Higgs, 1987, p. 42)

The following is a summary of how ideology works in politics according to Higgs:

1. There are few ideologies. This is because ideology has to be coherent and comprehensive.
2. They are produced by opinion leaders and the public or masses consume them. Most people get their ideas from reading or hearing politicians speak and we agree or disagree.
3. Ideologies constrain and propel change (political action)
4. Ideology becomes prominent during social crises.
5. Leaders cause consumers to act through rhetoric.

All of these bear some resemblance to the ideas of Stern and North and will be discussed later. For now, the issue of rhetoric will be discussed in some detail.

For Higgs, an ideology is successful because of its rhetoric.

> "Ideological expression aims to persuade, but not in the cool dispassionate manner celebrated by the rational ideal of science and philosophy. Of course it may be rational, at least in part, and it may appeal to indisputable facts. But the persuasive power of ideological expression arises for the most part from neither logic nor facts. It arises mainly from the unabashedly polemical character of the rhetoric employed. Said Lenin: 'My words were calculated to evoke hatred, aversion and contempt . . . not to convince but to break up the ranks of the opponent, not to correct an opponent's mistake, but to destroy him.' The ideologue wants to convince his listeners not only to accept certain interpretations and valuation of the social world; he wants also to impel them to act politically, or at least not to oppose or interfere with those who do. He knows that the most persuasive argument is not necessarily the most logical or the most factual. 'You have to be emotional,' says Richard Viguerie, the enormously successful conservative fund-raiser. Another veteran political fund-raiser observes that those who respond most often to political causes are 'argumentative, dogmatic, and unforgiving. Everything is black and white for them'-that is, they are especially impelled by ideology.
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> Ideological rhetoric usually takes a highly figurative, quasi-poetic form. Metaphor, analogy, irony, sarcasm, satire, hyperbole, and overdrawn antithesis are its common devices. Ideological thought is expresses 'in intricate symbolic webs as vaguely defined as they are emotionally charged.' We exaggerate only a little if we say that in ideological expression imagery is everything.
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> Ideologues, hoping to attract those who lack the time or capacity for extended reflection, encapsulate their messages in pithy slogans, mottoes, and self-ennobling descriptions. When these terse war cries produce the desired effect they mobilize large numbers of diverse people. The secret of their success lies partly in their evocative moral appeal and partly in their ambiguity and

> vagueness, which allow each person to hear them as lyrics suited to his own music." (Higgs, 1987, p. 48)

Higgs also sees ideology as being involved in a dialectical process, as do Berger and Luckman. We need to see how ideology and society are linked by examining the "*socioeconomic* (emphasis added) determinants of ideological change." (Higgs, 1987, p. 53) For example, Marx and Engels appealed to class consciousness and membership through ideology with the aim of changing society. He does feel though, that ideas have a life of their own and that they act randomly on the social system. (Higgs, 1987, p. 54)

Mythology and Ideology

The parallel developments in economics and socio-economics which emphasize the importance of ideology, in a sense, emphasize irrational thinking and behavior. Individuals are seen to give up their own interest for the good of some group to which they belong at least partly because they believe in and identify with the values of that group. All three of the writers summarized earlier, Stern, North, and Higgs indicate that this violation of free riding is possible because opinion leaders and ideological entrepreneurs use symbolic language or rhetoric to galvanize their followers or the members of the group. The key is that people respond to symbols. This is brings in the connection with mythology. Myth and mythology are all about the use of symbols. North even mentioned myths as an important part of the culture that shapes ideology. The late mythologist Joseph Campbell even went as far as to say that they were "symbolic representations of our psyches" (Campbell, 1968, p. 255).

How is mythology related to ideology? Myths tell stories which impart values. Since values are seen here as similar to ideology in that they both are essential for group solidarity, there is one connection between mythology and ideology. They also both perform similar functions. The four functions of mythology according to Campbell are:

> 1. Mystical-Realizing what a wonder the universe is, and what a wonder you are and experiencing awe before the mystery. Myth opens the world to the dimension of mystery, to the realization of the mystery that underlies all forms.
> 2. Cosmological dimensions-This is the dimension with which science is concerned-showing you what the shape of the universe is, but showing it in such a way that the mystery comes through.
> 3. Sociological-This supports and validates a certain social order. These myths vary from place to place.
> 4. Pedagogical-How to live a human life under any circumstances.

Although not identical to, these are similar to the aspects of ideology mentioned by Higgs. The sociological function is akin to Higgs's solidary aspect while the pedagogical function is akin to Higgs's programmatic aspect. The cosmological aspect can be seen as similar to the cognitive aspect in that they both aim at explaining why the world is as it is. The pedagogical function can also be seen as similar to the affective aspect of ideology in that it can communicate morals.

Given that the world is full of uncertainty, everyone has an ideology or lives by a mythology. One can never scientifically "prove" that their ideology is the correct one. Furthermore, how does one choose and then adhere to an ideology? There must be some emotional, irrational attachment to it. As mentioned earlier, people are swayed by the emotional and

symbolic rhetoric of issue entrepreneurs. They often do this with poetry (as Higgs mentions) or stories. Every ideology has within it a myth or mythology. This provides it with the necessary emotional foundation, without which no political movement would be successful.

Three writers have previously looked at the connections between ideology and mythology.

Halpern (1961) examined the popular and technical usages of myth and ideology. His immediate concern was the influence they both had in history. ""Myths" and "ideologies" are *major* and not trivial concretions of the symbols accumulated in the culture over generations; that is, by definition, they weigh enough in the balance of history to be remembered and to exert their effects from one generation to the next." (Halpern, 131) He saw myth as "the *characteristic* form of belief of antique or primitive man and ideology the *characteristic* form of belief of modern man." (Halpern, 135) Why is this the case?

> "The same basic problems face *both* the science of myths and the science of ideologies: First, how do these erroneous, fantastic, or even (it is often added), morally pernicious ideas arise and how do they achieve widespread currency? This is the problem of the psychological and social *origin* of myths and ideologies. Then, second, since these errors and fantasies are so religiously maintained, what is the social "survival value" they may be presumed to embody? This is the problem of the psychological and social *function* of myths and ideologies. The difference between myth and ideology is a difference in the way each arises and the way each functions in history." (Halpern, 135)

The answer for Halpern is that myths originate from *experience* whereas ideologies originate from *situations*.

> "The mythologists all seek origin of myths in some aspect or other of *experience*: experience as distorted by language, or by prelogical ways of thought; or specials kinds of experience - dreams, communal rites, etc. The students of ideology, on the other hand, seek the origin of ideologies in *situations*: particularly situations of social conflict and competition. Because of this "an ideology" always implies "other ideologies with which it is in dynamic relations" - namely, the ideologies of other persons within the same social situation."(Halpern, 135-6)

Halpern differs slightly from the writers quoted earlier on the nature of ideology. This is seen with:

> "It is frequently suggested by theorists of myth that myth images function as integrating values around with individuals or societies become organized and exist as coherent entities. On the other hand, the function of ideologies, as theorists of the subject agree, is (in terms of individual and group interests) to procure advantages for specific social positions and (in terms of social structure) to segregate and consolidate competing groups around rival ideas." (Halpern, 136)

But myths and ideologies are not always distinct.

> "Myth and ideology are clearly distinct phenomena, but they are not necessarily separate phenomena on the same level. In fact, it emerges quite clearly from what has gone before that myth is, in a sense,more elementary than ideology, and ideology, in a way,

implies some of the processes proper to myth.

To establish this, we need only refer to our description of the *origin* of mythical and ideological beliefs. Myth, as we saw, has its origin in a particular expression or distortion of experience of experience. Ideology arises as an expression of a particular role in a social situation. We feel more or less confident of our meaning when we speak of "expressing an experience". But what is meant by "expressing a particular role in a social situation"? This is at bottom a shorthand way of saying something else. What is actually "expressed" in the origin of an ideology is "a particular experience', exactly as in the origin of a myth; for the very word "express" implies "an experience" as what is being expressed. Moreover, "a situation" itself means a particular way of analyzing experiences: *viz*., in terms of the relations obtaining between the various subjects and objects involved in an experience. Thus, what is meant by expressing a particular role in a social situation is the following: expressing particular experiences under the distorting influences (consciously or not) of "interested" motives-that is of motives whose functional meaning is the maintenance of a particular social role.

In the analysis of the origin of myth, quite different distorting influences are typically considered as bearing upon the symbolic expression of experience: the "poetic" character of languages, the "instinctive" urges of Man in the generic sense, etc. The analysis of the origin of ideology begins when socially determined "interests" are taken into account as well. But an analysis which takes *special* factors into account begins at a level where generic factors-the nature of symbolism as such, the generic constitution of man-have already had some effect. The

> "origin of ideology" is a topic logically subsequent to the "origin of myth". It would perhaps be more proper to speak of the "origin of beliefs" only in regard to myth, while in regard to ideology we are concerned rather with the "moulding of beliefs"." (Halpern, 136-7)

In order to refine the concepts of myth and ideology, Halpern looks at the work of two authors that studied the role both in history: Georges Sorel and Karl Mannheim. For Sorel, "myth leads to radical change, prepares men for combat." (Halpern, 138) It is contrasted with its opposite, Utopia, which is an intellectual product. For ideology, Sorel had two definitions. The first saw ideology as the ""conventional lies" of a civilization. In this sense, ideology

> "expresses the interests" of the status quo, and functions as an "opiate" stupefying the consciousness of the potentially rebellious class so that they are not alive to their own proper myth. We see, then, that "ideology", in this sense (like "Utopia"), is opposed to myth: in its origin, it "expresses" conventional, "middle class" ideas-that is, the accepted intellectual conventions; in its function, it limits conflict to the bounds permitted by ideas held in common by all of society-"the primordial rights of man". Is "ideology", then, to be identified with "Utopia" and defined as the opposite of "myth"?

The second definition of ideology sees it as integrally related to myth.

The following is Halpern's description of Sorel's work on myth and ideology.

> "We may now sum up Sorel's contribution towards elucidation the concepts of myth and ideology. Sorel explicitly defines the concept "myth" and he does so by contrasting it with an opposite

concept, "Utopia". Myth, he tells us, expresses (and that signifies *communicates*) a personal experience, the experience of the will to action; while Utopia, a purely intellectual product, expresses or communicates no more than an impersonal grasp of facts and estimation of values.

Ideology, according to Sorel, differs from Utopia by its tie to myth. Ideology is a rational structure with its foundations in myth. Sometimes it builds a machine serving the historic creative force of an era, and then it communicates the power of revolutionary personal experience of them. In other cases, it upholds a facade behind which work reactionary forces, and then it builds on dead myths which were once historic experiences and whose memory it keeps alive. Utopias, on the other hand, operate with facts known and not felt, and by standards entirely free from historical roots.

Sorel traces the diffusion of myth through three historic phases. When it is fully alive, myth expresses the personal experience of heroes-acting individuals of historic stature-and it functions as a means of force, to others. Thus, it stimulates both themselves and others to act.

Secondly, living myth is formed into ideology, which (accordingly) conveys the original aim and force of myth, but in such a rationalized form as to extend its communicability in time and space. One may infer that Sorel assumes the living myth of the heroic minority is not in its pure form directly communicable to a whole revolutionary class. It requires the persuasive qualities of "rational" ideology to "train . . . thought" and "prove, by the test of experience, the absolute truth of the new religion and the absolute error of the old.

Finally, ideology may develop into something beyond itself-a faith. The transition to this culminating historic phase of a myth occurs when a system of proof (or explanation and justification) accepted by a restricted (or partisan) group becomes institutionalized as the conventional view of a whole people or church." (Halpern, 140)

The other writer Halpern examines in detail is Mannheim. Mannheim saw ideology as essentially conservative. "It is a rationalization (in the Freudian sense) of the *status quo*." (Halpern, 141) On the other hand, "Myth is associated with ideology, in Mannheims's usage, as a cultural process with essentially conservative functions. It differs from ideology because it is an *irrational* rather than a *rational* cultural form-but this, for Mannheim, only underscores the static, conservative function he assigns myth." (Halpern, 142)

Halpern sees some common conclusions between the two writers.

> "The forces behind both revolutionary and conservative beliefs are irrational, primal expressions of fresh experiences; the role of rationality is to give these forces rational, communicable form, so that they may become historically-that is, continuously-effective and not be dissipated in a series of "short lived" explosions."(Halpern, 143)

Furthermore,

> "Both writers agree on series of distinctions between the main conceptions, "myth" and "ideology". Myth, as the irrational pole of the origin and function of beliefs, is a zone of contact between irrational drives and rational communication-that is, we many add, it is an area where beliefs arise and social consensus is established; ideology, as the rational pole of the origin

> (moulding) and function of beliefs, is a zone of rational communication and social competition." (Halpern, 143)

Halpern also discusses other writers. These include Herbert Spencer, Max Muller, Ernst Cassirer, Carl Jung, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, Emile Durkheim, Friedrich Nietzsche, Max Weber, and Karl Marx. The consensus Halpern sees these writers reaching on the relationship between myth and ideology is that myth is irrational and at the opposite pole of rational ideology. Myths are about the origin of beliefs and while ideology, which is aims to serve class interests, is about the moulding of beliefs. Mythological concepts need to be interpreted symbolically and that "myth is itself a primordial form of human symbolical activity and, like language, it is pre-logical in nature." (Halpern, 145) Mythical symbols are archetypes which have an irrational quality and constitute "the fundamental forces making for personal integration and, of course, social organization." (Halpern, 146) He is clear on what happens when societies lose their sense of mythic belief:

> "To be sure, even myths must be formulated (*i.e.*, "rationalized") in order to serve as an ideological cement binding together a revolutionary cadre. But a belief can also exist as sheer ideology, entirely devoid of mythical élan, when it is committed to the idolatry of empty words. At this point, culture becomes decadent and society, so unified, stagnates. Only petty interested motives prevail, and the breakdown of social consensus is imminent." (Halpern, 146)

Halpern sees Max Weber's ideal type concept as a mythical concept used to explain social and economic development in history. (Halpern, 148) He does not necessarily draw any parallels between that and Jung's concept of the archetype. This will be discussed later. Marx created a "living myth of the proletariat" who would fulfill the "true destiny of man." (Halpern, 149) The revolutionary leaders themselves rely on myths to stir up the rebellious spirit.

Another writer who examined the connections between myth and ideology is Feuer. For him an "invariant myth" is an ingredient in any ideology. (Feuer, 1) This myth is the Mosaic myth of a intellectual leader who redeems and liberates some oppressed people. (Feuer, 2) Revolutionary intellectual leaders who *themselves* saw their cause in these terms include Marx, German socialist leaders of the nineteenth century Ferdinand Lassalle and Wilheim Liebknecht, abolitionist Thomas Wentworth Higginson, French Socialist Georges Sorel, and American Communist Lincoln Steffens. The rise of fascism in Italy also paralleled the Mosaic myth in that the Italian people needed to saved from their own decadence and led back to their Roman glory. (Feuer, 10) The nationalist Joseph Mazzini, too, saw his movement as one which would lead and save an oppressed people. (Feuer, 11-13)

What North called intellectual entrepreneurs, Higgs called opinion leaders, and Stern issue entrepreneurs, Feuer calls "ideologists." He is more concerned, however, with the psychology of these people more than the others.

> "Among the various peoples in the given period who are in various degrees oppressed, exploited, or deprived, the would-be ideologist selects one with whom he can most readily achieve and 'identification'. He finds in the members of that group the embodiments of the virtues he most prizes, and an absence of those defects which he most despises. The people, the proletariat, the peasantry, the Negro, the American Indian, the

> lumpenproletariat, the hobo, the Latin American Guerilla, the North Vietnamese, have been at different times the historically chosen in the ideological myths. On the part of the intellectual, this experience of identification has a conversionary emotional character. The union with the chosen people has a mystical quality; divisions within the intellectual's psyche are overcome; his feeling of weakness dissolves; he experiences a sense of manliness, strength, vigor." (Feuer, 14-15)

Examples of this for Feuer include Marx and Engels as they engaged in revolutions and met the working class. In fact, Hegel called for a new mythology of reason "in order to make the philosophers sensible." (Eagleton, 151) Also, ideas had to be expressed "aesthetically, that is, mythologically" in order to have "interest for the people." (Eagelton, 151)

Feuer also finds the Jacobic myth of who will be most favored by the father in many movements. "When ideologies, the continuators of myth, assure intellectuals that they are the bearers of a unique historic mission, the latter feel like favored children." (Feuer, 5)

Feuer is also concerned with the relationship of myth and ideology to science and the social sciences.

> "The Mosaic myth is an all-essential ingredient in ideology, but the myth, in modern times, must be embedded in scientific, empirical as well as philosophic arguments. An ideology must therefore enlist a certain minimum of sociological arguments; it must at least avail itself of a minimum perception of social reality, some empirical facts which will lend at least a partial credence to its assertions; when the ideology proclaims a given class, nation, race, sex, or group as chosen for a mission, it must preserve some minimal connection with reality; a myth altogether detached from reality can never do service in an ideology. This is the generative symbiosis in ideology of myth and science: an empirical content embedded in the ideology, yet always mythologized." (Feuer, 96)

Furthermore, he asks

> "Why have ideologies exerted a great influence on the development of the social sciences? Precisely because their myths told partially in the language of social sciences, are extrapolated, in compliance with a compulsive, emotional a priori, from a perception of social realities. The Marxist ideologist, desirous of proving that the workers have a historic mission to abolish capitalism will turn social scientist, and study painstakingly the miseries of working-class life and their political actions; always, there will remain an 'ideological leap' from the empirical facts and the testable social uniformities to the notion that history has conferred a 'mission' on the workers." (Feuer, 97)

Also

> "[E]very ideology upon a minimal core of social fact superimposes emotionally projective formations; metaphors of the womb of the old society, the pregnancy with its contrary, force as the midwife, are all components of the myth of the birth of the hero, the class or group with the mission to destroy the old.
>
> The ideologist, under the sway of his central truth, finally, however, loses his sense of scientific method and verification." (Feuer, 98)

Feuer saw this happening to Marx, whom he feels could not prove the following propositions:

1. The *existence of classes* is only bound up with *particular historical phases in the development of production.*
2. The class struggle necessarily leads to the *dictatorship of the proletariat*
3. This dictatorship itself constitutes only the transition to the *abolition of all classes* and to a classless society.

According to Feuer, the ideologist also wishes to show that his myth is consistent with nature itself. "No ideology, moreover, is content with asserting its Mosaic myth in philosophical-scientific language. The ideologist wishes to derive that myth from the nature of the universe itself." (Feuer, 99) He elaborates on this with:

> "No ideology, indeed, is satisfied with the status of a social myth. Georges Sorel stressed that myths were irrefutable and unverifiable, that they were solely emotional visions of movement. Not so an ideology which aims to be demonstrable. Ideology is driven toward 'deriving' its social myth from a world-view, a *Weltanschauung*. We might call this 'method' of world-mythologizing the method of 'isomorphic projection.' In other words, the same structural traits which characterize the social myth are projected on the world as a whole as a total myth. Then, after this projection has been accomplished, the ideologist claims to 'derive' his social myth as a special case of the world myth. Thus, the Marxist ideologist, in his full orthodoxy, is more than a historical materialist of human societies; he is also a 'dialectical materialist' for all nature. The universe as a whole adheres to his revolutionary ideology; it evolves through struggles of opposites, making qualitative 'leaps', at critical junctures to new qualitative epochs, negating previous stages with respect to their basic laws." (Feuer, 99)

Finally, he looks at the relationship of science and mythology by examining the unconscious motives of the scientist.

> "[F]or in the history of science, strong unconscious motives have often affected the thinking of scientists. Werner Heisenberg was affected by the romantic philosophy of his circle in the youth movement in opposition to materialism and determinism; Einstein moved in a student circle which was marked by hostility to every form of absolutism, political, moral, and scientific. Then it is not the mere presence of unconscious factors in the thought-processes which separates the ideologist from the scientist. Rather something more is involved,-namely, the power of the scientific method to transcend the unconscious motives though its reliance on prediction, experiment, verification, falsification. The ideologist, as a myth-maker, remains unanswerable to the confirmation or infirmations of predicted consequences. With out the impelling force of unconscious motives, science too would languish; but without the work of experiment and verification, it would regress toward myth." (Feuer, 182)

Eagleton (1991) was also concerned with the relationship between myth and ideology. For him, it is not easy to determine.

> "Are myths the ideologies of pre-industrial societies, or ideologies the myths of industrial ones? If there are clear parallels between the two, there are also significant points of difference. Both myth and ideology are worlds of symbolic meaning with social functions and effects; but myth is arguably the more capacious term,

> revolving as it does on the great 'metaphysical' questions of birth, sexuality and death, of sacred times, places and origins. Ideologies are generally more specific, pragmatic forms of discourse, which may encompass such might issues but bring them to bear more directly on questions of power. Myths are usually more concerned with how the aardvark got its long nose than with how to spot a communist. They are also typically pre-historical or dehistoricizing, fixing events in some eternal present or viewing them as infinitely repetitive; ideologies, by contrast, may and often do dehistoricize, but the various nineteenth-century ideologies of triumphal historical progress hardly fit this bill. (One may argue, however, that such ideologies of history are historical in their content but immobilized in their form; certainly Claude Lévi-Strauss sees history as simply a modern myth.) (Eagleton, 188)

Eagleton shares Campbell's idea of the sociological function of myths, which can be seen as "naturalizing and universalizing a particular social structure, rendering any alternative to it unthinkable." (Eagleton, 188) He does see myth and ideology working together because the rational side of any movement, ideology is not enough to stimulate political action on the part of the members of some group.

> "Men and women engaged in such conflicts do not live by theory alone; socialists have not given their lives over the generations for the tenet that the ratio of fixed to variable capital gives rise to a tendential fall-off in the rate of profit. It is not in defence of the doctrine of base and superstructure that men and women are prepared to embrace hardship and persecution in the course of political struggle. Oppressed groups tell themselves epic narratives of their history, elaborate their solidarity in song and ritual, fashion collective symbols of their common endeavour. Is all this to be scornfully dismissed as so much mental befuddlement?" (Eagleton, 191-2)

His answer is no. It is all designed to "foster solidarity and self-affirmation." (Eagleton, 192) This is reminiscent of Higgs's views on ideology. In fact, any ideology, although partly an illusion, must offer something real to the people who will be led in order for it to work.

> "As Jon Elster reminds us, ruling ideologies can actively shape the wants and desires of those subjected to them; but they must also engage significantly the wants and desires that people already have, catching up genuine hopes and needs, reinflecting them in their own peculiar idiom, and feeding them back to their subjects in ways which render these ideologies plausible and attractive. They must be 'real' enough to provide the basis on which individuals can fashion a coherent identity, must furnish some solid motivations for effective action, and must make at least some feeble attempt to explain away their own more flagrant contradictions and incoherencies. In short, successful ideologies must be more than imposed illusions, and for all their inconsistencies must communicate to their subjects a version of social reality which is real and recognizable enough not to be simply rejected out of hand. They may, for example, be true enough in what they assert but false in what they deny, as John Stuart Mill considered almost all social theories to be."

Elsewhere, in summarizing Pareto, he writes "Ideas are just specious rationalizations of

unchanging human motives" which reflect the "relatively invariable 'sentiments' in human life (Eagleton, 186) and later, in summarizing Sorel, that ideas "must be grasped as vital organizing principles, unifying forces which are 'true' in so far as they engender the 'noblest and deepest sentiments'. (Eagleton, 187) Sorel even says that socialism had to be "conveyed in the immediacy of a mythic image rather than by the circumlocutions of science." (Eagelton, 187) Each of these hint at the concept of archetypes. This will be discussed later.

How does myth and symbol work in politics?

Several writers have addressed this issue. What the previous discussion of the relationship between myth and ideology suggests is that people act politically based on emotions (the irrational) and ideology (the rational). The two are intimately related. People wish to act politically because of their feelings. Their ideas then guide them in the actions that they do take.

Sears, Huddy, and Schaffer (1986) examined the possibility of "the simple symbolic politics viewpoint with some notion of cognitive structure to get a more satisfactory view of public thinking." (Sears, Huddy, and Schaffer, 161) The simple symbolic politics viewpoint merely says that people respond to symbols. But it ignores the underlying cognitive or rational basis for the symbols that people look to for direction in political action. People do have some rational reasons, say, for believing in "democracy." They can at least explain some of the advantages. But the word itself does symbolize and evoke feelings that people do have, perhaps even unconscious ones. One of their findings was that symbols were important in explaining people's attitudes and issue positions towards equality no matter how much they knew about politics. But they were *group* symbols, that is, how people felt about certain issues could be at least partly explained by the symbols they believed in that expressed the values of a group to which they belonged.

Roseman, Abelson, and Ewing (1986) examined the relationship between emotion and cognition in political communication. They found that successful political communication takes into account the emotional tendencies of the target audience, that it needs to make people feel good, not just affirm the feelings that the people already have, and that "emotion is not divorced from political cognition and is certainly not antithetical to it." (Roseman, Abelson, and Ewing, 292) The two are consistent with each other. A message of pity aimed at a group that feels anger will not work. Or,

> "In the political arena, it is not generally feasible to tack the emotion of one appeal onto the cognition of another. You cannot easily take an organization promoting nuclear buildup and sell it with a love message. As a bumper sticker we saw recently states: You Can't Hug a Child with Nuclear Arms. Political propagandists and psychologists should not try to graft wings onto whales." (Roseman, Abelson, and Ewing, 292)

Furthermore, "Cognitive content, however, must not contradict the cognitions implicit in emotional messages. Thus pity-oriented fund-raisers seem to place considerable importance on communicating the effectiveness of each donation. If our support wouldn't save that child's life, would we help?" (Roseman, Abelson, and Ewing, 293)

Conover and Feldman (1981) studied why people identify themselves as liberal or conservative. One of their findings was that "ideological labels, and consequently self-

identifications, have largely symbolic, nonissue oriented meaning to the mass public." (Conover and Feldman, 372) They found the same to be true of party affiliation.

When the above studies use the concept of symbol, it refers to rhetoric. This includes words with vague meanings like "freedom" or "equality."

Geis (1987) looked at how language and myth work in American politics. He was concerned with

> "[T]he question of how political language can evoke patterns of political belief and what language will be efficacious in such evocations. I agree with Edelman in that language that evokes mythic themes-causally simple, empirically unsubstantiated (and largely unsubstantiable), explanatory theses-can significantly influence political thought and I would further argue that quite ordinary language may tend to be especially efficacious in that it tends not to attract attention to itself.
>
> Why do politicians resort to mythic thinking, that is, to simple causal thinking? The answer lies in some combination of the following facts:
>
> (a) It is hard not to think in simple causal terms.
>
> (b) Simple causal theories are easier to grasp and are more elegant than complex causal theories.
>
> (c) Simple causal theories warrant simple causal solutions.
>
> (d) Simple causal solutions are more appealing to people than are complex causal solutions.
>
> Unfortunately, politicians seem to find mythic thinking irresistible and can be expected to indulge in it until the people cease responding to the resultant rhetoric." (Geis, 37)

Some of the myths he used in his analysis come from Murray Edelman and include "The Conspiratorial Enemy," "The Valiant Leader," "United We Stand" (pre-dating Ross Perot), and "Man is a Rational Animal."

An example of the Valiant Leader, Geis offers as an example President Kennedy's injunction "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." Politicians use such "grandiloquence" in order to evoke the Valiant Leader myth. During the Vietnam War, President Johnson tried to evoke the myth of the Conspiratorial Enemy by saying that "failure to meet aggression means war not peace." (Geis, 29) Johnson's strategy fulfilled the dual function of a political myth according to Geis because it provided an explanation of an event as well as a justification for a certain course of action. Political myths are half truths which cannot be verified or falsified. Some believe that the axis powers started World War II because they were not met early enough by aggressive resistance from the allies. There is no way to prove that this was the case in Vietnam. Another example of the Conspiratorial Enemy is Reagan referring to the Soviet Union as the Evil Empire. (Geis, 30) He does, however, also mention that even scientists can be subject to mythic thinking. (Geis, 29)

Edelman (1964) looked at the symbolic uses of politics. He too saw the power of symbols and myths in politics to bind people together. He saw elections as a ritual act which did not necessarily decide policies and in which voters based their decisions not mainly on issues but on symbolism. The election ritual is not worthless. It binds the polity together and sustains it. But as a ritual it is an acting out of the myth that "the people rule" even though much of the time special interests and bureaucrats rule. (Edelman, 3) Myths and symbols are also important because of the uncertainty between policies and their

impact. Since the world is so complex, it is often difficult to link a social condition to a specific policy. Voters necessarily have to take comfort in the myths and symbols offered to them by the politicians in the hopes that they accurately represent what the politicians actually stand for and that what the politicians stand for is close to the beliefs of the voters. (Edelman, 7)

His views on the nature of symbols is consistent with the others reported in this section. "The meanings, however, are not in the symbols. They are in society and therefore in men. Political symbols bring out in concentrated form those particular meanings and emotions which the members of a group create and reinforce in each other." (Edelman, 11)

He saw political opinions as serving three functions. The first is to help people understand how the world works. The second is to promote social adjustment or facilitate group solidarity. The third is to help ""externalize" unresolved inner problems." (Edelman, 7-8)

Sebba (1962) also saw elections as rituals and politics being dominated by symbols and myths that foster group identity. For Sebba, myths are "more emotional than rational" and come into play when our understanding of causality in the world is weak. (Sebba, 150) In fact, successful political leaders are able create or shape myths that support their aims.

One mythical pattern he uses as an example is The Devil-The Great Conspiracy-The Purge-The Scapegoat. Many groups or countries have a devil they are fighting: the U.S.A. is fighting the communist, the Soviet Union the capitalist, and Germany in the 1930's the Jew. Why? Because the devil is leading a conspiracy against "the chosen people" who then have to be purged of the devil's henchmen.

A second pattern is The Divine Origin-The Mission. Here a group or people is chosen by god to fulfill a mission such as manifest destiny because we are the descendants of "those sturdy pioneers who carved a nation out of the wilderness." The Nazis pushed the Nibelungen saga which supported the myth of the master race.

The Blood myth holds that "Blood Sacrifice can change the course of history." (Sebba, 161) Christ is an example. Nazism rose on the martyrdom of early members. (Sebba, 162-3)

He also discusses the relationship of myth and the state. States and their constitutions need a mythical foundation. He shows this by noting that the post World War I constitutions of Germany and Austria were technically very good and very rational. But that was all and they did not last long. They were replaced by totalitarian regimes who understood the power of myth.

Sebba sees new states as being brought about by revolutions which must have a mythic grounding.

> "Changes that cannot be brought about by reform may be brought about by *revolution*. We define revolution as a process of change which involves the creation of a new axiomatic system of governing principles or values. This implies that revolutionary change from one axiomatic system to another is grounded in nonrational decision. And since such decision arises from profound, basic, prerational belief, revolution is mythical in origin." (Sebba, 166)

He asks how does a leader make decisions in setting where rational thinking is not possible?

> "The extreme case is one in which the uncertainty of the outcome casts its shadow over the principles used in judging such outcomes. In this situation, reasoning may paralyze the decision-maker as it would paralyze a soldier in action

> who suddenly begins to wonder why he is fighting and why he should go on fighting. The eventual decision (or failure) to act may be the product of personal characteristics, of habit, of an inclination to gamble blindly, of outside forces or of chance; in all these cases it is fortuitous, not rational. If, however, decision is made out of deep, ultrational commitment to an ultimate goal or value, its roots are in the mythical realm." (Sebba, 166).

His conclusion is that myth and symbols must be studied if social scientists are to understand society. (Sebba, 169)

Mythic themes and myths are also used in political advertising. Jamieson (1984) examined presidential campaign advertising. How myths are used in advertising is of political importance because advertising is "now the major means by which candidates for the precedence communicate their messages to voters." (Jamieson, 446) Her conclusion is that although ads have to deal with issues "Ads also have to fit within a general set of cultural norms and values." (Jamieson, xxii) This is why we see ads like the one for Reagan in 1984 which proclaimed that "It's morning in America." This is a mythic image of American being reborn and returning to its former greatness and glory after the malaise of Jimmy Carter. Reagan's ads also included scenes of weddings and parades, as if none took place during Carter's Presidency. They created an image of a mythical Rockwellian America. But election ads cannot simply put thoughts into the minds of the voters. "Duplicitous ads are also minimized by the need of campaigners to synchronize the images they present in ads, news, and debates. The advertising image must be a credible extension, not a contravention, of the image of the candidate captured elsewhere." (Jamieson, xx) Furthermore,

> "For those who read the campaign's position papers, examine its brochures, and listen to its stump speeches, the ads function as reinforcement. Those who ignore the other campaign-produced materials receive a digest of them in the ads. This is true of both the advertising against the opponent and the advertising supporting the candidate." (Jamieson, 452).

Ads also may be powerful, but irrational and "solicit a visceral and not intellectual response." (Jamieson, 450) But it has to be remembered that, on a strictly selfish cost-benefit basis, the act of voting in an election is not rational. So it should not be surprising that "irrational myths" can sway the voters or that they can stimulate political revolutions.

The combining of factual content with emotional, evocative images in campaign advertising parallels Eagleton's view that although elites create ideologies for mass consumption, those ideologies must be based on some verifiable facts while at the same time they must appeal to the deep seated emotions in people. The work cited earlier on political symbols and ideologies makes the same point by showing the complementary relationship between cognitive and affective aspects of perception.

It should not be surprising that myths and symbols can play such an important role in American government and politics. The mythologist Joseph Campbell saw the founding fathers as masters of myth and symbol. The evidence for this is on the dollar bill, which includes mythic symbols like the pyramid and the great seal. (Campbell, ch. 1) They were also heavily influenced by the Roman mythic poets, Horace, Virgil, and Ovid. (Elkins and McKitrick, 48) Even Clinton's inaugural speech included such mythical language as

quest, vision, "the conviction that America's long heroic journey must go forever upward" and "we must answer the call."

One of the conclusions usually reached in the Public Choice literature is that when variables measuring ideology are statistically significant, is that the politician has voted based on ideology so that he can provide the voter with a label with which they can identify. Voters may want a liberal senator, so the senator will be sure to have a liberal voting record, at least on issues of *symbolic* importance to the constituency. What the senator is actually doing is making sure that when he advertises his image, it has some factual basis. This is the combining of the cognitive and affective aspects mentioned earlier. This is what the Public Choice voting literature misses.

The relationship between ideology and mythology is the same as the relationship that Clifford Geertz saw between *ethos* and *worldview*.

> "In recent anthropological discussion, the moral (and aesthetic) aspects of a given culture, the evaluative elements, have commonly been summed up in the term "ethos," while the cognitive, existential aspects have been designated the term "world view." A people's ethos is the tone, character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood; it is the underlying attitude toward themselves and their world that life reflects. Their world view is their picture of the way things in sheer actuality are, their concept of nature, of self, of society. It contains their most comprehensive ideas of order. Religious belief and ritual confront and mutually confirm one another; the ethos is made intellectually reasonable by being shown to represent a ay of life implied by the actual state of affairs which the world view describes, and the world view is made emotionally acceptable by being presented as an image of an actual state of affairs how which such a way of life is an authentic expression. This demonstration of a meaningful relation between the values a people holds and the general order of existence within which it finds itself is an essential element of all religions, however those values or that order be conceived. Whatever else religion may be, it is in part an attempt to (of an implicit and consciously though-about sort) to conserve the fund of general meanings in terms of which each individual interprets his experience and organizes his conduct.
>
> But meanings can only be "stored" in symbols: a cross, a crescent, or a feathered serpent. Such religious symbols, dramatized in rituals or related myths are felt to somehow sum up, for those for whom they are resonant, what is known about the way the world is, the quality of the emotional life it supports, and the way one ought to behave while in it. Sacred symbols thus relate an ontology and a cosmology to an aesthetics and a morality: their peculiar power comes from their presumed ability to identify fact with value at the most fundamental level, to give to what is otherwise merely actual, a comprehensive normative import. The number of such synthesizing symbols is limited in any culture, and though in theory we might think that a people could construct a wholly autonomous value system independent of any metaphysical referent, an ethics without ontology, we do not in fact seem to have found such a people. The tendency to synthesize world view and ethos at some level, if not logically necessary, is at least empirically coercive; if it is not philosophically justified, it is at lest pragmatically universal." (Geertz, 127)

Geertz's summary explains the relationship between ideology, myths and symbols examined in the previous sections. Myth and ideology support each other in the same way that ethos and worldview support each other. But key ingredients in this support are, rituals and symbols. These, along with myths, are in great use in politics, not only in revolutions but in winning elections and the everyday workings of government.

Why do people have religion, myths, symbols and rituals?

> "The drive to make sense out of experience, to give it form and order, is evidently as real and as pressing as the more familiar biological needs. And, this being so, it seems unnecessary to continue to interpret symbolic activities-religion, art, *ideology* (emphasis added)-as nothing but thinly disguised expressions of something other than what they seem to be: attempts to provide for an organism which cannot live in world it is unable to understand. If symbols, to adapt a phrase of Kenneth Burke's, are strategies for encompassing situations, then we need to give more attention to how people define situations and how they go about coming to terms with them." (Geertz, 141)

Such a view expresses the kind of duality that characterizes socio-economics. It gives human beings other motives besides those which are biological. This is a feature which distinguishes it from neo-classical economics, which, in positing selfish behavior, sees only biological motives. The problem is that ideologies are associated with different groups or classes which have their own myths, maybe their own culture. This may be one of the reasons for social fragmentation and conflict in our world: we all tend to identify ourselves with a subgroup based on race, class, nationality, wealth or occupation. Therefore, we all have different myths and symbols. We tend to see our group as the chosen people, while the other group is made up of demons and monsters. The Horatio Algier myth supports laissez-faire capitalism while books like *The Grapes of Wrath* and *The Jungle* and movies like *Wall Street* support the welfare state.

Elsewhere, Geertz sees ideology as something partly determined by ideologists that plays a symbolic role and helps cement group solidarity while having both cognitive and affective aspects.

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