1

An Introduction:
Process and Politics

*The true method of discovery is like the flight
of an aeroplane. It starts from the ground of
particular observation; it makes a flight in the
thin air of imaginative generalization; and it
again lands for renewed observation rendered
acute by rational interpretation.*
Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality

Anyone who follows the fortunes of process philosophy and theology
will be aware of the efforts that are now being made to relate the
metaphysical systems of Whitehead and Hartshorne to contemporary
social and political life. At the same time, one cannot help but be
cognizant of the degree to which this new-found interest in concrete
social issues contrasts with previous process scholarship. Prior to the
mid-seventies process philosophers and theologians, almost without
exception, expended their considerable intellectual resources on the
task of critically reflecting on cosmological and metaphysical ques-
tions. Having taken off with Whitehead and Hartshorne they had, to
borrow Whitehead's analogy, enjoyed an extended flight in the thin
air of metaphysical speculation. Although inordinantly delayed, this
flight has finally touched down for a growing number of theologians
and philosophers.

Many explanations for this delayed arrival are possible. David
Hall, one of the earliest philosophers to address contemporary social
problems from a process perspective, referred to the tendency among
philosophers in the present period to "remain content with . . . issues
which are relevant only to the profession itself."[1] The "eager
scholasticism"[2] typical of Whiteheadian scholarship can thus be
viewed as merely symptomatic of this general trend of the academy.
John Cobb, on the other hand, suggests that the neglect of political
theory on the part of theologians stems from the influence of

3

neo-orthodoxy and theological existentialism on the American theological scene, as well as a tendency among process theologians to appropriate the work of Reinhold Niebuhr rather than "develop the implications of the process tradition for social and political theory on an independent basis."[3] No doubt these and many other reasons contributed to the late arrival of process theologians on the political scene. However, having been propelled into action by the absence of significant interpretations of culture or perhaps in response to the challenge of other contemporary theological movements, an increasing body of literature relating process thought and public life is now being published.

Unfortunately, when one examines this literature one becomes acutely aware that a serious study of Whitehead and Hartshorne's *own* social and political thought has been neglected. What one does frequently find has been variously described as an attempt to "construct a unique political response coherent with the metaphysical structure,"[4] or to "develop a normative form of political organization"[5] in a process mode of thought, or in the words of Cobb quoted earlier, to "develop the implications of the process tradition for social and political theory."[6] In addition there are other neo-Whiteheadian scholars who employ process thought simply as an angle from which to approach political issues, rather than seeking to derive proposals "by strict entailment from Whitehead's philosophy."[7] Yet in all of these instances contemporary process scholars have failed to critically analyze Whitehead's and Hartshorne's social and political ideas and to reflect on the implications that those ideas might have for process metaphysics generally and for their own studies in particular.

This neglect is no doubt due in part to the fact that neither thinker produced a systematic political theory. Perhaps this is what Joseph Needham, one of the earliest critics of Whitehead's political thought, was seeking when he lamented: "One looks in vain in Whitehead's writings for some clear lead among the social tendencies of our times."[8] He continued saying that although Whitehead sketches features of economic individualism and its connection with seventeenth-century atomism, his thought remains "too abstract" and fails to "interlock with the concrete realities of political life."[9] In other words, Whitehead himself is being criticized for remaining aloft in a flight of imaginative generalization and not descending again into the concrete realities of life. Yet Whitehead's and Hartshorne's failure, if that indeed is what it is, to write systematic political theories

should not blind us to the fact that they did produce a considerable volume of material concerning social and political issues. It just so happens, however, that what explicit comments, analogies, and allusions they do offer are strewn throughout their writings, making it less straightforward than might otherwise be the case to determine their own political commitments.

What follows is a thorough examination of the social and political beliefs of Whitehead and Hartshorne. Until recently, no one attempted this with regard to Hartshorne even in the most limited way.[10] Whitehead, however, has received some attention, perhaps the best known being the work of A. H. Johnson. Incorporated in Johnson's most extensive treatment of Whitehead's theory of civilization one finds brief recitations of the latter's views on social and political philosophy.[11] Although a few pages of critical comments are provided together with a superficial attempt to ground these views in the metaphysics, Johnson's work remains woefully inadequate not only in its methodology, but also in its execution and conclusions. In his immeasurably superior analysis of Whitehead's theory of culture Hall chastises Johnson for concentrating on the less speculative portions of Whitehead's writings and neglecting the ''metaphysical underpinnings of these issues.''[12] To a point Hall's criticism is well-taken. Unlike Hall, however, I do not disparage the task of providing an ''orderly restatement'' of Whitehead's social and political views.[13] On the contrary, I maintain that this is a necessary but neglected first level of argument for reasons which will become clear shortly. My fundamental objection to Johnson's work is that like everyone else he too has failed to give Whitehead's views historical context and depth by relating them to the wider social milieu in which and from which they emerged. This has resulted in a naive and uncritical repetition of ideas which remain disconnected not only from one another but from their social context as well. Consequently what we are left with is a partial and rather aseptic reconstruction of Whitehead's personal beliefs.

I believe that a careful exposition of the writings of Whitehead and Hartshorne will enable us to identify and reconstruct in considerable detail their underlying political beliefs. To this end we are guided at least in Whitehead's case by his autobiographical musings. ''My political opinions were, and are, on the Liberal side, as against the Conservatives,'' he asserts. ''I am now writing in terms of English party divisions. The Liberal party has now (1941) practically vanished; and in England my vote would be given for the moderate side

of the Labour party" (ESP 14). This note is particularly revealing because Whitehead expressly identifies his political opinions as those of the Liberals, and not simply as being "liberal." That is, Whitehead himself relates his opinions to the concrete historical reality of British party political divisions. Moreover, with the demise of the Liberal party as a dominant political force in Britain those Liberals who were pushing for social reforms tended to join the Labour party.[14] R. B. Haldane, for example, a strong advocate of reform and an intimate friend of Whitehead's, left the Liberal party over the issue of educational reform to become the first Labour Lord Chancellor. That Whitehead, a Liberal, would now relate to the moderate wing of the Labour party suggests that he identified himself with the social reforming wing of the Liberal party.

This initial impression that Whitehead should be numbered among the Liberal reformers is supported by several other of his personal reflections, autobiographical details, and historical comments. In later life he reflected that the years from 1880 to 1910 were "[o]ne of the happiest times that I know of in the history of mankind" and that he experienced "a sense of purpose and progress in the world"; yet in the same breath he added that he was also aware that many things needed changing: "[B]ut we intended to change them and had set about doing so" (D 228). Whitehead's involvement in movements of social reform began perhaps as early as 1884 while a student at Cambridge.[15] Following a meeting at the Guildhall concerning the establishment of a settlement of university students among the poor in London, Trinity College, of which Whitehead was a member, organized its own Toynbee Association (named after the Oxford economist and Liberal reformer, Arnold Toynbee). Whitehead supported the reform efforts of Toynbee Hall by serving for more than two years beginning in 1889 as secretary of the General Committee of the Toynbee Association at Cambridge. The aim of Toynbee Hall and other settlements patterned after it was to provide a solution to the social problems of England. Toynbee Hall, according to Andrew Vincent and Raymond Plant,

> stood as an acknowledgement of the claims of all citizens to share in the good things of social life. These good things were culture, knowledge, beauty and cleanliness. In helping to lead and provide people with these good things, the settlements like Toynbee Hall hoped to mitigate class suspicion, to achieve greater social justice and to realize a more cohesive community.[16]

Although the practice of the Hall was at times overtly—and almost always covertly—patronizing, its aim to provide conditions for individual development and its emphasis on education accords well with Whitehead's own sentiments as recorded later in his writings on education.[17]

As a supporter of social reform Whitehead is probably best known for his advocacy of women's suffrage. On at least one occasion he addressed the annual meeting of the Cambridge Women's Suffrage Association, and he acted as chairman of the Cambridge branch of a national Men's League for Women's Suffrage, which was founded in 1907.[18] And it was not only on the issue of the enfranchisement of women that Whitehead found himself advocating a minority cause. While reminiscing at a symposium held in his honor he addressed the "younger members . . . who are of course in revolt against the previous age" and recalled:

> I have been struck with the fact that every cause I have in any way voted for in England has finally reached such triumphs as a cause can reach. I have never, never been at final variance with the bulk of my countrymen. I have sometimes and generally voted in a minority for a few years before the cause has triumphed. Most of my votes have been minority votes, but they have always ended in that final majority which settles the question. And thus I deduce that I can have no claim whatsoever to standing above, or beyond, or in any way outside of my age. I am exactly an ordinary example of the general tone of the Victorian Englishman, merely one of a group. (ESP 88)

Although a product of his age, Whitehead also perceived himself as part of the vanguard who with foresight led the majority in a revolt against the previous age resulting in the transformation of Britain's social and political landscape. In fact, although actively involved in a few issues, Whitehead's actual leadership role appears quite limited; even so, what is significant for our purposes is that he firmly aligned himself with the cause of social reform in his own day.

A successful inquiry into Whitehead's politics must take its cue from his own testimony to have been a "Liberal in revolt against liberalism." Such a description places Whitehead in the maelstrom of Liberal politics during his years at Cambridge and London. Recent investigations into political life and theory in Britain describe the three decades leading up to the First World War as a time of turmoil

for the Liberal party.[19] A serious crisis of identity emerged following the passage of interventionist legislation by a Liberal government. Such legislation could not be reconciled with the traditional liberal ideology, which emphasized individual freedom and the principles of laissez faire. Led by men like Cobden, Bright, and Peel, and infused with the economic spirit of the Manchester school, the Liberal party historically arose in opposition to perceived governmental interference in the economic life of the nation. However, within a few decades of its birth it had become clear that the natural harmony of interests and social progress promised by the Manchester radicals were not forthcoming. The situation in 1882 was well described by Arnold Toynbee when he said

> The times are troubled, old political faiths are shaken, and the overwhelming exigencies of the moment leave but small breathing space for statesmen to examine their principles on which they found their practice. The result has been that startling legislative measures, dictated by necessity . . . have been defended by arguments in sharp contradiction to the ancient principles of those who have pressed these arguments into their service. I think this contradiction is undeniable. It is asserted in connexion with the support given by Radicals to recent Acts of Parliament not only by enraged political opponents but by adherents of the Radical and Liberal party who have refused to abandon their allegiance to their former principles. The gravest of these charges brought against Radicals is the charge of socialism; a system which in the past they strained every nerve to oppose.[20]

The consequences stemming from the failure of classical liberalism led many young radicals to support interventionist legislation to the horror of former friend and foe alike. The nature of liberalism itself became the subject of debate and eventually led to the reformulation of liberal ideology along "collectivist"[21] lines by the new liberals toward the end of the century.

Whitehead was neither unaware of nor impassive toward the divisions in the Liberal party. "The important internal division of the political liberals in England was not the prominent one between Radicals and Whigs," he writes. "It was the division between the pure liberals and the modified liberals" (AI 42–43). For Whitehead the distinguishing feature of the modified liberals was their repudiation

of the "liberal doctrine of an atomistic society" (AI 43), which was at
the heart of the new liberal collectivism. One can sense Whitehead's
partiality for the "modified" or new liberals in his denunciation of
pure liberalism. Only if one remembers that the "mere doctrines of
freedom, individualism, and competition," which were the founda-
tion of classical liberalism, "had produced a resurgence of something
very like industrial slavery at the base of society" (AI 42), he asserts,
can one understand nineteenth-century industrial politics. White-
head was well aware that the failure of the pure liberal doctrine led to
the introduction of "remedial industrial measures" to which the
"great liberal leaders, Cobden, Bright, and even Cladstone, were
either opposed, or were notably cold"(AI 42). In passing judgment on
the Liberal party to which he belonged Whitehead concluded, with
the aid of hindsight:

> Unfortunately for the liberal political party in England, its later
> leaders, Gladstone, Lord Hartington, Asquith, belonged to the
> pure liberal faction. If Campbell-Bannerman had been some-
> what abler and, what is still more important, if he had lived,
> political history in England would have been different. As it
> was, in the last phase, English political liberalism under
> Asquith's leadership was engaged in direct opposition, or
> apathy, in respect to every reform which it was the task of a
> reforming political party to undertake—the Women's move-
> ment, Education, Industrial Reorganization. During the seventy
> years of its greatest triumphs, from 1830 onward, English
> liberalism was slowly decaying by its failure to acquire a
> coherent system of practicable ideals. (AI 43)

Although the Liberal party as a whole, being a house divided, was
unable to put together a coherent system of practicable ideals, those
who sought social reforms did produce a clearly identifiable political
theory. As Whitehead was aware, the key feature of modern liberal-
ism was its repudiation of an atomistic theory of the individual and
society. While modern liberalism was in Whitehead's day a rather
diffuse movement, what its proponents all shared was a common aim
to reconcile individuality and sociability through a theory of human
nature.[22] It was this that served as the foundation for the liberal
reformers' political prescriptions. On the basis of Whitehead's per-
sonal reflections I maintain that there is ample justification for
assuming that he was committed to the values and beliefs of the new

liberals. This commitment is evident as early as his student days in Cambridge and, I shall argue, remained consistent throughout his life.

When we come to Hartshorne, however, his commitments are at once more difficult and easier to ascertain. They are more difficult because he does not expressly identify himself, as did Whitehead, with the activities of a particular political party.[23] Yet despite the absence of personal testimony, Hartshorne's political commitments are easier to identify than Whitehead's because Hartshorne has written more material with the express intention of addressing such issues. To take one example, in a review of Henry Simons's pamphlet *A Positive Program for Laissez Faire: Some Proposals for a Liberal-Economic Policy*, we find Hartshorne asserting very early in his career that ''[a]lthough Professor Simons does not say so, I believe it could be shown that religious economics must be liberal economics.''[24] This liberal economics, however, is not the negative laissez faire theory of classical liberalism, but one that enables people to compete on more equitable terms and provides for government programs to alleviate the worst effects of competition through tax reform—both key aims of the new liberal theorists. In other articles Hartshorne has also addressed the issues of democracy, equality, freedom, and individualism. An analysis of these writings will, I believe, substantiate my claim that he, like Whitehead, has been committed throughout his life to a modern liberal political ideology.

What follows thus aims to be, at least on one level, a study in the history of ideas; it is an attempt to reconstruct from the available data the political beliefs held by these two process philosophers. I propose to compare and contrast systematically their explicit references to social and political ideas with those advanced by the major modern liberal theorists around the turn of the century. Perhaps it might be objected that certain features of their political views, such as their organicism, could find equally cogent similarities with elements of classical Greek, medieval monarchist, and Marxist political theory as well as with modern liberalism. In other words, many would argue that establishing similarities is insufficient to demonstrate Whitehead's and Hartshorne's commitment to a particular ideology. In reply I would argue that the available personal testimony and biographical evidence supplies us with an adequate warrant for making an initial, in part tentative, identification of their beliefs. What is now required is a rigorous examination of their political comments and allusions. This will enable us to determine whether such an

identification can be substantiated in detail. The thrust of my argument is that a strong *cumulative* case can be made for modern liberal theory, which cannot be made equally well for any other position. I endeavor to take the reader on an interpretive journey through the writings of Whitehead and Hartshorne and suggest that the most satisfactory explanation of the entire corpus of material, as opposed to particular isolated portions abstracted from this larger corpus, is that these philosophers were committed to a modern liberal ideology. I maintain that this proposed explanation is both simpler and more fundamental than possible alternative theses concerning their ideological commitments. The following study deals with the history of ideas and not with mathematics; therefore, we should expect a form of demonstration commensurate with this type of inquiry. A claim to have exposed Whitehead's and Hartshorne's ideological commitments can be deemed reasonable to the extent that we are provided with a coherent and unified interpretation of their political beliefs. I suggest that the value of the approach taken here, an approach that attempts to elucidate Whitehead's and Hartshorne's political ideas within the context of their wider social and intellectual environment, is that it reveals a unifying perspective that gives coherence to their scattered and seemingly disparate utterances.

The philosophers and theorists who will figure most prominently in the following exposition of Whitehead's and Hartshorne's writings are John Stuart Mill, Thomas Hill Green, and L. T. Hobhouse. From this list we can observe that very diverse ethical and metaphysical views—utilitarianism, idealism, and realism[25] respectively—have been pressed into service to underpin modern liberal theory. Yet despite this diversity they all share a consensus of beliefs concerning what "individuality" and "sociability" involve, and it is this shared conception of human nature that supplies the foundation for their further arguments for equality, liberty, and democracy.[26] Process philosophy, too, is concerned with a proper understanding of individuality and sociability, and this, not only as a feature of human nature, but of reality as a whole. What is more, an examination of the political ideas of Whitehead and Hartshorne reveals that they also, like the modern liberals, linked their organic theories of reality with a defense of the traditional liberal values of equality, liberty, democracy, and so forth. Process philosophy, in their hands, appears to be one more metaphysical theory by which a modern liberal political theory has been legitimized.

Although a variety of philosophical theories were employed in Britain to underpin modern liberalism, Idealism was particularly important. From about 1880 to roughly 1910 philosophical Idealism enjoyed considerable popularity among intellectuals. It reached its zenith at Oxford under the auspices of such notables as Thomas Hill Green, Edward Caird, F. H. Bradley, Arnold Toynbee, William Wallace, and David Ritchie. Yet while Oxford was the point at which the "Rhine flowed into the Isis,"[27] where British and German ideas met and mingled, the influence of Idealism was not confined to the university; it continued to flow down the Thames to London through its influence on MPs such as Haldane, Asquith, and Herbert Samuel and upon political and economic theorists such as Hobhouse and J. A. Hobson, many of whom were educated at Oxford. What Idealism provided has been aptly described as a "context of political discourse."[28] There is no clear causal relationship or correspondence between Idealism and political theory. Bradley and J. M. E. McTaggart, for example, were both Tories; indeed, McTaggart was apparently a materialist and political radical when he came up to Cambridge and only became a Tory after he discovered Hegel.[29] Bernard Bosanquet, another Oxford Idealist, was a strong critic of the collectivism of the new liberals; and yet, that same collectivism was steadfastly defended by liberal reformers with arguments derived from philosophical Idealism. Thus the connection between politics and Idealism is ambiguous; even so, Collini argues, rightly in my opinion, its reactionary impact was the exception: "English Idealism was a house of many mansions as far as political affiliation was concerned, but if it could be said to have had one overall political influence it would, historically, have to be called a radical one."[30]

What the new liberals found in Idealism was a set of categories that could assist them in their efforts to resurrect a liberal faith which, in Hobhouse's words, "had the air of a creed that is becoming fossilized as an extinct form."[31] Whereas liberalism adhered traditionally to an atomistic social philosophy, a negative theory of freedom, and a conception of the human person as an appropriator and consumer of utilities, the new liberals advanced an organic social philosophy, a positive theory of freedom, and a conception of the human person as an exerter and developer of his or her capacities. Many new liberals believed that this new political paradigm could ally itself with philosophical Idealism in its struggle with the individualist paradigm of classical liberalism. Hobhouse, for example, despite his antagonism to Idealist epistemology as well as his opposition to

Hegelianism's "bed-rock conservativism"[32] as exemplified by Bosanquet, accepted the validity of many Idealist insights, which he freely employed support of his own position. Indeed, Hobhouse perceived his own theory as being a development of many ideas first introduced into the British political arena by Green. In *The Rational Good*, for instance, Hobhouse expressly states that Green's idea of the common good "if pressed and defined, yields point by point the principle of harmony in development."[33] Hobhouse's political theory, like many of the radical liberals, "came to rest upon a recognizably Idealist metaphysics."[34]

The convergence of views that is evident between Idealism and new liberalism is interesting given the question of Whitehead's acquaintance with Hegel's philosophy and with Idealism in general.[35] Some of the leading Liberal reformers—Hobhouse, Haldane, and Toynbee—had a clear grasp of the way in which concepts and arguments derived from Idealism were being utilized to support the new liberal position. This was not true, however, of all the new liberals. "Others took hold of the theories more or less unconsciously as part of the context of discussion," claim Vincent and Plant.[36] Perhaps this might help to explain the Hegelian characteristics evident in Whitehead's later writings. It is common knowledge that Whitehead denied having any "first hand acquaintance" (ESP 88) of Hegel's work; indeed, he claims to have read but a single page of the latter's prodigious writings. Yet embedded within his well-known disclaimer concerning his lack of first-hand knowledge we find a very positive reference to Hegel: "[I]t is true that I was influenced by Hegel. I was an intimate friend of McTaggart almost from the very first day he came to the University, and saw him for a few minutes almost daily, and I had many a chat with Lord Haldane about his Hegelian point of view, and I have read books about Hegel"(ESP 88). Whitehead perceived Hegel's influence as stemming largely from his personal relationships with prominent Hegelians. These friendships began after coming to Cambridge in 1880—just as Idealism was coming into vogue among university philosophers and intellectuals— and would last throughout his life. McTaggart was Cambridge's leading Idealist philosopher and was, with Whitehead, a Fellow at Trinity College; though he was also an extreme Tory, many of Whitehead's other encounters with Idealism appear to have been through friends and movements aimed at social reform. The Toynbee Association, with which he was involved for several years, derived much of its theoretical support from the philosophy of Green. While at Cam-

bridge he also developed an enduring friendship with Goldsworthy Dickenson, an Idealist who was interested in political philosophy and in promoting international peace.[37] And then there was Haldane, in whose house Whitehead claims to have read his single page of Hegel. Lord Haldane was both an eminent British politician and an outspoken new liberal who used Hegelianism as an intellectual foundation for his reform efforts. Indeed, Haldane regarded the architect of the progressive social policy of new liberalism to be none other than Green. When one considers that Whitehead's own thought matured and developed at a time when Idealism attained the peak of its influence on British life—in the universities where he worked, among the intellectual elite who were his friends, and in the movements for social and political reform to which was committed—it is entirely feasible that Whitehead took hold of Hegelian notions, as Vincent and Plant said, ''more or less unconsciously as part of the context of discussion.'' Perhaps we can postulate a ''political heritage'' as well as a ''poetic heritage'' when seeking to understand the influence of Idealism on Whitehead.[38]

Concerning the Hegelian character of Whitehead's work, George Lucas observed that ''the bulk of Whitehead's nonsystematic writings on history, culture and civilization suggest numerous comparisons with the generalized philosophy of culture which may be derived from Hegel's writings. The comparisons which might be advanced on such grounds, however, are easy to suggest but difficult to define or defend with precision.''[39] I suggest that if a connection between Whitehead and modern liberalism can be sustained, however, then given the clear relationship which existed between modern liberalism and Idealism in Britain, we are much better placed to elucidate the comparisons between Whitehead and Hegel on issues of history, culture, and civilization. The comparisons can be defined and defended with precision when one perceives that the similarities between them lie precisely in those areas where modern liberals frequently employed Hegelian concepts and arguments in order to substantiate their political theory. Consequently I would question Lucas' conclusion that ''the more superficial similarities which can be detected at such points proceed . . . as a result of the more basic metaphysical affinities exhibited between Whitehead and Hegel.''[40] On the contrary, perhaps Whitehead's basic affinities with modern liberalism resulted in superficial similarities with Hegelianism, which were in later life incorporated into his metaphysics.

This notion that the Idealist features of Whitehead's philosophy may in part derive from his adherence to a political theory that had freely made use of Hegelian arguments and concepts touches on a very important issue, namely, the relationship between Whitehead's and Hartshorne's political commitments and their metaphysical theories. Lucas's comment that the similarities between Hegel's and Whitehead's views on history and civilization "proceed" from the "more basic" metaphysical affinities exemplifies the penchant among process philosophers and theologians to discount the influence of Whitehead's *Sitz im Leben* on his metaphysical theory. That such an influence might exist, and that it might also have important implications for the present discussion concerning the relevance of process metaphysics to politics, has gone unnoticed. If A. H. Johnson is guilty of neglecting the metaphysical underpinnings of Whitehead's political theory, contemporary process thinkers are equally guilty of neglecting what might be termed the ideological underpinnings of Whitehead's and Hartshorne's metaphysical theories. Typically, Whitehead's and Hartshorne's political beliefs are dismissed as irrelevant or simply ignored by contemporary process thinkers concerned with concrete social issues. Instead, they begin with one or other of the metaphysical systems and then attempt to construct a political theory that coheres with it. By so doing they overlook the fact that these flights of metaphysical speculation, to return again to our original analogy, did not just appear out of thin air but took off from the ground of some particular historical reality. By focusing their attention on abstract metaphysical theories that have been uprooted from their historical contexts, process thinkers have overlooked the sociological conditioning of Whitehead's and Hartshorne's thoughts and with that the possible ideological functioning of their philosophies.

What follows aims to be not merely a careful analysis of Whitehead's and Hartshorne's social and political views; it also intends to provide an ideology-critique of their philosophies. To what degree do the principles of process metaphysics reflect the social locations of its founders? If we take seriously the hermeneutic of suspicion, is there evidence that Whitehead and Hartshorne's philosophical principles legitimate or rationalize the values and interests of modern liberals? Along with a reconstruction of their political commitments I am concerned to suggest ways in which such commitments may have received legitimation through their metaphysical

theories. I am interested, in other words, in determining the ideological significance of process philosophy.

Ideology is, to say the least, an elusive and equivocal concept.[41] Although both the concept itself and the use of the term antedates Marx, the wide currency that it now enjoys is largely owing to the influence of his writings. For Marx ideology is a pejorative term; it is a form of distorted consciousness, a false representation of reality. This form of consciousness, however, does not arise arbitrarily; it results from contradictions that exist in human social life. As Marx wrote in the preface to *A Critique of Political Economy*, ''[t]he mode of production of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.''[42] All forms of consciousness are social products; however, the capitalist mode of production produces contradictory social relations and, as a consequence, distorted representations about them.[43] It is the nature of ideology to conceal social contradictions and to do so in the interests of the dominant class.

From Lenin onward, however, ideology has also been used as a positive concept by Marxists and non-Marxists alike. Karl Mannheim, for example, seeks to supersede Marx by transforming the theory of ideology into the sociology of knowledge. This transformation is accomplished when one subjects all points of view to ideological analysis.

> What was once the intellectual armament of a party is transformed into a method of research in social and intellectual history generally. To begin with, a given social group discovers the ''situational determination'' of its opponents' ideas. Subsequently the recognition of this fact is elaborated into an all-inclusive principle according to which the thought of every group is seen as arising out of its life conditions. Thus, it becomes the task of the sociological history of thought to analyse without regard for party biases all the factors in the actually existing social situation which may influence thought.[44]

Thus the ''thought of all parties in all epochs is of an ideological character.''[45] With Mannheim's general formulation of the total conception of ideology the term ''ideology'' loses its deprecatory connotations and comes to refer impartially to the element of social determination in all historical thought-systems. Because of the nega-

tive connotations that adhere to the term ideology, Mannheim eventually proposes to avoid its use and to speak instead of the "perspective" of a thinker.[46]

With this transformation in the meaning of ideology the method of ideological investigation also changes. There are two approaches that Mannheim deems proper. The first approach, which is called the nonevaluative approach, "confines itself to discovering the relations between certain mental structures and the life-situations in which they exist." A nonevaluative study of ideology seeks to understand the narrowness and limitations of each point of view by demonstrating the relationship between the given ideology and the life-situation of the thinker. This is done without advancing further judgments as to the validity of the ideas in question. The second method of ideological investigation combines the former nonevaluative approach with an epistemologically oriented approach in an effort to determine "what constitutes reliable knowledge."[47] This leads Mannheim to offer his theory of "relationism." Since there are some "spheres of thought in which it is impossible to conceive of absolute truth existing independently of the values and position of the subject and unrelated to the social context," the task of discriminating between true and false historical knowledge centers on determining "which social standpoint *vis-a-vis* of history offers the best chance for reaching an optimum of truth."[48]

In my discussion of process philosophy and political ideology I will be using the term ideology as a positive rather than as a negative concept. To say of a body of thought that it is ideological is to emphasize two of its features: the *symbolic* and the *functional*.[49] To speak of ideology's symbolic character is to speak of its origin, its representational character.[50] An ideology is, as Mannheim would say, a perspective that reflects social existence; it is a product of its social location. The symbolic feature of ideas, including philosophical ideas, is a characteristic of human thought that Whitehead apparently was well aware of. "The few first-rate philosophic minds," he is reported to have said,

> need to be understood in relation to the times in which they lived and thought, and this is precisely what is not done. A philosopher of imposing stature doesn't think in a vacuum. Even his most abstract ideas are, to some extent, conditioned by what is or is not known in the time when he lives. What are the social habits around him, what are the emotional responses,

what do people consider important, what are the leading ideas
in religion and statesmanship? (D 225–26)

It is just such a contextual approach, a method of interpretation that
takes seriously the sociology of knowledge, which I will adopt in my
investigation of Whitehead's and Hartshorne's political beliefs.

The second feature of an ideology is that it is functional. As a
system of thought an ideology is not value-free; it is not socially
uncommitted. It is important to ascertain the social ends—typically
the class interests—that are aided and abetted by the cognitive
systems that we construct. An ideology-critique will therefore not
only elucidate the social origins of a given system of thought, but will
also attempt to analyze ''how a theory or intellectual trend reflects the
interests, aspirations and characteristics of the social group which is
behind it and through which it finds expression.''[51]

When I refer to the modern liberal ideology I am speaking of a
certain perspective on reality. A ''more or less systematic set of ideas
about man's place in nature, in society, and in history,[52] that emerged
in Britain during the late nineteenth century and through which the
values and interests of its proponents found expression. It is this
ideology to which I believe Whitehead and Hartshorne were, to
varying degrees, personally committed. What is more, I contend that
this ideological commitment is reflected in their respective philoso-
phies. While the metaphysical principles may not make overt political
recommendations, they have what might be termed an ''ideological
significance.''[53] The metaphysics supplies through its universal and
ostensibly neutral principles a foundation for a modern liberal ideol-
ogy. ''Despite their apparent abstention from values and norms,''
writes Hans Lenk about ideologies, ''they are indeed dependent on
deep-rooted, if not hidden, commitments to values, norms and
evaluations or priorities/preferences. They serve as theoretically
disguised value-orientations.''[54]

In saying that Whitehead and Hartshorne were personally
committed to a modern liberal ideology and that their presentation of
process philosophy has a particular ideological significance is not to
imply anything about the truth-value of either the ideology or the
metaphysics. This is because we are not employing the term ideology
as a negative, critical concept to signify the distorted ideas of a false
consciousness. Our interest is in investigating the origins and func-
tions of certain ideas; but, as Williamson points out, ''to describe the
origin and function of a belief is not yet to say anything, one way or

the other, about the truth, correctness, or validation of that belief."[55] This study seeks only to bring to consciousness the "theoretically disguised value-orientations" of process metaphysics; it is not, however, through its analysis claiming or even attempting either to negate or to endorse those value-orientations.

In making explicit the ideological significance of Whitehead's and Hartshorne's process philosophies this study further seeks to make a contribution, however slight, to the task of constructing a process political theology. John Cobb has recently summoned process theologians to reflect on the effects that social location has upon their theology. When we fail to recognize that "[w]hat and how we think is a product of who we are" then, he concludes, " . . . our work is likely to be unconsciously ideological, justifying our privileges."[56] However, I contend that process theologians must not only take seriously their own social location, but also the effects that social location had upon the philosophies of Whitehead and Hartshorne which they have appropriated. At this point the writings of Cobb are particularly instructive. Having called for self-criticism on the part of process theologians in the light of social location he goes on to assert that "[t]here is nothing in process categories that is inherently white, North American, or middle class."[57] Without the support of a detailed ideology-critique of Whitehead's and Hartshorne's writings I consider such a claim to be premature. The same hermeneutic of suspicion that Cobb says needs to be taken seriously by process theology[58] needs also to be applied to the works of Hartshorne and Whitehead. As I shall argue in the conclusion, failure to do so could result in an unconscious repetition of what is in effect an inherent ideological bias of the metaphysics.

What I am suggesting is that it is not sufficient for process theologians and philosophers to be critically aware of their own social location; the intellectual tradition in which they operate may itself possess an ideological significance that may be unwittingly inherited unless that tradition is also subjected to an ideology-critique. One purpose of the present study is to provide a critique of process philosophy through an examination of the writings of its founders. Of course, since this study is concerned with the origins of process philosophy one cannot on the basis of its findings alone make generalizations about the ideological significance of the work produced by any given contemporary representative of the tradition. The political thought of such scholars as Robert Neville, David Hall, Delwin Brown, Schubert Ogden, and John Cobb, to mention but a

few, as well as their important and provocative contributions made on the topic of process thought and politics, would have to be examined in detail if one were to offer an ideology-critique of their works. This study does not intend to offer such a critique, nor does it intend to circumvent the detailed analysis necessary for that task by assuming that criticisms of Whitehead and Hartshorne necessarily apply to them. What I am providing are resources for an ideology-critique of process theology by bringing to consciousness the ideological genesis of the process tradition.

It is my hope that this study will stimulate philosophers and theologians who are interested in the area of process thought and politics to reflect anew on the issue of ideology. In examining the social and political ideas of Whitehead and Hartshorne and in raising the question of the importance of those ideas for the development of process philosophy, my aim is to point the way toward a neglected but promising field of inquiry. It is my hope that the following arguments will stimulate an interest in others to take up the challenge of such research.