

REMEMBERING FRANK CUNNINGHAM



Photo: Maryka Omatsu

FOR FRANK AND TO HIS WIFE, MARYKA OMATSU

Acknowledgements

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We hope that this mixture of personal and professional remembrances serves to remind us of Frank's qualities as a person and as a politically engaged

intellectual. We invite those who did not know Frank's scholarship to explore his writing through and beyond these contributions and include a bibliography to those ends.

Finally, please note that every effort has been made to contact authors; if you would like to withdraw or further edit your contribution or, if you would like to add a contribution, please contact Elaine Coburn at ecoburn@yorku.ca.

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Contribution by Joseph Carens

We take note with sadness of the passing of Professor Emeritus Frank Cunningham. Frank suffered from leukemia and died at his Vancouver home on February 4, 2022, assisted by the Canadian Medical Assistance in Dying program. Judge Maryka Omatsu, his wife of more than 50 years, wrote: “Frank died as he lived, courageously and true to his principles.”

Personally, my first sustained interaction with Frank came in 1988 when Marsha Chandler, the Chair of our department of Political Science, at the University of Toronto, assigned me the task of organizing a memorial conference on C. B. Macpherson who had died the previous summer. I was new to the University of Toronto, and I relied heavily on Frank’s deep knowledge of C.B. Macpherson and his good advice about whom to invite (see Cunningham 2018; Macpherson



Frank with wife, Maryka Omatsu (photo : Maryka Omatsu)

2014). Over the years I always saw Frank as a person whose values I shared and whose judgment I trusted. He was someone who would pitch in and help, as he did by appearing a number of times in a course I taught that exposed grad students to the different approaches to political theory available at the University of Toronto. I tried to reciprocate when I could, e.g., by participating in the course he organized at Regent Park.¹ He did a better job than anyone else of bridging the disciplinary divide between the departments of philosophy and political science here at the University of Toronto. And we had mutual friends abroad who drew us together. The late Iris

¹[Ed. note:] The Regent Park Learning Exchange programme was a non-credit course begun in autumn 2003 by Frank Cunningham, then Principal of Innis College, and other colleagues at the University of Toronto. The programme was tuition free and as Frank observed, there was no criteria for admission “They [students] just have to be interested” (quoted in the Globe and Mail 2004). For Frank’s reflections on this experience see Cunningham (2019a:71-79).

Marion Young, Veit Bader, and Rainer Baubock are three who come to mind, but there were others as well. Frank was someone whom I was lucky to have as a colleague and as a friend.

Professionally, Frank's primary appointment was in the Department of Philosophy, but he also became an official member of the Department of Political Science in the mid 1990s, and in many respects politics was always at the centre of both his intellectual work and his life. He was the author of seven books, most of them concerned with the relationship between democracy and socialism (Cunningham 1974; 1978; 1987; 1994; 2002; 2018; 2019a). Frank was not content to remain in the realm of ideas, however. Throughout his life, he fought for social justice and democratic socialism. From the time he arrived in Toronto, in the mid 1960s, he was active in protests against the Vietnam war. Later he was arrested for his efforts to oppose apartheid in South Africa. He was continuously involved in anti-racist and socialist movements. He also always tried to transform his local environment, whether in the university or in his neighbourhood, as well as supporting efforts to bring about social change on a much wider scale. Frank had a particular interest in urban politics, teaching courses on that topic both here at the University of Toronto and after his retirement from the U of T at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver.

Frank's last book was *Ideas in Context: Essays in Social & Political Theory* (2019a). This is a collection of articles that he wrote over the years, some unpublished and others published in what he regarded as obscure places. The book is available for free, on the website of the Canadian Society for Socialist Studies, an organization of which Frank was a long-time member. The articles will be interesting to theorists, but the brief comments that Frank makes in introducing each article will be interesting to everyone. These comments reflect upon the personal and social context in which Frank wrote the piece and, sometimes as well, upon the ways in which his own thinking evolved over the years, often in response to particular political or intellectual circumstances. If you want to remember who Frank was or even to get to know him for the first time, this is what you should read.

As the Michelin guide used to say about 3 star restaurants, *il vaut le voyage*.

- Joseph "Joe" Carens, Professor Emeritus and Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, Department of Political Science, the University of Toronto

Contribution by Carol Gould

Frank was one of the foremost thinkers on the relations between equality and democracy, recognizing early on the need to articulate how moving to more just and equal forms of society also requires the development of deeper and more extensive forms of democracy.² Frank

² Reprinted with permission with slight editorial changes from the *Journal of Social Philosophy*, Volume 53, No.1, dedicated to Frank's memory. Frank was a member of the JSP Editorial Board since 2004.

elaborated his distinctive approach in several books, including *Democratic Theory and Socialism* (Cunningham 1987), *The Real World of Democracy Revisited and Other Essays on Socialism and Democracy* (Cunningham 1994), and *Theories of Democracy: A Critical Introduction* (Cunningham 2002). He found resonance and inspiration in the prescient works of C. B. Macpherson, which he wrote about in his book *The Political Thought of C. B. Macpherson: Contemporary Applications* (2018). Frank also brought together several of his own essays in his last book *Ideas in Context: Essays in Social & Political Theory* (Cunningham 2019a). Included there is his piece on “Combatting Right-Wing Populism,” which was originally published in this journal’s 50th Anniversary Issue (Vol. 50, no. 4, Cunningham 2019; from the *Journal of Social Philosophy*). The book’s conclusion also cites two other articles that he published with us, “Market Economies and Market Societies” (Vol. 36; Cunningham 2005) and “Twilight of the Modern Princes” (Vol. 37; Cunningham 2006). These various books and articles all demonstrate Frank’s profound understanding of the complex interconnections between theory and practice, and between political philosophy and critical social theory.

Frank also stood out in being able to successfully blend his life-long social justice activism with a distinguished academic career, including over forty years as a member of the philosophy department at the University of Toronto (hereafter the U of T), with service for a period as its chair. He was additionally appointed in the university’s political science department and was principal of U of T’s Innis College, where the Urban Studies program was located. Post-retirement, Frank was an adjunct professor at Simon Fraser University in the Urban Studies program. He was able to teach and write at the highest levels while pursuing his activism against the Vietnam War, Apartheid in South Africa, and the harms of capitalist globalization.

In addition to Frank’s anti-racist and anti-imperialist activities, he was noteworthy for his early support for the feminist movement and for women’s equality both inside academia and in society at large. He gave personal support and encouragement to me and others of my generation like Iris Marion Young, and took immense pride in the accomplishments of Maryka Omatsu, a distinguished Canadian judge and his partner of over 50 years.

I greatly appreciated Frank’s astute advice as a member of our journal’s board, and I admired his fair-minded reviews, which were always written in ways that would prove helpful to authors. As a person, too, Frank was delightful, with a great, acerbic sense of humor, and a warm and empathic presence.

Even when analyzing politics, Frank remained a quintessential social philosopher. I very much hope that his work and teaching will continue to inspire new developments in the theory of democratic socialism.

- Carol Gould. Distinguished Professor Philosophy, Philosophy and Political Science, Hunter College and Director, Centre for Global Ethics and Politics at the Ralph Bunche Institute, The Graduate Center, City University of New York

Contribution by Michael Wade Donnelly

Over four decades ago, Frank and I discovered that we enjoyed talking together. We continued our conversations until the week of his death. Frank was lucid, eclectic, and always well-grounded in his arguments. In many respects, he was my Sensei, my teacher. It started during a long car ride on University of Toronto Faculty Association business when I complained about the obtuseness of political scientists asserting that the discipline could produce science. While steering the car on the country road, he gave a stout defense of the goals of “objectivity” invoking Georg Hegel and Frederick Engels no less! He added, “I wrote a book about this” (see his *Objectivity in Social Science*, Cunningham 1974). We shared ideas ever since, about war and peace, inequality, racism, the incarceration of Japanese Canadians during World War II, the secrets of being a good teacher, the University and the Community, the uncertainties of being a middle manager in a university (see Cunningham 2019a for his writings on many of these themes). In later years, when I returned to the study of philosophy (“from Thales to Rawls” I told him), he kept me focused on the basic tools of philosophy – arguments, conceptual distinctions, empirical assessment – and on the utter importance of moral thinking. When I taught a course on the political economy of contemporary Cities, he admonished “Michael, you must start with Aristotle”. Frank’s own writings on Cities are unique (see Cunningham 2007, which indeed begins with Aristotle). In recent years, we thought together about contemporary Japan. I had the upper hand on this topic. Many of his books have been translated into Japanese. Learning in the University helps cultivate a deeper understanding of the human condition and human needs. Learning never ceases. Professor Cunningham helped me all along the road. I am sure that he did so for many others.

- Michael Wade Donnelly, Professor Emeritus, Department of Political Science, the University of Toronto

Contribution by Melissa Williams

Frank was an important figure to me from my earliest days at the University of Toronto. From our first encounters, he appointed himself as my friend and fellow traveler on the path of democratic justice (for instance, Cunningham 1987; Cunningham 2007a; Macpherson 2003). Conversations with Frank about democracy and social justice were always both intellectually serious and a great deal of fun because of his affable personality and *joie de vivre*. I remember some intense discussions he hosted at Admiral Road, punctuated with laughter and lubricated by his signature martinis. He was a consistently committed feminist and expressed this not only through his scholarship but also, irresistibly, through self-effacing comparisons between his own accomplishments and those of his wife, Maryka Omatsu. He was a kind mentor to me, as I know he was to many other female scholars over the years. His early mentorship of, and long friendship

with the late Charles Mills, whom we lost in autumn 2021, also exemplified Frank's capacity to weave his commitment to social justice into all the roles he played in the academy (see Mills and Cunningham in Coburn et al 2022: 17-22).

Frank was, as the French put it, *entier* in that hard-to-translate sense that there was a wholeness, completeness, and integrity to all the different facets of his life, from scholarly work to university roles to community activism and engagement in the world of policy. All were of a piece of his boundless friendliness toward humanity. Not that he didn't have an edge: he could also burn bright with righteous anger at injustices from the very local to the all-encompassing social scales of politics.

Intellectually, I've been most influenced by Frank's work in democratic theory. His *Theories of Democracy: A Critical Introduction* (Cunningham 2002), is to my mind the best overview we have of the range of theoretical understandings of democracy. It's an excellent work precisely because it lives up to the "Critical" in its title. Frank never loses sight of his own theoretical account of democratic justice in presenting other theories, but he is also rigorous and fair-minded in setting out the stakes of choosing one model of democracy over another. The book grew out of a seminar in democratic theory that he taught for many years in the Department of Political Science, and my own seminar on the topic bears the clear imprint of Frank's approach.

I've also been inspired by Frank's vision of democratic urbanism (Cunningham 2007; 2008a;

2010; 2011; 2019b), which informed not only his work at the Cities Centre at the U of T but also his many projects of practical engagement with democratic life in the city of Toronto, work he continued in Vancouver when he and Maryka moved there. Early in my time at the University of Toronto, Frank recruited me to contribute to a course he constructed for residents of a low-income



photo: Maryka Omatsu

part of the city.³ Frank was also a driving force behind the incorporation of philosophy into the public high school curriculum in the Toronto District School Board (Cunningham 2019a: 71; Cunningham, Lalonde, Neelin and Peglar 2003). Frank was always seeking out ways to shift our institutions and social relationships in the direction of inclusive, reflective, democratic citizenship, and the impact of these efforts carries forward across generations.

Some years ago, not too long after Frank and Maryka had moved to Vancouver, I was visiting the city and got in touch with Frank. He extended a warm invitation to visit them in their new digs, and Maryka and he showed me their characteristically generous hospitality. Frank was like an excited child, bursting with delight and gratitude for their good fortune as he shared the beautiful view of English Bay and Stanley Park. Then he told me he had something even more magical to share with me, and he escorted me downstairs and out of the building to a nearby grove of trees within the compound of the apartment complex. It was around this time of year, in February as I recall, and he beckoned my gaze to the top of the trees: the Great Blue Herons were building their nests. With feminist zeal, Frank explained to me that the nest builders were all males, who had arrived before the females and were competing with each other to build the finest nest so they could attract the best mate once the females arrived. I will never forget it. I hope that Frank and Maryka got to see some of this season's herons before he left us.

– Melissa Williams, Professor, Department of Political Science, the University of Toronto

Contribution by Ian Angus

I knew Frank slightly in Toronto in the late 1970s where he was a helping hand to many struggling graduate students and an inspiration that one could be on the political Left and still prosper in the academic world. Much later, around 2007, when I was directing the Canadian Studies program at Simon Fraser University and had invited Mel Watkins to teach as Visiting Professor, I met him again at Mel's house over dinner. Frank and Maryka were just in the process of re-locating to Vancouver. It was the occasion to deepen our acquaintance and our common interests in philosophy and socialism, so that it grew into friendship. I remember saying at a conference, when we were drowning in neologisms thrown at us by a Lacanian, that I had no idea what he was talking about. Frank replied, "that's because he's not saying anything." He had no patience for bombast. Frank was both humble and critical as a philosopher, not trying to rule the world in his mind as philosophers are inclined to do but determined to speak in a comprehensible way that made a difference to something concrete—racism, the city, democracy, public participation, class, Quebec nationalism, right-wing populism, and more (see Cunningham 2019a). He lived his time. I realized only after his death that in his last phone call to me he was

³[Ed. note:] The Regent Park Learning Exchange programme. See Joseph Carens' contribution.

saying goodbye. I had proposed a roundtable on Frank's work. He had suggested instead a conference on democratic socialism. We wouldn't finish it but the idea is still alive. I admired the way in which the politics and ideas came before his person—a certain kind of humility that didn't deny his own talents. Indeed, he marshalled them for the good fight, always with his eye on the bigger picture.

- Ian Angus, Professor Emeritus, Department of Humanities, Simon Fraser University

Contribution by Yoshikazu Nakatani

I feel bitterly grieved at the loss of my dear friend, Frank, but his presence in my life leaves a brilliant and wonderful afterglow in my memory. We first met about thirty-five years ago when I invited him to be a guest speaker at the 90th anniversary celebrations of my faculty in Kyoto, Japan. On many subsequent occasions, I asked him to be a visiting professor. Happily, he accepted my requests. During his stays in Kyoto, I guided him and his wife, Maryka Omatsu, around this traditional, beautiful city. With these visits as a catalyst, I developed a close friendship with Frank and, in 1994, I stayed for one year at the University of Toronto as a visiting researcher under his kind auspices.

I learned much from translating three of his books, *Democratic Theory and Socialism* (Cunningham 1987), *The Real World of Democracy Revisited* (Cunningham 1994) and *Theories of Democracy* (Cunningham 2002) into Japanese. In addition, I translated some of his academic articles; their Japanese versions appeared in my faculty journal (*Ritsumeikan Law Journal*). In particular, Frank's concept of developmental democracy and the application of it to a range of practical cases is noteworthy, because they show how the principles of democracy must be deepened and strengthened in the specifics of a given social situation and political context. His insightful analyses made me reconsider the relationship between the capitalist state and regimes of liberal democracy, where liberal forms of democracy generally function as a legitimization discourse for the capitalist state, involving some contradictions in their operation.

Frank's political philosophy critically considers the instrumental social relations within liberal capitalist societies, where individuals become an important medium for economic (re)production. Of course, this idea is influenced by the concept of "possessive individualism" theorized by C.B. Macpherson (1962). His theory is indebted, too, to Harold Laski, after Laski's centre of gravity shifted from his early works on pluralism, for instance, in *Studies in the Problem of Sovereignty* (1916) to his later works centering class society (see Lamb 1999 on this ideological transformation in Laski's work). In addition, we cannot fail to notice the influence of R.H. Tawney on Frank's political philosophy through Macpherson, given Tawney's interest in the origins of capitalist society and economic egotism (notably in his 1920 book, *The Acquisitive Society*).

Frank's political thinking and especially his theorization of democratic society is basically anti-dogmatic and practical (Cunningham 1987; 1994; 2002). This may be gathered from his empirical concept of "more or less democracy" (see Cunningham 2002; 2019a "Democracy: More or Less": 26-34), which echoes J. S. Mill's socialistic considerations in his later works (Mills 2008 [1879]), while also drawing on John Dewey's concept of the Public (1927). In these works, Frank was motivated by his ardent desire to liberate human beings from the bondage of the instrumental relations inherent in capitalism democracy, by retrieving and enlarging meaningful possibilities for democracy. He excavated the latent possibilities of liberal democracy from capitalist socio-economic structures and attendant political constraints. In my view, he was exploring prospects for the realization of what he called "developmental democracy" which he found in a dialectical dynamism of "unity in conflicts" inherent in liberal democracy, or in many socio-political movements of "tendency and counter-tendency" (eg., Cunningham 2008).

I have just finished writing a book in Japanese on the liberal democratic capitalist state (now in press). My approach includes an analysis of the socio-economic structures of capitalist state and how these are legitimated in and through liberal democratic discourse. This book is deeply informed by Frank Cunningham's insights. I was looking forward to his advice before publication, but alas this hope was not realized.

"May his soul rest in peace!"

- Yoshikazu Nakatani, Professor Emeritus of Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan

Contribution by Esteve Morera

I met Frank in the early 1980s when I went to the University of Toronto to study philosophy. At the time, Frank was working on his book *Democratic Theory and Socialism* (1987); he also taught a graduate course on this theme that attracted an unusually large number of students. One of my first publications begins with a reference to that book; although I do not generally teach democratic theory, whenever I talk about it in my classes on political theory, much of what I say is still shaped by his ideas. Frank's influence, particularly on those who knew him, is deep and long-lasting.

Frank eventually became my dissertation supervisor, which I soon realized was a very good choice. His youthful smile, his generous spirit and his patience gave me the necessary encouragement and confidence to complete my work. Our widely ranging conversations about political philosophy, Antonio Gramsci (1971), Ernesto Laclau (Laclau and Mouffe 2019), Karl Marx and much more were as inspiring and pedagogically valuable as they were influential. He personified that rare union of the human and the intellectual; he was indeed the embodiment of a great intellectual and teacher.

His sharp mind and humanity will not be forgotten.

- Esteve Morera, Associate Professor. Department of Philosophy and Department of Politics, York University

Contribution by Edward Andrew

Frank was a friendly, convivial guy, with lots of energy and lots of interests. When Oxford University Press contacted me about republishing C.B. Macpherson's (1962) *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* and other works, I thought Frank was the person best suited for the task. He worked enthusiastically on the edited volume, *Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval* by C.B. Macpherson (2014) and his introduction brought Macpherson's mixture of democracy and socialism to twenty-first century audiences. Frank suffered at the hands of Quentin Skinner and his followers who think John Locke more of a republican than a possessive individualist (see, for instance, Skinner 1973; for Cunningham on possessive individualism see 2018: 8, and 13-20). Of all Frank's many qualities, what struck me most was his optimism, not just Antonio Gramsci's combination of optimism of the will and pessimism of the intellect ([1929-1934] 1971:175) but a thoroughgoing optimism about the future of a democratic world. In our e-mails during the past year, I indicated that his optimism about the future was a moral virtue that I admired and lacked.

- Edward (Ed) Andrew, Professor Emeritus, Department of Political Science, the University of Toronto

Contribution by Seth Klein

It was my good fortune to have Frank Cunningham as a Philosophy professor at the University of Toronto, where I did a BA in International Relations in the late 1980s, but minored in Philosophy. Frank was my favorite teacher. I had him for two courses: Political Philosophy and Environmental Philosophy. The second of those was a new course. Strange as it may sound today, the idea of environmental philosophy was novel terrain back then, and Frank was presciently crafting something from scratch. Frank was never one to see philosophy as merely the study of ancient thinkers – for him, it was always about bringing rigorous thinking to the challenges of the present (see Cunningham 2019a).

I had big ideas back then about democratic education, and the University of Toronto's giant unidirectional lectures weren't much to my liking (for Frank's views on democracy in universities, see Cunningham 1991; 2007a). And so, in my third year there, along with my sister Naomi, the environmental writer and activist, writer Kyo Maclear and a few other friends frustrated by the lack of participatory learning, decided to launch a University of Toronto "Free School." We drew

inspiration from the earlier free school experiments at the University in the late 60s and early 70s, and began offering participatory educational classes on whatever people were interested in. The sessions were promoted across campus, and many were well attended by similarly disenchanted students.

Across the university, with its thousands of faculty members, the one professor who consistently chose to show up and join these makeshift classes was... Frank Cunningham. He didn't come because he had been specifically invited. And he didn't come to lead sessions. Rather, he just showed up to join in and enjoy the discussions. I think it was what he imagined learning with young people should be like. We, in turn, enjoyed having him there.

A number of us stayed engaged with Frank for the rest of his life: lucky us.

- Seth Klein. Team Lead with the Climate Emergency Unit, founding director of the British Columbia office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, adjunct professor with Simon Fraser University's Urban Studies Program, and author of *A Good War: Mobilizing Canada for the Climate Emergency*.

Contribution by Marjorie Griffin Cohen

Frank knew how to be a very good friend. The main story I want to tell is about Frank's generosity at the very end of his life.

Frank's primary intellectual expertise was in philosophy, and while I could appreciate his work, this was not my area of research and writing. Frank wanted to be supportive of my activist project Thecareeconomy.ca and volunteered to write something on the ethics of care. We realized this would need to be published in an academic journal, then referenced on our website, which is primarily an activist website dealing with immediate issues related to the political economy of care.

"Why Care: Philosophical Defences" (Cunningham 2022) was the last thing he wrote, and he completed all of the edits for the publisher two days before he had Medical Assistance In Dying (MAID). I am so very grateful that he was able to do this, but it also turned out that the timing was critical politically as well because it came out just as the 'freedom' convoy threatened Ottawa and the country. "Freedom" became the rallying cry of those opposing government mandates intended to protect people from Covid-19, and it relied heavily on the idea that individual freedom is a priority over other concepts of how people should live together and how we should care for each other.

Frank's piece on ethics focuses on why people should care about prioritizing care – and why that priority requires a collective, not an individual, approach. He did this by calling on centuries of philosophical thought to defend three main ideas. One is that those who are most vulnerable should be given priority; we should not merely pursue the greatest good for the greatest number. The second idea he advances is that we are all trustees of the common resources necessary

for social well-being - now in the present and for the future. This contrasts with the idea that care should be private property, an exclusionary concept. The third idea concerns citizenship, whereby people are not only willing to be governed but are actively engaged in governance.

Frank, as an activist philosopher, consistently demonstrated his notion that 'care' is at the centre of human ethics and well-being.

- Marjorie Griffin Cohen, feminist economist and Professor Emeritus, Simon Fraser University

Contribution by Mario Reale

J'ai connu Frank en 1988 en Yougoslavie, près de Dubrovnik, où nous participions tous les deux à une grande conférence de la gauche internationale, à un moment politique grave et extrêmement délicat pour le destin des pays en train de sortir du communisme.

Je me souviens bien de cette date puisque l'œuvre principale de Frank, *Democratic Theory and Socialism* (Cunningham 1987), avait à peine été publiée. Un matin, en parlant avec la journaliste et politicienne Luciana Castellina, Frank est venu me chercher, souriant et comme insouciant, presque une image du *Quiet American* de Graham Greene ([1954] 2004). Il aimait Antonio Gramsci ([1929-1935] 1971) et il venait d'apprendre que je représentais l'*Istituto Gramsci* pour l'Italie.

Démocratie et socialisme - les thèmes du livre de Frank (Cunningham 1987), que je me suis pressé de lire malgré son épaisseur et ses difficultés - c'était toujours nos sujets passionnants de recherche et nos objets de conversation privilégiés. Frank se présentait immédiatement et volontairement non seulement comme citoyen du monde, mais aussi comme le fier fils de sa patrie d'élection bien-aimée, le Canada. Le Canada était, en quelque sorte, l'expression de ses sentiments anti-impérialistes qui l'avaient conduit à abandonner Chicago à un très jeune âge (voir Cunningham 2019a:5). Pour cela il voulait parler en français dès que possible: une langue dont il comprenait et exprimait tout, bien que je ne sache pas si les dieux lui ont pardonné sa terrible prononciation.

Le passeport USA ne devait être utilisé qu'en cas de nécessité, comme quand son portefeuille et tous les documents lui ont été volés à Budapest (ou à Sofia) et il s'est précipité chez nous à Rome pour refaire les documents. Même dans des débats publics, il lui arriva de passer de l'anglais au français, convaincu à tort que les italiens comprennent mieux le français que l'anglais (je me souviens de l'étonnement du philosophe regretté Danilo Zolo à la fin d'une présentation de son livre en plein air, avec beaucoup de gens, pendant un magnifique coucher de soleil romain).

Le thème général de nos discussions était toujours le même: l'état des choses dans le monde, au sens le plus large possible, et ce qui pourrait accélérer le changement radical qui nous mènerait au socialisme; mais Frank discutait librement, ironiquement, avec beaucoup d'envie d'avoir des échanges et avec des détours qui nous ramenaient au centre des problèmes.



photo: Maryka Omatsu

Il y avait une différence d'approche entre nous, qu'on vivait quand même comme une source de richesse mutuelle. Bref, je formulais mes positions dans un mode de pensée qui était dit à l'époque «européen-continentale», où la forme-parti exerçait une fonction tout à fait centrale pour l'organisation et les chemins de transformation sociale et politique. Frank, comme on le sait, appartenait à une autre histoire, c'est-à-dire à celle qui était appelée la «démocratie des citoyens», où le rôle des partis était beaucoup plus limité, bien que non absente. Son point de référence était naturellement C. B. Macpherson – auteur décisif, fondamental pour comprendre l'originalité même de Frank – comme on voit à partir de l'important livre qu'il lui a récemment dédié (Cunningham 2018, voir également Cunningham 2019 :125-126 ; 141-149; Macpherson 2014).

Nous étions arrivés à la conclusion presque commune que la forme-parti, bien qu'à repenser, représentait une ressource inévitable pour toute perspective socialiste; comme, pour ne citer que deux exemples, il est présent dans la réflexion du dernier Ernesto Laclau (voir Laclau et Mouffe 2019), ou dans la grande détermination de Jonathan White et Lea Ypi (White et Ypi 2016) à défendre une telle position.

En tout cas, c'est sur la base de ces conditions préalables et dans la conviction de la fécondité de la rencontre entre différentes inspirations idéales vers le socialisme que j'ai eu l'idée de faire traduire l'œuvre majeure de Frank (Cunningham 1987). Les problèmes ne manquaient pas: le livre faisait 380 pages; la maison d'édition, l'émérite «Editori Riuniti», pour laquelle j'étais consultant, traditionnellement proche du parti communiste italien, était riche en prestige, mais pas en argent; la traduction elle-même avait des problèmes, qui ont été bien résolus par un de mes brillant élèves, Vittorio Giacopini (*Teoria della democrazia e socialismo*, Roma 1991). Mais toutes les difficultés

ont été surmontées, et je vous laisse imaginer la joie de Frank, pas vaniteuse, pour ce «succès», et pour les nombreuses présentations qui ont suivi la sortie du livre: c'était comme si le prophète avait aussi été reconnu dans sa patrie.

J'aurais pu limiter ma mémoire à cet épisode, mais trop de choses seraient oubliées dans l'esprit de cette note-commémoration sur la vie de Frank. Je vais me limiter à deux brefs flashes. Le premier est un voyage avec Frank et ma femme Paola en Umbria et Marche. J'avais une Audi toute neuve et Frank me demanda, timidement, s'il pouvait la conduire. Il ne quitta plus le volant jusqu'à notre retour à Rome: il était heureux comme un enfant d'affronter les virages serrés des Apennins dans une voiture rapide et avec une boîte de vitesse manuelle. Pendant ce voyage, chez des amis, il y a eu un déjeuner paysan de je ne sais plus combien de plats, avec Frank qui appréciait tout et voulait tout savoir sur la cuisine. Une fois à destination nous avons visité près d'Urbino un magnifique château du 17^{ème} siècle appartenant à des proches de ma femme. Ah, exclama-t-il Frank, et ce serait un «chateau», une seconde maison? Il ne cessait de parler de spécialités gastronomiques locales, comme le «fromage de fossa»; et il me confia qu'il aurait aimé passer là le reste de sa vie, s'occupant des travaux manuels qu'il aimait tant. Je lui rappelai Wittgenstein et le jardinage.

L'autre flash, c'est un séjour avec sa femme Maryka et ma femme dans la belle maison surplombant la mer de Gaeta, dont j'avais récemment héritée (j'aurai également beaucoup de choses à dire sur les réunions avec Maryka). Peau très claire, Frank brûlait facilement au bord de la mer. Pour éviter ce malheur, il se levait tôt le matin, avant que le soleil n'arrive sur la plage, et il nageait d'un promontoire à l'autre. Après le petit-déjeuner, il était bien tonique: c'était le temps des discussions interminables dans le jardin, des courses au vieux marché de Gaeta, de la décision 'importante' sur l'endroit où aller dîner.

Mais ça suffit, s'émouvoir c'est facile. J'ajoute seulement: quelle joie de t'avoir connu Frank, et quel dommage que toi et Maryka ne veniez pas l'été prochain faire un autre *tour* en Italie.

- Mario Reale, Professeur Émérite de Philosophie théorique, Département de philosophie, Sapienza Roma.

Contribution by Peter H. Russell

It seems oxymoronic to write about Frank Cunningham as a University Administrator, but he was. In 1994 he became the 6th Principal of Innis College at the University of Toronto (hereafter the U of T). Knowing Frank as a political philosopher, I was surprised that he let his name stand as a candidate for the position, surprised that the search committee (thick with senior U of T brass) chose him and, perhaps most surprised, that Frank accepted the appointment. I should have known better. Frank Cunningham and personal power do not fit well together but neither do Innis College and personal power. Innis College Principals do not "run" the College. The Principal's job

is to know whom to encourage on the staff and among the students, and to perform diplomatic services for the College to the governing powers of the University. Frank was well suited for the job. His optimism, good nature and sense of humor enabled him to be a very successful Principal.

- Peter H. Russell, Professor Emeritus, Department of Political Science, the University of Toronto

Contribution by Derek Allen

“He was an inspired teacher, agile thinker, gifted administrator as chair of his university's philosophy department and later as principal of Innis College, as well as an enduring optimist about the future of a more democratic world.” (Judy Stoffman, Obituary, *The Globe and Mail*, March 19, 2022)

In 2021, the Society for Socialist Studies published an online open access collection of 15 papers by Frank (Cunningham 2019a), titled *Ideas in Context: Essays in Social & Political Theory*. Each paper, or pair of papers, is preceded by an introduction that provides information about the personal and political contexts in which the paper or pair of papers was originally produced. Collectively, the introductions are a testament to Frank's remarkable record of sustained commitment to a variety of important social causes – a commitment demonstrated both in his scholarly work and in his diverse practical engagements undertaken over a period of many years. The following remarks present material from a selection of the introductions and conclude with a personal note.⁴

In 1966, Frank “voluntarily left the United States and became a citizen of a foreign country” (2019: 5). That country was Canada. He counted himself as one of those Americans who moved to Canada and recognized “unique and attractive features of [the country] as well as threats to them and look[ed] to defend its positive features.... [He] undertook to engage specifically Canadian issues in [his] scholarly as well as in [his] political-activist ventures, [and] ... beginning in the 1970s [he] undertook to learn French on the supposition that to be an engaged political theorist [in Canada], one needed this facility” (44).

In 1978, Frank published *Understanding Marxism: A Canadian Introduction*. At that time, he considered himself to be a Marxist, and his Marxist writings in the 1970s “explicated and defended the methodologies of historical and dialectical materialism” (6). He later came to question some Marxist theses, and in an *Ideas in Context* (2019a) paper he “challenges an ambition of Marxism to be hegemonic - whether as a dominant world view, a symbol of anti-oppression struggles in general, or an organizational leader of all left movements” (7). However, when he

⁴ Some of the introductions from which I quote below are in italics; I have deitalicized the excerpts I quote from them.

composed *Ideas in Context* he still saw the Marxist perspective “as vital for understanding the economic dynamics of class conflicts” (5).

Frank's (1978) *Understanding Marxism: A Canadian Introduction* includes a chapter on democracy. “Its main argument is that the essential difference between socialism and capitalism with respect to democracy is that for socialism to succeed it must expand and strengthen democracy, while capitalists in a liberal-democratic state must always find ways to constrain or circumvent democracy” (24). The book “depicted democracy, including liberal democracy, as the goal of socialism (not the other way around)” (24). “The linchpin of all [Frank's] subsequent work on democracy was the thesis that democracy should be thought of as a matter of degree” (24). The main theorists he drew upon in his “democratic-theoretical efforts [were] Marx, Gramsci, Dewey and Macpherson” (25) – especially Macpherson, whose theories “largely figured in [Frank's] three books on democratic theory” (25).

Frank believed in “embedding” his “academic pursuits in the circumstances of [his] life”, and this “included persisting attention to educational matters” (71). In 2003 he “contributed to a secondary school textbook, co-edited with three high school teachers, entitled *Philosophy: The Big Questions* (Cunningham, Lalonde, Neelin and Peglar 2003). This was part of a long,

sometimes arduous, but finally successful campaign in which [he] was involved beginning in the 1980s to introduce philosophy into the Ontario secondary school curriculum” (71).

“Beginning in 2003 the University of Toronto embarked on a project, initiated by Innis College, to offer courses taught by volunteer professors in Regent Park, the second-largest public housing complex in the country” (71). Frank “participated in its organization and taught in it” (71).



photo: Maryka Omatsu

Throughout his career at the University of Toronto he “intervened in campus politics and wrote articles at various levels of scholarly sophistication on aspects of post-secondary education” (71).

Frank was anti-racist. In the “Racism” section of *Ideas in Context* (2019a) he writes: “My anti-racist sentiments date from my departure from my racially homogeneous and culturally racist small town for university.... Later I learned more directly what it is to be a member of a visible minority from the experiences of my Japanese-Canadian wife, Maryka Omatsu, and from stories of her community's mass dispossession and incarceration in WWII. Beginning in my student years, especially in Chicago and Toronto, I joined in anti-racist activities (and I was briefly jailed pursuant to my participation in an anti-Apartheid demonstration)” (89).

“One of the interruptions of my formal education was devoted to living for a time in New York City (in 1960 if I recall correctly). At the same time, I was coming out of a period of immersion in mystical literature and had tried to divest myself of material, earthly concerns. I can date the abandonment of this aspiration to a specific time and place, namely [when I was walking at dusk one evening] on the Brooklyn Bridge. Surveying the Manhattan cityscape, I was awestruck by the lights, sounds, movements, and buildings of its magnificent materiality - all things mystics are especially counselled to avoid. This sparked in me an attraction to metropolises that stuck with me in the ensuing years and finally found its way into my academic pursuits in the Spring of 1993.... That Innis College at the University of Toronto housed the university's undergraduate Urban Studies Program was a major incentive for me to take on the position of its Principal in 2000, and I began fully integrating urban issues into my teaching and research.... As well, I participated in an active downtown Toronto neighbourhood association (the Annex Residents' Association), serving for a time as chair of its Planning and Zoning Committee. This experience partly compensated for my lack of formal training in urban planning by affording me street-level understanding of my city” (107).

“After my Innis position, I moved to a University of Toronto research centre, which had recently been renamed the Cities Centre, as its resident Humanist.... I was especially attracted to the Centre's involvement with the local politics, culture, and governance of the city. However, the University administration ... closed the Centre in 2013.... Shortly thereafter I left the University and Toronto and moved to British Columbia, where I was appointed as an Adjunct Professor of Urban Studies at Simon Fraser University. It maintains engagement with local urban issues; so I have been able to recoup the sort of scholarly life I had enjoyed in the dismantled U. of T. Cities Centre, as well as involving myself again in neighbourhood activism in the West End of Vancouver” (107-108).

A personal note:

Frank had a strong influence on my philosophical thinking and interests – an influence which began when I had the good fortune to be a student of his in a University of Toronto (hereafter U of T) undergraduate course on the philosophy of the social sciences. For several years in the 1970s I worked on a doctoral thesis on certain issues in classical Marxism. It wasn't a U of T thesis, but Frank and I nevertheless had conversations about it that I found very helpful. One day he visited me at my tiny apartment and said “the most important property this thesis can have is the property of being done”. With this remark in mind, I worked on the thesis with renewed vigour and submitted it by the due date.

I had been a member of the UofT Philosophy Department for several years before Frank became the Department chair. I recall phoning him and asking him, in his capacity as chair, for a research leave. He told me that he had to submit the Department's research leave requests for the following year that very day but said he would include my request. It was granted.

On September 12, 2020, he sent me an email in which he said “I've been working on preparing a collection of my papers, stitched together with a description of the circumstances in which they were written”. A month later he sent me an email in which he said: I've settled on a title *Ideas in Context*.

Over the next two months Frank and I exchanged emails as he developed the collection into its final form.⁵ It was wonderful to have this ongoing correspondence with him, in addition to

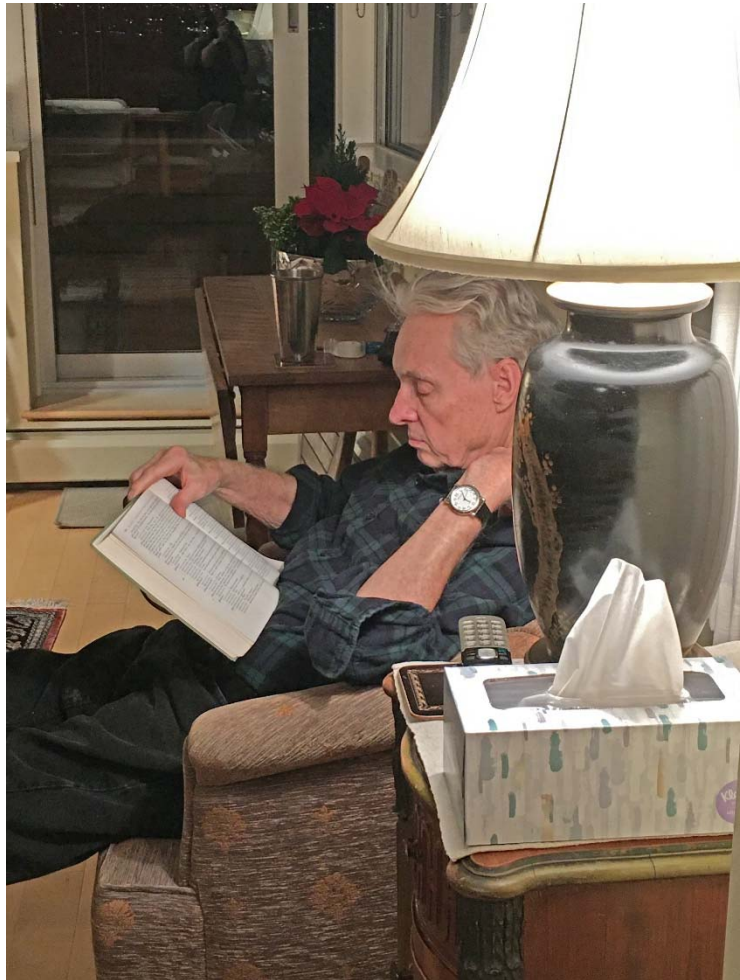


photo: Maryka Omatsu

⁵ In an email Frank sent to me and to three others on January 17, 2022, he said that the Society for Socialist Studies had hosted an open Zoom symposium on *Ideas in Context* and the contributions had recently been published (Coburn, Cunningham, Holden and Mills 2022).

several phone calls. He had been a teacher, mentor, and colleague of mine, and he became a treasured friend.

- Derek Allen, Professor Emeritus, Department of Philosophy, the University of Toronto

Contribution by Kennedy Stewart

I had known about Frank Cunningham's great scholarly contribution long before I had the pleasure to meet him in person (for instance, Cunningham 1974; 1987; 1994; 2002; 2018). I appreciated Frank's teachings during my time as an academic, but even more so after becoming the mayor of Vancouver as he took great pains to help us imagine how grand theories might be made practical and actionable. When my wife Dr. Jeanette Ashe and I finally met Frank he was warm and generous and continued to send us his work and thinking, which we greatly appreciated. We are saddened at his passing, but also feel so lucky to have spent time in his orbit. Canada has lost a national treasure.

- Kennedy Stewart, Mayor, City of Vancouver

Contribution by Michal Bodemann

Was it in 1975 or 1976 when I met Frank for the first time?

I had arrived from Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1974, and in the ambit of the Communist Party we became involved in a nuclear disarmament campaign. A group of us met weekly at the Graduate Student's Union at the University of Toronto, and over many weeks, with much enthusiasm, we prepared a well reasoned, well thought out resolution to be presented at a Communist Party Congress, held in Toronto. At the time, Frank was one of, if not the leading figures of that project.

The big day of the Congress arrived, and we took our polished resolution to the General Secretary of the Communist Party, Bill Kashtan, who presided. We brought it right to the Chair's table and returned back to where we were sitting, waiting with great anticipation. Kashtan eventually took a look at the draft resolution, mumbled a few remarks and then dropped our beautiful, well drafted document on a side table—or was it a waste basket? I don't remember. It was the end of that initiative and also the end of the illusion that the Communist Party could be a force for reform and social change. Progressive politics had to be sought elsewhere, critically, without dogma, and that was one of Frank's life long objectives.

Another early memory was Frank's idea to decorate his Christmas tree with a hammer and sickle. To me, it was his way of acknowledging tradition, tacitly, including that of his upbringing

and at the same time subverting it; this was typical of Frank's sense of humour, mocking established authority and established conventions. At our near weekly dinners with close friends in Toronto his humour was very much in evidence, whether at Barbara Lampert and Peter Fitting's home or during evenings with Andrea Margles and Andrew Ranachan and many others. He demonstrated great connoisseurship, especially as far as Andrew's scotches were concerned...

Frank was passionate about politics and about political theory. How could Ernesto Laclau possibly support the Kristina Kirchner regime in Argentina? What did Chantal Mouffe have to say about that?

When I remember Frank I think of the many places we spent time together: the old school house up north which Frank had renovated with such care and passion, the house on Snake Island, and the homes in Toronto; visits to Berlin with his partner Maryka Omatsu, to Mecklenburg, to Sardinia, always open to new things; his engaging curiosity during our travels with local Sardinian friends to faraway places there, including the memorable restaurant in the town of Teti, for example, serving wild mushrooms and *culurgiones*, a Sard dumpling specialty which Frank began to prepare on his own, back in Toronto.

Frank's enthusiasm, humour, passion, *joie de vivre*, his commitment to social justice, as expressed in his writings and in his practice, continue to inspire.

- Michal Bodemann, Professor emeritus, Sociology, University of Toronto

Contribution by Richard Stren

Over the years, my personal connection with Frank was a result of our mutual interest in urban issues and especially urban politics (Cunningham 2007; 2008a; 2010; 2011; 2019b). Frank always looked at the philosophical side of these questions, while I usually took much more of a straight up empirical approach. Frank had a close connection with the old Centre for University and Community Studies (hereafter CUCS, see: www.urbancentre.utoronto.ca/aboutcucs.html) at Spadina and College (where I was resident for years), and later worked on the "Cities" course which we were both involved in. Frank was passionate about progressive urban policy, so that we had many spirited discussions about the direction Canadian cities needed to take. In Toronto, this progressive energy was often expressed in his rate payers association where he was very active. Frank took that interest with him to Vancouver when he moved there with Maryka Omatsu, his wife. Here, the two of us developed a policy discussion series – based on a debate between an academic and a policy specialist – at CUCS that was very popular in the wider community. After he moved to Vancouver and began teaching in the Urban Studies program at Simon Fraser, he applied that model successfully in a new setting. Frank had a great sense of humour, and the two of us often found much to laugh about within the university setting, with which we were so deeply connected.

- Richard Stren, Professor Emeritus, Department of Political Science, the University of Toronto

Contribution by Igor Shoikhedbrod

It is difficult to express the tremendous impact that Frank Cunningham had on me as a student, as an aspiring academic, and as an engaged member of the University of Toronto's (hereafter the U of T) activist community. I met Frank in the fall of 2007, which now feels like a long time ago. I was enrolled in his introductory course to political philosophy (PHL256) at the U of T, attended by the likes of Michael Ignatieff during their student days. My classmates and friends from PHL265 still chuckle at how Frank rolled his Rs when referring to Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Years later I realized that this was one of the many teaching tricks that Frank used to engage us in political philosophy during the early morning hours of lecture.

Frank's class had a profound influence on my subsequent decision to pursue the study of political theory at the graduate level and beyond. After Frank moved to Vancouver, we sought to meet during his intermittent stays in Toronto. I took every opportunity to remind him how much his course and mentorship meant to me—in fact, right until the end. Although we were unable to meet in person during the pandemic, Frank joined a virtual meeting that I put together, where we discussed my article in *History of Political Thought* (Shoikhedbrod 2022). By then, I knew that Frank's health was failing. Nevertheless, his cheerful presence and his pride in my accomplishments meant the world to me. His support of my work as an emerging scholar was characteristic of his professional life. Frank was an outstanding teacher and supportive mentor who connected people, built bridges, and remained committed to a better world, even in the most discouraging of times.

In retrospect, I am glad that I had the opportunity to tell Frank that I would be writing a review of his book, *The Political Thought of C.B. Macpherson* (Cunningham 2018). Frank welcomed the news and encouraged me to continue pursuing my academic endeavours despite the setbacks that are routinely experienced by aspiring academics in our increasingly corporatized universities. To my surprise and subsequent despair, Frank passed away a day later.

Upon learning of Frank's passing, I reached out to my former PHL265 classmates to reminisce about what he taught us. These former classmates and I had established Beyond Intellectual Discovery (hereafter BID), an undergraduate politics and philosophy discussion and community engagement organization that held regular events on the St. George campus. Frank was our first distinguished speaker and guest.



Above: Frank joining BID for a discussion on democracy at University College in 2009. The following members of BID can be seen. Back row, from left to right: Rajin Singh (BID's Communications Coordinator), Adlan Taramov, and Rylan Kinnon (BID's Moderator). Front row, from left to right: Ravi Singh (BID's Assistant Director), Igor Shoikhedbrod (BID's Executive Director), Frank Cunningham, and Haidar Ali Khan. This photo was taken by a BID member in Room 69 of University College.



Above: Frank participating in BID’s event “Who Cares about Social Inequality?”, held at Hart House in 2010. The following individuals can be seen. Left to right: Lynda Lange (Emerita Professor, Philosophy, University of Toronto), Gordon Anderson (Professor Emeritus, Economics, University of Toronto), Frank Cunningham, John Duncan (Director of Ethics, Society & Law Program, Trinity College, University of Toronto), Igor Shoikhedbrod (Executive Director of BID), and partial photo of Ravi Singh (Assistant Director of BID). The photo was taken by BID member Rajin Singh at the Hart House Music Room.

While BID continued its activities for a few years longer under a different leadership, most of its founding members moved on to careers in the civil service, law, or the not for profit sector. For better or worse, I was the only one who continued in academia, though always with a foot planted in campus activism and social justice initiatives.

In 2011, I began my doctoral studies at the U of T’s Department of Political Science. Once again, Frank guided me and offered valuable advice about the department’s history and its bearing on my nascent doctoral research project concerning Marx’s critique of liberalism. We would collaborate on two other social justice-oriented events during my time as a graduate student. The first focused on “Global Austerity and the City,” bringing together experts on urban politics and philosophy in the aftermath of the heavily repressed G20 protests in Toronto. The second event addressed the “Fundamentals of a Green Economy,” and featured Frank and former Toronto Mayor David Miller as speakers.



Above: Frank speaking at a Hart House Social Justice Committee event on “The Fundamentals of a Green Economy” in 2013. Back row: David Miller. Front row: Frank Cunningham and very partial image of Igor Shoikhedrod (then graduate representative of the Hart House Social Justice Committee and primary event organizer). Photograph by Yi Zhao by Hart House on behalf of the Hart House Social Justice Committee. The image was taken at the "Great Hall" of Hart House. For a link to the video recording of the event: <https://youtu.be/uhtFIO157fg>.

In 2013-2014, I had the privilege of taking another course with Frank, focused on Cities from an interdisciplinary perspective. Frank taught us about the philosophical contributions of Friedrich Engels, Georg Simmel, Walter Benjamin, and Henri Lefebvre in connection with the city, its possibilities, as well as its discontents (Cunningham 2007; 2008a; 2010; 2011; 2019b).

Subsequently, Frank and I joined forces again to organize a panel, “Is Democracy in Crisis? If Democracy is to Survive, What Must it Become?” for the 2019 Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of British Columbia. The panel was jointly sponsored by the Canadian Political Science Association and the Society for Socialist Studies and featured presentations from both junior and senior political theorists. Frank’s presentation was later transformed into a learned article on “Combatting Right-Wing Populism” (Cunningham 2019), published in the 50th anniversary issue of the prestigious *Journal of Social Philosophy*.

I share these photos and recollections of Frank because words cannot express my immense gratitude for his kindness, support, and enduring influence. He will be sorely missed by former students for whom he will always remain an inspiration.

- Igor Shoikhedbrod, Assistant Professor of Political Theory, Department of Political Science, St. Francis Xavier University

Contribution by Nicholas Blomley

Frank and I connected over a shared interest in the Canadian political economist C.B. Macpherson. Frank had studied with Macpherson at the University of Toronto. I was impressed with Macpherson's writings on property (for instance, Macpherson 1978). Both of us agreed that Macpherson had been somewhat neglected. While I grumbled about this, Frank took action. He edited a reissue of Macpherson's books through Oxford University Press (Macpherson 2014), and subsequently published an excellent short book of his own in Palgrave's Critical Political Theory and Radical Practice series, entitled *The Political Thought of C.B. Macpherson: Contemporary Applications* (Cunningham 2018). It's a wonderful piece that sustains his argument that Macpherson's work 'constitutes a coherent whole that has well stood the test of time and can make original contributions in confronting current challenges' (Cunningham 2018:v). He not only introduces Macpherson but puts him to work in a series of contemporary contexts (neoliberalism, globalization, environmental degradation, racism, and the city, see Cunningham 2018).

In a sense, his book is not just about Macpherson. The work speaks volumes to Frank's own scholarship, politics, and humanity. In particular, we see Frank's commitment to bring theory to bear on important, grounded issues of social justice, notably in the city (2007; 2008a; 2010; 2011; 2019b). He was very active on this front, working in Metro Vancouver on local urban topics and issues such as systemic racism. We also see his ability to move between diverse topics, evident also in his recent edited book *Ideas in Context* (Cunningham 2019)a where he tackles education, nationalism, democratic theory, and cities. We have lost an important Canadian socialist scholar and public intellectual, and a powerful voice for liberation and justice.

- Nicholas ("Nick") Blomley, Professor, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University

Contribution by Wayne Sumner

For many years, the University of Toronto's Department of Philosophy was located on the top two floors of a nondescript office building on Huron Street. The offices were nothing special, very utilitarian (in the vulgar sense). But my office was my primary work base, so I hung out in it a lot. And that's where I had a stroke of great luck: my office was adjacent to Frank Cunningham's. Since I am mildly claustrophobic, I can't tolerate having my office door shut. Frank took frequent advantage of this open-door policy to saunter in, throw himself into one of my chairs, and begin some wild and fantastic yarn about something we *absolutely should* do together. Those of you who knew Frank well will easily conjure up an image of that sly smile on that eternally boyish face. Frank and I both arrived in the department in 1965 and spent our entire careers there until retirement, so by the time we were both done the hours passed in my office (or his) in each other's genial company would have numbered in the hundreds, if not thousands.

I know that I am neither original nor unique in this: many will remember Frank for his wonderfully dry sense of humour. But there was more to it for the two of us. As junior faculty we shared the passionate conviction that both our department and our university were run by old fogies and desperately in need of renovation and reinvention. So we also found that we could make common political cause, as we did in working to organize the Faculty Reform Caucus in the late 1960s as a ginger group counterweight to the faculty association, which we (and many others) regarded as way too conservative. Frank and I also shared causes in the wider world. Our politics were both well left of centre, though I could never call myself a socialist (more a social democrat, in the old Waffle sense, for those of you who remember). But that meant plenty of overlap in our political views, and plenty of evils for both of us to oppose. I'd like to suppose that the two of us helped to make the world a slightly better place, and maybe we actually did.

I would be remiss if I failed to mention another of Frank's great virtues, this one of an academic nature. Both of us did political philosophy, but with a difference. I was embedded in the mainstream Anglo-American analytic tradition, reading John Rawls, Robert Nozick, and Jerry (G.A.) Cohen. The tradition was not narrowly restricted to philosophers, since there were plenty of economists and lawyers who also engaged. But it tended to ignore what was happening at the same time among political theorists in political science departments. There was much less commerce than you might expect between political philosophers and political theorists, each side thinking that what the other side was doing was not where the action was. Frank was not like that. To his eternal credit, he forged links with colleagues in Political Science and took seriously the work of political theorists, especially C.B. Macpherson, who were not much read in philosophy departments (Cunningham 2018). Frank also devoted a great deal of attention to a topic—democracy—that political philosophers tend not to write about as much as they should (Cunningham 1987;1990;1991; 2000; 2002; 2008). In the end, Frank had as many like-minded colleagues in Political Science as he did in Philosophy. This ecumenical, bridge-building side of his academic character speaks to the breadth and generosity and openness of his mind. We need minds like his in an academic world that becomes ever more specialized and compartmentalized. We cannot afford to lose one.

Frank's death came as a huge shock to me. I will not stop missing him, as a friend, colleague, and fellow philosopher.

- Wayne Sumner, Professor Emeritus, Department of Philosophy, University of Toronto

Contribution by Ronald Beiner

My main interaction with Frank revolved around a book he wrote for a Contemporary Political Philosophy series I was co-editing for Routledge. *Theories of Democracy: A Critical Introduction* (Cunningham 2002) was in fact the first book published in that series. He told me on

a few occasions that his wife, Maryka Omasu, was threatening to divorce him because he was putting so much time into writing the book, hence neglecting her. Frank was particularly excited about the fact that he was able to arrange a Chinese-language edition of the book before he even started writing it. It did in fact appear in Chinese in 2010, published by Jilin Publishing Group Limited. It is a terrific book: a really capacious and ambitious survey of all the variants of democratic theory and their strengths and weaknesses, written with exceptional clarity and force. Frank straddled Political Science and Philosophy probably to a greater extent than any other colleague in either department. It's a shame more of us haven't been able to do that. He was a great bridge-builder. He even taught Philosophy to engineering students.

– Ronald (Ronnie) Beiner, Professor Emeritus, Department of Political Science, the University of Toronto

Contribution by Richard Sandbrook

Personally, what I most liked about Frank was his companionable nature. I always looked forward to a meeting with him, usually once or twice each time I visited Vancouver. Sitting on the patio with Frank at *The Sylvia Hotel*, overlooking English Bay, beer in hand, was such a treat. We might discuss anything. Even when he was weak in late July last year, we met twice there and had a convivial time. Now, when I return to *The Sylvia*, it will not be the same at all.

Intellectually, I was most impressed by Frank's versatility: Philosophy and Political Science, teaching philosophy to engineers, turning at the end of his life to the study of urban policy issues (see Cunningham 2019a for an overview: 107-124). The disciplines varied, but his commitment to equality, socialism and democracy was always at the centre. I liked to tease him that he and I were proxy members of the capitalist class because we lived from substantial pensions earned by our fund managers largely from the stock market. However, he would not accept that.

– Richard Sandbrook, Professor Emeritus, Department of Political Science, the University of Toronto

Contribution by Ingrid Leman Stefanovic

Many years ago, my architect father gave me some advice as I embarked on a graduate career in philosophy. "Shoot yourself to the stars," he said, "but don't forget to come back and work with the rest of us in building a better world."

My friend and colleague Frank unknowingly lived up to my father's advice. A renowned philosopher, Frank was also very much a city-builder. Whether it was his commitment to the

Annex Residents' Association in Toronto, or his initiatives in developing workshops and urban programs in Vancouver, Frank made a big difference, on the ground, engaging and impacting the way that those cities functioned.

A unique contribution to a book that I co-edited on *The Natural City* is Frank's chapter, where he described cities as "grue-like" (Cunningham 2008a). "Grue," he explained, "is defined as the colour that is green until some unspecified time after which it is blue" (Cunningham 2008: 50). His point was that the less uniform and predictable things are, the more they are "grue." While environmentalists like to talk about "green" cities, Frank wanted to shift the language to the gruing of cities, thereby emphasizing that their complexity – including their socio-political, economic, regulatory, and physical characteristics - makes it impossible to realistically adhere to only a single, reductionist vision of the urbane.

Rather than supporting any tidy, pre-ordained vision of the city, Frank suggested that we advocate in favour of certain virtues – concern, tolerance, and trusteeship – as a more honest way of engaging in city-building.

On the ground, pursuing such virtues is exactly what he did, as he tirelessly gave his time to improving our urban environments. I am grateful to Frank for his friendship, his optimism, and his good cheer. Who can forget that smile? But it is his tireless commitment to city-building, in all its complexity, that will continue to inspire me and others who had the good fortune to work with him and learn from him. That urban legacy is too rare amongst philosophers, as my father well knew, but it is a legacy that I and others will always respect and deeply value.



photo: Maryka Omatsu

- Ingrid Leman Stefanovic, Professor Emerita, Department of Philosophy, University of Toronto and Professor and Dean Emeritus, Faculty of Environment, Simon Fraser University

Contribution by Philip Resnick

Death by suicide has often been the philosopher's lot -
Empedocles leaping into Etna,
claiming that he would become an immortal god;
Socrates condemned to drink the hemlock
that would expedite his passage to the underworld;
Seneca, forced by Nero to die a Stoic's death;
Condorcet, proscribed and driven to suicide
at the Reign of Terror's end;
Walter Benjamin, at the Spanish border,
convinced the brown shirts were just behind.
Not quite the same today,
when infirmity drives some, quite rationally,
to choose assisted suicide
when the pain exceeds what most humans can endure.
So it was with our dear friend, Frank,
who leaves us with fond memories of his dry wit
and deep commitment to a democratic politics
that bit by bit seems to be in need
of life support itself
in these grimly polarizing times.

- Philip Resnick, Professor Emeritus, Department of Political Science, the University of British Columbia

Contribution by Harry Glasbeek

In my old-fashioned cabinet file, I have two huge folders containing the many articles Frank wrote and generously shared with me. It is fitting that the last one I had to add to the file bore the title: "Why Care: Philosophical Defences" (Cunningham 2022). Frank cared.

The piece supports an initiative named *The Care Economy* (<https://thecareeconomy.ca>). Its purpose is to advocate for a social entente in which *equitable* access to all things pertaining to health becomes a Canadian priority. Frank did what he always did so well. He endorsed an idea which dovetailed with his passion for social justice and then set about showing how it was mandated by clear thinking and ethical considerations. In short, this last article was reflective of his lived life as a public intellectual.

It is that empathy for people which made you want to have Frank Cunningham as a companion and friend. He was smart, very smart, could be wickedly funny, and he was always searching for ways in which he might contribute to the general good. That good, as he saw it, was that all individuals should be respected and given autonomy over their lives. What stood in the way were the powerful who benefitted from the dispossession of others, from their marginalization, from their aspirations to be fully capacitated. So, he used his training and his impressive scholarship, first to understand the nature of the problem and then to act to help others understand and to give them tools with which to help themselves.

Precisely because what motivated him was respect for the autonomy of one and all, he focused much of his work on the enrichment of democratic practices. His scholarly writings on the subject are numerous and have been widely read (Cunningham 1987;1990;1991; 2000; 2002; 2008). But he walked the talk. Whatever interested him, with whomsoever he worked, Frank set up educational and teaching organizations to engage people in democratic projects. He not only wrote about democracy (and I treasure his book on it, see Cunningham 2002), he was involved as an activist. Informed by his academic studies, he was a militant and agitator in constitutional debates and problems, tumultuous revolutionary situations, his university's failures when it came to inclusion and the acknowledgment of other ways of seeing the world, his professional philosophers' association elitism, in the promotion of opportunities for young residents in social housing, in city development struggles, in bringing critical thinking to high school students, and more (for an overview see Cunningham 2019a).

The last piece, "Who Cares" (Cunningham 2022), then, reflects all this: an article about a movement which sets out to ensure that all individuals be accorded respect and access to essential services. He embraced this project because it requires us to be mutually supportive and to make decisions about how to do that in the most participatory, most democratic way, possible.

Under his gentle and fun-loving manner, there was a serious person, one who was sensitive to the fact that he had been privileged. He had been enabled to exploit his formidable intellectual talents and, because of his built-in sensibilities, then felt obliged to put them to use to better the world, especially those corners of it where the vulnerable are forced to dwell. He has left not just an impressive academic record but also a legacy of what it means to be an involved and caring citizen. I do not know whether Frank was aware of this statement by Peter Singer:

To live ethically is to think about things beyond one's own interest. When I think ethically I become just one being, with needs and desires of my own, certainly, but living among others who also have needs and desires. When we say we are acting ethically, we should be able to justify what we are doing, and this justification must be of a kind that could in principle convince any reasonable being (Singer 1995, p.174).

I also do not know whether Peter Singer knew Frank but he surely would think of him as an outstanding exemplar of his idealized ethical person.

Frank Cunningham had a rich life. He enriched, and will continue to enrich, our lives. I will miss him.

- Harry Glasbeek, Professor Emeritus, Osgoode Law School, York University

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