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Saving Us From Ourselves: The Interaction of Law and Technology: Extemporaneous Comment

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EXTEMPORANEOUS COMMENT

BY WILBERT E. MOORE

I HAVE four or five unrelated joints, all of them brief. I was pro-
voked by Dr. Curlin's paper into thinking once more about the poor
job the social sciences do training people in the techniques of social
invention. Except for law, and perhaps social work, we do not have
technological adjuncts to the social sciences. We trust social invention,
therefore, to legislators and other amateurs. What brought this to mind
was his wish for an organization creature which does not exist. With
regard to the creation of such an organization, I find myself in agree-
ment with Dr. Coates—we have to try several. We do not have
enough theory or experience to permit us to create the ideal assessment
organization.

I agree with Professor Bereano that we have discussed our prob-
lems in elitist terms, but I would submit that it is both justifiable and
proper. This is because "elitist problems" are closely related to a middle
class bias. Class has been thought to be one of the more useful concepts
used by sociology. I would say that by most standard measures, or
criteria of class membership, the United States is 85 percent or at least
80 percent middle class. This leads me to the conclusion that there
is no such thing as the culture of poverty. The poor, as Dr. Bereano
noted, share our middle class values and, they develop mechanisms to
help them cope with and endure their poverty while they aspire to
middle class status. Thus, to say we have a middle class bias, seems to
admit that we are talking about the majority of the American population
and, the problem becomes one of getting everybody into the game.

Finally, one other comment that I wanted to make is that we
do have a vehicle of communication between those lawyers and social
scientists who want it, and that is Law and Society Review. I would also
suggest a Law and Technology Review, which would, again, not try to
reach every lawyer or every technologist, but only those who want to
cross the bridge or stand in the middle of it. It seems to me that there
is room for such a journal.