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THE PATHOLOGICAL MODEL AND THE SCHOOLS:
A CRITICAL INQUIRY

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
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* * * * *

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FIELDS OF STUDY

History of Education and Social Criticism
of American Education
Curriculum Theory
Reformation and Renaissance History

Bernard Mehl
Paul Klohr
Wilhelm Pauck
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**VITA** ........................................... ii

**Chapter**

1. **INTRODUCTION: THE PATHOLOGICAL MODEL AS AN IDEOLOGY** ........................................... 1

2. **THE PURITAN COVENANT: THE POLITICAL ROOTS OF PATHOLOGY** ........................................... 18

3. **PROPERTY, FREEDOM AND THE DEPRAVITY OF MAN** ........................................... 51

4. **THE ERA OF IDEOLOGY: SOCIAL DARWINISM AND REFORM DARWINISM** ........................................... 91

5. **CULTURAL DEPRIVATION THEORY: PATHOLOGY AND THE SCHOOL** ........................................... 143

6. **CONCLUSION: BEYOND IDEOLOGY** ........................................... 167

**BIBLIOGRAPHY** ........................................... 174
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THE PATHOLOGICAL MODEL AS AN IDEOLOGY

In The Souls of Black Folk, William E. B. DuBois, essayist and sociologist, claimed that white America has made it a practice to ignore the beauty to be found in the black experience and has, as though wearing blinders, seen only the pathological; broken homes, vice and the despair of poverty. According to DuBois, the racism so generic to the American experience has invaded our very view of the world denying to us the ability to trust in the essential beauty of the human condition we all share.¹

The question that immediately arises is the validity of DuBois' assessment of American life. Was he merely voicing the paranoia one black man felt toward the larger society, or did he rightly gauge the depth of our alienation. If correct, does this insight apply only to point out a particular aberration, one fault in an otherwise sound value system, or does it provide a key to a critique of a whole society?

Jean Paul Sartre addressed himself to just this question in the essay Anti Semite and Jew. In Sartre's view the racist does not become such because of some bad experience with a Jew or Negro. Nor is prejudice the result of a nasty attitude in the air which the individual

learns from his family and friends. Hatred of the Negro or the Jew is a stance toward life. It is a choice which represents a hatred of life itself. The racist does not hate the Jew, says Sartre, and love his wife, his dog, his friends. He is a man who hates everything and he is a man who is afraid:

Not of the Jews to be sure, but of himself, of his own consciousness, of his liberty, his instincts, of his responsibilities, of solitariness, of change, of society, and of the world -- of everything except the Jews.

"Anti-Semitism," says Sartre, "in short, is fear of the human condition."
The fear of the human condition is focused in the Jew or Negro, for he seems to represent the difference and solitariness of existence which cannot be further incorporated. In Hannah Arendt's words, "The alien is a frightening symbol of the fact of difference as such, of individuality as such, and indicates these realms in which man cannot change . . ."
The qualities of the Negro or Jew become necessary reflections of a changeless inner nature, a basic depravity. The evil of the Jew or Negro is not individual -- it is generic. Consequently, racism is not just a sociological phenomenon -- it is also a metaphysical one. The

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3Ibid., p. 21.

4Ibid., p. 54.

5Ibid.


7Ibid.
racist is a Manichaean. That is, he believes in a dual world split between good and evil.\(^8\) For the Manichaean, redemption from evil is an impossibility. Goodness and evil are locked in immortal combat, a combat which can end only when one is the victor. This is the point where the racist reveals himself to be not an anomaly, but an integral part of the larger society. Because race hatred has nothing to do with the object of its hatred, the stance toward life it embodies is rooted in the very structure of a society. The racist shares a common suspicion about the nature of reality with the rest of his fellows, even those who consider themselves quite liberal in matters of race. This common structure, at least in Europe and America, is a Manichaean view of human existence.

Only two ideologies were able to gain general acceptance at the end of the 19th century and have been able to continue influence to such a degree that it is virtually impossible to find anyone who does not accept one: The ideology which conceives history as a struggle of classes and the ideology which views history as a natural struggle between races.\(^9\) Though each of these ideologies appeals to a different sort of man for different reasons, they both share a common Manichaean view of the world. The rise of these ideologies would have been inconceivable without the almost universal belief in a dual world of good and evil.

\(^8\)Sartre, Anti Semite and Jew, pp. 43-48.

\(^9\)Arendt, Origins of Totalitarianism, p. 159.
To these two great historical ideologies we may add a third. Neither so overtly political in nature as these, nor so centered in particular aspects of man's social life, it nevertheless is built upon a Manichaeian world view. Like the other ideologies, it claims to hold the key to the problems of the universe, the hidden knowledge necessary to save man (and it is this claim that separates an ideology from an opinion). This third ideology may be termed the pathological, or medical model. This is not to deny that a pathological view of human problems was held as one opinion among many for centuries. However, as with the other ideologies, this model of existence could gain ascendency as an ideology only with the credence afforded it through science and the promise that science would eventually lead to ways of destroying the pathology.

Perhaps the most controversy about the medical model, or pathological model, has been in the area of psychiatry. Critics such as Thomas Szasz have identified the medical model as an ideological interpretation of what he likes to call 'problems in living.' By calling mental problems an illness, Szasz says, the psychiatric patient is labeled as having a defect that renders him incapable of responsible action. Since no physical cause can be demonstrated that results in the symptoms of mental illness, there is no basis for assuming that psychiatric

10 Ibid.

problems are of the same order as a physical disease. That there is such a thing as mental illness, is a belief no more scientific than any other myth.\textsuperscript{12} The implications of Szasz's ideas will be developed more fully later, but for now we have a more fundamental problem.

The problem is that the medical or pathological model is one of those vague ideas, bandied about but never really defined. Because of this, its meaning is confused and we find ourselves not quite sure of just exactly what it is. Such confusion is to some extent unavoidable, for as an ideology it is ever adaptable and refuses to be pinned down to a specific set of criteria which would allow its truth or falsity to be once and for all judged. In the words of D. A. Begelman:

\begin{quote}
The expression 'medical model' may be taken to mean at least a dozen independent things, any one of which is assumed to imply the other eleven. Clinicians think that if you dispose of one; you've disposed of them all. The trouble with this is that after one masters adequate arguments against one aspect of the medical model, a second, already pronounced dead raises its ugly head.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

Begelman goes on to suggest that at least three propositions have been identified with the medical model in psychiatry: A) The cause of deviant behavior is some organic defect in the nervous system. B) Deviants are not responsible for their behavior. C) Deviants should be treated 'as though sick.'\textsuperscript{14} Each of these propositions is unclear in definition,

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\textsuperscript{12}ibid.
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\textsuperscript{14}ibid., p. 48.
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and even more confusing, each implies the other. For example, if organic defect, then non-responsibility; if non-responsibility, then an organic defect; if a defect then treat as sick; if treat as sick, than an organic defect; and so on.  

In the face of such a tangle we may well assume that a working definition must accept the confusion not as a crudity of thinking that needs to be refined, but as a part of the nature of the phenomenon itself. The confusion and vagueness of the medical model is an unavoidable part of its nature because it is not a scientific theory at all, but a metaphysical theory: The medical model is the application of Manichaeanism to human experience. Through scientific study it promises to find the particular social, psychological or pathogenic agents which cause evil, and root them out. As with other ideologies, it is not really scientific; it merely uses the modern belief in the power of science to give credence to its own claims about the world's being a battleground between the forces of good and evil.

The classical critique against Manichaeanism is that of St. Augustine. Augustine denied the Manichaean claim that the world is divided into two powerful spheres, one good and one evil, on the basis that it posited two Gods -- one good and one evil. The Judaic-Christian idea of one God of goodness alone, made a Manichaean dualism heretical. This, of course, made the problem of evil a knotty one; for if God is all powerful, how could He allow evil to exist if He did not will it?

\[15\] Ibid.
If He did not will it then does not its existence prove that He is not all powerful? Augustine argued that indeed evil does not exist substantially. Evil is merely the turning away from good, of its privation.  

There is no efficient cause of evil because it is itself only the manifestation of a lack, as darkness is only the lack of light and not a positive state of its own. To fight evil, Augustine implies, is to believe that it is a real threat to the good. As such it attributes a faith to the power of evil itself. The crusader against evil, from Ralph Nader to the local movie censer, can fight it only to the degree that he disbelieves in the power of the good. The Manichaean is drawn to evil, observes Sartre: "His business is with evil, his duty is to unmask it, to denounce it, to measure its extent." As the psychoanalysts tell us, the obsession with an 'idea fixe' is a love relationship and this is what the Manichaean feels toward evil. The need to count up statistics of it, to collect anecdotes and to warn against it reveals the intimacy the Manichaean feels toward evil, not his denial of it.

There are two theories about the way in which ideologies develop and are assimilated into the world view of the masses of people. One sees ideology as a conscious tool, shaped by self interest. As such, 

17 Ibid., p. 385.  
18 Sartre, Anti Semite and Jew, p. 45.  
19 Ibid.
It is created by a deliberate distortion of facts. It is significant that this theory of ideology is the one most often put forward by members of opposing ideological camps. It views the world in terms of conspiracy, and therefore seeks to act in terms of conspiracy. Examples would include the internal struggle in Russia between Stalin and Trotsky, or Mao's lately revealed struggle with the forces of Lin Piao. This understanding of ideology is itself strictly Manichaean. It sees the struggle between competing ideologies as one between irreducible forces of good and evil. Consequently, propaganda is seen to be a good for one group while an evil for others. For example, we sometimes hear democracy must fight communism and therefore must resort to propaganda to counter the propaganda of the enemy. What this view fails to realize is that propaganda is always and everywhere the same, regardless of its source, because it is a technique, and as such, universal.

Those who believe that ideology is a conscious tool of special interests are not confined to political activists. Consumerism that demands truth in labeling and environmentalists engaged in fighting greedy business interests, also uphold this view.

The second theory of ideology is in a way very similar to the Augustinian notion of evil. Its most important proponent is Karl Mannheim and his theory of false consciousness. Because of changes in

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history the individual's norms, modes of thought and theories may no longer be in accordance with the reality of a situation, and may even serve to keep him from adjusting. In this case, these old patterns degenerate into an ideology whose function is to conceal the real meaning of the individual's conduct, even from himself. Similarly, Clifford Geertz has postulated the idea he calls social psychological strain. He suggests that when the balance of a society is lost through a breakdown of tradition or through some other social upheaval, the attempt to reassert an equilibrium may result in the formation of an ideology. The root cause of the rise of ideology is not a group of conspiritors, argues Geertz, but lies in the "chronic maladjustment of society." Social life is never free from contradiction and frustration, such as between politics and liberty, stability and change, goals and values, and so on. The ideological pattern that arises out of this confusion may take on any of a number of forms but its cause lies in the inability to find an orientation or a usable model to make sense of existence. By way of example, Geertz points to Camus' idea that the terror of the French revolution was precipitated not by the greater social insecurity of that time over any other, but because the fundamental balancing

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24 Ibid., p. 203.
25 Ibid., p. 205.
mechanism if the entire social order was overthrown with the murder of
the King. The King was killed by the philosophers spiritually long
before he was disposed of physically in the name of the social contract.²⁶
To make that contract a reality as a basis for the social order, however,
was not such an easy transition. Out of the tremendous turmoil and
destruction that enveloped France arose Napoleon, who, if not providing
order, at least made use of the confusion to build an empire.

To put it another way, a society which is in a state of flux can
avoid ideology only by establishing limits. In The Rebel, Camus at-
ttempted to find those limits through the realization of solidarity among
men. Beginning with the problem of murder, Camus came to a sense of
the limits necessary for solidarity. The limits were established by
the refusal to accept either the murder of the revolutionists or the
murder of the conservative upholder of official history.²⁷ Camus
realized that without absolutes of God and tradition we could keep our
sanity only by keeping choice alive, and that choice could be kept alive
only by denying Ivan Karmazov's cry that all things are possible. Be-
yond a certain point we must not go, for to one side lies terrorism and
to the other dehumanizing passivity. Genuine choice demands that ten-
sions between free will and determinism, genes and environment, in-
dividualism and social responsibility, be kept open and never decided.

²⁶Ibid., p. 220.
²⁷Albert Camus, The Rebel, Trans. Anthony Bower (New York:
As Bernard Mehl has written, if one side of the debate leads to a "brave new world," the other leads to "1984." Ideology of the right or left denies the necessity of limits and instead promises to provide the knowledge needed to solve social maladjustment once and for all.

It is not our purpose to argue whether the pathological model is a legitimate concept of physical medicine, though as we shall see, its credibility has been called into question. Nor is it our purpose to argue whether the pathological model is a valid concept outside of physical medicine, as Szasz has done in the area of psychiatry. Szasz has not realized that as a doctrine of man, a change in labels will not change the way in which the phenomenon is viewed. "Protective retaliatory strikes" are still bombing raids in Vietnam and those who "pass away" are still quite dead. To escape the dilemma by renaming "mental illness" as "problems in living," obscures the real issue; for there would still be an army of experts spending their time helping people still seen as debilitated. The issue is that one Weltanschauung has claimed a scientific verification when it has not done so in fact. Because the existence of pathological agents has not been proven to cause disease, or to cause mental illness or account for failure to read, it is an act of bad faith to simply assume that explanation. As one view of the nature of things it must stand in open competition with other explanations of apparent dis-integration.

Karen Horney has suggested that a lack of balance in a society may result in a cultural neurosis. Fear of some genuine threat, she says, can leave a society feeling constantly in danger. At the same time, where there is no genuine basis for fear, a society may become the victim of anxiety.²⁹ Anxiety is a state of fear with no basis for it. A man may have a deep anxiety of developing cancer. It does no good to tell him that it is a baseless anxiety, for he will respond that he knows of a person who actually did develop cancer. A woman is frightened that she will be choked by food so she refuses to eat solid foods. It does no good to tell her that her fear is groundless, for she will be able to find a story in a newspaper telling of a woman who has choked on a bite of food.³⁰ Similarly, an ideology of pathology is sure that failure to read, or to socially adjust, must be caused by some fault -- physical or mental -- in the individual. It does no good to respond that such need not be the case, for the ideologue will find examples that were indeed the result of some malady. As in the case of individual neurosis, the only way of separating anxiety from a real concern is by a sense of proportion.

That some percentage of a population may suffer from a pathological disorder is a legitimate possibility. One can find examples of individuals who appear to be incapable of performing because of a physical or genetic defect. Of course, we constantly are surprised to learn that such individuals sometimes overcome what were thought to be

³⁰Ibid., p. 8.
rigidly-fixed boundaries of capability; but to argue that there may be no pathology as such (meaning that there are no lurking germs with no function but to cause harm, no rapist with fangs, no school teacher bent upon systematically destroying the souls of her charges) ends as a contemporary argument of how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. Not that the question is unimportant, far from it; it is of such importance that we may humbly admit that it is far too big of a question for us to settle. It does not appear likely that we will disband our hospitals, sanitariums, and prisons in order to put it to the test. We can, however, approach the problem through a more modest quest. By establishing the limits that are able to give us a reasonable sense of proportion, we may find our balance and escape falling prey to ideological thinking. If whole populations are defined as victims of a cultural pathology as has occurred in recent urban education theory, we should immediately become wary. If children in large numbers are being drugged for a disease called hyperkinesis which has no known organic cause; and if, as increasingly is the case, other reading and behavioral problems are defined pathologically as minimal brain dysfunction, again without any organic basis, we may suspect a need to reassert limits of proportion.31

The establishment of limits that keep alive the tension between nature and nurture, free will and determinacy, and individuality and

social responsibility, demands a trust in the essential oneness and validity of the human experience despite its absurdity.\textsuperscript{32} Such an acceptance of the human condition is incompatable with a Manichaean dualism of good and evil, pathogenic and healthful, as categories of existence. For this reason the limits can never be fixed but must always be pushed farther to include more and more of life.

If we are not yet caught in an ideological trap built of our own mistrust of our own freedom, certainly the anxious tenor of our society places us close to it. The overarching concern about health and medical problems, the increased use of therapy in the psychiatrist's office and the school, our insurance mania, and our continuing belief that our police and prisons constitute the thin blue line keeping us from self-destruction, speak of a view of the world that is something less than humanistic. Indeed, if Ellul's understanding of technique is correct -- that it is the denial of all limits in the name of efficiency\textsuperscript{33} -- then our technical civilization is built upon a Manichaean model of the universe. The dualism of the Manichaean demands that limits be set aside in the name of a higher end. That end is the solving of human problems. Technique, and a society that believes in technique, is committed to the idea that whatever serves to solve those problems most efficiently must be implemented.\textsuperscript{34} Perhaps this is one


\textsuperscript{34}Jacques Ellul, \textit{The Technological Society}, p. 138.
reason why we have so little empathy for those who go against their own best interests by refusing the benefits of our hospitals, schools, and social services. Yet, human problems somehow elude the neat solutions of technocrats and social workers and stubbornly maintain themselves as part of life itself. In the end the planner must be executioner because the final solution to human problems of poverty, illiteracy, race, and inefficiency must be death, literal or figurative.\(^{35}\)

That the Jew or Black discovers he is being killed literally by the bigot and spiritually by the social democrat\(^{36}\) reveals more than the dynamics of racism. It also gives an insight into the meaning of modern history for all men. It lays bare the dynamics of a Weltanshauung that argues for a dualism in human affairs. It is this dualism which constitutes the pathological model.

In the following chapters I have attempted to trace the rise of the pathological model as an ideological answer to the problem of evil in human affairs. Rather than search indiscriminately for instances of such thinking, I have confined myself to treating selected historical events that appear to throw light on the phenomenon as a whole. Chapter Two begins this process by focusing upon the Puritan experiment with its concept of the depravity of man. Relying heavily upon Perry Miller and Edmund Morgan and the writings of John Winthrop and Cotton Mather, I have looked at the relation of the concept of human depravity to the

\(^{35}\) Mehl, *Classical Educational Ideals*, p. 6.

covenant theology. I believe that the deep-seated dualism of Puritanism is evident in their pathological view of human nature. Surprisingly, their pathological view seems to be the result of the political need to separate the good from the bad, rather than a result of the religious doctrine of man's depravity. Using Mannheim's sociology of knowledge approach, I related Cotton Mather's discovery of the pathological nature of disease to the Puritan world view. This discovery had the same origin as the persecution of religious dissenters and witches, despite our tendency to view one as enlightenment and the other as dark superstition.

Taking Perry Miller's thesis that the men who most deeply believed in and acted on the idea of innate depravity were not the clergy but the lawyers, I traced the political nature of the pathological view through the rise of the legal profession. A solution to the American dilemma of freedom, the law was built upon the belief that only respect for property rights could keep man's depravity at bay. The great wave of immigrants beginning in the 1840's created great fears for the safety of property in a land filling with a foreign urban population. Common schools were seen as a way of insuring respect for property which was needed to keep society from disintegrating. Meanwhile the problem of slavery was coming to a head. The lawyers were forced to support it for fear that abrogation of property rights in that matter would undermine the entire legal institution. Forced to choose between law and human freedom, America chose to reject law. The Civil War was the proof of that choice. The American romance with the law had ended. The schools took on a life of its own, replacing the law as the
center of society.

Chapter Four is concerned with the rise of the two most powerful ideologies of the 19th century: The ideology of economic class and the ideology of race. Social Darwinism and Reform Darwinism expressed the moral relativism of the right and left. Both accepted the same premises about the world. Both agreed, for example, that the immigrants crowding the cities were inferior. One explained it by nature and the other by nurture. In doing so the ideological nature of all thought was accepted. Eric Goldman's *Rendezvous with Destiny* was particularly helpful in pointing this out. Through the educational writings of Dewey and efficiency-conscious educators writing in the *NEA Journal* and *School and Society* I found the same tendency in progressive education. The result was an orchestration of medical, sociological and psychological techniques for those who failed to perform.

In Chapter Five, wishing to see if educators today are caught in an ideology of pathology, I surveyed the literature in urban education. I found almost complete agreement that the poor are members of a separate culture and that the culture is inferior. The views expressed about this culture of poverty were not only very far from Oscar Lewis' use of this concept but also were of such a nature as to be judged unreservedly pathological.

Finally, Chapter six, draws the strands of the dissertation as a whole together into a final overview.
CHAPTER II

THE PURITAN COVENANT: THE POLITICAL ROOTS OF PATHOLOGY

If we are to seek out the roots of the ideology of pathology in America, the logical place to begin is with the Puritans -- those dour somber-faced and somber-dressed fanatics of New England who made the depravity of man the basis for their view of the world, those severe critics of life whom Emerson called "The great grim earnest men who solemnized the heyday of their strength by planting New England."^1

Unfortunately, or fortunately, such a group never existed. The Puritans never were all that somber-faced or somber-dressed, for they held that enjoyment of, thought not slavery to, the things of this world was all to the good. Far from being harsh masters of their children they tended to be permissive, seeking to win their children through love rather than punishment.2 As for the doctrine of the depravity of man, it should be kept in mind that it was not an invention of the Puritans. It was an Augustinian notion which was always present in western Christendom and had gained renewed influence through the reformation. As was pointed out in Chapter One, Augustine held this position but did not believe that evil was substantive. Thus, the doctrine of the depravity

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^2 Edmund Morgan, The Puritan Family, Trustees of the Public Library, (Boston, 1944), p. 58.
of man did not necessarily lead to cynicism concerning man. Instead, as in Augustine, it could lead to a religious solidarity among people who saw themselves as being part of the same condition as the highest and lowest men around them. It therefore suggested mercy rather than judgment, greater introspection upon one's own failures and a less damning view of the foibles of others.3

If the Puritans did fall into an ideology of pathology, and if that fall cannot be traced to some streak of nastiness in their collective character or to a religious doctrine of man's depravity, what then were the causes? At least two factors are apparent. First, in the Puritan world view, as opposed to the Augustinian, evil was seen as substantive. Second, and logically necessary to the first, while Augustine strictly separated the city of God from the city of man (the spiritual from the political) the Puritans welded the two together. The belief in the power of evil and the resulting politicalization of religious doctrine served as the basis for the rise of an ideology of pathology in America.

The beginnings of the process were located in the very decision to come to America. The simple choice to leave Europe changed, or reflected a change, in the relation of the individual to the events and problems in which he was engaged. To decide to leave home, neighbors, family and country was to accept the impossibility of redeeming the

3Augustine, City of God, p. 365.
society in the old world. It was to set oneself outside of the fortunes and fates of other men and to escape to a solitary refuge. In Cotton Mather's words, "They flew from the deprivations of Europe to the American stand."\(^4\)

In response to the query of why the colonists came to America, D. H. Lawrence wrote it was to escape, to get away:

To get away -- that most simple of motives.
To get away. Away from what. In the long run, away from themselves away from everything. That's why most people have come to America and still do come.\(^5\)

To get away from everything they are and have been.\(^5\)

A man does not separate himself from a civilized land of town and farm for a primeval virginal wilderness without believing that he is fleeing decadence for a fresh new life. The decision to leave is at the same time a judgment of the depravity of the society at large. When the Separatists left England for Holland then Plymouth Colony, they made no secret of the fact that this was the reason. The Puritans, too, were highly conscious that a decision to flee to New England amounted to just such a judgment. In principle they had been opposed to the Separatist act because, they argued, it denied Christian charity and arrogated a righteousness that belonged to God alone.\(^6\) The Puritans held that though the churches of England were filled with hypocritical ritual and


unregenerate members, they were nevertheless churches with real and potentially real Christians and should not be abandoned. The Puritan had to remain in the world but not of it. The suffering that this brought with it was the price of the Puritan's mission in the world.

In Edmund Morgan's words:

The obligation was not simply a trial imposed on saints in order to test their strength. It was a recognition that all men were brothers in sin and that there was no escape in this life from the evils that the monks in one way and the separatists in another were trying to put behind them.\(^7\)

But, as persecution intensified and as conditions of the spiritual life seemed to deteriorate, the line between the Puritans and the Separatists began to waver. The possibility of fleeing to the new world began to be considered in earnest. Since the wrath of God would soon descend, it seemed a folly to sit still and wait for the suffering that others were bringing upon the land. Why should they bear the punishment for wrongs for which they were not responsible? Other Puritans objected that they were needed at home to do a work that was already underway and to which they owed a commitment.\(^8\)

Ob.: We have feared a judgment a great while but yet we are safe, it weare better therefore to stay til it come, and either we may flie then, or if we bee ourtaken in it we may well content ourselves to suffer with such a church as ours is:

Ans: It is likely that this consideration made the churches beyond the seas as the Pallatinate, Rochell

\(^7\)Ibid., p. 32.

etc. to sitt still at home, and not looke out for shelter, while they might have found it; but the woeful spectacle of theire ruine may teach us more wisdome to avoide the plague when it is forseen and not to terry as they did till it overtake us. 9

John Winthrop, who was to be the first governor of Plymouth Colony, and his company were not fleeing to the new world merely to escape persecution. They had come to the conclusion that it was no longer possible to live and work in England without becoming corrupted. Among the reasons for leaving, drawn up and circulated by Winthrop were: 1) the impossibility of carrying on the arts and trades without the aid of dishonest methods, 2) the perversion and corruption of their children by evil example, 3) overpopulation, and 4) the coming of the judgment of God from which America would be a hiding place. 10

Still, Winthrop was uncomfortable with the idea that they were merely fleeing the corruption of England as had the Separatists before them. He added that it would be a great missionary work for the Indians, and since the church was universal, they would not be weakening the church at home but be building the universal church more strongly. Since it was all part of the same enterprise, it would not be a remission of their Christian duty to work in New England. 11 Whether this last was a serious reason or not, the Puritans who came to America had no great certainty of their mission. They carried in their hearts the

9 Ibid., p. 142.
10 Ibid., pp. 114-117.
11 Ibid.
most profound doubts about what they were leaving and why. Under it all lurked the desire to find a way of remaining Englishmen while escaping the coming judgment of God upon the backsliding and evil generation that was England. Though the Puritans attempted to avoid facing the meaning of their removal from England they sensed rightly that it was based upon a pathological view of the human condition. The story of the Puritan experiment in America was in large part a struggle between the deep-seated pathological view of man and the attempt to escape the damning consequences of that view.

The working solution to the problem was to hedge all bets. The trip to America was not a rejection of the homeland, but a temporary withdrawal undertaken to save it. They would build "a city upon the hill," a light in the wilderness for all to see. They would undertake a covenant with God. This concept of covenant became the central idea of American Puritanism. According to the Puritan creed, a regenerated sinner was automatically a member of a covenant of grace in which he agreed to a legal contract with God. In return for his fealty, God would abide by the rules of the covenant, saving his soul. The covenant also, however, could be social. God could enter into a contract with a group of saved individuals. These men, even if only a minority of the population, could stand for the terms of the contract. So long as they held up their end of the covenant by carrying out a specifically enunciated political policy, God would bind himself to the terms of the

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covenant, blessing the fortunes of the entire society. Such a national covenant was, according to Perry Miller, the logical extension of the covenant of grace, in which salvation was seen as the agreement of contractual terms between God and man. While each saint stood individually before God in the covenant of grace, they stood as a group in the social covenant. Though all of the members of the society were not gracious, they were held to the contract agreements by force of law. The matter was analogous to a declaration of war in which all citizens of a country may not be agreed. It is nevertheless a national act in which all participate whether or not they wish to.

The idea of a covenant, a relationship between God and a people in which God would look with favor upon them if they would in turn live according to his commandments, did not originate with the Puritans. Medieval cities before the reformation saw their relation to God in this way. Pestilence and drought, for example, were seen in terms of a particular city's failure to fulfill the covenant. Like the Puritans the remedy was found in returning to righteousness through acts of penance. But the fortunes, good and bad, were visited upon the town as a whole and not to be escaped or denied individually. The covenant idea in the medieval city was an acceptance of the human condition in

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14 Ibid., p. 21.
which all shared. It was based upon the interconnectedness of all lives within that city -- from the burgher to the thief.\textsuperscript{15}

The Puritan concept of the covenant while very similar, especially as it developed in America, was shaped by the Calvinist preoccupation with individual election. Though the Puritans maintained the medieval Christian notion that the individual could not separate himself from the fortunes of the rest of society, they also believed that only some members of the society were potentially redeemable: The great number of men were not of the elect. The tension that this created was enormous. As we have seen in the case of Winthrop, the Puritan found himself neither quite capable of washing his hands of his society nor of throwing in his lot with theirs. The answer, as we have seen, was to hold those strands together by a compromise. The Puritans would leave England, yet continue to aid her by the sanctity of their lives. Meanwhile, they would be safe in America from the coming wrath of God.

It was a shaky compromise and one that could be maintained only if the Puritans could indeed prove themselves to be an elect, not given to the degeneracy that characterized Europe. The rightness of their act of separation could be justified only if they could lead more exemplary lives than their English brethren. They must do nothing less than build the kingdom of God on earth in a land untouched by the corruption of England. Having built that kingdom their claim of election would be

proven true, and the reformation of the world could begin. A failure to achieve this aim, however, would be proof of their own degeneracy. It was a great and ambitious undertaking to join a covenant with God. Failure to perform the duties entailed would mean disaster in the wilderness. Halfway across the ocean on board the Arrabella, John Winthrop explained the great risk involved in their venture:

Now if the Lord shall please to hear us and bring us in peace to the place we desire then hath he ratified his covenant and sealed our commission, [AND] will expect a strict performance of the articles contained in it, but if we shall neglect the observ- 

As Winthrop's sermon implies and subsequent Puritan actions showed, the covenant was social and political as well as religious. As such, it did not define sin as some primordial, mystical cancer of the very structures of the soul, as had Augustine, Luther, and even Calvin. Rather, sin was defined as a "bond broken," a violation of a contract. Its nature, as Miller says, was of a punishable crime rather than

16 Mather, Magnalia Christi Americana, p. 27.


an infinite sin. Seen in this light, he says further, the punishment takes the form of infliction of a judicial sentence, rather than a deterioration of the mind and body. Sin for the Puritan was located in the failure to live up to a legal agreement. This was the great sin that man inherited from Adam’s fall. Original sin was not viewed as a cancerous growth, destroying the trustworthiness of the individual’s physical and spiritual faculties. Instead it was a legal imputation:

There being a compact and covenant between God and him, that if Adam stood, all his seed should stand with him; but if he fell then that all that were borne of him should by vertue of that covenant, compact, or agreement have his sinne imputed to them, and so should be corrupted, as hee was, and die the death.\footnote{Ibid., p. 400.}

The Puritans, deeply influenced by the need to view their errand in political terms, saw questions of sin and salvation legally and ethically rather than mystically or religiously. Far from denying the potentiality of man to exercise free will, sound judgment and moral behavior, their covenant theology was dedicated and built upon this very premise. It should not be surprising that American Puritanism believed in free will and the rational process and the possibility of moral society; for without such beliefs the act of transplanting themselves to America would have been fruitless, and their errand a futile and meaningless gesture. At the same time, they found this ethical voluntarism a perfect support for the doctrine of election.

\footnote{Ibid., p. 401.}
The doctrine of election held that all men are damned, but God chooses to save some men, while consigning the rest to the hell they deserve. It was a man's agreement to accept this grace that sealed the covenant of grace discussed above. Because the Puritans believed that faith was a matter of plain logic, that the mind was unimpaired by the fall and quite capable of understanding and accepting truth, the reason for failure to believe must be rooted in a perversity of the will. Only God through his grace could return the soul to its original pristine condition, removing the perversity of man's refusal to see the truth. Thus, the Puritans saw their system as pre-eminently logical, the very soul of rationality. Regeneration through grace allowed one to see that rationality and to understand, in Perry Miller's words, "The solutions to all difficulties not only theological but cosmological, emotional and (most happily) political."  

So long as the doctrine of election served as a purely religious idea it tended to suggest that despite appearances anyone might be saved. Neither good works, noble birth, nor religious feelings were proof of being saved, but conversely neither were lying, cheating, murdering, or whoring proof of being damned. When Erasmus retorted in horror to Luther's belief in election, saying, "But then some good men may not be saved," Luther answered, "Yes, but think of all the rascals who will be saved and who otherwise would not have been."  

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21 Miller, Colony to Province, p. 21.

religious mind, "What was good for the rascals was good for the country." But for a political mind, the overarching aim was to find a way to separate the good from the bad, to prevent the rascals from destroying the cohesion of the society. Whatever may have followed from the effects of the "frontier experience" in New England, one certain need was to think politically as well as religiously. The first act before disembarking was the signing of the compact. Having left England physically and spiritually, the Puritans changed their relation to the political state. Their alliance was no longer to England but solely to the furtherance of the success of the New Jerusalem. They did, as Mather writes in the *Magnalia Christi Americana*, "Combine into a body politic, and solemnly engage submission and obedience to the laws, ordinances, acts, Constitutions and officers that should from time to time be thought most convenient for the general good of the colony." 23 The terms of the social covenant required that the business of the state be prosecuted with honesty and responsibility and that vice, crime and heresy be controlled.

Thus, we see that the Puritan system was all inclusive. Besides explaining exquisitely the nature of reality, it served to justify the act of separation from England and the political and ecclesiastical control of the colony by only church members though they were a distinct minority. As we shall see, however, the balance of the religious and political represented by the covenant could not be maintained long. The decision to leave England because it was too corrupt, and the decisions

that then followed from it, forced the Puritan mind and culture into
greater and greater contradiction. The persecution of the Antinomians
from 1636-38, of the Quakers from 1656-65, and the witch hunts in 1692,
are excellent examples of this contradiction. They show the change of
thought in American Puritanism from the English and the relation of
ideology to a society which is insecure because of internal contradic-
tion or strain.

English Puritanism espoused the rights of conscience and the
error of forcing conformity. As a sect opposed to the established order,
their claim to legitimacy rested upon a social commitment to what they
took to be God's law, derived through personal, inward, knowledge gained
through piety. Social discipline was to be based upon the freedom of
the individual conscience instead of being imposed through established
English law, noble blood, or patriarchy. In America, however, the
Puritans were in control, not in a fight to gain it. Individualism
meant anarchy and dissolution, and was therefore rejected for collect-
ivism. They could not allow the building of the kingdom to be jeopard-
ized by the individualistic anarchy of people like Roger Williams and
Ann Hutchinson whom the Puritans called Antinomian. Antinomianism
held that the conscience was free and that no political or religious
law was necessary for the saved individual. John Cotton, the eminent
Puritan preacher, could state a position very close to this in England
and be quite orthodox, but on his arrival in America find that he was

\[24\]
Michael Walzer, Revolution of The Saints, (Cambridge: Harvard
University, 1965), p. 57.
on the edge of heresy because Ann Hutchinson had been quoting him.

Similarly, the Quakers whose doctrine of the inner light suggested an idea close to that espoused by Ann Hutchinson found that they were considered a horrendous threat to the colony's spiritual and political health. As with the Antinomians, no one was very clear as to what the issue was that made them so dangerous. They could not be identified by their theology as being significantly different from the orthodox. They were quite well tolerated by their English counterparts across the ocean, but in New England they were pilleried, banished and hanged. According to Kai Erikson, the Antinomian and Quaker threat was not theological but political. Their refusal to join in the collective aspirations of the colony, the refusal to place their hearts and minds within the social structure, was the crime. The Puritan experiment was no longer a reformation but an administration. Any failure to conform was viewed not as an act of individual integrity but as a vicious attack upon the covenant and therefore motivated by the devil. The important fact, however, is that looking back we can see that the danger perceived by the Puritans in these groups was not an alien idea reacted to in fear and superstition but a reflection of the basic values and beliefs that they themselves held. The persecution was based upon the impossible contradiction between the individualistic, spiritual elements that had

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26 Ibid, pp. 22-23.
formed the Puritan movement and the collectivistic, political elements needed to survive as a state. The "deviant" Antinomians and Quakers were, in fact, not deviant at all. They shared the same core values as their tormentors and were persecuted for precisely that reason. Furthermore, both groups manifested a thirst for martyrdom that suggests a desire to join the larger society. As Merton pointed out, the breaking of social rules may easily reflect acceptance of them. The desire for prison or other punishment is the proof of the respect the "deviant" holds for the society. The famous witch hysteria shows this even more clearly.

The witch trials grew out of a case of possession in several girls who spent their afternoons in Reverend Samuel Paris' kitchen with a slave named Tituba. Two of the youngest of the girls began to show strange behavior. They screamed and fell into grotesque convulsions, sometimes crawling on hands and knees barking like dogs. The hysteria began to spread throughout the village of Salem. All over the village young girls were screaming and groveling on the ground. When the physician was unable to help, it was concluded that the girls must have been bewitched by the devil. Three women were accused of the crime, including the slave Tituba. She admitted using magic and witchcraft and once more implicated the other accused women in her confession. The girls then


began to tell of others who had done them harm. More trials were brought before the judges and more innocent people were hanged. As the charges became more and more bold, and important men began to be accused, the credulity of the community began to be shaken. Finally, Governor Phips decided to dismiss all but the most solid cases and eventually pardoned all of those who were found guilty. The witchcraft hysteria had ended, about one year after it had arisen.

The witchcraft hysteria was not born out of superstitions or fear of the mentally ill. Nor was it created out of religious fanaticism or of the spite of one individual for a neighbor. It was created out of the very concern of the Puritans to act rationally and objectively. It was possible for the simple reason that the Puritans believed that there was such a thing as witchcraft. H. R. Trevor-Roper, writing of the 16th century witchcraft craze in Europe explains:

The 16th century clergy and lawyers were rationalists. They believed in a rational Aristotelian universe, and from the detailed identity of witch's confessions they logically deduced their objective truth. To the "patrons of witches" who argued that witches were "aged persons of weak brains," whose melancholy motives were exploited by the devil, the Reverend William Perkins could reply with confidence, that if it were so, each would have a different fantasy; but in fact, men of learning had shown "that all witches throughout Europe are of like carriage and behavior in their examinations and conviction." Such international consistency, he argued, was evidence of central organization and truthful testimony.

29 Ibid., p. 150.
30 Ibid., p. 152.
The records of the Salem witch trials are in accord with Trevor-Roper's comments above. It was not torture-elicited confessions which convinced skeptical Puritan community leaders, but the spontaneity of confession, and the similarity of detail in these confessions. Such overwhelming evidence was to be found, Mather writes, "... that some of the most judicious and yet vehement opposers of the notions then in vogue, publicly declared, 'Had they themselves been on the bench, they could not have acquitted them. ..."32

If we in the 20th century no longer believe in witchcraft, it is, says Trevor-Roper, because we are not thorough-going rationalists, at least in regard to human behavior and human belief. We do not look only for identical causes of external actions or internal illusions. We look also for internal causes. Because we look for them we find them in human psychology and psychopathology.33

The Puritans found themselves assailed by the devil precisely because they believed in him. The critics of the trials were proven right when they warned that, "The devil would get so far into the faith of the people, that for the sake of many truths which they might find him telling of them, they would come at length to believe all his lies."34 Kai Erikson suggests that this is the point of connection between the

32 Mather, Magnalia Christi Americana, p. 209.
Antinomian, Quaker, and witchcraft persecutions. These outbursts of violence reflect not a larger crime rate in the colony but a greater tension within the culture as a whole. Because there was not an increase of criminal trials in these periods, but a stable deviant rate, Erikson believes that the society could only deal with a given level of deviancy. Thus, what the colony chose to label deviant at one time was ignored at another, confirming Dirkheim's classic hypothesis that a society requires a certain level of deviancy to mark its boundaries. The deviant behavior, then, is reflected in the fears, values and beliefs of the group itself. Erikson puts it well in the following:

"Men who fear witches soon find themselves surrounded by them; men who become jealous of private property soon encounter eager thieves. And if it is not always easy to know if fear creates the deviancy or deviancy the fear, the affinity of the two has been a continuing cause of wonder in human affairs. Observers of a later age may look back and understand that the witches and the magistrates were using the same cultural vocabulary and moving to the same cultural rhythms, but on the whole this secret is not known to the people of the time. To them deviant behavior seems to come out of nowhere, an uninvited perverse thrust at the heart of community."

It is easy, of course, to look back at religious intolerance or witch trials and find in them what seems to be a people's fright at their own shadows. Not expecting to see witches we do not see them, and not fearing sectarianism we find that religious tolerance does not end in the destruction of the political order. If we move to an area

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36 Ibid., pp. 2-3.
which reflects the same basis of thought, but which we today happen to share, the problem becomes more difficult and the line between ideology and reality becomes harder to discern. A case in point is the pathological, or germ theory of disease.

It seems a curious coincidence that the earliest western proponent of the germ theory of disease should be Cotton Mather, Puritan divine and great apologist for the Salem witch trials. Yet, on another level, it is perhaps not so surprising. An amateur medical man, Mather was highly interested in medical theory which he understood as mirroring theological precepts. The Angel of Bathesda, a collection of his medical lore, begins by stating that the problem of medicine is nothing less than the problem of evil and that sickness is a result of sin in the world. Puritan theology held that physical as well as spiritual maladies were acts of judgment by God, but also that salvation was brought about by God through agencies in the everyday world. Spiritual salvation came not magically from heaven, but through the words and acts of children, wife, neighbors, or the minister. Similarly, physical salvation, as aboard ship in a storm, might come only by the captain using his talents and skills to bring the ship through. Mather, then, was quite disposed to see disease pathologically and to believe that a means might well be at hand to arrest it. All that remained was for him to see a report from Constantinople telling of the success with which


38 Miller, Colony to Province, p. 349.
innoculation was used in North Africa to immunize against smallpox. He avidly wrote it down, theorized that the cause of the disease may have been the tiny "animalicules" he had seen in his microscope, and waited for the next visitation of the plague from God.

Even here, in the discovery of disease agents and cure, the flight from England played its part. For in England, the reports from Constantinople so eagerly read by Mather, were unnoticed. A prime reason for this was the fact that in England smallpox was a relatively safe disease usually contracted as a child. In the isolation of America, however, smallpox was not a child's disease. It was not to be found until an infected ship would arrive. An epidemic would then rage, killing hundreds of people who had not developed natural immunity.39 The very fact of coming to America had changed their relation to the disease.

The seventeenth century was a time of increased questioning of the causes of disease, but the prevailing theory of the time was the traditional one based upon Galenic and medieval views of medicine.40 This theory viewed disease as caused, not by pathogenic agents, but as manifestations of an imbalance in the body system as a whole. According to this theory, individual diseases were inconsequential manifestations of a tendency toward disease created by the imbalance. There would be little gained in treating the particular symptoms if an


imbalance in the general system was not corrected, for then new symptoms would manifest themselves. The individual symptoms were, of course, treated, but to the doctor of the early 17th century it seemed folly to attempt to bail the water out of a capsized boat. First, the boat must be returned to an upright position and only then would it be efficacious to bail out the water. Disease, then, was not believed to be caused by an organic agent but by the lack of some stabilizing pressure or humor in the body. Blood letting was so popular at the time because it lowered pressure from too much blood, and adjusted the level of the humors, allowing a return to a normal balance. By Mather's time advances in chemistry and physics had enlarged the theory beyond pressure and humor balance and suggested acidity or alkalinity of body fluids as a cause of illness, as well as physical and emotional strain or laxity as a generator of disease. Other theorists felt that specific rather than a general cause of disease could be located. The idea that "Animal-aculae" (germs) might be the cause was suggested in the early 1700's. But Cotton Mather was the first to act upon it. As Shryock put it: "Assuming that minute 'worms' were sent by God as the external causes of illness, the Bostonian immediately saw the possibilities of what we would call chemotherapy. Would not a safe 'but potent worm killer . . .' he asked, 'go further than any remedy yet found out, for the cure of many diseases.'"

41 Ibid., p. 51.
42 Ibid., p. 56.
Smallpox had long been considered one of the severest punishments meted out by God for failure to perform the duties of the covenant. It was a tenth plague held in reserve for the most stiff-necked times. And in 1720, carefully reading the signs, "Increase Mather warned New England that smallpox was the next in order; by the end of May 1771, cases were reported and by June 6 the disease had become epidemic."

As the epidemic spread, Mather persuaded a Dr. Boylston to have his family inoculated as a test case. Thereafter, Boylston, who was not an academically trained physician, became convinced and began to practice inoculations. This was met with great alarm by the population who believed Mather and Boylston were spreading rather than curing the disease. At one point a firebomb was thrown into Mather's house. The city's only college educated physician, Dr. William Douglass, also resisted the practice, making him the recipient of the Mathers' undying malice. Soon, of course, Mather was vindicated as the inoculation proved successful.

Yet, despite Mather's success and the subsequent acceptance of the germ theory made possible by Koch and Pasteur a century and one half later, the theory has lately come under heavy criticism. Rene Dubos has pointed out that the mere presence of pathogens does not necessarily produce disease. He argues that believing one has found the cause of disease by placing one group of bacteria in a petrie dish and

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43 Miller, Colony to Province, p. 346.
44 Ibid., p. 360.
watching another group gobble them up, is like believing one has found the cause of fire because water quenches it. There is considerable evidence, writes Dubos, that the waning of infectious disease had little to do with inoculation but rather was the result of the development of immunity through racial history. Dubos states that much of modern medical theory supports the idea of general susceptibility to disease and plays down the role of specific etiology. That is, medical theory now tends to support the basic position taken by Mather's critics rather than the germ theory of Mather. One reason for this is the discovery that, while the introduction of virulent organisms can be used to induce disease, individuals commonly harbor such microbes in their bodies with no ill effect. For example, the classic proof of the germ theory was Koch's demonstration that tuberculosis could be induced by injection. Through trial and error he discovered situations sufficient to bring the host and parasite together so that the disease could be produced. The selection of the type of animal, the dosage of tubercle bacilli, and the conditions under which it best thrived, all minimized the affect of the variables which interplay in life and created a pure experimental situation proving the virulence of the tubercle bacilli. But Koch

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46 Ibid., pp. 92-93.
47 Ibid., p. 95.
48 Ibid., p. 94.
did not account for the fact that probably every individual in the room with him harbored the tubercle bacilli, or at one time had harbored it, with no ill effects; for in the late 1800's practically all city dwellers were infected though only a small number developed the disease. Similarly, cholera vibres may be ingested in great numbers and be found persistently in the stools, yet the individual will have no discomfort. Examples could be multiplied, but the point is that medicine no longer speaks in terms of cause and effect. Words like triggering mechanisms, contributory factors, and initiating causes reflect a view that the body is an ecological system in which all variables play far-reaching roles in the relation of the body to disease and health.

Lewis Mumford in *The City* says that the disease of a culture is intimately tied to its values and life style. Thus, the disease of a well-centered culture like the medieval town was of an entirely different order from a civilization like our own with individual water supplies. Individually supplied running water is a safeguard against stagnant wells and the close personal contact that accompanies a well culture. At the same time individual running water assumes a technical industrial

49Ibid., p. 93.
50Ibid., p. 96.
civilization, producing synthetic materials. Smog and alien chemical substances in the environment increase the incidence of respiratory disease, heart disease and cancer. Thus, as seen earlier in the case of smallpox in America in the 17th century, the values and beliefs and lifestyle of a people is intimately tied to the sorts of disease with which they are burdened. Once more, the view of disease cause and cure is shaped by the particular kind of disease found within the theorist's culture and by the world view he holds. As we have seen in the case of the germ theory, careful experimentation does not improve the level of objectivity. Koch's and Pasteur's meticulous methods actually slanted the findings precisely because they were so objective. Mather wrote, in defense of inoculation: "Of what significance are most of our speculations? Experience! Experience! Tis to thee the matter must be referred after all; a few emperics are worth all our dogmatism." Unfortunately, as we have seen, Mather's emperics were shaped by his view of the world. An English physician looking at smallpox saw a different manifestation of the disease with different implications about the nature of disease. The difficulty is that a type of Hawthorne effect operates. Inoculations did work and great strides in health developed under belief in the specific etiology of disease. But so also did opposing views work; for any practice that upset the biologic relation of the pathogen to its environment helped to eradicate disease.

example, the belief that disease was caused by bad air and bad water, though opposed to the pathogenic theory, immensely imporved urban health standards in the mid-nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{54}

Disease and deviant social behavior may well function as mirrors of the intellectual structure that Mannheim called relationism. "Relationism," says Mannheim, "signifies merely that all of the elements of meaning in a given situation have reference to one another and derive their significance from this reciprocal interrelationship in a given frame of thought."\textsuperscript{55} For the Puritans, as has been pointed out, the frame of reference was the covenant. The covenant was based not only on the belief that only some men are saved, but also upon the belief that it was politically necessary to know which men fell into which category. It was, in effect, a pathological view of human society. However, this separation of men into identifiable groups of saved and damned, so logically necessary to justify the Puritan errand, was also a slow-burning fuse which finally ended in the collapse of the Puritan synthesis.\textsuperscript{56} The covenant theology may have solved all apparent contradictions and secured the Puritan's place in God's plan for the universe, but it all depended upon the elect living up to the terms of the heavenly contract. The hard fact was that the zealous followers of the Lord found that their children had not inherited the fire for piety

\textsuperscript{54}Dubos, \textit{Mirage of Health}, pp. 122-123.

\textsuperscript{55}Mannheim, \textit{Ideology and Utopia}, p. 86.

\textsuperscript{56}Miller, \textit{Colony to Province}, pp. 20-21.
that their fathers had brought into the wilderness. The elect found with horror that their children were exhibiting many of the marks of the damned. The Puritans had been caught in their own logic. For if wayward behavior, lack of responsibility, and lack of religious zeal were the obvious proofs of damnation, then the defection of their own children meant that the errand was at an end. The kingdom of God would not be built in New England, perhaps God had not even approved of the attempt. Trying to escape the conclusions demanded by their own logic became the primary task of the Puritan community.

One of the first results of that attempt was the school. The birth of public education in New England was an admission of the failure of the family to meet the challenge of raising children in the way of the covenant. They found the wilderness of America to be a threat just as they had found civilization back in England to be a threat. The great fear was that they would be inundated by the very wilderness to which they had escaped and that civilization "would be buried in the graves of our fathers." The breakdown of family discipline under the rigors of colonial life was a result of a number of factors; the harsh indignities of frontier life, sometimes punctuated by starving periods, the change in social levels created by the leveling nature of the new world, and the abundance of land and economic opportunity. Whatever the reasons, the laxity of family discipline and the resulting breakdown of

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the social order shook the foundation of the Puritan community. A series of laws were passed within a decade of settlement, demanding nothing less than capital punishment for filial disobedience. The breakdown of the family as the means of building social order also marked the defeat of the church in fighting the evil forces of greed, lust, laziness and crime. The family was no longer the ethical and religious keystone, holding the strands of the covenant together. Morality, as Bernard Mehl said, "was to be housed in the school and was to be its prime subject matter. The school would assume the power of keeping order in the city and erase the line distinguishing the minister from the teacher."  

The creation of the schools was not only an attempt to keep order. Education was revered by the Puritans on religious grounds as well. As Protestants believing in the reformation idea that salvation comes through the word, they saw ignorance as the trap of mortal sin. Therefore, in 1647, the general court of Massachusetts instituted reading schools for the colony because ignorance was "one chief project of that old deluder Satan, to keep men from the knowledge of the scriptures." Since "every grace enters through the soul through

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58 Ibid., p. 23.


60 Morgan, Puritan Family, p. 45.

61 Ibid., p. 46.
understanding," it naturally followed that, "the devotion of ignorance is but a bastard sort of devotion."

According to the Federalist theologians, echoing the scholastic idea of levels of grace, man could not earn grace for himself, but he could prepare himself by "making the ground fertile and receptive for the seed if God should send it." This was the role that education played, in theory. Still the housing of morality in the school meant a tremendous blow to the Puritan theocracy. The hierarchical nature of the Puritan cosmos, in which each man had his place and each worker his vocation, was based upon the family as paradigm of the universe. The covenant of grace was between not only God and the believer, but also included his seed. While a believer's children were not automatically saved, they did have a better chance of salvation than did those of unregenerate parents. Thus, the discipline, obedience, and vocationalism that came out of the view of the family as a microcosm of society and the cosmos, was also a justification of oligarchy over democracy. The recognition of the need for schools to take over the family function of education was the admission that chaos had found its way into the bedrock of the Puritan state. Piety was replaced by reason and heredity by ability. No matter how conscientiously Puritans tried to make the schools an extension of the family, they were unable to combat its leveling tendencies.

62 Ibid., p. 52.
63 Ibid., p. 47.
64 Miller, Colony to Province, p. 360.
This threat was not ignored by the Puritans either. It tempered their regard for education. The great faith in education attributed to the Puritans is not completely accurate. For this faith in education is a paradox: It inversely reveals a great distrust of education carried on outside of piety. The distrust of intellectualism which burst out in the great awakening was not an aberration but a basic element of Puritanism. Witness Cotton Mather, perhaps the most educated American of his time, writing against Dr. Douglass who dared to oppose his inoculation program. Douglass, who was an academically trained physician, attacked Boylston for being untrained. Mather responded in defence of Boylston.

Why should gentlemen otherwise well qualified be called illiterate, ignorant, etc. because they did not idle away four years at a college as some of our learned men have done?65

A strange comment from a highly educated member of a highly educated clergy who had just been in the process of sneering at the ignorance of unlettered critics like the printer James Franklin. But the social and intellectual leadership of the clergy was in decline. The history of Puritanism was the history of a man always on the edge of disaster, feeling the ground give way behind each step. The incipient end of England demanded escape to America, the breakdown of family threatened inundation by the wilderness, and the school threatened the growth of a new intellectual class and a loss of power for the clergy. Caught

65 Ibid.
between antagonistic aims, each measure taken to keep the covenant going became a threat to drag it to its doom. Mather's response to Douglass was the lashing out of a cornered man. The Puritans had run out of room, disaster seemed imminent. Once again, Cotton Mather was the voice of a generation when he wrote in *The Present State of New England*:

> Now tis a dismal uncertainty and ambiguity that we see ourselves placed in. Briefly, such is our case, that something must bee done out of hand and indeed, our all is at the stake; we are beset by a thousand perplexities and entanglements.\(^{66}\)

The Puritans did, of course, try to do something out of hand. The theologians argued more and more strongly that if people really tried they could perhaps influence God to save them, that the lines of damnation and election were perhaps not so starkly drawn as they had thought. Hoping to spur a change of heart, greater influence was placed upon the potentialities of man. Yet if the old order of the few elect whose identity was proven by rewards on this earth had tended to degenerate into rapacious capitalism, the new order giving more power to man to change his life and that of others tended toward unitarianism. Between this Scylla and Charybdis men like Cotton Mather tried to seek a way out of the despair of an unfulfilled mission. His Erasmian attempt to find an ecumenical basis for cooperation on disputed points is one example. Another is his determination to devise good and to improve himself and his society. Though he did not equate doing good with the highest end

in life -- salvation, he came dangerously close. "If men would set themselves to do good," he wrote, "a world of good might be done, more than there is in this evil world . . . There needs abundance to be done that the evil manners of the world, by which men are drowned in perdition may be reformed . . ."67 So obsessed did he become with this method of escape that each page of his diary is filled with the initials G. D., good devised. Good action had become a means of at least helping to save the world. It was but a short step from this ideal to the appearance of the Unitarian mind, and with it the suspicion that if man had such gifts of personal and social improvement, he might save himself without the need of God.

The Puritan experiment ended in the impossible attempt to maintain an elite tribalism, uncontaminated by the masses of men. The Synod proposal of 1662, the "half-way covenant," was the obituary notice for the errand in the wilderness. It was an admission that the elect were in fact neither more holy, nor more able to build God's kingdom than were the other men who were around them, and from whom they had fled in England. Without the clear and stark distinction of saved and damned, elect and unredeemed, the great logical attempts at escape were unable to resolve the contradiction upon which Puritanism was built.

With the end of the Puritan experiment, the synthesis of the political and religious splintered, creating two separate histories. The first traveled through Jonathon Edwards and the great awakening.

Rejecting rationality and clinging instead to piety the Puritan religious tradition had spent itself and had become absorbed into revivalism by the early 19th century. The second history, the ethical and political, translated itself into the enlightenment faith in reason and law. It was this aspect of the Puritan tradition that influenced the young republic's character so deeply. It was also this aspect of the Puritan tradition which carried the pathological view forward into a new secular age.
CHAPTER III

PROPERTY, FREEDOM AND THE DEPRAVITY OF MAN

In 1740, the leaders of American cultural and social life were the clergy. By 1790 their place had been taken by the lawyers.¹ This replacement of leadership marked a shift in the American mind, for until this time lawyers had been despised by the educated and illiterate alike. The dramatic transformation of the bar from a jeered occupation of pettifoggers to "the most entrusted, the most honored and withal, the most efficient and useful body of men," is an important aspect of the rise of the ideology of pathology in America.²

The Puritans traditionally despised lawyers as men who traded upon the misery of other men. Because they gained fees only because of disharmony in society they were seen as men who had a stake in promoting disputes, and therefore litigation within the community.³ As a result, Article 26 of the body of liberties of 1641 prohibited anyone from taking


money for helping another in court. Though they later were forced to repeal this article and allow the practice of law, the Puritans never accepted it as more than a necessary evil to be carefully held in check. Under pressure from England the Bay colony was forced to allow more power to lawyers but kept the fee limit as low as possible. As far as the Massachusetts general court was concerned, attorneys should exist for the welfare of clients and not clients for the enrichment of their attorneys. This distrust of lawyers was not confined to the Puritans. The majority of the colonies also had laws limiting fees and holding the disruptive practices of lawyers in check.

Yet, despite this unpromising beginning the profession was here to stay. By the 1730's young men were agonizing over the question of whether to give their lives to the ministry or law. The rise in popularity of law as a profession paralleled the rise of Arminianism in the congregational churches. The Arminians were precursors of the Unitarians. Infused with the enlightenment doctrines of toleration, the Arminians rejected strict Calvinism and stressed the basic rationality of the supernatural and the benevolence of a God who acts according to law rather than whim. This doctrine early became associated with

4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., p. 418.
Boston's most educated and prosperous citizens -- the same group that later would embrace Unitarianism and Episcopalian latitudinarianism. Belonging to this group, too, were the first real founders of the legal profession, Jeremiah Gridley, Edward Trowbridge, Benjamin Prat, and Benjamin Kent. It was their arrival in Boston that began the reversal of the lawyer's status.

Of the four, only Trowbridge had intended from the beginning of his college days to study law. Gridley began to practice law in the 1730's only after he had dabbled in school teaching, journalism and theology. Despite his continued orthodoxy he was commonly thought to have been a skeptic. Kent had been a Congregationalist minister, but had been removed from the pulpit after a heresy trial in which he was found guilty of Arminianism. About the same time Kent was turning to the law, Prat accepted a divinity scholarship to Harvard, but soon lost interest, became an open skeptic, and turned to the law.

The rejection of the ministry for the law was not confined to these founders. The Arminian tendencies of the time took a heavy toll in lost divinity students. Of the eleven Harvard graduates between 1731 and 1735 who became lawyers, eight of them were reacting negatively to a career in the church. A similar reaction was shown in the records

8 Murrin, Colonial America, p. 428.
9 Ibid.
10 Wright, Unitarianism in America, p. 23.
11 Murrin, Colonial America, p. 428.
12 Ibid., p. 427.
of 1750 at Yale. To show even more clearly the way in which the bar appears to have been a choice against the church, we need only look at the overall figures. The Harvard and Yale classes of 1730-38 produced seventeen lawyers while the next nine classes produced only nine, apparently due to the effects of the great awakening. Classes then continued to steadily rise again each year until they fell off at the time of the revolution.13

This process of the rise of the legal mind and its quasi-religious character is illustrated in the life of John Adams. Like many of the college educated lawyers, he had planned to enter the ministry. He quit the ministry for the law because of his "opinion concerning some disputed points."14 That is, he leaned toward Arminianism.

The choice of a career in law offered him both a means to attain power and prestige and a means to satisfy a religious commitment to a higher truth and reason. Numerous incidences in his diary allude to the seriousness of his calling:

Let virtue address me, 'Which, dear youth will you prefer? A life of effeminacy, indolence and obscurity, or a life of industry, temperence and honor . . . Let not trifling diversions or amusement or company decoy you from your books . . ."15

or again

Now to what higher object, to what greater character can any mortal aspire, than to be possessed

13 Ibid.
15 Ibid., p. 72.
of all this knowledge well digested and ready at
command to assist the feeble and the friendless,
to discountenance the haughty and lawless, to pro-
cure redress of wrongs and the advancement of right,
to assert and maintain liberty and virtue to discourage
and abolish tyranny and vice.\textsuperscript{16}

Adam's rejection of the ministry for the law was analogous to
the choice made by Puritan society as a whole. If heaven could not be
depended upon, then the law would suffice. Law became the supreme
principle and the social contract became the new covenant.\textsuperscript{17} Thus, in
the \textit{Dissertations Concerning Canon and Feudal Law}, Adams argued love
of universal liberty was the reason for the settlement of America. It
was rejection of both ecclesiastical and feudal contracts which no longer
served the rights of man.\textsuperscript{18} In "Thoughts On Government" he argued that
good government is an empire of laws, the aim of which is to insure
man's happiness. "Law," he said in his diary, "is human reason."\textsuperscript{19}

It governs all the inhabitants of the earth;
the political and civil law of each nation should
by only the particular cases in which human reason
is applied.\textsuperscript{20}

Adams in the spirit of the age was no longer able to accept
ideas of innate depravity and election that had made sense in the lives
of his Puritan forebearers. He was a Lockean man who believed the mind

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., p. 124.

\textsuperscript{17}Miller, \textit{Life of the Mind}, p. 217.


to be a Tabula Rosa, and therefore educable for both good and bad. Too
much the Puritan to accept the utopianism of Condorcet or Priestly, he
was nevertheless "a believer in the probable improvability and improve-
ment, the ameliorability and amioration in human affairs . . ."21 Pro-
gress was a realizable hope, he believed, so long as irrationality and
anarchy could be controlled. Substituting the enlightenment belief in
law and a rational universe for the Puritan faith in election and piety,
even the dour Adams could be guardedly optimistic.

The enlightenment had not simply replaced the city of God with
the city of man as Carl Becker suggested. It replaced fate with fortune.
Fate suggested tradition, and aristocracy, the limitation of freedom and
the impossibility of progress. It rang of the tragedy of the Greek hero
and of the stoic struggle of Sisyphus. Fortune, on the other hand,
offered unlimited freedom. It was the possibility that had brought
thousands to America; it was know-how over aristocracy, equality over
nobility; and it was individualism. It was the great innovation of the
Roman over the Greek way. As in Rome it allowed tremendous hopes for
success. Freed from the jealousy of the gods and the treachery of des-
tiny, one could go to sleep a poor man and the next day awake to riches.

So long as it was a promise of success, fortune seemed a far
happier prospect than the gloomy narrowness of fate. But as the Romans
and with them the Americans found to their grief, one could also go to
bed rich and wake up poor. Two poor immigrants could float down a river,

21 Adams, Selected Writings, p. 185.
build adjoining farms, and struggle with the earth. As so often occurred, one would make good, rising in time to become a rich and influential planter, while his brother on less fertile soil would sink into poverty and anonymity. The prospects, as it were, were so unsure as to be even more frightening than fate, for at least in fate was some sense of certainly about identity and tradition. Desperately searching for some modicum of certainty in a limitless world, the Romans turned to the science of astrology. Equally reeling from the dizziness of fortune, Americans turned to the science of the law.

Thus, lawyers gained prestige in spite of the American distrust of lawyers, for Americans had a profound respect and need for the law. The waning of the power of the church had left a vacuum. Without strong family bonds and traditions, Americans were in fear of the very anarchy they had left Europe to embrace. They found themselves at once enamored by the wild frontier where everyman was on his own and fearful of the consequences of life without limits. This contradiction would become a central part of the American experience, and it would reveal itself in ever changing, but always essentially similar terms: Heart versus head, nature versus the city, federalism versus republicanism, Jeffersonian democracy versus Jacksonian. It would shape a literature beginning with Emerson and his belief in nature and self-reliance as well as an antagonist in Melville with Typee and Billy Budd. It would shape a religious

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tradition of plain style revolted by the degeneracy of man, and its opposite, a religion of progress for the genteel Brahmins of Boston. Finally, it would shape a belief in the school as a common experience for all children as well as a violent opposition to the leveling that would follow its implementation.

Nowhere is the contradiction more perfectly displayed than in the "Leather Stocking Tales" of Cooper. Cooper built a national myth of the freedom of the forests, the nobility of the natural man, and the dignity of the rugged individual acting according to conscience alone. Yet, at the end of Natty Bumppo's life we find him a squatter on Judge Marmaduke Temple's land; land which so far as he knew was free for he had never sought to lay claim to the forests he had walked. Having killed a deer out of season, the judge attempts to have him arrested. Knowing nothing of game laws but having never wantonly killed, Natty Bumppo resists. A young man comes to his defence, reminding the judge of the old man's patriotic record and of the judge's debt to him. Of Natty, the simple man of the forest, he says:

He is simple, unlettered, even ignorant; prejudiced perhaps, though I feel that his opinion of the world is true; but he has a heart, Judge Temple, that would atone for a thousand faults; he knows his friends and never deserts them even if it be his dog.

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24 Quoted in Miller, Life of the Mind, p. 100.
Natty is nevertheless arrested and brought to trial. Before releasing the jury to deliberation, the judge charges them: "Living as we do, gentlemen on the skirts of society, it becomes doubly necessary to protect the ministers of the law." Found guilty, fined and sentenced to a month in prison, Leather Stocking rails at the wrongness of putting a man in jail who has always walked in the open air acting from the right found in his own heart. Natty then escaped to the great plains, but he did not escape the American dilemma of the law. For there he ran afoul of a despoiler of nature who claimed his right to do with the land as he willed and to act as he saw fit. "I can not say you are wrong," responds the sorrowful Natty, "and I have often thought and said as much when and where I believed my voice could be heard."

That Natty Bumppo's brush with the law should have been so popularly received, and that his creator, James Fenimore Cooper, was himself the son of a judge not so different from Marmaduke Temple, reflects the ambivalence felt by the public towards law and lawyers. That law of some sort was necessary was a belief that followed the settling of the frontier, but the necessity of lawyers was a different matter. The lawyer was defined by one critic as a "man who saves your estate from your enemies and keeps it for himself." The farmers of Vermont let it be known that, "Attorneys whose eternal babble/confounds the inexperienced

26ibid., p. 115.
27ibid., p. 101.
rabble," should be expelled from the courts. Contemporary journalism joined the chorus of anti-lawyer critics, claiming that they were the bone of society and "men so audacious, that they venture even in public to turn and twist and explain away the purpose and meaning of our laws." Proposals to abolish the legal profession entirely were commonly in the air, proof of the low esteem of men so without principle that they would defend innocent and guilty alike.

Despite the general atmosphere of distrust for the legal profession, it steadily gained influence and respectability. One reason for this was the breakdown of the influence of the church; another was the fact that while the practice of law was in disrepute in America, it was highly respectable in England and was therefore a means of gaining royal appointments. It was an avenue of success and power to up-and-coming middle class young men without the advantage of name or influence. But the greatest reason for its gains was to be found in the dilemma of Natty Bumppo, for as de Tocqueville pointed out, the American with few exceptions was not a man of the wilderness, even if living there. "There is no comparison between the pioneer and his house," he wrote. "The pioneer is a product of the 18th century. He wears the dress and speaks the language of the cities." No matter how individualistic, anti-aristocratic and rude the pioneer, he was a man of the city. He

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29 Ibid., p. 19.
30 Ibid., p. 18.
had the fears and the desires of the city. St. John Crevecoeur could write of the beauty of the idyllic natural world of America, but he would not stay; he returned to France as a literary hero in waistcoats and high heeled shoes.\textsuperscript{32} The American farmer could characterize his life as the most perfect in the world, free from tradition, rules, class and all the sores of European civilization, but in the next breath he would speak with sparkling eyes of progress and his hope for a better future with more land and more money. As Richard Hofstadter observed, "The United States was the only country in the world that began with perfection and aspired to progress."\textsuperscript{33}

Americans wanted certainty, and without church or tradition only law could provide it. The law was in chaos, however. No one knew to what extent the common law of England was or was not applicable to America. No one was certain as to what was law and what was not.\textsuperscript{34} A Virginian lamented this state of affairs in a disquisition published as early as 1701:

\begin{quote}
It is a great unhappiness, that no one can tell what is law, and what is not, in the plantation; some hold that the law of England is chiefly to be respected, and where that is deficient, the laws of the several colonies are to take place; others are of the opinion that the laws of the colonies are to take first place and that the law of England is of force only where they are silent . . . Thus, are we left in the dark,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{32}Lawrence, Studies in Classic American Literature, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{34}Kammen, People of Paradox, p. 41.
in one of the most considerable points of our rights; and the case being so doubtful we are too often obliged to depend upon the crooked cord of a Judge's discretion, in matters of the greatest moment and value.35

The passing of the clergy as the leaders of American life and the rise of the legal profession to that post meant the setting aside of religious questions for political ones. America had embraced the political as a way of life, and in doing so was forced to accept the necessity of lawyers in spite of its initial distrust of them. From there, it was but a short step to investing the lawyers with solemn duty of saving the republic from the anarchy of factionalism, both individual and sectional.

If the lawyers were to achieve and sustain this position, they would have to create a priesthood of elite men with the necessary erudition and force to make the sullen democracy accept their higher wisdom and knowledge of the mysteries of the law.36 The means by which lawyers achieved this was education. Throughout the colonies they banded themselves together into bar associations with power to accept or reject practitioners of law. They set up the most stringent courses of study. "Again and again," says Perry Miller, "the lawyers impressed upon the democracy the idea that to attain distinction at the bar required so severe an intellectual discipline that few could even hope to measure up to it."37 They devised a litany, he continues, in which awesome

35Ibid.

36Miller, Life of the Mind, p. 111.

37Ibid., p. 136.
terms were regularly employed: i.e., the law "demands the energies of
the most powerful minds and exhausts all the stores of learning."\textsuperscript{38}
Absolute discipline and self-sacrifice was the price of the study of law.
Feeling more sure of themselves, the lawyers would look back upon the
revolution as an event created and achieved by the lawyers, forgetting
that the majority of them had turned Tory and that only one in seventeen
had not been Loyalists and could still practice after the revolution.\textsuperscript{39}
By the middle of the century the myth of the lawyer had gained ascen­
dency. The reservations of the Natty Bumppos and David Crockett's were
overcome. The law was accepted as preeminently rational and scientifi­
cally exact. The hope of society's progress and fulfillment lay in the
promise of the law, strongly built upon the foundations of the great
commentaries of Kent, Hoffman, and Story.

This is the secret of the attraction of the law for young men
like Adams, who, a generation earlier, would certainly have chosen a
ministerial career. The influence of the enlightenment had penetrated
even the Congregational Church, as the dramatic rise in Arminianism
shows.\textsuperscript{40} The belief that man was depraved by nature seemed completely
unviable in the face of enlightenment ideas such as those of John Locke.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{39} Murrin, Colonial America, p. 443.

\textsuperscript{40} Wright, Unitarianism in America, p. 2. Cotton Mather writing
in 1726 said that he knew of not one case in 200 churches where the
Pastor was an Arminian, much less an Arian or a Gentilist. By 1735 the
unity was crumbling and by 1745 Jonathan Edwards found it epidemic.
The growing replacement of concern with political matters over religious ones reflected a growing belief in the possible improvement of human life and society. It promised a bright and great future for man. Indeed, the American revolution was the symbol and reality of that promise. It marked the liberation from Calvinistic determinism and a belief in the potential progress of man. Based on the concept of the universality of rights, the revolution had accepted the idea that all men were created equally for freedom, that none were by nature deprived of the natural right shared by all other men.

The philosophy of John Locke was a primary source for this view. His arguments served to support the colonists' right to repudiate English control, and through the idea of the Tabula Rosa to serve as the basis for their belief that know-how and industry had more credance than tradition. With the acceptance of Locke, the primacy of nurture replaced nature.

One of the basic concerns of Locke's political philosophy was the legitimacy of the growing power and wealth in the middle class. He argued the right of the middle class to their new-found prosperity primarily by undercutting the legitimacy of the claims of the declining aristocracy on one hand and the pauper class on the other.

According to Locke, property was originally given by God as a common possession of all men. Common sense, he said, tells us that unless an individual appropriates some of that common property for himself he will starve. He cannot ask all the rest of humanity if he may kill

and eat this deer, or gather and eat this fruit. Similarly, common
sense says that since there is abundant property for all, another can-
not have equal claim to what one had appropriated for oneself. Private
property, then, is simply the right of an individual to enjoy the fruits
of his labor.\footnote{\textit{ibid.}, p. 306.}

The objection may be raised, Locke continued, that if gathering
the fruit of the earth gives one a right to it, then anyone may engross
as much as he wishes.\footnote{\textit{ibid.}, p. 308.} But this is not so. The same law of nature
which gives the right to appropriate property for oneself also limits
it. A man may not collect more than he can use. What is beyond his
share belongs to others. "Nothing was made by God for man to spoil or
destroy."\footnote{\textit{ibid.}} Thus, the horder of goods, for example the aristocrat, has
no legitimate grounds for claiming ownership of things beyond his ability
to use. For Locke, the legitimatizer of property was labor, not title
or tradition.

At the same time, this equality of opportunity proved that the
paupers had chosen their state through their own lack of industry. The
wealth of the newly-arrived middle class was not theft from those who
remained poor, for the different degrees of industry were apt to give
men possessions in different proportions.\footnote{\textit{ibid.}, p. 319.} This natural disparity was
not imposed but chosen. The invention of money as a medium that would not decay and therefore could be hoarded enlarged this disparity. But since gold and silver had no intrinsic worth, only symbolic worth, money could be adopted only by common agreement of all men. Thus, the poor had concurred with this too, and again were responsible for their own poverty.  

As the protectors of property, the lawyers represented this conservative aspect of Locke's political theory. Their function was to make respect for property sacrosanct, and by doing so they would preserve the delicate balance of order in American society. Historically, law in England had been a freedom-serving institution in that it allowed a measure of autonomy in a society ruled by an absolute monarch. It increased the freedom for the individual by limiting or checking the power of the King. In America, however, there was not the least sign of a king; on the contrary there was seemingly unlimited freedom. The function of the law became quite the opposite from that in England. It was to create limits where there were none, to initiate controls where there were none. Its function was to close avenues of freedom, to act as a check to the mad rush of democracy that followed the revolution. As Tocqueville observed:

Lawyers are attached to public order beyond every other consideration. It must not be forgotten, also, that if they prize freedom much, they generally value legality still more: They are less afraid of tyranny than of arbitrary power and provided the legislature

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46 Ibid., pp. 319-320.

47 Miller, Life of the Mind, pp. 223-224.
under takes of itself to deprive men of their inde-
pendence, they are not dissatisfied.\textsuperscript{48}  
The lawyers saw themselves as watches in the night, "sentinels on the
walls and at the gates."\textsuperscript{49} As Justice Story put it, their job was to
"triump by arresting the progress of error and the march of power, and
drive back the torrent that threatens destruction equally to public
liberty and to private property . . ."\textsuperscript{50} A majority of the lawyers of
the early republic had rejected the ministry because they could not
accept the Calvinist doctrine that men are depraved by nature. The
great irony of their choice was that they accepted another version of
the inherent depravity of man through nurture. "The result," observes
Perry Miller, "was that they were of all men the most disillusioned
about human nature."\textsuperscript{51}

According to one lawyer of the time there was romance in the law
but it destroyed the lawyer's faith in humanity: "He is too apt to be-
lieve the depravity of man innate and natural, allowing of no cure and
beyond the reach of reform."\textsuperscript{52} Throughout the 1820's and 1830's im-
passioned speeches attacking public evils like greed, luxury, "the

\textsuperscript{49} Miller, Life of the Mind, p. 215.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., p. 214.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
selfish thirst for pleasure," and lack of reverence came not from the clergy but from lawyers like the great commentary writers, Kent and Story.\textsuperscript{53}

It may seem at first incongruous that the lawyers, with their reactionary faith in English common law, their staunch opposition to equitable division of property, and their disdain for the masses, should have been allied with Arminianism and Unitarianism which were based upon the ideas of human progress, universal humanity, and a benevolent God. Jacques Ellul, however, has pointed out that optimism and pessimism about human affairs are both a part of the same continuum.\textsuperscript{54} The belief in the possibility of success carries with it the unspoken possibility of its opposite. A trust in progress is always endangered by retarding or subverting influences. The very possibility of success or progress makes those who fail to join the fight for that progress all the more guilty, for utopia seems always just ahead. The believers in progress did not doubt the possibility of great improvements in society but they feared the elements which threatened to contradict that progress.

For the lawyers, the great danger to the order they were daily creating and sustaining was the people themselves. As Justice Story lamented:

\begin{quote}
Our government . . . purports to be a government of law, not men; and yet beyond all others it is subject to the control and influence of public opinion.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{53}Ibid., pp. 215-216.

\textsuperscript{54}Ellul, \textit{Technological Society}, p. xxiv.
Its whole security and efficiency depend upon the intelligence, virtue, independence, and moderation of the people. It can be preserved no longer than a reverence for settled uniform laws constitute the habit, I almost said the passion, of the community. There can be no freedom where there is no safety to property or personal rights.\(^5\)

The law and all its gifts of security and freedom, though the product of centuries of slow but steady growth, stood ever in danger of being destroyed by irresponsible philistines. Speaking of those who would abrogate law or make changes relying on their own rashness instead of trust and respect for the law Story continues:

> Surly, they need not be told how slow every good system of laws must be in consolidating; and how easily the rashness of an hour may destroy what ages have scarcely cemented in solid form. The oak which requires centuries to raise its trunk and stretch its branches and strengthen its fibers and fix its roots may yet be leveled in an hour. It may breast the tempest of a hundred years, and survive the scathing of lightning. It may even acquire vigor from its struggles with the elements, and strike its roots deeper and wider as it rises in its majesty; and yet a child in very wantoness of folly, may in an instant destroy it by removing a girdle of its bark.\(^6\)

If the law was to survive and continue to "strike its roots deeper and wider," it could do so only if protected from the folly of ignorant and willful men. The only hope for that protection lay in the education of the masses. This, they felt, would inculcate respect for law and the order of society. Like their Puritan forebearers, the lawyers viewed ignorance and original sin. Just as salvation depended upon the ability to know the word of God for the Puritans, it depended upon the common

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\(^{56}\) Ibid., p. 515.
man's ability to understand the laws for the lawyers. As Chief Justice Kent remarked in 1794:

A general initiation into elementary learning of our law, has a happy tendency to guard against mischief, and at the same time to promote a keen sense of right and warm love of freedom.57

"The art of maintaining social order and promoting social property," he continued:

Is not with us a mystery fit only for those who may be distinguished by the adventitious advantage of birth or fortune. The science of civil government has here been stripped of the delusive refinements and restored to the plain principles of reason.58

In this same spirit, Charles Fenton Mercer, in his "Discourse On Popular Education," given in 1826, argued for free popular education. According to Mercer, the sovereignty of the people meant that they must be educated. For just as a king can only pass just laws if properly educated, the people by common consent create just or faulty law according to their education.59

Law has been defined to be 'Summa Ratio,' 'The perfection of reason,' and such it ever should be. It has also been denominated, 'The expression of the public will,' and so in America it emphatically is. How necessary then to instruct and enlighten the public judgment which guides that will.60

58 Ibid., p. 331.
60 Ibid., p. 304.
Similarly, in 1826, Thomas Cooper, supporter of Jefferson and president of the University of South Carolina, delivered a series of lectures in which a lecture on education was the first of several concerning police laws, and this lecture just followed one devoted to poor laws. As Rush Welter comments, "... Its placement indicates that in his view education is desirable because of its efficiency in promoting social order." With Cooper, the aims of the law and republicanism came together. "The first duty of a republic is to provide for the instruction of its citizens; the next to exact the evidences of it." The function of education, argued Cooper, is to bring to fruition the maxim that ignorance of the law is no excuse. This wedding of education as the means both of making the people responsible citizens and removing the excuse of ignorance of the law became a powerful argument for the replacement of pay-as-you-go education and pauper education for the poor. De Witt Clinton, eight years governor of New York and mayor of New York City for twelve, repeatedly argued for common education since "a general diffusion of knowledge is the precursor of and protection of republican institutions." He applauded its conservative nature as a watch over liberty. "Ignorance," he said, "is the cause as well as the effect of bad

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63 Ibid.
governments. William Carroll in a message before the Tennessee Legislature in 1827 voiced the same sentiments. He, too, supported universal public education, although he did not wish to pay for it.

It improves their (the farmers) moral condition, takes away incentives to vice, establishes habits of sobriety, industry and cheerful obedience to the laws; and enables them to acquire a knowledge of the salutary principles of our government.

According to James G. Carter, pioneer school reformer of Massachusetts the rights of property could be safeguarded only through education. "A populace equally impatient of the influence and authority which property initially confers," Carter said, is "rebellious against the salutary restraint of the laws."

The common school movement, then, had its roots deeply entwined in the fears of the lawyers and others with a trust in the law as the only unifying principle in an otherwise limitless America. Its early supporters saw it as one means of protecting property by inculcating respect for it, through respect for the law. The natural man, though educable for good or bad theoretically, seemed always to be bad when not actively trained for the good. Though often repudiating the Puritans, they were essentially engaged in the same mission -- the building of a republic to serve as a light for all other nations to see. As the Puritans demanded conformity to the religious law, the republicans

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66 Welter, American Writings, p. 30-31.

demanded obedience to the political law as the terms of the covenant. Just as the failure to do so proved to the Puritans the depravity of the nature of man, it proved to the republicans the depravity of a culturally deficient environment.

The common school movement was not only the manifestation of the fear of the leveling march of the masses. It was also an expression of the desires and beliefs of the masses themselves. Once made a part of the common school, the varied elements would help shape the meaning of the school into something that its original supporters had invested into an entirely different institution.

One of the first manifestations of the rising democratic desire to join into an egalitarian society was the working man's organization. It arose out of a desire to make success possible for anyone willing to work. The birth and life of the working man's organizations coincided with the depression of 1828-1831. In the wake of the expanding economy and new industry, there was a corresponding breakdown of social patterns. The faculty system and cheap labor threatened to destroy the independence of the old craft and artisan class. The rise of corporate management with its attending vices of impersonalism and monopoly made the traditional small independent shop inefficient and unable to compete. These shops were forced to extend their hours of work in a desperate struggle to survive. At the same time the introduction of interchangeable parts

69 Ibid., p. 30.
and assembly line-type factory techniques created cheap labor and sweat shop conditions.\textsuperscript{70}

The advent of the 1828 depression signalled the opportunity to take advantage of the political power recently gained by universal male suffrage. Beginning in Philadelphia, workingman's parties were created in almost every city in the country.\textsuperscript{71} They were not, it should be pointed out, only collections of lower middle class workers. "Worker" was broadly defined. It included anyone who owned his own business, for example. In fact, almost anyone was welcome with the exception of lawyers, bankers, and brokers.\textsuperscript{72}

The workingman's parties were a manifestation of an expanding democracy, awakening out of the republican era of special interests and privilege. They were a rejection of the aristocratic values and systems for which the lawyers had stood, and a rejection of the resulting monopolies and restrictions of opportunity the lawyers had supported.\textsuperscript{73} This monopolizing tendency of the aristocratic social structure, they warned, would create a permanent poor class of workers. As the mechanics' Free Press of Philadelphia argued:

\begin{quote}
We are fast approaching those extremes of wealth and extravagance, on the one hand, and ignorance, poverty and wretchedness on the other, which
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{73} Welter, \textit{Popular Education}, p. 47.
will eventually terminate in those unnatural and oppressive distinctions which exist in the corrupt governments of the old world.\textsuperscript{74}

In fighting this threat, the workingman's parties were involved with many issues beyond long work hours and low wages; imprisonment for debts, religious establishment, corporate charters, an unjust militia system, and poor housing.\textsuperscript{75} Yet a basic and more vigorous concern than any of these was the demand for free equal education and an end to the aristocratic system of private education for the rich and charity schools for the poor. Equality of education was at first seen as the panacea which, once implemented, would end the root cause of social injustice. Accepting the view that ignorance was the basis of crime, Stephen Simpson, author of the \textit{Workers Manual}, argued that the prison cells were filled with the unfortunate victims of the twin evils of ignorance and charity schools.\textsuperscript{76} The implantation of public education would diminish crime and improve the industry of the nation, he said.\textsuperscript{77} He even argued that intemperance and sexual license were rooted in ignorance.

Knowledge is the grand remedy of intemperance; for in proportion as we elevate men in the scale of existence, and give them reason to esteem and respect themselves, so do we reclaim them from all temptations of degrading vice and ruinous crimes. A reading and

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., p. 45.
\textsuperscript{75} Binder, \textit{Age of the Common School}, p. 31.
\textsuperscript{76} Vassar, \textit{Social History}, p. 105.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., p. 186.
intellectual people were never known to be sottish - but those who are ignorant, or stupid, are forever wallowing in drunkenness and debauchery. Thus, sobriety and political honesty are twin offspring of education.78

Simpson went so far as to argue that the lack of respect accorded to laborers was a result not of their low status jobs but of their ignorance alone.79 In a curious twist of logic the misery of the sweatshops and factories was blamed on the workers themselves:

Owing to this ignorance and degradation, it is, that the educated and enlightened, taking advantage of their condemned condition, have oppressed and bound them in the fetters of servile subjection.80

The same ideas expressed by Simpson were echoed by other workingmens' organization leaders. Especially after the collapse of the party, around 1831, a slightly different aspect of the question of education came to the fore. Spokesmen began to suggest that education, rather than a means of curing social ills, was a right to be sought on its own merits. For example, the demand of the Boston Labor cause, in 1835, was the ten hour day but Theophilous Fiske urged the union to demand an eight hour day. This would leave equal eight hour allotments of time for work, sleep, and amusement and instruction.81

With this change of view towards education as opportunity itself instead of a means to opportunity, education became an accoutrement of

78bid., p. 187.
79bid., p. 191.
80bid.
81Binder, Age of the Common School, p. 36.
upward mobility. As Samuel Lubell pointed out in relation to a different surge of concern over enfranchisement from the late 1920s through the 1940s, an out-group does not gain admittance to a society through political (or educational) means. The political power or educational success is a by-product of having arrived economically and socially.\textsuperscript{82}

The distinction between education as a part of the spoils of success rather than a means to it became an important aspect of the workingman's organization and of the place of education in American life. It reveals an aspect of the nature of education in America that recent critics of the public school have failed to notice.

The workingman's organization was not destined to play a major political role, as it could not survive the economic panic of 1837.\textsuperscript{83} Despite the Democratic Party's acceptance of the educational doctrine of the workingmen's parties. They were able to produce little meaningful legislation in its behalf. Made up of immigrant groups, laborers, and poor farmers, too many of its constituency were too poor to afford increased taxation. Also, German Pietest groups feared the effects of a common education on their own sectarian schools. Therefore, the support of the common school fell to the forces aligned with the Whigs.

Motivated by their fear of rampant democracy, the Whigs were willing to support legislation for education. The Whig party represented the interests of the propertied, merchants, middle class farmers, and


\textsuperscript{83}Binder, \textit{Age of the Common School}, p. 36.
lawyers. It also included Unitarian humanitarians and philanthropists, for the 1830s and 1840s were years of crusades for social improvement. Prison reforms, fights for women suffrage and temperance, as well as schools, were supported for their ameliorating effects on crime and ignorance.

But the great contradiction inherent in the humanitarian creed was that its optimistic faith in progress and its belief in the possibility of overcoming evil was predicated upon a basic depravity in man. As with the lawyers, the belief in the difference of individuals because of environment demanded a belief in the overarching effect of good environments and bad. Man was the victim of his circumstances, and bad circumstances created bad men. It made little difference whether the natural depravity came from without or from within, for in either case the judgment was the same. The "good" environment was merely a mirror of the humanitarian's own environment, just as the Puritans tended to view election according to their own experience. Rejection of self interest became the only unpardonable sin, for it was proof that the ability to reason was impaired.

The emergence of the social work mind, as Dostoevski pointed out, is part and parcel of the same mentality that led to the emergence of the legal mind. They both stem from a belief that the good life can only be found in obedience to natural law; both are predicated upon a distrust of the excesses of freedom. The lawyers felt that unrestrained freedom would undermine the rights of property, surrendering the

republic to anarchy and destruction. The humanitarians believed unrestrained freedom would end in license and debauchery. The Grand Inquisitor could serve equally well to symbolize the aims of either conservative lawyers or forward looking humanitarians.

This is certainly not to suggest that the lawyers and humanitarians found themselves always on the same side of the issues of the day. Liberals such as William Ellery Channing, for example, would argue that property had more to fear from the avarice of business leaders than from laborers seeking enfranchisement. Also, taking a more liberal view of the enlightenment idea of universal rights, anti-slavery sentiments were commonly a part of the humanitarian creed. The lawyers, on the contrary, considered safety of property as a more important need than human rights. Both, for the most part however, were concerned more with the effects upon society resulting from ending or continuing slavery, than with the plight of the slaves themselves.

Whatever differences the humanitarians and lawyers did hold, their outlook and philosophy were very much alike, and the character and nature of their basic agreement is nowhere more evident than in their belief in the socializing and moralizing powers of the common school. To them it represented both a control of rampant democracy and a tool to create an environment that would counter the depravity that seemed so


evident in every corner of society. The symbol of this amalgamation of lawyer and humanitarian interests was Horace Mann.

Though Mann's name has become synonymous with a utopian view of society cultivated through education, he, like most other reformers of the day, felt the choice lay between that utopia and utter degradation. Only by taking all possible steps for the former could the latter be escaped. Quite optimistic that the laws of nature and civilization could be discovered and implemented, he equally believed that the failure to discover them could end in disaster. If he had faith that properly trained young men could discover those beautiful and harmonious laws, he was also convinced that if a single generation should pass by uneducated, all that had thus far been gained would be utterly lost.

All the evils of the age, said Mann, can be traced to the vicious or defective education of children. As he seemed to enjoy repeating, "If we permit the vultures' eggs to be incubated and hatched it will then be too late to take care of the lambs." As Mann saw it, each individual's life affects the whole of society. No individual is isolated in the world. As father, husband, worker, and citizen, his influence through time creates a Karma of good or evil. Society has no choice but to take unto itself each man, no matter how depraved or saintly.

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88 Ibid., p. 78.
89 Ibid., p. 41.
90 Ibid., p. 146.
Because the society suffers the effects of an individual's degradation as well, it is in society's best interest to support public education for all.  

Mann and other school reformers of the era sought a means to create a common experience for a people divergent from each other in many respects but sharing a common destiny. He argued the merit of the school lay in its ability to mold and direct individuals to accept and work for that destiny. Law, he said, had the failing of stepping in only after the damage had been done. The thief was removed from the streets, but only after he had injected his venom into society. Religion, with its sectarian nature, could never be a means to the good society since its imposition would mean the destruction of liberty. Yet the school was both a positive force for good and commensurate with a libertarian political creed. So Horace Mann packed away his law books and laid aside his Unitarian religion to create a common school in a common Christian atmosphere.

Though they were called common schools, the schools were far from common. Mann's concept of an education in a general Christian atmosphere turned out to have a peculiarly Unitarian ring. Similarly, other common school systems found that a common religious atmosphere was not easily established. Denominations fought bitterly against the

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93 Ibid., p. 157.
watered-down religion in the schools. The ranks were closed among disagreeing Protestant groups only when faced with the great wave of Catholic immigrants of the 1830s and 1840s. In those years nearly four million immigrants came to America. Characterized as the "very scum and dregs of human nature," the German and Irish Catholics aroused fear that they would subvert the republican way of life. In 1835, Samuel F. B. Morse warned, "that there is good reason for believing that the despots of Europe are attempting by the spread of Popery in this country, to subvert its free institutions." The great question to be decided, said Morse, is the question of Popery or Protestantism, absolutism or republicanism.

As more Catholics arrived in America, filling whole sections of the cities, fear of the Roman plan to subvert America was trumpeted from the press, tracts, magazines, and sermons. Native American associations were formed and a convent was burned in Massachusetts. Once again, as the prime agent of Americanization, the schools were called upon to defuse this threat to political harmony. As Benjamin Labaree, President of Middlebury College, argued, the large numbers of immigrants interfused


95 Ibid., p. 298.

96 Ibid.

in society was changing the identity of the American character. If the "Goths and Huns" were not to do to America what they did to Rome, he said, the reason will be found in the school.\textsuperscript{98}

If the demand for conformity voiced by Labaree expressed the views of great numbers of Americans who feared the threat of the immigrants, it still gives only one side of the picture. For the rhetoric of freedom for all, separation of church and state, and the commonalty of all could not be rejected. The idea may have been to use the schools as a political weapon, but the rhetoric behind that attempt took on a life of its own. Once the idea of commonalty, that is, true pluralism, was voiced, it could no longer be resisted. As Governor Seward, in support of Catholic efforts for educational reform stated, an American could not hate foreigners, for to do so was to hate what his own forefathers were.\textsuperscript{99} Despite his fear that the Catholics might be "Huns and Goths" Labaree also argued for laying aside prejudice and accepting the stranger. If the role of the school is to Americanize the immigrant, he said, it is also to prepare the native population to accept him.\textsuperscript{100}

For their own part, the Catholics seemed to understand the meaning of the common school well enough. They demanded that the Bible readings be discontinued, that anti-Catholic text books be removed, and in New York made a bold effort to gain control of their own schools

\textsuperscript{98}Lannie, "Emergence of Catholic Education," p. 297.

\textsuperscript{99}Cremin, Transformation of the School, p. 98.

\textsuperscript{100}Binder, Age of the Common School, p. 64.
under the Spencer plan. Community control of schools could be instituted in the city, they said, allowing Catholic sections to run their own schools. Catholic leaders in other cities fought for the end of Protestant monopoly on the culture of the school. Their efforts and minor successes in this regard opened them to the criticism of men like Horace Bushnell. An aristocratic blue blood of Boston society, the Congregationalist Bushnell complained in 1853 that the growing political power of the Catholics was undermining the Protestant culture of the schools. On the whole, the Catholic efforts at forcing Protestant America to allow a measure of genuine pluralism ended in failure. Under their criticism of sectarianism, the schools further watered-down their religious content or stopped it entirely. Never was a respect granted for a Catholic point of view. Finally wearying of the fight, Catholics withdrew from the public to parochial schools following the Civil War.

From the vantage point of the immigrant experience of the 1830s and 1840s, the common school seemed destined to remain a tool of the protectors of the social order. Yet, as stated earlier, the school through time and necessity was gaining new dimensions. If it was used to insure conformity it was also, over the years, being invested with more lofty ideals. If true equality of education was a fiction, as revisionist critics are finding, it became even more difficult to avoid acting on what it professed. If it could usually maintain itself

101Welter, Readings, p. 176.
102ibid.
against the claims that human rights applied equally to all in the classroom, it could not always do so. For better or worse the school was forced to give more and more credence to pluralism and less and less to its role of cementing the social order. The school was caught in a current that constantly moved it away from the original intent of the lawyers and those of related interests. No one realized this more keenly than did the Southerner. Instinctively he realized that the acceptance of free public education would lay the axe to the root of the institution of slavery.

The pro-slavery forces argued against common education as a leveling institution that would destroy the southern aristocratic social system. Teaching blacks, they argued, would simply make them rebellious slaves. Though they argued that the slaves were basically uneducable, proslavery people admitted a belief that it could have far-reaching effects. As Frederick Douglass wrote in his autobiography, the southern white invested reading with the same fearful respect as did the slaves, though of course, on opposite sides of the issue. Actually, as has been recently shown, more than twenty-five percent of the slave population were educated as craftsmen and skilled workers. Rather than a mass of uneducated field hands, the slaves represented a differentiated work force ranging from highly skilled artisans to unskilled laborers.

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105 Ibid., p. 29.
But the idea of vocational education caused no alarm. The meaning of
the southern fear of non-vocational education was the realization that
common education, regardless of its efficacy, had been invested with a
symbolism. It was a rite of passage, and once admitted to that rite,
a group could never truly remain subservient.

Consequently, critics of the common school argued that it would
result in a reduction of the quality of life, since a society could have
learning only where the leisure for education was not afforded to some
hard-working men who did not have time for reflection. 106 Just as the
logic of acceptance of the common school meant that aristocratic privilege
must end, its rejection ended in an opposing logic. Pro-slavery theor­
ists, by denying liberty to slaves, were finally driven by their logic
to repudiate liberty for everyone. George Fitzhough, for example,
argued that, "Liberty is an evil which government is intended to cor­
rect." 107 Other writers argued similarly, substituting words like
"society" or "civilization" for "government," as Rush Welter observed.
Because they began by denying liberty to Negro slaves, they ended by
demouncing freedom in all its customary manifestations.

The South was driven by the same fear that had driven their
northern brothers to the law -- the fear of freedom without limit. With­
out hierarchical structures to maintain the social fabric, it would tear
apart. Sartre in his study of bigotry observed that it is a stance

106 Welter, Popular Education, p. 133.
107 Ibid., p. 135.
toward life, a rejection of freedom than cannot remain confined to the object of his hate but must permeate all other areas of life as well. The pro-slavery theorists bear this observation out. Samuel F. B. Morse is typical of this, in that he began by fighting the immigrants, argued for slavery, and finally stated that "human freedom is disobedience to God."  

The common school had been supported by men wishing to inculcate greater respect and legitimacy for the law. By the 1850s, southern pro-slavery theorists saw it as a threat to law and property. Though in fact it still mostly operated to bring conformity and order, it began more and more to symbolize social equality, human right above order, gentility, and toleration. One reason for this was the subtle changes in the nature of the school that could not be avoided by the presence of different ethnic groups and social classes. This democratic process ended by evolving the school into a new national church, rejecting the rule of law.

The rejection of law as a national religion came with the failure of the law to reconcile the slavery struggle. The law and the lawyers were unable to find a solution, though they heartily tried through compromises, and legislation. The end came with the Dred Scott case. This was the final step of the question, for it was an argument over the two strands of American tradition that had fought each other since the first settlers.

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It was the dilemma of Natty Bumppo resurfacing to reveal a strain basic to the American character -- a belief in universal human rights above property rights and the individual's conscience over social responsibility. True to their sacred trust, the lawyers were forced to define Dred Scott as property and to protect the right of property over human rights. To have ruled otherwise would have been to open the flood gates to the anarchy that the law had been engaged in fighting for generations. Yet, somewhere within the American mind the solution was rejected, as the Civil War attests. Huck Finn spoke for the general will when, alone with the runaway slave on a raft, he decided to do the inexcusable -- to transgress the rights of property and save Jim.

To help a slave escape, he was sure, was an unpardonable sin. He felt like a scoundrel for being so callous as to steal old Miss Watson's slave when she had treated him right and never done him any harm. His American faith in the inviability of property could not be surmounted, for Miss Watson's ethical way was the only alternative to his father's lying and stealing. The only right thing to do was to write a letter to the old woman telling her where the slave was hiding. Yet, despite his better judgment he found the common humanity he shared with Jim outweighing his duty to protect the right of property.

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111 Ibid., p. 187.

112 Ibid.
"It was a close place," said Huck.

I took (the letter) up and held it in my hand. I was atrembling, because I'd got to decide, forever, betwixt two things, and I knowed it. I studied a minute, sort of holding my breath, and then I says to myself:

'All right then I'll go to hell' - and tore it up. 113

Faced with a choice between the two strands of American tradition, property rights and universal equality, the American mind was unable to repudiate its basic belief in the commonalty of human existence. The choice against slavery ended the American romance with the law. It was a choice for democracy and a rejection of aristocracy. It was a reaffirmation of the Jacksonian notion that civilization does not reside in an elect group but resides in all, and as such it was a repudiation of the Calvinism so basic to the American milieux. The school took upon itself the job of creating that common history out of which the diverse elements of America would be joined. The school as the new national church became a rite of passage, and the means of transmitting sanctity and sanity in an age in which no other means was possible. 114 From the repudiation of slavery to the Morrill Act of 1862, the choice affected all of American culture. Yet Americans have always had a way of beginning with a head of steam and then quickly tiring. Its history of reform,

113Ibid., p. 189.

114Mehl, Educational Ideals, p. 8.
as Finley Peter Dunne satirized, has never quite been able to last through even one administration. The momentary idealism vanished as white America began to feel guilty for paying too much attention to the plight of the Negro and for letting idealism get in the way of good business sense.

The promise of a genuine pluralism of opportunity got lost with the reemergence of a secular Calvinism that found its expression in the rise of Social Darwinism following the Civil War. Once again the fear of freedom created another check upon trust in the human condition. This time biology was to prove the election of the successful and to assuage the guilt for the success built upon the backs of the poor. But like the phoenix arising from its own ashes, the promise never really was quite able to be losted. The school was unable to shake off the weight of its own history.

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CHAPTER IV

THE ERA OF IDEOLOGY: SOCIAL DARWINISM AND REFORM DARWINISM

From the Civil War onward, race and race thinking became the central issue to be addressed in America. Whatever other issues may have been involved in that war, the question of freedom and the necessity that it be universal was central. For a fleeting moment the American soul affirmed the commonalty of all human life and with it the poet's prescription that the death of one man impoverishes all the rest of humanity. But such visions shake and rip at the delicate social balance created by men who fear the forces of hell are set about them and ready to fall upon them.

Hell has had many forms in the American imagination. For the Puritans it was conformity in Europe and then individualism in the wilderness. For the farmer it was the city, for the lawyer it was anarchy and for the white American after the Civil War it was the life of the Negro. In reality the list could go on almost forever. For in America more than any other place in the world, Sartre's definition applies: "Hell is other people."  

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1. Dubois, Souls of Black Folk, p. 54.
The vision of universal brotherhood passed and with it the resolve to carry it out in political and social terms. Jim Crow laws appeared in the South, and the North settled back to business as usual. Over forty years later W. E. B. DuBois would be confronted with the fact that he was a problem, that indeed the problem of the twentieth century was to be the problem of the color line.  

American life is and has always been essentially one of isolation. As Everett Ladd has remarked, the small town is our boyhood, and the city a guilty phase in our lives we seek to forget. But the suburb is truly our own in its lonely anonymity. If the American has always exuded a sense of self-confidence and optimism about the future, it is, says Octavio Paz, because he lives in a world constructed in his own image. It is his own mirror reflecting himself.  

Unable to accept the world in which he was born, the man who no longer wished to be English or French or German simply picked himself up and left. He started over in a new land to create a world in his own image of himself. Wishing to be free of the restraint of religious establishment, of Duke and Dauphin, he simply declared himself so. When he had had enough of freedom and wished restraint, again he simply volunteered his freedom to the restraining limits of the law. Or again, when

6 Ibid., p. 20.
the law forced a decision between institutionalized security and freedom. He chose to abolish slavery; for he could not make it square with the image of the man he had created. Fashioned from a mirror image, the American identity was a reaction against history. As such, its inherent difficulty was its essential negativity. The first colonists came not so much for freedom as to escape restraint. Both American law and her Calvinist religious faith were less positive ideals of reality and man's responsibility for that reality than reactions against excesses or tendencies thrusting themselves forward and demanding an answer. Huck Finn could find his way out of his dilemma of turning or not turning in Jim only be negation. "All right," he said, "then I'll go to hell." He could find no justification for his act in law, religion, nor his sense of fair play. Like his creator, Mark Twain, he could find his morality only in opposition to what was around him.

Perhaps this is one reason why the drive for Negro freedom lost momentum after the initial fervor following the Civil War. A solid basis could be felt for opposing chattel slavery as antithetic to the American tradition, but for a positive belief in the meaning of the Black experience and of its necessity for the vitality of the whole society, there was not the least consciousness. Here was the poverty of an identity based upon negation and fashioned out of a mirror image. Without substance it could not choose what truly was substantive when faced with it. It could not embrace that which was different from

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7Clemens, The Adventure of Huck Finn, p. 189.
itself, for it could reflect only the self-image of the white Anglo-Saxon placed before it. Reality was only found in the self.

According to Octavio Paz this is the secret of white Anglo-Saxon alienation:

... He believes in the purifying effects of asceticism, and the consequences are his cut of work for work's sake, his serious approach to life, and his conviction that the body does not exist, or at least cannot lose -- or find -- itself in another body. Every contact is a contamination. Foreign races, ideas, customs and bodies carry within themselves the germs of perdition and impurity. Social hygiene complements that of the soul and the body.

From the beginning of American history its character had been shaped by the immigration of Europeans to its shores. Peopled mainly by the English, Scottish-Irish, Germans, Dutch and French, a certain homogeneity had emerged. The mixture had gone so far, even before the Revolution, that one French observer could talk about an American type as a new national character. Until the 1840s, immigration continued for the most part from these same countries and at a slow enough pace to

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8 It should be pointed out that white Anglo-Saxon Protestant refers to an ideological position, not to a cultural group. The homogenization of peoples even before the great emigration of the last half of the 19th century made any claim of racial or cultural purity specious. The concept "Anglo-Saxon," writes Goldman in Rendezvous with Destiny (New York: Knopf, 1956), was left intentionally vague. It referred to anyone who agreed to the conservative status quo and for the most part did not bother to worry about origins. 'Anybody can tell an Anglo-Saxon,' said John W. Brugess, a professor of Constitutional law at Columbia. 'An Anglo-Saxon is a man who instinctively knows that liberty can not survive trade unions and other socialistic schemes from Eastern Europe.' p. 69.


allow for easy assimilation.

But beginning after the 1840s the speed of immigration became more intense. Following the great Irish potato blight, poor farmers began to pour out of Ireland seeking to escape famine. Hundreds of thousands of Irish came to America. The migration continued steadily until by 1914 some four million Americans were of immediate Irish ancestry. 11 Germans came in huge numbers after 1848, but reached peak numbers during the 1860s and 1870s. They were followed by the Norwegians and Swedes, over four million of whom came to the United States between 1860 and 1880. 12

The great change, however, came in the last quarter of the century. Immigration from northern Europe slowed and great waves of southern and eastern Europeans began to arrive. Fourteen million immigrants came during that period, followed by another 14 million between 1900 and 1915. 13 These people seemed to be alien, a threat to the American identity as shaped by the first northern European immigrants. Strange accents, different physical characteristics made them suspect as did their Catholicism and Judaism. Native Americans, unable to accept their own ethnic characters were hardly ready to accept the validity of the Catholic Pole or Russian Jew for the American experience. The rabid

11 Ibid., p. 97.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid., p. 99.
racism and anti-Catholicism F. W. B. Morse voiced in the 1840s had not been rejected by the American mind. The character of America was drastically changed and that was not an easy prospect for men who had fashioned a national identity from the mirror and who now no longer recognized themselves when they looked into it. The country was no longer their own. The most classic example of this sense of displacement was voiced by Henry Adams in his *Education*. Standing on a dock in New York he realized that America was more the home of the Russian Jew working in front of him than it was his own, though his ancestors had created and led it. The same sentiments were voiced by a New York social worker, Robert Hunter in 1904, though less philosophically and with a great deal more bitterness. Walking among a group of Hungarians and Bohemians who had been thrown out of work he felt the frustration of being unable to communicate, unable to oppose or sympathize with them in their plight (though it is not quite clear who asked him to do either). He fumed, "I was an utter stranger in my own city."  

Hunter, like most other Americans who had their roots in the earlier migrations, saw these new southern and eastern Europeans as different and as such destructive to the America they knew. "Only the student of those ethnic changes wrought by great migratory movements, such as the one we witness in our day, can have any idea of the racial

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modifications which are likely to result from the coming of these strange people from all parts of the world," he said. He warned that far-reaching change in America's national character would result, that the American type must change in response to the influences of new racial stocks. He catalogued the horrors inevitable in the wake of these new influences: stature would be decreased and the skull would become shorter and broader. Psychological changes would occur, as well. "What the final man will be," he solemnly warned, "no one can tell." Therefore he urged legislation to control immigration making sure that only the 'better class' of people should enter the country.

For Hunter the new forces and new languages were a threat to the American heritage:

> The direct descendents of the people who fought for and founded the republic and who gave us a rich heritage of democratic institutions are being displaced by the slavic Balkan and Mediterranean peoples.

It is, said Hunter, a question of babies and birth rates. He was afraid not of a malthusian population explosion but of the genetic quality of the children being born. Greater immigration meant less pure native births. Intermingling of peoples would indefinately lower the standard

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16 Ibid., p. 53.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid., p. 53.
19 Ibid., p. 60.
of human existence he argued, and therefore by allowing immigration America was committing race suicide. 20

The ideas expressed by Hunter above, dominated the years between the Civil War and World War I. They were expressed in two apparently opposite views which in reality were based upon the very same premises. The one was social Darwinism, a conservative individualism that crudely applied Darwin's survival of the fittest to social life. The other was the reformist spirit that culminated in progressivism and which sprang up in opposition to social Darwinism. Eric Goldman, in his book *Rendez-vous with Destiny*, called it reform Darwinism for this reason. 21 Both viewed the urbanization of America in pathological terms, seeing it as corrupting of values and leading to degeneracy of the spirit as well as the body. Both viewed the world in terms of a secular Calvinism in which the elect experts alone could adequately run the world. The masses should, they both argued, accept the superior wisdom of these experts, realizing that whatever good they are able to enjoy in this world comes only through their grace.

For the social Darwinist, the expert was the man who had proven himself the most fit by achieving financial and political power. The great industrialists such as Vanderbilt and Gould, Morgan and Rockefeller, represented the kinds of men the Darwinists held up as examples of the


highest expression of the human species. It was these men who were the
saviors of humanity. They were like mutants in the biological realm.
By their innovative ability they increased industrial efficiency creating
more jobs, benefiting the society as a whole.22

Social Darwinism with its catch phrases of the survival of the
fittest, and the struggle for existence, gave the force of natural law
to a laissez faire competitive society. It provided a guiltless fatal-
ity to the disproportion of wealth by declaring that those who had made
it financially deserved to have done so on their own merit. Once more,
it promised that in the end their success would lead to the improvement
of the whole race of mankind. Compassion was thus shown to be counter-
productive and acceptance of hard-headed reality become the highest
virtue.23

This idea was not new and did not have to wait for Darwin's
voyage on the beagle to gain a hearing in American life. It was a stan-
dard economic argument voiced by Malthus and Ricardo long before Darwin.
Both saw the world in terms of increasing demands and limited resources
to meet those demands. Ricardo's "Iron law of wages" said that the
better the standard of living the more workers there would be fighting
for their subsistence. Malthus applied the same iron law to population.
Just as the amount of capital for labor wages was limited, the produc-
tivity of the land was limited. Poverty and famine were simply natural

22 Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought,
23 Ibid., p. 6.
laws of balance.

The most popular and influential example of this Darwinism before Darwin was the sociology of Herbert Spencer. Actually Spencer's thought was more of a metaphysical philosophy than a sociology. He foresaw the improvement of the human race as the effect of heredity. The poorest genetic specimens would be weeded out leaving a stronger and better population. Their children would in turn undergo the same weeding further improving the race. And so it went \textit{ad infinitum}.\textsuperscript{24} Spencer had taken Malthus' theory and added the idea that the struggle for existence led to progress.\textsuperscript{25}

Darwin himself, like Spencer, had simply used Malthus' categories to explain the biological laws he had found. His theory of evolution was a conscious verification of the common wisdom of the day.\textsuperscript{26} What Darwin's theory did was to give a scientific credence to a "might is right" interpretation of human existence.\textsuperscript{27}

Darwin was immediately hailed in America unlike the cool reception he received in England. America was in the process of reorientating its practically-minded faith to science. Not quite comfortable with either religion or law, its own practicality was tentively being tried. The resulting prosperity, expressed in burgeoning industry, technological advancement and improved living, seemed to verify its choice. The


\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., pp. 123-124.

\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., pp. 13-25.

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., p. 91.
entire culture turned toward the vitality of steam and steel. Walt Whitman gave voice to the lusty faith America had in her know-how and in her energy to put it to use. And even the academic community was affected. Under the influence of the German Universities, the American college began to move toward more research and experimentation and away from the liberal arts programs. Harvard elected a chemist, Charles William Eliot, as its president in 1869, showing the growing power of the scientific temperament. The founding of John Hopkins University in 1876 marked the first institution devoted to research in America. It was also free of any religious connection and promptly invited Thomas Huxley, famous evolutionist and anticleric to give an address.

Despite early resistance to certain anti-religious aspects of Darwin's theory by old line clerics in the universities, their resistance was quickly swept aside. William Graham Sumner, for example, a leading social Darwinist caused a great deal of excitement at Yale in the early 70's because of his views. But by 1877, Yale's Peabody Museum had accepted evolutionism and the battle was over.

"Ten or fifteen years ago," said Whitelow Ried in an address he delivered at Dartmouth College in 1873, "the staple subject here for reading and talk was English poetry. Now it is English science."

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28 Ibid., p. 19.
29 Ibid., p. 21.
30 Ibid., p. 20.
31 Ibid., p. 21.
Social Darwinism took on the aspects of a religion. As Henry Adams saw it, "Natural selection seemed a dogma to be put in the place of the Athanasian creed; it was a form of religious hope, a promise of ultimate perfection." But it was a strange kind of religion, a secular religion geared to minds without the least trace of religious sentiment. It was the Calvinism of Malthus and of their fathers with their belief in election and the natural depravity of men, especially other men, cut loose from its sources and reasserting itself in the logical minds of scientific men who would not have been caught dead reading theology. It was no mere coincidence that William Graham Sumner with his respect for the forgotten man, the frugal hard working craftsman who refuses charity and somehow manages to survive, and his philosophy of stoic pessimism which urged men to face up to the hardships of existence, should be the son of a Scottish immigrant craftsman who worked hard, was frugal but never achieved a secure life of ease and just happened to be a strict Calvinist.

Social Darwinism besides being a justification for a coldly competitive business-oriented society also served to create an image of the growth of society, an image of slow and unhurried change as necessary to sound development. Whether in the pessimism of Sumner, or in the optimism of Spencer, a calm, slow, orderly process was the ideal. This

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34 Hofstadter, Social Darwinism, p. 7.
made Social Darwinism a conservative movement. Yet, at the same time, it was a peculiarly progressive conservatism. In its refusal to break the mold of society to accelerate change, its distrust of reformers and revolutionists, its concepts of natural rights and equalitarianism, it strongly resembled classical liberalism.\(^35\) While men like Carnegie, Rockefeller and Morgan were political conservatives they were economic innovators.\(^36\) As Richard Hofstadter observed, the roles of conservative and liberal have been so often intermingled and reversed that they no longer have any clear meaning. Certainly these labels became hopelessly confused under Social Darwinism with its dynamism and expansionism on one level and status quoism on another. But if these labels became confused within Social Darwinism itself, how much more did they become confused when the opponents of Darwinism in social life turned out to be an equally mixed bag.\(^37\)

The unabashedly ideological use of evolution by the Social Darwinists invited attack from more liberal quarters. Edward Ross, a progressive sociologist said, "Darwinism strips the commonplace man of the dignity that attached to him as a son of God, and, moreover, gives the successful a chance to parade themselves as the fittest."\(^38\) He went on to call Social Darwinism a brutal selfishness as old as the ice age.\(^39\)

\(^35\) Ibid., p. 8.
\(^36\) Ibid., p. 9.
\(^37\) Ibid.
Yet as Eric Goldman observed, few if any progressives desired to repudiate Darwinism's basic premises. They were, he says, "sons of the nineteenth century, entranced by science, confirmed Darwinians." Like the conservatives they opposed, they adopted to their own purposes the ideology at hand. It was a reaction by negation to an ideology that was itself built upon negation. Their self-proclaimed mission was to desolve the power of conservative Darwinism while leaving evolutionism intact. A key method for doing this was found in the Marxian analysis of economics. Marx held that social ideas appearing to be objective facts gained through unbiased thought were really only the rationalization of economic interests. Since the conservatives had attempted to gain public acceptance of their ideas by pandering to the American belief that success proved worth, the reform Darwinists would place their bet upon an equally strong strain of the American character: the disapproval of selfish acquisition. Social Darwinism was faced with an ideological debate. If the conservatives took a particular stand the Reform party automatically took its opposite. The former argued against state and humanitarian intervention to alleviate suffering because it tampered with the operation of natural selection. The latter argued for state and humanitarian intervention because a thorough-going evolutionism suggested

40 Ibid., p. 72.
41 Ibid., p. 73.
42 Ibid., p. 75.
43 Ibid.
that rapid change of institutions could and should occur. If the Social
Darwinists pointed to a Rockefeller or Carnegie as naturally superior,
the Reformers would explain him away by saying he had the advantage of
a better environment. The Social Darwinists and their antagonists
fought over the cause of degenerate classes in society, especially the
immigrant and the Negro slum-dwellers. One side argued for genetic in-
feriority and the other argued cultural inferiority. But neither ques-
tioned the basic assumption that underlay the debate: that perhaps the
immigrant slum-dwellers and the Negro were not degenerate at all.

As Eric Goldman points out, the result of this definition by
negation was a thorough-going relativism. Wherever progressivism
touched American life it created an atmosphere that suggested truth was
not fixed but relative to economic interest. There was a great deal of
truth in this view. And yet, it easily became an escape from anything
being fixed for a generation wishing freedom from all limitations.
While it denied dogmatic absolutism it allowed no means of honoring iden-
tity or of finding values beyond individual selfishness. Reformers like
Herbert Croly, Jane Addams and John Dewey consequently worked to decul-
ture ethnic groups, while the progressive era saw the advent of accomoda-
tionist Reform Judaism and Booker T. Washington's policy of Negro sub-
servience.

The youth rebellion of the sixties followed this same pattern.
Without a positive belief to supplant what they felt to be the bankruptcy

44 Ibid., p. 75.
of their parents' values, the youth had only the No of rebellion. Whatever they heard from the lips of their parents, they reacted against by taking the opposite side. The result, as the 1970's have shown, was that whatever impetus to social justice which spurred the revolt died in a fog of relativism. 'Do your own thing' came to mean that no one was responsible for anyone else; that Black freedom was not more important than women's freedom or gay freedom or Indian freedom. All issues became equally important or unimportant.

As Karl Mannheim pointed out, the multiplicity of world-views resulting from the end of a static social order was an historical event in Western culture. The breakdown of the church as sole judge of truth and the resulting growth of a mobile class structure with different interests dated at least from the Reformation. The result of this was the impossibility of men any longer agreeing on the nature of reality. Facts no longer brought men to the same conclusions; definitions no longer served as a basic form of mutual understanding because words meant different things to different men. As society split itself into divergent interest groups any sense of a common goal to give meaning to existence was lost. The destruction of a basis for finding truth within the individual's own experience, as the philosophies of Hume and Kant realized, meant that only analysis could create a collective world-view. Science promised to take men out of their self-interested ideas about

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47 Ibid., p. 15.
reality by giving them the means of achieving true objectivity.

But, what became painfully clear during the later nineteenth and early twentieth century was that analysis itself was equally given to differing interpretations of the meaning of facts and experience. That is, for example, capitalist science appeared quite different from Socialist science. Prince Kropotkin saw the meaning of evolution in the ideal of the cooperation of life for the benefit of all. Symbiosis the interdependence of life, to him suggested the lesson to be learned from evolution. Huxley derived an opposite interpretation of nature, "Red in tooth and claw," and supporting the idea of competition. As already shown, the conservative forces and reformers equally found their own ideological bias within the same Darwinism. Under the influence of Marx's analysis of industrial society, the political nature of ideas was unmasked. What had passed for objective thought was shown to have been based upon class interest and therefore, was wholly biased. Political discussion, says Mannheim, possesses a character quite different from academic discussion. It seeks not only to prove itself correct but seeks also to demolish the basis for the opponents social and intellectual existence.

The nineteenth century began the process of politization of all areas of life. As Ellul has shown, the politization of life consists

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48 Ibid., p. 19.
49 Hofstadter, Social Darwinism, p. 95.
50 Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia, p. 38.
of taking autonomy away from every act making every aspect of life a mere reflection of political disorganization. In our time we might point to abortion, women's rights and race as examples. The fundamental nature of this politization is to unmask.\textsuperscript{51} Realizing the social nature of thought, political discussion seeks to bring to the light of day the unconscious collective motivations which form the basis for the individual's thought. It is first and foremost a weapon to be used against an opponent. It is never an argument aimed at finding a common truth. The result of this unmasking is to divide reality into "two slogan-like concepts, ideology and utopia." Mannheim explains the nature of this new reality as follows:

The concept "Ideology" reflects the one discovery which emerged from political conflict, namely, that ruling groups can become so intensively interest-bound to a situation that they are simply no longer able to see certain facts which would undermine their sense of domination . . .

The concept "Utopia" reflects the opposite discovery of the political struggle, namely that certain oppressed groups are intellectually so strongly interested in the destruction and transformation of a given condition of society that they unwittingly see only those elements in the situation which tend to negate it.\textsuperscript{52}

The reduction of all conflict to 'ideology' and 'Utopia' accepted the relativity of every point of view. That is, that truth does not exist

\textsuperscript{51}Ibid., p. 39.

\textsuperscript{52}Mannheim, \textit{Ideology and Utopia}, p. 52.
but only combating propagandas. By propaganda, of course, is meant not false statements but the marshalling of facts to provoke a particular action.\(^5^3\) The facts may be quite true, but it is their selection and emphasis which creates the desired end. Thought is used politically rather than morally or aesthetically. This process of the politization of thought and of human concerns was shared by the conservative Darwinists on the 'right' and the reform Darwinists on the 'left.' Within that pattern created by an 'ideology' answered by a 'utopia' all thought was approached as propaganda and counter-propaganda. This process of politization marks a focal point in understanding the meaning of progressivism.

To understand the idea of politization, the reduction of every area of life to a hidden political motive, it is necessary to look at populism; for progressivism was the political heir to this third party movement of the 1890s. Populism set the stage for the relativism that became progressivism's weapon against the Social Darwinists and eventually destroyed the movement itself. The basis for this was the populists' conspiratorial theory of society. Believing that all history after the Civil War could be explained as a huge conspiracy of international money power, the populists argued not just that conspiracies exist in history but that history itself is a conspiracy.\(^5^4\)


\(^5^4\) Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, pp. 70-71.
That is, history itself was viewed as a pathological state of affairs. The great inequities in the American society certainly gave a great deal of support to this idea. Following the close of the Civil War the country entered a period of unparalleled economic expansion. With that expansion, created by the rise of great industry, came a great deal of ugliness and corruption. Members of the aristocracy, like Henry Adams, as we have seen, were dumb from the shock of seeing their former position in American life being usurped. The overwhelming events of industrial growth and settlement of the west, rising prospects and the promise of opportunity stifled descent for the equally growing disproportion of wealth and the growth of a class society. The farmers, however, with their Jeffersonian distrust of urbanization saw themselves being caught in a squeeze between the vice of industry and the commercialization of agriculture. The farmers saw their former prosperity being taken from them by monied interests. They saw their plight as a struggle between wealth producers and wealth owners.\textsuperscript{55} The owners were engaged in a conspiracy to create two nations, one rich, one poor; one of labor and one of capital.\textsuperscript{56} In answer to this conspiracy the farmers welded themselves into the populist party, the first major third party movement in American history.\textsuperscript{57} "We meet," said the populist platform of 1892, "in the midst of moral, political and material ruin."\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., p. 66.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., p. 56.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., p. 61.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., p. 67.
Corruption dominates the ballot box, the Legislatures, the Congress and touches even the ermine of the bench. The people are demoralized . . . The newspapers are largely subsidized or muzzled, public opinion silenced, business prostrated, homes covered with mortgages, labor impoverished and land concentrating in the hands of the capitalist. The urban workmen are denied the right to organize for self-protection . . . The fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few, unprecedented in the history of mankind.59

The populist party was built and bred upon a conspiratorial view of history. The rural identity of the party gave fertile soil to the ever-present American fear of the remote and alien. Basic to their program was the old agrarian hatred for the city, and with it the immigrants who were pouring into it daily. As early as 1885 a Kansas preacher, Josiah Strong, published Our Country, which depicted the city as a cancerous growth upon the land.60 Hamlin Garland, visiting Chicago in the late 1880s, remembered assuming it must swarm with thieves and seriously doubted his chances of making it from the railroad station to his hotel unharmed.61 Thomas E. Watson wrote of the immigrants pouring into the cities, "The scum of creation has been dumped upon us." He continued: "The vice and crime which they have planted in our midst are sickening and terrifying." Typical of the populist conspiratorial mindset, he blamed this upon the greed of the industrial leaders who wished cheap labor without concern for America's future.62

59 Ibid.
60 Ibid., p. 82.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid., p. 83.
The populists spurned a broad-based labor-farmer coalition, partly because of the strength of the midwestern segment of the party who were determined to make free silver a cornerstone of the party platform in the Presidential election of 1896. But more deeply, the reason lay in its conspiratorial view of history.

A conspiratorial view of history assumed that the evils of the day were consciously planned and executed. International interests were involved in a hidden but deliberate attempt to gain control of government and to crush all those who stood in their way. The only means of fighting such a conspiracy was to unmask their designs. As Mannheim observed, the weapon of political unmasking cannot long remain the property of only one group. It soon becomes the property of every group against other groups and finally against themselves. This is what underlay the disintegration of what appeared to be the rising prospects of the populist party. Though they had many common concerns with the laborer in the city, the populists never cultivated them for they distrusted the aims of labor and their demands for higher wages and shorter hours. The socialists were cold-shouldered, at least in part, because of the populist fear of Jewish influence in their ranks. In the South, the farmers' alliance, a coalition of black and white farmers which was gaining power and winning elections, was crushed by conservatives' appeal

63 Goldman, Rendezvous with Destiny, p. 46.
64 Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia, p. 39.
65 Goldman, Rendezvous with Destiny, p. 47.
66 Ibid., p. 48.
to racist fears. The populist conspiratorial view set them against the world and against themselves. They were not likely to be successful against such odds. But the collapse of the populist party was offset by the growing strength of the progressives.

While populism had been rural and provincial the progressives were middle class and urban. The farmers had rebelled out of economic desperation during an economic crisis. The progressives were from the ranks of the well-to-do and gained power at a time of economic prosperity. The populists came from the Jacksonian tradition while the progressives were the sons of the aristocratic mugwumps who were the traditional enemies of the masses. Both, however, were affected deeply by the increasing industrialization of America. Just as the farmers felt their world being destroyed in the rise of cities on the prairies and themselves being "crucified on a cross of gold" in the 1890s, the lawyers, professors, clergy, and other professionals and members of the best society felt that immigration, government corruption and business monopolies were destroying their's at the turn of the century.

Certainly one reason for the progressive elan of the turn of the century was that the populists had sensitized the entire country. The professionals who had traditionally supported conservative Darwinist ethics no longer were satisfied with its doctrines. According to

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68 Hofstadter, *Age of Reform*, p. 131.
Hofstadter the impetus for progressivism was found in the loss of status of professional life.\(^6^9\) As business interest controlled the college and as it engulfed the law and transformed the church, the result was a demand for academic freedom from men like Charles Beard and the economist Richard Ely; and insurgency against the corporate control of lawyers, from men like Charles Evans Hughes and Louis D. Brandeis.\(^7^0\) Similarly, the social gospel of Rausenbush and Washington Gladden sought to make the church relevant once again by addressing itself to the pressing industrial evils of the time.\(^7^1\) Eric Goldman traces the progressive movement to the increased influence of German idealism in American academic circles. As Germany became "the place to study" the German Hegelian system made the lightweight philosophy of Herbert Spencer seem a woefully inadequate basis for social theory.\(^7^2\)

In any event, whatever the particular sources, progressivism was an expression of an age. From the American Revolution and before, perhaps from the Reformation and before, the movement of the great masses had been underway. Increasingly the lowest stratas of society were demanding a share in history. As Bernard Mehl has written, the masses would no longer be content to patiently bear their anonymous lot under the direction of an elite who alone were in on the true meaning of a

\(^6^9\) Ibid., pp. 148-157.
\(^7^0\) Ibid., p. 160.
\(^7^1\) Ibid., pp. 148-160.
\(^7^2\) Goldman, Rendezvous with Destiny, pp. 79-80.
providential history. They would have it that they themselves should join in creating their own history. But creating history is not without its price. The death of providential history, as Nietzsche prophesied, was the death of God. With God died all basis for common values and truth above personal interest. The Nihilism that Nietzsche foresaw was the crushing weight of relativism. What did we do, asked Nietzsche, when we unchained this earth from its sun?

Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving now? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward in all directions? Is there any up or down left? Are we not straying as though an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space?

For humanity lost in the aimless wastes of relativism, Nietzsche could see escape only by giants of soul who would by embracing life completely bring about a revaluation of all values, values gained through the conquering of adversity instead of submission to it.

The warning was echoed by the other great critics of the nineteenth century; Stendhal, Burckhardt, Kierkegaard and Dostoevski; who warned that without God all must be permitted. All in common agreed that the escape from relativity could be had only by each individual's struggle with life by which he would appropriate not his own truth but a

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73 Bernard Mehl, The Educational Presence, unpublished manuscript, p. 18.


75 Ibid., pp. 501-507.

truth above himself which all others could share. The danger they fore­
saw was the temptation to relinquish that individual freedom for the
security of order and well-being. That is, of the individual handing his
freedom to an expert. It was exactly this trust in the expert that the
progressives offered.

The men and women drawn to the progressive ideology were those
who fully felt the marching of the masses into history. The increasing
socialist agitation of the nineties culminated in the great Pullman
Strike of 1894; the tradesman alliance of the Knights of Labor was re­
placed by the American Federation of Labor in 1896. The masses were
demanding a share in the larger society. The progressives were respon­
sive to this push, and being much more urban in base than the populists
were much more concerned with creating a better life for the laborers and
urban poor. The progressive, typically, was middle class and Protestant.
As a protestant movement it was upset with greed and corruption and
especially with hypocrisy. Consequently it fought political and economic
bias, worked for sanitary and safety reform for laborers and had a
strong bent toward women's rights and tax reform, but it equally held a
protestant distrust for the masses. Despite its claims of truly bring­
ing democracy to fruition and its rhetoric of "the people" it quickly
made strong qualifications about who "the people" were and how they
should make their wishes felt. For example, they voiced many of the
same fears about the immigrant that the populists had felt. Indeed,
the race rhetoric of the progressives could be as virulent as the Social
Darwinists', as we have seen with the social worker Robert Hunter. The
progressives' answer to the problem of the immigrant was twofold. First,
a strong government control as the only means to limitation of immigration and of social legislation. Second, a process of Americanization by which the individual would leave behind his ethnic identity and join the mainstream of American society.

The American identity of the mirror coupled with the Darwinian revolution had brought forth a relativism which made identity as a Greek or Jew, Italian or Negro a divisive form of irresponsible self-interest. Accepting the political nature of reality described by Mannheim, the progressives could posit only one escape from atomized group interest: the expert. The expert, by superior training, would formulate the answer to society's need and battle the forces of illness and ignorance in the slums. The expert was the reform Darwinist's answer to the Social Darwinist's captain of industry. He was, in its most classic form, the sociologist.

The roots of American sociology, were firmly rooted in the Darwinian era. Herbert Spencer, through William Graham Sumner, had been the basis for the first American sociology. The sociology of Spencer and Sumner stressed the biological determinism of man in society and justified social inequality. This point of view was attacked by the liberal Frank Lester Ward. In his book, Dynamic Sociology, published in 1883, Ward countered with the doctrine of the expert. Social planning, he said, should replace the messy and inefficient struggle of biological selection. Man's brains should be used actively to create a new world rather than to merely submit to nature. Ward consequently urged a stronger government who would have the expertise and strength to carry
out needed reforms and programs. In essence Ward was advocating a sort of platonic group of sociologist-kings who by their efficient planning could build the structures necessary for a better life. The pioneering work of Ward was followed by an army of sociologists and social workers, like E. A. Ross and Charles Horton Cooley, Jane Addams, Albion Small, the teacher of Dewey, and a thousand lesser known names.

These people were quite aware that they were living in a time when democracy was in the air, and for the most part voiced their approval. E. A. Ross in Changing America countered arguments against enfranchisement and said that this event was not mob rule but a public necessity. Jane Addams urged that immigrants be brought into government. Social workers sponsored settlement houses and worked toward assimilating the immigrant into the American mainstream. But underlying this optimism was a belief that their own Protestant middle class background was the only acceptable model for this new society. Ross for example, also wrote about the degeneracy of the immigrants and unselfconsciously praised imperialism for its giving other races "impressive object-lessons in good government." Both Ross and Charles Horton Cooley, author of Human Nature and the Social Order, raised the specter of race suicide suggesting that fecundity had a negative correlation to

78 Ross, Changing America, pp. 1-6.
80 Ross, Changing America, pp. 17-21.
the quality of people.  

In contrast, Jane Addams, who founded Hull House, wrote with a great deal of sympathy for the immigrants. She criticized the cold impersonal bureaucracy for failing to equal the warmth of the corrupt ward bosses. It was the prying, judging nature of the charities and government service organizations which insulted the immigrant's dignity that was at the base of their support of the corrupt politician, she said. Increased crime, Addams charged, was a result of the lack of respect given to a foreign culture. She even urged that the immigrant be brought into the actual government of the city. Yet, at base her program was a patronizing one. The immigrant was to be allowed in the working of government not in order to bring a fresh perspective to bear but to learn to accept the end of his own way of life. By bringing the immigrant into government, said Jane Addams, he will be forced acquiesce.

A Greek American, slaughtering sheep reminiscent of the Homeric tradition can be made to see the effect of the improvised slaughter on his neighbor's health and the right of the city to prohibit the slaughtering, only as he perceives the development of city government on its modern basis.


83 Addams, Newer Ideals of Peace, pp. 51-53.

84 Ibid., pp. 63-65.

85 Ibid., p. 73.
She continues:

... He should be given the job of street cleaning and sewer digging in which he first engages to understand the relation of these simple offices to city government. 86

Miss Addams sums up by saying that at certain stages of moral development a person (the immigrant) can act only in his own interest. It is a long step, she says, from this to becoming concerned with a community as a whole even without hope of individual improvement. 87 Though she castigated reformers for trying to change the slum dwellers by lectures instead of example, she assumed that they were duped and taken in by the bad example of the bosses. 88 It was, of course, her burden and the burden of the other social workers who followed her lead, to provide this higher example. As a result the social worker always had the relation of a doctor to patient and not friend to friend as Jane Addams hoped it would be. Martin Buber once said that a doctor could never have an I-Thou relation with a patient. The patient always comes out of a need and therefore must always be lower in his own eyes and in the reality of the situation. 89 Similarly, though Jane Addams and those who accepted her model celebrated the warmth and goodness of the slum dwellers, the reality was that it was always they who had to change in order to gain a place in the democracy she espoused. The benevolent social work model

86 Ibid., p. 74.
87 Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, p. 227.
88 Ibid., pp. 228-237.
which believed social morality and harmony could be built through soap and water was of a piece with Ross's justification of imperialism because it cleaned up dirty cities in the far east. It was also a form of imperialism, but a psychological imperialism rather than an economic one. Paz's suggestion that physical hygiene corresponds to a spiritual hygiene that fears contamination by other races' ideas and values should be kept in mind.

The Negro too suffered from the rise of race thinking which had subsided following Reconstruction and the southern populist alliance of poor farmers, black and white. Suddenly it burst forth in rabid hatred and the passage of Jim Crow laws in the 1890s. Ray Stanard Baker, writing of the Negro's place in the North, admitted that as they fled the South and poured into northern cities discrimination was growing. Sociologists like Cooley brought the new science to the Negro problem.

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90 Soap and water held a curiously symbolic meaning for the progressives with their emphasis upon environmental rather than genetic inferiority. Ross was able, for example, to praise colonialism because it brought clean docks to Hong Kong and "spotless asphalt" to Africa. See Changing America, p. 21. Similarly, Jane Addams placed hygiene as a gauge of moral advancement. See Democracy and Social Ethics, pp. 220-230.

91 See C. Vann Woodward, The Strange Career of Jim Crow, p. 103. Woodward lays at least a portion of the blame for the resurgence of race hatred in the mid 1890s to the support of the Darwinist social theory of Sumner, and sociologist like Franklin Giddings who gave them scientific credence.

He admitted the nature/nurture argument to be a complete confusion:

How far is the present inferior condition of that race remediable by education and social improvement, how far is it a matter of germ plasm, alterable only by selection? The whole Negro-white problem hinges on this question which we cannot answer with assurance.\textsuperscript{93}

Cooley, revealingly, thought the problem analogous to the question of criminality and asked how much education would be tried and when sterilization should begin. Undaunted by doubt, Cooley looked to science for an eventual answer. "At present," he said, "the best we can do is try everything that seems likely to improve the germ plasm or social process."\textsuperscript{94}

Cooley was not alone in his opinions on race, they were so basic a part of American sociology. As W. E. B. DuBois bitterly complained:

While sociologists gleefully count his bastards and his prostitutes, the very soul of the toiling, sweating black man is darkened by the shadow of a vast despair. Men call it the shadow prejudice and learnedly explain it as the natural defence of culture against barbarism, learning against ignorance, purity against crime, the "higher" against the "lower" races. To which the Negro cries Amen! And swears that to so much of this strange prejudice as is founded on just homage to civilization, culture righteousness and progress he humbly bows and meekly does obeisance. But before that nameless prejudice that leaps beyond all this he stands helpless, dismayed and well-nigh speechless; before that personal disrespect and mockery, the ridicule and systematic humiliation, the distortion of fact and the


\textsuperscript{94}Ibid., pp. 18-19.
wanton license of fancy, the cynical ignoring of the better and the boisterous welcoming of the worst, the all-pervading desire to inculcate disdain for everything black. . . .

Dubois was one of the first Americans to realize the ideological basis of the apparently objective studies of science. Rather than being escape from relativity through universal objective truth it had revealed itself as an ideological tool. With Dostoevski he realized that the love of humanity in general covered an inability to love man in the particular. Dubois writes of this realization as a conversion which required him to renounce a universalist progressivism that had served as the foundation of his education at Harvard and Berlin. In Vincent Harding's words:

He had heard the misleading call to life as a "universal" man, meaning in stark colonial terms an evolute, a man beyond his people, beyond his roots, beyond his ancestors -- and therefore beyond his children. . .

Harding continues:

Though he took many paths which he later considered mistaken ones, his life demonstrated the fact that the truly universal man became such not by leaping past his people into some ethereal universe, but by fighting his way through the bloody gates of his own particular ancestral experience. For Dubois that was the way to the universal nature of truth itself.

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95 Dubois, Souls of Black Folk, p. 50.

96 Dostoevski, Brothers Karamazov, pp. 222-224.


98 Ibid., p. 22.
Dubois' belief that truth could be found only by becoming more deeply aware of his black identity flew in the face of the progressive ethos that demanded the individual assimilate and reject petty group interests. His denial of the common democratic good when in conflict with his duty to his race, was exactly opposed to the position voiced by people like Ross, Addams, Croly, and educators like John Dewey. It also brought him into conflict with the policies of Booker T. Washington.

Booker T. Washington, self-taught genius behind the Tuskegee Institute, had been born a slave and had risen to the position of uncontested leadership among American Negroes by the turn of the century. The nature of their disagreement was far from simple-minded Uncle Tomism versus racial pride. It was a question of the assessment of the means necessary for black people to survive and prosper in a society deeply hostile to them. Washington was certainly not a progressive, but he anticipated the progressive belief that education must be practical, that it must fit the student to live in an industrial nation. He realized that the future of black people depended upon their ability to make themselves useful, even indispensable if possible, to the larger society. Though he never believed Negroes would be assimilated into the professions nor accepted socially he believed that they could, through skilled labor, build a better life for themselves and be of real use to society. As he was fond of repeating:

Let there be in a community a Negro who by virtue of his superior knowledge of the chemistry of the soil, his acquaintance with the most improved tools and best breeds of stock, who can raise 50 bushels of corn per acre while his white neighbor only raises thirty and the white man will come to the black man to learn. Further, they will sit down on the same train, in the same coach and on the same seat to talk about it.  

Harmony will come, prophesied Washington in proportion as the black man has something needed by the white man, either brains or material. Washington rejected the idea of a classical education as unrealistic for a people living in the terrible poverty of the southern Negro. The picture of the lone black boy pouring over a French grammar amid dirt and weeds in a neglected home, seemed to him absurd. He saw little use in well-educated but unemployed young men standing about on street corners because they were unfit to work at the only occupations open to them: industrial occupations. Washington prided himself on being a realist who had to take into account the interests of three groups not just his own. If blacks were to prosper in the South then it could happen only with the cooperation of the southern white man and the continued support of Northern philanthropy. Agitation for civil rights


102 Dubois, Souls of Black Folk, p. 81.  

103 Washington, My Larger Education, p. 504.  

104 Ibid., p. 49.
or demands for a place in the larger society would fall on deaf ears. Only by proving competency and willingness to serve would the Negro earn the respect of the white and thereby gain his civil rights. As a consequence of industrial education, said Washington, "The white brother is beginning to learn by degrees that all Negroes are not liars and chicken thieves." In Washington's view the white man had cause to distrust the morality and intelligence of the Negro masses. The drudgery of slave life had inculcated a disdain for work and the grinding poverty of Reconstruction and after had seriously stunted the moral sense of many Negroes. Washington was particularly incensed by those who became preachers and teachers simply to escape labor. His educational program was meant to uplift the race by inculcating the value of work, dependability and thrift. It was from this stance that Dubois violently rebelled. For Dubois had grown up in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, the center of abolitionism not of slave owners, where there were not great numbers of poor illiterate ex-slaves, but less than 50 black folk. None were wealthy but neither were any derelicts. They worked as laborers, as farmers, and sometimes as servants. Dubois' family was one of the oldest in the valley, and as a child he was not aware of being different from any other of his school mates. Yet suddenly he found his color

106 Ibid., p. 127.
108 Ibid., p. 11.
109 Ibid., p. 12.
a barrier. A girl, to his vast surprise refused to exchange greeting cards with him.\textsuperscript{110} And with that small event the autobiography of a race concept was born. Dubois realized that the discrimination he had experienced had nothing to do with any failure in himself, nor the populations' experience with derelict Negroes; that the racism was not a result of some failure in the Negro at all but was a hatred without basis.\textsuperscript{111} For a long while this realization lay vague, not quite formed and waiting in the back of his mind. Then as a teacher in the back country of rural Tennessee he was struck by the tremendous strength and beauty that managed to survive despite despairing poverty, disease and frustrated hopes. Out of that experience came the \textit{Souls of Black Folk}, Dubois' testament to the beauty and strength of the black soul.

Consequently, though sympathetic to Washington's aims, he felt bound to oppose him for practically accepting the inferiority of the Negro.\textsuperscript{112} Under the policy of submission, he charged, had come disfranchisement, legal creation of a status of inferiority and a steady withdrawal of aid for Negro higher education.\textsuperscript{113} In essence Dubois denied the pathological nature of the black experience, and said that by admitting this falsehood, Washington had helped create a self-fulfilling prophecy and a baseless justification for white racism. At the same

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{110}\textit{ibid.}, p. 14.
\item \textsuperscript{111}Dubois, \textit{Souls of Black Folk}, pp. 86-87.
\item \textsuperscript{112}\textit{ibid.}, p. 87.
\item \textsuperscript{113}\textit{ibid.}, p. 88.
\end{itemize}
be brought into serious question, in his own mind, the scientific pro-
gressivism of the age.

In *Dusk of Dawn*, he wrote of his disillusionment with the pro-
mises of evolutionary science and democracy. He realized with dismay
that the world-wide democracy was a pseudonym for colonialism, that
science was becoming a religion and that wealth was becoming God. 114

All of this, said Dubois, dominated education, determining what
the next generation would read and learn. 115 On the whole, looking at
the tremendous industrial expansion of the 1880s and 1890s, seeing the
rise of the western farmer and the eastern mechanic's improved wages,
all looked well. Still the life of the Negro haunted the scenes of op-
timism and growth that filled his senses. At first he did not question
the goals and ideals of white America, only its refusal to acknowledge
the competence of men like himself because of their race. 116 Soon, how-
ever, he began to suspect that racism was not an aberration, a fault in
an otherwise sound economic and social system. Rather, it was a symptom
of an underlying cancer of compassionlessness, lack of commitment and
alienation covered by words like democracy, universalism and the scienti-
fic method:

Had it not been for the race problem early thrust
upon me, I should probably have been an unquestioning
worshipper at the shrine of the social order and the

115 Ibid., p. 27.
116 Ibid.
economic development into which I was born. But just the part of that order which seemed to my fellows nearest perfection, seemed to me the most inequitable; and starting from that critique, I gradually, as the years went by, found other things to question in my environment. 117

One of the basic aspects of the environment that DuBois found to question was the expert. As we have seen, the expert was a necessary corollary to democracy, for the progressives, because people seemed bent upon acting against logic and their own self-interests. The slum dweller did not leap at the chance of freeing himself from the corrupt alderman when offered a reform alternative. Workers failed to labor efficiently and thereby stunted productivity. Ethnic groups continued to refuse amalgamation, businessmen continued to operate according to the laws of the old individualism. As a result, progressives like Herbert Croly in 1909 urged strong new government power to regulate unions, corporations, small business and agriculture. 118 He also demanded a solution be found for defusing ethnic identity as it led away from progress and into conservatism. 119 Meanwhile, E. A. Ross had proclaimed that the old morality of personal honesty no longer was adequate to give equity in corporate society. His solution was the expert who would show the people the real enemies of society and the ways to fight them. 120 Men such as Frank Boaz

117 Ibid., p. 27.
118 Goldman, Rendezvous with Destiny, p. 156.
119 Ibid., pp. 154-155.
120 E. A. Ross, Sin and Society, (New York: Houghton, 1907), Ross identified all interest groups including ethnic identity and workers class consciousness as well as greedy business men as responsible for the ills of society. By implication only the objective scientist was sufficiently free from the temptation to act out of selfish interest or bias.
the antropologist, and economists like Richard Ely and Father John Ryan and a host of other academics had in common the belief that the expert could solve the knotty problems that frustrated the advance of democracy. Dubois' position was that the expert's validity depended upon the assumption that the refusal or inability to assimilate into the larger society was a reflection of inferiority in that group. His own experience suggested quite otherwise, that the experts were themselves only excuse-makers for the society's bad faith. Their function, he implied, was to create propaganda. Again it should be noted that propaganda does not imply falsehoods but the marshalling of some facts and elimination of others to create an impression that fulfills an ideological aim. In an essay entitled "The Ideology of Social Pathologists," C. Wright Mills came to some of the same conclusions as had Dubois. The "case" method used by sociologists, said Mills, tied them to the same political limitations as the social worker. The case approach was designed to categorize the individual problem according to the concerns of those who sought to remedy it. Just as the social worker had to see the life with which he was dealing as a problem, the expert attempted to find the solutions needed by the social worker to solve it. It should be obvious that such a view of a life as a problem assumes its pathology. Mills' critique of the social pathologist of the progressive era was based not on particular findings with which he disagreed, but on the ideological character

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of the entire set. Rather than doing objective research, observes Mills, they were guilty of filtering their studies through a rural middle class protestant value framework. The pathology they found was in reality only their own uncomfortableness with the otherness of the immigrant or the Negro. The sociologists' study turned out to be only one more ideology in an age of ideologies and not the escape from relativity. As Mills implies, the findings of the social pathologist told a great deal about his own worldview but had little validity in terms of the people being studied.

The belief in the expert as the means for creating a better life was, of course, not confined to the areas of government, city health, and welfare, prisons and so on. As might well be expected by the strongly academic nature of the reformers, the schools became a tremendously important key to their program of democratization. The Common School movement of the 1840s had been built upon the premise that the school was the only means available to create a common American society. This vision gained a rebirth in the progressive era. But the schools suffered under the same confusion as the rest of society and its institutions. The school too found itself in a Nietzschean quandary of flux and change. Partly from fear and partly from compassion thirty-one states had passed compulsory school laws by 1900. The effect of these laws was to explode enrollment. The number of five to eighteen year olds in school rose from six and a half million in 1870 to fifteen and a half million by 1880,

123 Ibid., pp. 542-544.
fifty-seven percent. By 1916, the public schools enrolled twenty million pupils. 124 Compulsory education laws not only brought more pupils to the school room but kept them there longer. This created new problems, not only in finding space and teachers to accomodate the avalanche of students, but more importantly in the philosophy of education behind the schools. Greater numbers meant wider interests. The fact that many students were there against their wills meant terrible discipline problems if those interests were not met. The high school teacher could no longer teach boring esoteric classes. The old methods and contents had to go. John Dewey was aware that the "new education" that was replacing the old curriculum in the private high school, was itself a product of the dawning of the age of the masses. 125 The old rural community was gone, admitted Dewey, and education must seek a way of being relevant to the new industrial age. 126 The problem was that a new industrial community could not be fashioned to replace the lost rural community because community is based upon permanency while industry is built upon change. Pragmatism became the new philosophical structure for education not because it afforded a new method but because it was a way of doing without one. 127 Pragmatism, or in Dewey's case, instrumentalism,


126 Ibid., pp. 11-13.

127 Goldman, Rendezvous with Destiny, p. 123.
accepted that absolutes were possible only in a static aristocratic society. A commitment to democracy meant that those absolutes must give way. At the same time Dewey and the progressives, wished to preserve truth as a reality and not a mere set of opinions. That is, they sought a way out of the relativism that seemed inevitable in a mass society. Dewey's answer was found in the scientific method. Truth would be discovered by inquiry and experimentation. Denied absolute truth men were still capable of judging 'warrantable assertability' and arriving at working truths. Dewey's scientific method was cut from the cloth of a specific type of science, however. It was created from the same premises and world-view as the sociologies of Ross and Cooley. It was fashioned out of reform Darwinism.

In Dewey's view, truths pass in and out of existence as for Ross, moral standards pass in and out of existence. Just as occurs in the biological realm, truth evolves and sometimes creates new forms and sometimes becomes extinct. The truth is discovered in the specific situation, therefore the child should learn by doing. It is not found as preparation for a later life or as the unfolding of an inner fixed nature, for both these views of education assume an aristocratic set of absolute values. Rather, said Dewey, education is growth. The purpose of education is to support and nurture this growth as an end in itself.\(^{128}\) By growth is not meant anarchy or letting loose of whatever desires the

child happens to have. It implies that education is for the here and now, a purpose unto itself; but a purpose to be guided and shaped by the teacher. The teacher's job is to balance the needs of society against the individual's interests leaving the integrity of both intact. As the two interact, both are transformed with the end result that the individual finds his place as a useful and creative member of society. It was just at this point that Dewey's theory ran into the problem of separating education from propaganda. How could one separate out the claims of individual identity and social responsibility, especially in the light of modern totalitarianism which created a social cohesion through propaganda? After a visit to the Soviet Union in 1928, Dewey, like many other progressives, found himself enthralled with the bolshevik experiment. Here seemed to be a whole society engaged in building a new order with every institution in that society acting as an educative agent. The schools in Russia were achieving the integration of school to the needs of society that he had advocated in School and Society in 1900; an integration based upon the industrial order of the modern world but built not on the motives of profit but on the common needs and aims of its constituents. Because the Russian's propaganda was aimed at universal public good and not private greed, Dewey accepted it as a necessary part of

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modern education. "Propaganda is education," wrote Dewey, "And education is propaganda." The reason that Dewey could make this kind of statement was his conviction that propaganda could not create a new social order by itself. In order to be effective it must reflect the aims and aspirations of the people as a whole. The school is the institution charged with transmitting those aims and aspirations to the new generation. Consequently the "new education" of progressivism meant the attempt to transmit the new industrial values of cooperation, efficiency and social responsibility to the young. American propaganda was in great measure built upon this insight of Dewey and upon his theory of teaching that followed from it.

Dewey's willingness to accept propaganda was built upon his realization that the modern world does not admit the choice of propaganda versus truth, but only propaganda A versus propaganda B. It is one partial truth in competition with other partial truths. Given that situation, Dewey placed his hope in science. Science, he believed, could give the objective methodology necessary to determine which of the competing truths best fitted the social and historical reality of the time. In order to fulfill this responsibility, science had to be separated from technology. It must actively choose the sort of society that its rationality revealed as the most viable way to build human community.

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132 Dewey, Impressions of Soviet Russia, p. 54.
134 Ellul, Propaganda, p. 5.
"Such a science," wrote Dewey, "would be at the opposite pole to science conceived as merely a means to special industrial ends." 135

It would indeed include in its scope all the technological aspects of the latter, but it would also be concerned with control of their social effects. A human society would use scientific method, and intelligence with its best equipment, to bring about human consequences. Such a society would meet the demand for a science that is humanistic and not just physical and technical. 136

Based upon this view, Dewey believed, a society could be built that was both universal and humane. As a consequence, Dewey shared with other progressives the distrust of ethnic identity. For Dewey, such an identity as being Jewish or Black and so on was an obstacle in the way of creating a new American culture; a culture which he believed might in time become a world culture. 137

Subsequent history has shown that Dewey's desire for a science separated from technology failed to materialize. Ellul has suggested that the reason for this is that the very existence of technique is dependent upon the necessity of using whatever is discovered. Therefore, to believe that technique could be controlled is to fail to understand its nature. Technique, says Ellul, is the rational use of the most efficient means available at a given time. 138 Since efficiency is the

136 Ibid.
137 Ibid., p. 140.
138 Ellul, Technological Society, p. 97.
essential and only value of technique it could not exist if efficiency was subservient to any other criteria. In addition, technique tends to create technological problems which only another technique can solve. This in turn creates new technical problems requiring more technique. For example, we may point to modern medicine in which the use of drugs or surgery to cure a disease results in complications like infection or pneumonia, which in turn requires more drugs and surgery, and so on. Such examples could, of course, be culled from every area of life, from sex to the registrar's office.

As Raymond Callahan's study of the cult of efficiency in the public schools made clear, beginning as early as 1900 belief in efficiency had permeated American education. Reform-oriented school administrators became worshippers at the shrine of efficiency as it saturated American life and as the schools came under the attack for their antiquarian methods. Even the moral and spiritual problems of the day were traced to inefficiency. According to H. Martyn Hart, Dean of St. John's Cathedral in Denver:

The crime which strolls almost unblushingly through the land; the want of responsibility which defames our social honor; the appalling frequency of divorce; the utter lack of self control; the

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139 Ibid.

140 Ellul makes clear the idea that technique is not confined to machines but exists in every area of life, pp. 85-90.

abundant use of illicit means to gain political positions are all traceable to ... one great crying defect - inefficiency.\textsuperscript{142}

Callahan sees the acceptance of efficiency as a capitulation to the interests of big business. In doing so, he has failed to see the tragedy of a culture trapped by its own lack of tradition and its religious belief in the reality of progress. Having escaped the determinism of history by sheer practical competency, America found herself the victim of a new determinism, that of technique.

A technical society cannot be based upon a truly democratic basis as Dewey believed a scientific society could be. The complexities of technique and the need for better management and orchestration of related techniques demands a trained group of expert technologists. Thus, the growth of technology demanded a corresponding growth of government since only a stronger government could regulate the effects of more complex techniques. The need to control monopolies and to protect public health, to supervise transportation, the operations of vital public works as well as such institutions as public education; all these objects of successful progressive reform, wrote Charles William Elliot in 1915:

\textquote{... are numerous, essential and difficult, and none but highly trained men can perform them. Every voter needs to understand what an expert is, how experts are trained and how experts should be utilized in the public service.\textsuperscript{143}}

\textsuperscript{142}Ibid., p. 52.

The school began to see its function as training experts and those who would follow the leadership of the experts. One effect of this was the beginning of tracking systems; academic subjects for some students and vocational education for others. More importantly, however, the schools by accepting efficiency, sought ways to use the expert internally. That is, the school looked to expertise to solve learning, discipline and other related problems of the classroom. The tendency for technique to orchestrate different techniques was revealed in the cooperation between social work, medicine and teaching as a means of solving social problems. "The sociologist," wrote a professor of education in 1917, "Has come to the aid of the social engineer." One example of this aid was the creation of the visiting teacher. One visiting teacher, after stating that she was more successful than other social workers in gaining entrance to homes, because of the prestige enjoyed by the school, explained her work:

In addition to helping the teacher do more effective work in the school she reforms bad home life and makes available for the use of the school the many social organizations working for family and individual service. The visiting teacher, continues the professor, is alternatively social worker and school nurse.

Similarly, arguments for courses in social hygiene became commonplace as medicine became more concerned with prevention and less with

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145 Ibid., p. 581.
146 Ibid.
remedial measures. Eugenics, always an important part of reform Dar­winist social planning, was also stressed. Social hygiene meant rooting out sickness from the environment and from the gene pool. Significantly the medical word "etiology" began to be used to describe this wholistic view of social problems. 147 Charles Prosser, writing in School and Society in June, 1916, lauded doctors and nurses as the most effective of social workers. "Even our technical schools," he happily reported, "have at last introduced courses in human engineering." 148 The underlying concept here was the pathological nature of urban life. Structural defects were the central problem to be solved if society was to prosper. Dr. Frederick Peterson, speaking before the N.E.A. in 1918, demanded that proper care of bodies be made compulsory as training of the mind had been, in order to "reconstruct the race" following World War I. 149 The key to understanding what the normal is, said Peterson, consists of the study of the pathological. Pathology has taught us all we know about the normal in biology, he continued.

We learned physiology from our studies of functions perverted by disease. We learned about the normal brain through investigation of diseased brains, the admired Montessori method of teaching normal children had its origin in the methods of Itard and Seguin in teaching idiots. 150


150 Ibid.
Once the pathology of the school room was accepted, the last institution in American life that opposed a technological therapeutic value-orientation had passed. That technology made life less humane and not more so has been the sad judgment of history. Since that time, believing the world around us to be pathological we have built an educational empire on training experts to be what Bernard Mehl calls "psychic cops."  

As a result we have become the victims of an orchestrated denial of our own freedom for our own self-interest. The Manichaean battle against evil never succeeds in destroying it. It merely pushes the boundaries so that more evil is found. The process that Dubois saw being turned upon black folk to deny them the integrity of their being finally turned upon those who set it in motion. The result is that, as with master and slave, we have become the prisoners of our own fear of freedom.

Most amazing of all has been the fact that the blacks who were the first victims of this pathological view, and of the technique that fed off it, have emerged as the only vital refutation of that model and embody the hope that America can remain human under siege. By the refusal to accept the pathology of the black experience, very ordinary individuals in very ordinary ways every day of their lives have quietly been refuting the pathological interpretation of the human experience. In doing so, the possibility of faith in man for the rest of us has been kept very concrete and alive.

The great danger is that the possibility will be rejected and that we will cling instead to an ideology that, as Mannheim explained,

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fails to see obvious truth because it is so rigidly tied to its own mis­
apprehensions. As we shall see in the following chapter, we have con­
tinued to define the Black experience as pathological and the school
continues to try and find ways to cure it instead of appropriating it.
CHAPTER V

CULTURAL DEPRIVATION THEORY: PATHOLOGY AND THE SCHOOL

One basic theme that has emerged in this study of pathology as an ideology is that a dualism feeds and justifies it. Rather than viewing the human condition as a single experience shared by all, in which the good and bad, comic and tragic, ignorant and enlightened, rich and poor may easily have exchanged places, the Manichaean dualism of pathology sees a fixed reality. Life constitutes a test. The success or failure in that test reveals the individual's assigned place in the universe, either in the sphere of good or evil. Failure on one level assumes a pattern of failure in all others. It is a clue to a basic depravity that underlies particular failings or situations. One illustration of this interpretation of reality is seen in the concept of cultural deprivation, so popular in the literature of urban education. The theory of cultural deprivation seeks to explain the failure of the poor (usually meaning Negro) child to perform in the schools. It rejects the genetic theory that assumes biological hereditary inferiority as the reason why children do not succeed. Instead, the theory suggests, the poor child is retarded by a complex combination of social factors and cultural deficits.¹ The educational consequence of this deprivation is that poor

children remain retarded no matter how well they are taught.²

The idea of culture deprivation did not emerge in its present form until the 1954 Brown decision but since then Riessman published The Culturally Deprived Child. In the book, Riessman suggested that the urban poor have a different culture than middle class affluent culture. While this culture has many strengths said Riessman, it has far more weaknesses. Its nature can most easily be understood in terms of what it lacks, he argued, and what it lacked was education, books, and formal language.³

The culturally deprived individual was for Riessman synonymous with the urban slum dweller, constituting a distinct set of values and life-styles that include extroversion, anti-intellectualism, concreteness rather than abstraction in thought, and a lack of concern for middle class values.⁴ Riessman's term 'culturally deprived' opened him to criticism that he failed to allow for the differences among the deprived, lumping all their problems into one, and that it suggested the poor had no culture. The result was a spate of new names including, "socially disadvantaged," "inner-city child," "slum dweller," "minority-group member," "educationally deficient," "under-educated," and "under-achiever."⁵ Yet, as E. J. Tate admitted, little has been changed by the revision of

²Ibid., p. 4.
terminology. The idea remains that the poor constitute a special group characterized by a lack of necessary qualities for full humanity. They are the population, according to an N.E.A. study, which has the most severe scholastic retardation, the highest drop-out rate and the most behavioral problems. The slow learner, disadvantaged child, or culturally deprived child, says Tate, is used to describe the "population who are different from the normal learner of middle class families." They came from the lower class masses, she continues, the majority of whom are Negro. In 1950, one out of ten persons living in the city were in this category. By 1960, one out of three, and by 1972, the "culturally deprived" constituted one out of every two persons in American cities. And the figure still continues to rise.

The term 'culturally deprived' was derived from the anthropological studies of Oscar Lewis. Lewis, in his book Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty, suggested that among certain impoverished populations a culture of poverty occurs. This culture transcends national and social differences, to create a universal system of

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7 N.E.A., p. 2.

8 Tate, Teaching the Disadvantaged, p. 1.

9 Ibid.

interpersonal relations, values and life styles. The culture of poverty, said Lewis, is at once an adoption and a reaction of the poor to their marginal position in a highly individuated, class-stratified capitalistic society. It represents the attempt to cope with an existence that is hopelessly trapped in poverty without any means of success. The culture of poverty member typically, according to Lewis, includes such traits as a low aspiration level, a short-range hedonism that seeks immediate gratification, a tendency to violence, matriarchal families and consensual unions.

The attributes of the culture of poverty in many ways describe any impoverished person within a capitalist system. The chronic low wages and crowded living quarters, sickness and physical violence that accompanies poverty are evident in any slum in any large city. But Lewis was very much concerned that poverty should not be confused with a culture of poverty. That is, impoverished conditions, including the worst deprivations of slum life, do not constitute the culture of poverty. Indeed, a group of people, as for example, the Eastern European Jew, or the lower castes of India, may be utterly poverty-stricken without being part of the culture of poverty. The culture of poverty can

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12 Ibid., p. 4.

13 Ibid., p. 11.

14 Ibid.
exist only where there is no sense of religious or social identity. As soon as a poor person becomes class-conscious or joins a trade union or in any way has an identification with an idea or organization, that person no longer is part of the culture of poverty.15 Even the Lumpen proletariat described by Franz Fanon in Wretched of the Earth -- the completely degenerated human waste created out of the deculturation of colonialism -- can by a simple act of rebellion escape the culture of poverty.16

For Lewis, the culture of poverty showed the resistance of the human spirit to dehumanization. Existing at the margins of the margins of society, the culture of poverty showed that the human condition was not pathological even at the point of absolute deprivation. Though he did not romanticize its often brutal and always despairing nature, he found, just as the reporters of concentration camp life found, that neither nature nor nurture accounts for the human response to suffering, and the ability to overcome it.

15 Ibid., p. 12.

16 Ibid., pp. 14-15. See also Franz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, Trans. Constance Farrington, (New York: Grove, 1963), p. 130 ff. "These classless idlers," says Fanon writing of decultured Algerians, "will by militant and decisive action discover the path that leads to nationhood. They won't become reformed characters to please colonial society, fitting in with the morality of its rulers . . . These workless less-than-men are rehabilitated in their own eyes and the eyes of history. The prostitutes too, and the maids who are paid two pounds a month, all the hapless dregs of humanity, all who turn in circles between suicide and madness, will recover their balance, once more go forward and march proudly in the procession of the awakened nation."

Fanon's belief in the Algerian Lumpen proletariat did subsequently prove to be correctly placed.
The use by educators of Lewis' concept for the urban poor represented a caricature of this idea. First, because it fails to use any sense of limit of proportion for the term. Lewis stated that, "there is relatively little of what I would call the culture of poverty," in America. Of the fifty million poor in America, Lewis estimated that only six to ten million might be included in the culture of poverty. This hardly would account for the one out of two persons termed culturally deprived in the cities. Further, given the increased sense of identity among ethnic minorities, the numbers should be decreasing who might be categorized as culture of poverty people, instead of rising. Second, Lewis identified over seventy characteristics of the culture of poverty, complicated by the difficulty in weighing the importance of particular ones in particular circumstances. Cultural deprivation has, however, been used to define an entire population, with such divergent membership that the only unifying factor is their lack of money.

The theory of cultural deprivation itself rests on rather limited evidence. Indeed, its basic conceptions about the daily life in the ghetto are for the most part mere assumption based upon extrapolations

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17 Lewis, *Study of Slum Culture*, p. 17.
18 Ibid., pp. 17-18.
from answers given researchers by the children. In the main, the
depression theory has been sponsored by three different groups: educa-
tors, psychologists and linguists. Not only do all three accept the
idea for different reasons but often in total opposition to each other.
As Joan Baratz observed, we have a contemporary version of six blind
men and the elephant, except they were all partially correct:

But when we look at the assumptions of the educator,
psychologist and linguist, we find that there are actually
some premises held by one profession (for example the
psychologists' view that a language system could be under
developed) that another profession sees as completely

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Kenneth Clark makes this point in *The Educationally Deprived.*
asks the child if he has dinner with his parents, if he engages in din-
er table conversation with them and so on. This slender thread of
evidence is used to explain and interpret the large body of tests car-
rried out in the laboratory and the school." Labov points out that there
is very limited direct observation of the home life even though this
is blamed for all the child's troubles. He further points out the dif-
ficulty of trusting the data available even from direct observation,
pp. 164-167. The very nature of the attempt to gauge speech fluency puts
the interviewed in such a relation to the interviewed that dialogue may
be impaired. Buber's I-Thou concept of dialogue in meeting suggests
that such a scientific study of speech can not possibly prove communica-
tion ability it can only appear to prove the opposite. See Martin Buber,

Another line of evidential basis rests upon the work of Basil
Bernstein who found that English upper classes use a more abstract mode
of speech while the lower classes are more contextually bound. Bernstein,
however, disclaimed the conclusion drawn from this study which inferred
the inferiority of lower classes. He suggested that not only can lower
classes easily learn the universal code (meaning abstracted technologi-
cally-oriented speech) but that upper classes may do well to learn some-
thing of lower class speech patterns if dialogue is not to be lost in
verbal abstraction. See "A Sociolinguistic Approach to Socialization
with some References to Educability," in *Language and Poverty,* especially
pp. 52-58.
untenable ( . . . linguists . . . consider such a view of language so absurd . . . to refute it would be a waste of time). The educator worked under the assumption that there is a single way of speaking and that every one who does not speak in the grammar book fashion is in error . . . This assumption also is untenable to the linguist. 20

Despite the confusion, the cultural deprivation theory has continued to be influential. 21 Because it has been accepted despite lack of evidence and contradicting ideas about what causes it, Clark has charged that its acceptance lies in nothing more than intuition, general impressions, and simple repetition. 22 It serves, says Clark, as did the instinct theory of forty years ago, to describe behavior that seems innate, unmodifiable and irreversible. According to Mackler and Giddings:

The lack of a clear definition allows cultural deprivation to mean whatever we choose at different times. Sometimes education is lacking. Sometimes it is economics; at other times it is familial, or social recreational or peer relational. 23

Its greatest problem, says Clark, is that it excuses the school from blame. By assuming the limited educability of slum children the school is saved from the embarrassment of showing a miserably poor record of success. 24 At the same time this "scientific" alibi creates


22 Clark, "Cultural Deprivation Theories," p. 5.


a self-fulfilling prophecy because teachers, accepting the inferiority of the children, treat them as such and as a result the children fail to perform. It is this aspect of the issue with which we are concerned. For it is the use of a concept, not its rightness or wrongness as an abstract theory which tells whether it is sound or suspect. If its use loses sight of limits then a theory crosses over the line separating warrantable conclusions and ideology. This is exactly what has happened with the cultural deprivation theory. It has become a way of disposing of the tensions that must be maintained between the child and the school. Kenneth Clark cites a particularly revealing exchange between his staff and a group of Harlem teachers:

... Teachers selected by principals to talk with us talked about their children as if they were all -- and sometimes we were stupid enough to say, 'Do you mean all' and they said, 'yes' -- were all climbing the ceiling. And we would say, 'Why would all children behave in this way?' And the answer was, because they are culturally deprived, they come from poor homes, they have no father in the home, and some even told us because they had no breakfast.25

As the above indicates, the effect of the use the cultural deprivation theory has been to deny the historical validity of the common school concept. The common school idea, as we have seen, was historically tied to the belief that despite individual and ethnic dissimilarities a common humanity shared by all could be molded out of the interaction and common learning of the classroom. As Mann realized, for the common school to do its function, rich and poor students alike must attend.

Similarly, the supreme court decision for Brown in 1954 pointed to the inability of the school to equally educate separate societies. The cultural deprivation theory rejects this idea of the universality of the school for many of the same reasons as the critics of common education did in Mann's day, though for sympathetic rather than hostile reasons. Because the poor are members of an alien culture, because their language, values and abilities are unintelligable to the affluent culture, they are condemned to a separate existence.

As Bernard Mehl has observed, this separate culture is one without escape. If the gloss of sentimentality is removed it takes on the stark determinism of social Darwinism. "Or," says Mehl, "to compare it to an older religious determinism, a new belief in the culture of poverty out of Calvin's Calvinism."26 Mehl continues:

In Calvinism at least the saints preselected by God could be found throughout the social class system and by sheer determinism of will and effort they could be seen and known and gain rewards in this world and the next. The new concept holds to the same test but without God and with less chance of proving grace. And there is no exit.27

A review of the literature shows that the above statement is no


27 Ibid.
exaggeration. The child of poverty, we are told, comes with less of everything to school: Ideas, experiences, events of happiness, health, feelings of love and a good self-image. He does not know how to play. He is early exposed to sex and aggression. He does not

Wishing to see the use of the culture of poverty idea in the schools we have confined ourselves to the literature aimed at the teacher in the school. Though many researchers would not put slum life in such absolute stark terms of depravity, these books show clearly the way in which the deprivation theory fulfills the ideological function of assuming the determined pathology of the ghetto child. The books were all written between 1965 and 1975. Later books show no different conclusions or point of view from the earlier books, even before 1965. Though different books are quoted, all said essentially the same thing, and agreed on all major points. Sources used were: Carl Bereiter and Sigfried Engelmann, Teaching Disadvantaged Children in the Pre School, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1966); Benjamin Bloom, et. al., Compensatory Education for Cultural Deprivation, (New York: Holt, 1965); Arnold Cheyney, Teaching Culturally Disadvantaged in the Elementary School, (Columbus: Merrill, 1967); Milly Cowles ed., Perspectives in the Education of Disadvantaged Children, (New York: World, 1967); Allen Figurel, ed., Better Reading in Urban Schools, (Newark: International Reading Association, 1972); David Gottlieb and Charles Ramsey, Understanding the Children of Poverty, (Chicago: Science Research Association, 1967); J. McVicker Hunt, The Challenge of Incompentence and Poverty, (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1966); John Nist, Handicapped English: The Language of Disadvantaged, (Springfield: Thomas, 1974); E. J. Tate, Teaching the Disadvantaged, (Palo Alto: Peek, 1971); Staten Webster, ed., Understanding the Educational Problems of the Disadvantaged Learner, Part I, Part II, (San Francisco, 1966); William White, Tactics for Teaching the Disadvantaged, (New York: McGraw, 1971); Ruth Hamlin, Rose Muker and Margret Yonemura, Schools for Young Disadvantaged Children, (New York: Teachers College, 1967); Joseph Loreto and Shelly Umann, Teaching the Disadvantaged, (New York: Teachers College, 1966).

29 Tate, Teaching the Disadvantaged, p. 8.

30 Bereiter and Engelmann, Disadvantaged Children in Pre School, p. 2.

strive for cleanliness, punctuality or orderliness to the same degree as the upper classes, and lacks discipline, self-control and flexibility. The child of poverty is treated to physical abuse by his parents and therefore uses it freely against others. He lives in an over-stimulated environment. Because the noises of his world are random and unmeaningful as opposed to the selected meaningful sounds of suburbia, the inner city child is deprived of sensory functions. "Fighting, yelling, harsh commands, all pitched above blaring radios and T.V. sets, are normal atmospheres in many houses," we are told. Even worse, he is subjected to glaring light bulbs and a lack of needed sleep because, "No one sleeps until the last viewer turns off the T.V. His life is an "ego-shattering set of internal events." For example, some Black children in Miami have not seen the ocean, have few toys and few friends (unfortunately these friends being equally deprived are of no benefit). He is below average in every intellectual ability. The culture of poverty child has no table manners and lacks appreciation

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32 White, Tactics for Teaching, p. 55.
33 Ibid., p. 186.
35 Tate, Teaching the Disadvantaged, p. 7.
36 Ibid.
38 Nist, Handicapped English, p. 38.
for various foods. He is fatalistic and afraid of silence. He thinks differently than does the child of the upper classes. The culturally deprived thinks inductively rather than deductively, when he does think, though as a whole these people do very little thinking at all. His language is so dysfunctional that he does not know the meaning of words like "or" and "and."

We are told further, that the reason for all this lies largely with the family. The lower class have a greater emotional and sexual involvement in marriage and family because they have nothing else to do. Therefore, it fails. Over-crowding of the large family in a small space hampers the child's development. As he tries to explore, he "finds himself getting in the way of adults, ill-tempered by their own discomforts and by the fact they are getting in each others way." Because parents are preoccupied with problems of living they have little

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40 White, Tactics for Teaching, p. 105.
41 Ibid., p. 36.
42 Ibid., p. 110.
43 Cheyney, Culturally Disadvantaged in Elementary School, p. 58.
44 Ibid., p. 61.
45 Bereiter and Engelmann, Disadvantaged Children in Pre School, p. 35.
46 Gottlieb and Ramsey, Understanding Children of Poverty, p. 28.
47 Ibid.
48 Hunt, Challenge of Incompetence, p. 41.
capacity to be concerned with a prattling infant.\textsuperscript{49}

Lower class families never discuss anything.\textsuperscript{50} They only use language to command, discipline and to express emotion, never to hypothesize, describe or compare.\textsuperscript{51} Indeed, speech in the ghetto is reduced to monosyllabic grunts -- "Go," "shut up," "hush!"\textsuperscript{52} Over a period of five or six years the ghetto child loses out on hundreds of hours of various speech sounds, destroying his ability to communicate.\textsuperscript{53} The culturally deprived child is further debilitated by the lack of adult models. The children see the father ridiculed so the male child has no respect for him.\textsuperscript{54} The daughter is likely to hate men because her mother is forced to work and her father deserts the family.\textsuperscript{55} The mother, we are told, is equally a failure as a human being. She dresses poorly and is careless of her grooming. Her voice is not motherly and her language is "not heard on television," and she is constantly condemning her child.\textsuperscript{56} If she is not inferior because she is an aggressive and harsh shrew, she is a poor mother because she lacks these

\textsuperscript{49}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{50}Loretan and Umans, \textit{Teaching the Disadvantaged}, p. 4.


\textsuperscript{52}Cheyney, \textit{Culturally Disadvantaged in Elementary School}, p. 61.

\textsuperscript{53}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{54}Gottlieb and Ramsey, \textit{Understanding Children of Poverty}, p. 30.

\textsuperscript{55}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{56}Emily Alman, "The Child of the American Poor," in Cowles, \textit{Perspectives}, p. 17.
qualities and is too timid. Both "lack grace, poise and good judgment.\textsuperscript{57}

As a result of all this the child of poverty develops "character disorders.\textsuperscript{58} He has a low self-concept.\textsuperscript{59} He lacks even rudimentary communicative skills and he is hopelessly retarded as all the deficits in his environment act cumulatively.\textsuperscript{60} Therefore, by first grade he is years behind the upper class child but by fifth grade he is even farther behind than when he began.\textsuperscript{61} Though his retardation is somewhat remediable, it cannot be eliminated entirely.\textsuperscript{62} The dynamics of his condition keeps him forever a part of the culture of poverty. Lewis saw the escape from this culture in a political and spiritual level as a realistic possibility. Not so for the deprived child. For example, because the parents work, tasks must be assigned before or after work for the child to undertake during the day. Because the parent is not present to discuss the various aspects of the task, the child misses verbal contact, becomes retarded and eventually has children of his own

\textsuperscript{57}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{58}Delmo Della-Dorra, "The Culturally Disadvantaged," in Webster, Understanding the Educational Problems, p. 269.

\textsuperscript{59}David Ausubel, "Effects of Cultural Deprivation on Learning Patterns," in Webster, Understanding the Educational Problems, pp. 251-253.

\textsuperscript{60}Berieter and Engelmann, Disadvantaged Children in Pre School, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{61}Ausubel, "Effects of Cultural Deprivation," pp. 253-255.

\textsuperscript{62}Hunt, Challenge of Incompetence, pp. 155-159.
who repeat the pattern. If an extended family is part of the child's home life, as it often is, this verbal deprivation does not hold, but a new problem arrives. He has so little privacy that the same result occurs from over stimulation. Or again, because the child does not have many toys and utensils to play with, his psychological development is retarded from too little experience (Martin Deutsch tells us the same could be said of the pioneer child, but he had plants!) On the other hand, because modern poverty is largely an urban phenomenon the child is subjected to unselected city noises, again resulting in retardation.

Thus, economic disadvantage means developmental disadvantage which causes educational disadvantage, leading to employment disadvantage, resulting in economic disadvantage, and so on. We find that living in the city causes retardation and living in the suburbs causes healthy development. Since the definition of poverty is lack of enough money to live in the suburbs, escape becomes impossible.

Although this group of cultural deprivationists almost always adds disclaimers that the poor have many strengths, just what these strengths are usually remains quite vague. Besides, they could hardly

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63 Bereiter and Engelmann, Disadvantaged Children in Pre School, p. 31.
64 Hunt, Challenge of Incompetence, p. 40.
66 Frederick Williams, "Some Preliminaries and Prospects," in Language and Poverty, p. 3.
affect the balance of these reports which so heavily weigh the pathological as to make these people seem barely human. Though the cultural deprivation theory is based upon an environmental view of the disorder, its psychological base assumes developmental arrest. As a result, mental retardation specialists have begun to see it as part of their area of concern. For example, a recent book by Leland and Smith, speaking of the culturally deprived child, says, "Such children are not mentally retarded at birth, but they may become retarded and often neurologically damaged by the neglect of society."^67

Similarly, the President's committee on retardation stated that many of the poor are found to be functionally retarded in the ability to think abstractly, impairing their ability to read, write, and count. The result of cumulative deficits is retardation, writes Earl Ogletree. The deprived child's intellectual plasticity decreases at a faster rate and he is less able to profit from new experience, as compared to his less deprived peer.69

The fact that the apparent retarding influence of the poor's environment may not occur in one brother or sister in the same family as it does in another, has not resulted in a revision of this view.

\[^{67}\text{Henry Leland and Daniel Smith, Mental Retardation: Present and Future Perspectives, (Worthington, Ohio: Jones, 1974), p. 22.}\]
Rather, the discrepancy has been accepted as a 'mystery' leaving the theory unchallenged. But the greatest difficulty with the retardation theory is that it underwrites a theory of relative deficiency. Whether the poor child does well enough to qualify for skilled or technical or college work is never discussed. The retardation that confines the poor child to a continued life of poverty is always relative to the upper classes. As a result, no matter how many gains are made by the poor, they ever remain retarded compared to the upper classes. For as the poor master each hurdle, the upper classes move on to new horizons leaving the poor again comparatively retarded. The new concern for creativity as a replacement for the mastering of rote-learning as the criteria of school success, is a prime example of this.

It also should be pointed out that the retardation theory is statistical, and therefore explains in stark clear laws that which is in fact muddy and far from obvious. The normal curve of human intellectual potential, personality characteristics, motivation and so on makes class distinctions of retardation (or any other specific trait) unreliable. Out of any group of children some will be more capable than others across class lines. Only when this fact is ignored and importance is attached to the more negligible differences of skewing at one end of the curve can a case for statistical difference be found. Yet, the

70 Ibid., p. 10.
reality is that professional and technical occupations are not filled solely by those who appear to be of the very highest intellectual capabilities. Nor has school success necessarily opened the doors of society to the poorest children.

The issue then becomes, as Bernard Mehl has said, that middle class children fail (that is, they do not retain French or Algebra) and succeed while poor children fail and do not succeed.\(^7^3\) Believing that poverty is pathological, a pathological explanation for the refusal of poor children to read results. Tests and observations do not prove retardation. The interpretations of tests and observations appear to. However, as we have seen earlier with the Puritans, the theory of reality that underlies an interpretation creates its own proofs. That is, to believe that the poor are different than the rest of society is to have already accepted the possibility that the difference may be caused by inferiority. Once that possibility is accepted, then a real difference will eventually be found. The inability to solve the problems created by these differences that do not exist must eventuate in a literal or figurative final solution. Thus, environmental deprivation, failing to be remedied by compensatory education, leads to medical attempts to offset apparent neurological damage, and so on, until sterilization seems the only solution. It is significant in this regard, that Arthur Jensen was associated for several years with Martin Deutsch, attempting to prove that retardation is caused by environmental deficits. According to Jensen, researchers have had plenty of time to show that

\(^7^3\)Mehl, "Is There a Culture of Poverty," p. 5.
differences are environmental and therefore remediable, but they have not done so. As a result, Jensen has accepted the conclusion that the difference must be hereditary inferiority.\textsuperscript{74}

Our concern here is not to argue the scientific accuracy of theories of cultural deprivation. No solid ground can be expected from that quarter, for science no longer is the dependable explainer of a Newtonian mechanistic universe of laws and principles. Modern science is itself in a Heraclitean world of flux where today's study is to be superseded by tomorrows, and that study by still another. What we can do, however, is point out the effects of viewing the poor as a separate culture with modes of thought, behavior and values that differ from the rest of society. We have seen the results of this intellectual stance among those who view the separate culture of the poor as pathological. The same effect can also be seen among an increasingly large group who wish to justify the supposed differences on the basis of cultural pluralism.

According to E. Paul Torrence, the last five years (1969-1974), have seen an increasing willingness to speak about the advantage of respecting rather than depreciating the culturally different child.\textsuperscript{75} A body of literature has developed around the idea that the deprived child does poorly in school because his culture of poverty gives him abilities


\textsuperscript{75}E. Paul Torrence, "Differences Are Not Deficits," Teachers College Record, (Vol. 75 No. 4: May 1, 1974), p. 471.
that are different from, and not supported by, the dominant culture. The main basis for this line of reasoning has been the linguist's rejection of the psychological idea of verbal deficiency as even a possibility. As Labov and others have asserted, any language pattern functions with precise order, and the speech of ghetto youngsters is no exception. It is fully developed, verbally as sufficient as middle class speech (perhaps more so) and intellectually viable. If the poor are not victims of verbal deficiency created by environmental deprivation how can their failure to succeed in the school room be explained? The answer, in "Cool Hand Luke's" phrase, is "a failure to communicate." Because, the poor, especially the Black poor, speak a different language than the standard English of the dominant culture, they are incapable of understanding their teachers, and their teachers are equally unable to understand them. From here, it is but a short step to the assumption that the culture of poverty idea could underwrite a concept of the poor as "totally other." Their life style, values and language make them inescapably bound to remain alienated. Sandra Warden, for example, criticizes the idea of "cultural deprivation" on the same grounds as the linguists argued against verbal deficiency. Just as no language is deficient, she says, no culture is deficient. It is simply different in kind.

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77Cheyney, Teaching Culturally Disadvantaged, p. 12.

Thus, no individual is "deprived" of a culture, and cultural disadvantage or alienation must be considered in relation to some other kind of culture than his own. In this case culture refers to the established pattern of norms and values of some group. Those who are "culturally alienated" are alien to (foreign, outside of) the mainstream of the "core" culture of the majority group in any society and by definition are minority group members...79

According to Taba and Elkins, the difficulty of attempting to span two cultures may be quite stressful. Such attempts, she warns, may lead to disorganization or neurotic behavior.80

In the same vain, Nathan Caplan, explained the failure of youth development programs on the basis of cultural difference. These programs failed, he said, because the kinds of values and abilities prized and cultivated by the poor fit them to be adept in ways not respected by the dominant culture. Correspondingly, the virtues and talents prized in the work-a-day world were lacking. Thus, according to Caplan, the virtues of the ghetto -- hustling, rapping, psyching-out people, fighting, athletics and so on -- make the poor failures as dishwashers, mechanics or maintenance men.81

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79Ibid.


81Nathan Caplan, "Street Skills of Many Hard to Employ Youths May Hinder Success in Job Training Programs," Newsletter, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, (Vol. 1, No. 19, 1973), pp. 5-7. The assumption Caplan makes about the poor's value structure is revealing, though it is hard to see how this so called ghetto personality differs from the ambitious executive or insurance salesman. Hannah Arendt notes that a thaw in Jewish/gentile relations in the 1920s preceded the resurgence of anti-semitism of the 1930s. The reason for this false improvement, she says, lay not in a change of belief about Jews being traitors and criminals, but in a feeling that treason and criminality may not be so bad, after all. (Arendt, p. 115). Caplan's remarks suggest an analogous interpretation of the "culturally disadvantaged."
Whether this idea is used to explain the necessity of the poor failing in school because of political disadvantage, as Charnofsky uses it, or because the dominant culture fails to recognize the gifted of a different culture, as Torrence does, the poor are seen as a separate and alien group, in conflict with the dominant culture. The result is second class citizenship, for as soon as America is divided between two cultures there is no contest as to which must be dominant. The real question is why should the idea of two cultures be accepted at all? Like praising a great Black writer, the adulation is at the same time a slap. Is not a writer like Baldwin or Wright simply a great American writer? America has no tradition. Its culture has no historical basis, only the weaving of the fibers of identity each individual brings to the American experience. America has no standard English, unless it be in some school marm's head. Its language is a blend of every element of society. The most grammatically perfect, erudite writer may, if he is glib and insensitive, write poorer English than the high-school dropout. Race, anthropologists agree, is a fiction and does not exist. America is built upon the principle that race does not exist, and therefore is built also upon the faith that America does not exist either. It is becoming, not being. As such, the splitting of its essence into

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competing cultures must be pernicious, for America is not a static entity threatened by some new foreign subgroups. Whatever limits its possibilities as genuine alternatives cripples its potentialities. For this reason, the great crisis of American civilization will be centered in the question of cultural pluralism. The denial of it must lead to a belief that the "minority poor" are inferior either biologically or environmentally. The acceptance of it must bring with it the refusal to see real alternatives for the culture as a whole, as anything but one opinion among many and with no claim on truth. The only alternative to this dilemma is the transcending of the idea of culture as style. When culture is reduced to style it is trivialized. Inconsequential differences are magnified and genuinely real differences are ignored. The end result is a technological society of no-culture masquerading in the emperor's new clothes. Only by refusing to view the other as an object, and therefore as a problem to be solved, can the real outlines of a culture emerge. Any solution that is based upon two cultures can only obstruct that emerging culture.
In Eugene Ionesco's play, "Rhinoceros," each citizen of a town becomes infected with a disease that turns him into a maddened rampaging animal. First, the eyes become dull, the speech becomes thick, then the skin toughens and takes on a green tinge and finally a horn sprouts from the forehead. At first such a transformation brings terror, but eventually the victim becomes reconciled and joins the herds thundering through the streets of the town. Indeed, as the herd becomes larger and as friends, relations, and wives join, the uninitiated begins to feel envious of the conformity and sense of belonging denied him. His own skin seems pale and soft compared to the Rhinoceros' and the face without a beautiful horn planted in its center looks weak and ridiculous as it stares back from the mirror.

Ionesco has written in an autobiographical sketch that the play grew out of his own experience in pre World War II Europe. He was a member of an intellectual circle of young Rumanian artists dedicated to resisting the spread of Nazism. Invariably, says Ionesco, when a member of the group would give just a few of the Nazi arguments credence he

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would soon join the Nazi Party. For example, if the person agreed that the Nazi argument that Jews are clannish was valid, though still opposed to the Nazi system and dedicated to fighting Anti-Semitism, he would always defect in a matter of weeks. \(^2\) The same idea has been suggested by another playwright, Friedrich Durrenmatt, in "The Visit." \(^3\) When a decaying town is offered a gift of a million dollars if they will murder a citizen of the town, they at first nobly refuse. But once having accepted the possibility of such a choice, the choice itself was unconsciously made. It was simply a matter of time until it realized itself. To even discuss sacrificing a person for the town's welfare was possible only in a society whose values were such that humanitarianism weighed less heavily than expediency.

These plays reflect the startling reality that modern totalitarianism placed before our democratic belief in free and open inquiry. It revealed that objective knowledge might be an impossibility; and that the very questions asked, the ideas entertained, lead to answers already present in the individual before he has formulated them. This realization was the basis for the emergence of the sociology of knowledge as a research method in the social sciences, and of existentialism in philosophy. Just as mind and body could no longer be viewed as independent spheres, form and content merged in art and ends and means merged in


political theory. We were forced to view the world in a wholistic manner in which we are responsible for our ideas and the use put to our ideas. At the same time we are condemned to the inability to ever find the truth about reality. As a result we have only competing faiths without the surity of dogma, and we must live with greater ambiguity than at any time in our history. Yet, on another level the choices from era to era remain the same. As Augustine had the Manichaeans, we have our professional pathologists.

There is, perhaps, in the nature of things, a kind of conservation of ideas. The apparent death of one or another idea is offset by its resurfacing in a new form. By ridding ourselves of a metaphysical world view and rejecting heaven and hell, we have merely brought them both down to earth. It is, of course, not enough to replace a spiritual hell with a physical one in theory. It must be peopled. While the members of the old hell could only be speculated about, the new one demands surity. Thus, its political nature, from the persecution of socialists to the ideology of insanity, and the fear of the poor. Needing proof that the new heaven is worth working for we need a promise of hell for those who fail to comply or who do not look like the elect. The result is a hell built upon class lines complete with doctrines of the depravity of school drop-outs and the sufficiency of suburban living. Well-being has become a marketable product as psychological adjustment has become the new means of social control. At the same time we have seen an increasing politization of what were formerly private affairs. From women's liberation and Nader's Raiders to the romantic critics of the public school, human concerns are seen to be questions of political
inequality to be solved through political means. Each new group seeks to identify the "real enemy" who is engaged in subverting the "real issue." Like their Gnostic progenitors they find revisionism -- be it of the roles of the sexes or of the school -- as the answer to the pressing needs of the time. The hope is that by exposing more evil the root of the evil will be discovered, and then a solution might be found.

What has not been faced, however, is that historically from the Manichaeans and Gnostics, to Nietzsche's Nay Sayers, this view has not been able to sustain a sense of meaning for the human condition. The Puritan foundations of America with its denial of the possibility of salvaging Europe, its need for law and its strain of elitism which has underwritten its racism has been the expression of this view. At the same time, America has kept alive a parallel strain of Jacksonian equality, demanding freedom from restraint and trusting in the essential oneness of the human experience. George Orwell, looking at a similar choice for England, accurately gauged its meaning when he wrote that the denial of the pathology of social class amounts to suicide for the cultivated "superior man" of the upper classes. The willingness to renounce the middle class virtues of cleanliness, aesthetic tastes even the manner of speech and thinking are at stake. It is not a question of tolerance, which is after all a political solution, but of effacement of one's very being. To choose solidarity with other men requires one to give up what

\[4 \text{George Orwell, } \textit{Road to Wigan Pier}, \text{ (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1958), p. 78.}\]
one in his inner soul believes to give him the quality that sets him above a mediocre existence. Such acts of self abnegation do not spring from programmatic sources. They demand conversion, and conversions are not planned nor are they brought about by unmasking ideologies. Nevertheless, a beginning may be found by realizing that a choice does exist, that intellectual integrity does not require a pathological view of the human condition and that we risk nothing but our own paranoia in seeking an alternative to it.\(^5\)

Much of the literature written for and against the use of the pathological model argues the appropriateness of medical solutions for what may be normal human problems. Certainly this is the approach taken by Szasz, Adams and their critics, in the psychiatric debate over "mental illness."\(^6\) Yet, as we have suggested, the pathological model rests on a more basic premise than a particular medical conceptualization. It rests upon a belief which forms the basis for what is commonly called the medical model itself. This more basic premise, consists of something more fundamental than scientific investigation. It reveals the very relation of a society to existence itself. It is obvious enough that

\(^5\)Ibid., p. 8.

\(^6\)We have earlier discussed Szasz's position in this matter. Henry Adams holds a position similar to Szasz. See "Mental Illness or Interpersonal Behavior?" American Psychologist, 1964, 19: pp. 191-197. He believes that after 1860, mental disease began to be viewed as literal non-figurative and undesirable alteration or change from, "optimal organic body function." p. 191. Before that time it had been seen as a moral problem to be treated by sympathetic therapy. Despite lowered cure rates, says Adams, the belief in pathological treatment eclipsed moral therapy, because it was ideologically in vogue., p. 192.
medieval medicine was of a piece with the medieval culture of Europe. The idea of balancing humors, and of the interdependence of the life process was a reflection of the medieval concept of the harmony of all creation. Similarly, the pathological theory of disease was possible only in a politically oriented society. For disease to be viewed individually and for it to be seen as a foreign enemy attacking the body, and solvable by specific measures, required a fragmented social milieu, where tradition and religion were no longer viable.

All this suggests only that a sociology of knowledge is a legitimate way of viewing medical theory and practice, as well as other more purely political ideologies. Medical theory is outside of our scope here, except insofar as it falsely serves as an empirical justification for the pathological view of existence. As we have discussed earlier, rather than being a view which substantiates pathology, the medical model is merely another manifestation of it; growing from the same root as other manifestations like Puritanism, the law and modern sociology and social work. It is this realization that may serve to liberate us from the weight of what appear to be indesputable facts, from our view of disease and death to intelligence tests and race and poverty. The result of this may not include answers to modern dilemmas; but it may reassert the tensions between nature and nurture, free will and determinism, individualism and social responsibility that are necessary to retain faith in the human condition.

We have suggested that the pathological view of the human condition is inextricably bound to the American experience. From the rejection of Europe as unredeemable, to the fear of freedom without limits,
to the escape to the anonymity of the suburbs, America has a historic
distrust of the human experience. At the same time, we have suggested
that America has attempted to resolve this essential Manichaeanism by
denying elitism in every form. Historically, the schools have been the
symbol and reality of that attempt. The belief that all people may share
equally in creating a common culture has been central to the school's
existence and to its supporters, even those it has failed to serve.

The future of public education has less to do with the failure
or success of the school to effect relevant classes or tap new creativity
than it does with an entire culture's decision to abandon a Manichaean
view of the human condition. Regardless of all the well-aimed criticism
the school has received and often deserved, the fundamental choice re­
mains between choosing it and totalitarianism of one form or another.
Dubois' statement that the problem of the twentieth century is the color
line has proven true and the focus of that line lies squarely in the
public school.
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