EXPERIMENTING WITH POWER: LIBERAL PSYCHOLOGISTS AND THE CHALLENGE OF SOCIAL REFORM: 1945-1975

by

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Abstract

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This dissertation probes the institutional rise and cultural diffusion of psychology in the United States in the years following World War II. It situates this phenomenon within the broader professional, political, and ideological contexts of post-war America. In particular, it focuses on the efforts of four leading psychologists – B.F. Skinner, Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow and Kenneth Clark – to reform and redefine psychology in light of the challenges confronting the United States in the 1950s and 1960s. These psychologists staked out new fields, or widened the parameters of established fields, with the intent of rendering professional psychology more relevant to social problems. Thus the rise of radical behaviorist psychology, humanistic psychology and social psychology are analyzed in relation to broad, post-war public issues such as the Cold War, the rise of affluence, the civil rights movement and the American counter culture.

The thesis of this work is that psychologists, originally inspired by idealistic agendas nurtured during the Progressive Era, found their profession out of sync with the emerging landscapes and challenges of the post-war world. New problems and challenges emerged, and these psychologists struggled to render their profession capable of engaging them. They practiced and promoted psychology in different ways, but an

underlying thread running though the work of these liberal psychologists was an endorsement of experimentation as a way of life, an endorsement wedded to probing critiques of the status quo and agendas for social reform. Empowered by their standing within a rapidly rising profession, they reached out to the public. Their promotion of experimentalism and social reform resonated with increasing numbers of people outside the profession, especially young people. But as psychology percolated into the wider culture, it became a contentious force, particularly in the experimental climate of the 1960s when psychology was integrated into various agendas and experimented with in different ways. The interactions between these professional psychologists and cultural and political radicals inclined to experimentation could be quite dynamic and heated.

The dissertation falls within the genre of cultural/intellectual history. The exploration of cultural themes and debates relies on an assortment of primary source material, in particular newspapers, magazines, academic journals, science fiction novels, memoirs and various studies of public culture published in the 1950s and 1960s – by journalists, political commentators and academics from various disciplines, in particular psychology and sociology. The chapters on historical developments within the profession rely on academic journals and the published work of the psychologists themselves. Published works of B.F. Skinner, Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers and Kenneth Clark are examined in depth. The dissertation also engages relevant secondary source material, in particular biographies and relevant studies written by psychologists, historians of psychology and cultural and intellectual historians.

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INTRODUCTION

The central argument of this dissertation was not clear until late in the writing process. Assumptions were constantly being challenged by the reading and research. A clear-cut thesis seemed, for a long while, depressingly elusive. At times I wanted to clear my mind of theoretical "interference" and open myself up more fully to the material. B.F. Skinner, one of the central characters in this study, actually endorsed this ideal, criticizing as he did the so-called "hypothetico-deductive" model of analysis. Skinner preferred an inductive approach, in which insights are carefully constructed through a painstakingly slow process of empirical observation. In the alternative (hypothetico-deductive) model, people rely heavily on "theory" and "inference" for analysis. But Skinner affirmed he had little interest in theory, and that attachments to a particular theory or school too often compromised one's "objectivity" and one's commitment to "truth."[1] The scientist had to observe phenomena with an open mind. Mediating assumptions would only distort his or her capacity to observe and to slowly build upon the insights acquired through empirical observation.

It is, I think, unrealistic for historians to aspire to that vantage point of pure, unbiased objectivity that Skinner championed. We all work within conceptual schemes that shape our observations. There is no getting around it. "Facts" always and only make sense when they fall within a broad structural system of interpretation. (Skinner himself

[1] B.F. Skinner, "Are Theories of Language Necessary?", *Psychological Review*, 57:4 (July 1950):193-216.

worked within one, and a very traditional one at that.[2]) A useful goal for the historian, as I see it, is not to liberate the mind altogether from theoretical attachments, but to *creatively resist* these attachments, particularly in light of data that challenges them. In general, I take it for granted that inductive and deductive approaches to analysis, when taken to extremes, are unrealistic, and that a nuanced perspective depends on a fruitful and tense negotiation between data and theory. The two are, at heart, inseparable.[3]

It was through this process of inquiry and negotiation that an argument did gradually come together. Rather than state my thesis at once, I think it would be helpful – for the reader and indeed for myself – to recount the twists and turns that led me to at least a little bit of clarity.

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I approached this dissertation with an interest in the growing importance of psychology in post-war America, especially during the 1960s when a number of psychologists became influential public figures. My interest in the subject matter, however, exceeded my knowledge, and I started to read about these psychologists knowing very little about them. One of the first books I read was Edward Hoffman's

[2] It was, at heart, a combination of utilitarianism and positivism. See Eckart Sheerer, "Radical Behaviorism: Experts from a Textbook Testament," in Laurence Smith and William R. Woodward (eds.) *B.F. Skinner and Behaviorism in American Culture* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1996): 151-175.

[3] I do not, then, consider myself an "extreme" social constructionist. Social constructions are, in general, structured by limitations grounded in biological, physical, and natural conditions, conditions that humans and societies engage in different ways. In other words, transcending the rich diversity of human cultures are conditions that make culture possible to begin with. I view culture and morality as rooted in our biological and evolutionary constitution. For a thoughtful probing of this approach see Margaret Somerville, *The Ethical Imagination: Journeys of the Human Spirit* (Scarborough, Ontario: HarperCollins Canada Ltd., 2006). For other nuanced approaches to biology and culture see Steven Pinker, *The Stuff of Thought: Language as a Window Into Human Nature* (New York: Viking, 2007) and *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature*, (New York: Penguin, 2002.) See also anthropologist Melvin Kooner, *The Tangled Wing: Biological Constraints on the Human Spirit* (revised edition) (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2002).

biography of Abraham Maslow, a founder of humanistic psychology.[4] I have learned that a good biography can go a long way for the newcomer. Hoffman's biography clarified a framework for the project. It linked together Maslow's connection to Progressive liberalism, post-war liberalism, and 1960s radicalism. My subsequent reading of Brian Thorne's brief biography of Carl Rogers further highlighted these connections, for Carl Rogers, another important figure in this study, was a contemporary of Maslow.[5]

Realizing these were notable professional and cultural figures and that humanistic psychology was important to this study, I started to sort through early issues of the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*.[6] The more I read about humanistic psychology, the more I was convinced that I had to read up on radical behaviorist psychology and B.F. Skinner, its founder and chief promoter. The founders of humanistic psychology had been reared in the behaviorist tradition, a tradition they eventually questioned and criticized. The most widely known behaviorist psychologist at the time was Skinner, and debates between Skinner and humanistic psychologists, in particular Carl Rogers, were provocative and well-publicized. I subsequently read a biography of Skinner, and also started to read Skinner's own published articles from the time. Especially illuminating were the published dialogues between Skinner and Carl Rogers, which clarified the points of contention as well as the shared concerns between the two psychologists and their respective schools.[7]

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[4] Edward Hoffman, *The Right to be Human: A Biography of Abraham Maslow* (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., 1979).
[5] Brian Thorne, *Carl Rogers* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1992). Thorne's brief biography is a useful companion to an older and more comprehensive biography by Howard Kirschenbaum: *On Becoming Carl Rogers* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1979).
[6] The first issue came out in the spring of 1961.
[7] Wiener, Daniel N. *B.F. Skinner: Benign Anarchist*. (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1996.) For the dialogues see Howard Kirschenbaum and Valerie Land Henderson, eds., *Carl Rogers: Dialogues: Conversations with*

I also started to sort through the relevant historiography. I was familiar with the work of Gerald Grob, an expert on the institutional history of professional mental health in the post-war period.[8] I discovered the more recent work of Ellen Herman, in particular *The Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts,* which was highly informative.[9] Drawing from a wealth of archival material, Herman examines the institutional rise and growing influence of psychology in various contexts. During and after World War II psychologists became increasingly regarded by policy-makers as an important source of "expertise." Herman navigates her way through numerous contexts and issues, revealing the importance of psychology to such areas as psychological warfare, internment camps, cold war foreign policy, and domestic policy. She examines, for example, the role of "experts" in the Kerner Commission on Civil Disorders, and in the conceptualization and implementation of President Johnson's War on Poverty in the 1960s. She also, towards the end, thoughtfully probes the influence of psychology on public culture -- on, for example, popular constructions of democracy.

Another important study I encountered was Eugene Taylor's *Shadow Culture: Psychology and Spirituality in America.*[10] Taylor's work was helpful in that it pointed to an on-going counter cultural tradition in American history, a tradition drawing together elements of spirituality and folk psychology. *Shadow Culture* presents an overview of this so-called "shadow culture." Chapters cover, in chronological order, an array of

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Martin Buber, Paul Tillich, B.F. Skinner, Gregory Bateson, Michael Polyani, Rollo May, and Others (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989), 82-152.

[8] Gerald Grob, *From Asylum to Community: Mental Health Policy in Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

[9] Ellen Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). See also Herman, *Being and Doing: Humanistic Psychology and the Spirit of the 1960s*, in B. Tischler, ed., *Sights on the sixties* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 87-101.

[10] Eugene Taylor, *Shadow Culture: Psychology and Spirituality in America*, (Washington D.C.: Counterpoint, 1999).

historical episodes which include the First and Second Great Awakenings, the various spiritualist movements of the ante-bellum period, and the "arrival" of psychoanalysis in the United States in the early twentieth century. Of particular relevance was Taylor's chapter on the Esalen Institute, a "growth" center that opened in Big Sur, California in 1962, inspired in large part by humanistic psychology. Esalen became not only a popular public forum for psychologists; it also became a cultural enclave in the context of the 1960s counter culture. Taylor's argument is that the 1960s marked a watershed for popular or "folk" psychology. Thanks in part to professional psychologists like Rogers and Maslow, "folk" psychology and spirituality percolated into mainstream culture and institutions, transforming them profoundly. Taylor in fact views the 1960s as the start of a "Third Great Awakening," a phenomenon which has (he argues) profoundly transformed public culture and discourse.

I was not comfortable with some of Taylor's conclusions. I had read the work of observers far less sanguine about the influence of psychology on public culture, and Taylor' study addresses none of these critics at length. His argument that post-war psychology has inaugurated a (still-on-going) "Third Great Awakening" is not very convincing. Nevertheless, *Shadow Culture* lit up the cultural dimension of my topic, an area, I should add, that interests me greatly.

In the course of this reading my subject matter became clearer, but my thesis remained elusive. I continued to inform myself about humanistic psychology and behaviorism. I read a study of founding humanistic psychologists by historian Roy DeCarvalho, which provided some useful intellectual portraits and biographical sketches

of Rogers, Maslow, and other popular humanistic psychologists like Rollo May.[11] Particularly helpful was a chapter on "humanistic psychology and behaviorism," which identifies the points of contention between the two schools. Aside from this one chapter, however, the book does not discuss Skinner and radical behaviorism at length. In fact, I noticed that the historiography in general did not address Skinner, his work, and his influence. Herman alludes to him very briefly, and casts him as an unsavory social engineer inimical to human freedom and democracy.[12] *Shadow Culture* does not address Skinner and radical behaviorism at all.

I started, then, to read Skinner. I read *Walden Two* (1948); his best-selling *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, the book which landed him on the cover of *Time* magazine in 1971; and *About Behaviorism* (1974.) I reviewed his early work where he first articulated the concept of "operant conditioning" – considered in general to be Skinner's most important contribution to psychology.[13] I also read relevant writings by John B. Watson, a founder of American behaviorism, whose work in the 1920s had inspired the young Skinner and Maslow alike to pursue careers in psychology. I was determined to understand the differences between Watson's "classic" behaviorism, and the "radical behaviorism" associated with Skinner.

In short, I started studying the history of twentieth century psychology. When Maslow and Rogers launched humanistic psychology in the early 1960s, they endorsed it as the "Third Force" in psychology. The "Second Force" was behaviorist psychology,

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[11] Roy DeCarvalho, *The Founders of Humanistic Psychology* (New York: Prager, 1991).
[12] See Herman, 268-269.
[13] B.F. Skinner, *Walden Two* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948); *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971); *About Behaviorism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974); "Behaviorism at Fifty," in T.W. Wann, ed., *Behaviorism and Phenomenology: Contrasting Bases for Modern Psychology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 79-96; *The Behavior of Organisms* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1938); *Science and Human Behavior* (New York: Macmillan, 1953).

and the "First Force" was Freudian psychoanalysis. I felt I needed a conceptual grasp of the history and basic theoretical apparatus of each "force." Fortunately, I had studied some of Freud's important writings in the course of my undergraduate and graduate work. I reviewed this material. I also read though medical journals and popular magazines from the 1910s and 1920s to examine the reception of Freudian psychoanalysis in the United States. I approached John Watson and the premises and popularity of behaviorism in the same manner. A number of additional sources were especially helpful in this stage of the research, in particular James Goodwin's *History of Psychology*, the work of historian John Burnham, and the relevant writings of sociologists Philip Rieff and David Riesman. Riesman's essays on Freud and public culture, written in the early 1950s, were especially insightful.[14]

For many months, I put the task of articulating a clear thesis on the back-burner and simply read. I had decided my first chapter was going to be a broad overview of psychology and post-war public culture, and so I extended my reading to the social and cultural commentary of the period. I read the work of various social scientists and public intellectuals, including Erich Fromm, Lionel Trilling, William Whyte, John Kenneth Galbraith, David Potter, Betty Friedan, Thomas Szasz, and Norman O. Brown. As I knew subsequent chapters would focus heavily on the 1960s, I read literature on the American

[14] James Goodwin, *A History of Modern Psychology*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1999). For a good history of "clinical" psychology see John M. Reisman, *A History of Clinical Psychology* (New York: Irvington Publishers, 2nd ed., 1992.) For the "popularization" of science and psychology see J.C. Burnham, *How superstition won and science lost: Popularizing science and health in the United State* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987). For a background on Freud and the influence of psychology on American culture, see Philip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith After Freud* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966) and *Fellow Teachers* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972). For psychoanalysis and public culture at mid-century see David Riesman's three essays on Freud in David Riesman, *Selected Essays from Individualism Reconsidered* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1954).

counter culture, specifically Richard King's *The Party of Eros: Radical Social Thought and the Realm of Freedom* (1972); Lawrence Veysey's *The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Counter-Cultures in America* (1973); and Keith Melville's *Communes and the Counter Culture: Origins, Theories, and Styles of Life* (1972.) I also read and was captivated by Kathleen Kinkade's *A Walden Two Experiment: The First Five Years of Twin Oaks Community* (1973) – an account of the founding and early years of an intentional community inspired by *Walden Two*. The book confirmed that Skinner needed to be integrated into these broader discussions of psychology, public culture, and social reform.[15]

Gradually, a number of things became clear and a thesis started to materialize. I realized my thesis would address the connections between psychology and post-war American liberalism. This was because all of these psychologists themselves emphasized the relevance of their psychology to American democracy and public culture. Skinner, Maslow, Rogers, and Kenneth Clark (another important figure in this study) were all

[15] Erich Fromm, *Escape From Freedom* (New York: Avon Books, 1941); *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, (New Haven: Ct: Yale University Press, 1950); *The Sane Society* (New York: Rinehart, 1955). J.K.Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958). Kathleen Kinkade, *A Walden Two Experiment: The First Five Years of Twin Oaks Community* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1973); Lionel Trilling, *Freud and the Crisis of Our Culture* (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1955);Betty Friedan, *The Feminist Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1963); Lawrence Veysey, *The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Counter-Cultures in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973); Richard King, *The Party of Eros: Radical Social Thought and The Realm of Freedom* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1972); Keith Melville, *Communes in the Counter Culture: Origins, Theories, Styles of Life* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1972); David M. Potter, *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and American Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954.);Thomas Szasz, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis: The Theory and Method of Autonomous Psychotherapy* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1965);Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (Hanover, N.H.: Wesleyan University Press, 1959).

liberals. They had forayed into psychology in the late 1920 and early 1930s, fired up with the Progressive faith in science as a means of facilitating social reform. By the late 1940s they were committed to reorienting psychology to meet the problems confronting post-war America. They became renowned psychologists and public intellectuals, and their influence was extensive. The early post-war period was an auspicious time for psychologists interested in social affairs. The rising prestige of psychology, and the prominence of these men within their professions, enabled them to respond to and to shape some of the important public dialogues going on around them, dialogues that stemmed from and engaged the crisis of American liberalism in the context of the Cold War.

While sorting through this literature, I noticed that a preoccupation with individualism cut across the political spectrum and pervaded much of the commentary on American society and culture. A concern with the decline of individualism was set against the backdrop of totalitarianism, which included the German and Italian Fascist regimes of the 1930s and early 1940s and the menace of post-war Stalinism. In the United States, the assault of technology and wealth on "individualism" had long been a familiar theme in literature and film, but in the early post-war years the international situation imbued it with ideological and emotional intensity.[16] Nurturing "healthy" individualism was deemed essential for a healthy, democratic culture. The centralizing tendencies at work in the public and private sectors would have to be wrestled with and proactively engaged. Affluence itself had to be "creatively" worked with in order to

[16] The novels that come most readily to mind are those of Theodore Dreisser, Edith Wharton, and Sinclair Lewis. Examples of social commentary in film are King Vidor's *The Crowd* (1928) and Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936).

safeguard liberal individualism from passive consumerism, complacency, and moral indolence.

If these concerns transcended boundaries and disciplines, so too did the appeal of psychology. Psychoanalysis underwent a rise in popularity in the 1950s. Public intellectuals like Lionel Trilling, Philip Rieff, Dwight MacDonald, Paul Goodman, Norman Brown, Herbert Marcuse, and David Riesman all turned to Freud for insights and departure points for change. Among the general public, increasing numbers of people were turning to "therapy" for help with what David Riesman and Rollo May regarded as "existential" problems. The jargon of psychoanalysis and "therapy" started to permeate public discourse. Psychology, however, was also contentious terrain. The profession in general had always been a noisy one, with the interests of clinicians, philosophers, social workers, and experimental psychologists often clashing in the competition for prestige, funding, and power. Psychoanalysts and non-psychoanalytic psychologists did not always get along. There was rivalry among competing schools. Psychoanalysis and behaviorism had, for example, been rivals from the start, and by the late 1950s humanistic psychologists were promoting a "Third Force." All in all, by the 1960s behaviorists, psychoanalysts and humanistic psychologists were all engaging these different "schools," the debates often becoming heated and highly politicized. People outside the profession were engaging these debates as well.

As a cultural and intellectual historian, I am, in general, drawn to public debates. A close study of them can yield insights into some of the broader dilemmas confronting people at a given time. The mid-century debates involving psychoanalysis, for example, reveal the challenges people were confronting and the different ways they were

confronting them. They also demonstrate the different ways people promoted psychology to meet these challenges. In the 1950s, for example, psychoanalysis became the starting point for all sorts of approaches to and interpretations of contemporary problems. In the opening chapter I try to sort through some of these approaches and interpretations. I attempt to situate them within the conservative, liberal and radical frameworks that were taking shape. The psychologists I focus on in subsequent chapters were clearly working from a liberal orientation, and this liberal orientation is my primary concern in this dissertation. In the opening chapter, however, I identify and discuss the more conservative and radical orientations that these liberals struggled to negotiate (and to avoid.) I also probe a number of cultural sources – such as science fiction, social commentary, and (non-scientific) fiction - to elucidate the public nature of the concerns addressed by Skinner, Rogers, and their like-minded colleagues.

In the second chapter I examine more closely the theoretical framework and social relevance of radical behaviorism and humanistic psychology. I look closely at the ways in which Skinner, Maslow, and Rogers, recast psychology to meet the demands of the post-war period. Before delving into these schools, however, I provide a historical overview of Freudian psychoanalysis and classic behaviorism. To understand humanistic psychology and radical behaviorism, one has to grasp the professional and cultural contexts from which they emerged. These prominent post-war psychologists were, in essence, "Progressive" liberals, and this distinctive orientation shaped their subsequent approaches to the crisis of post-war American liberalism. I considered it important to probe this "Progressive" orientation in order to better elucidate the connecting threads to the post-war psychologies they constructed.

Chapter three probes the dynamic interactions of Maslow, Rogers, and Skinner with the 1960s counter culture. These psychologists were inspired, challenged, and exasperated by the counter culture in all its variations. Interactions could be very contentious. On the one hand, in their commitment to nurturing individualism these psychologists endorsed an ethos of creative resistance, of experimentation, of *protest.* They merged this ethic with some probing critiques of the status quo, specifically those aspects of the status quo inimical to healthy individualism. Psychology, it was hoped, would empower people to creatively resist the status quo as opposed to helping people to adjust to it. Accordingly, they applauded many aspects of the counter culture – such as the demand for authenticity, the impatience with sham and corruption, and the willingness to experiment with sex, relationships, and living arrangements. But the counter culture confronted them with dilemmas. In the rebellious climate of the 1960s psychology was practiced, experimented with and integrated into all sorts of controversial agendas. Experimentalism could mean anything – from building communes, to engaging in group sex, to experimenting with psychedelics, to hitchhiking across the country. These psychologists were at times ambivalent and at other times harshly critical of the ways in which people were experimenting. None of them were sanguine about the preoccupation with psychedelics. The attack on rationalism was also problematic. Also, despite their impassioned critiques of the status quo, they themselves were not willing to "drop out," and their support towards those who did was always tinged with a mixture of ambivalence and skepticism.

Chapters four and five address the interplay of psychology and race. While sorting through the work of Skinner, Rogers, and Maslow from the late 1950s and early

1960s, I discovered very little written about race. The key figure here was Kenneth Clark, a social psychologist, and, like these others, an important public intellectual. Kenneth Clark also identified himself as a liberal, and his perspectives on psychology, human nature, and social reform resonate with those of other liberal social scientists from the time. Like them, he was keyed into the post-war international situation. He was committed to nurturing individualism and the sort of public culture "democratic" individualism required. He too combined visions of social reform with penetrating critiques of the status quo. But to these liberal critiques Clark added and emphasized the problem of race. Racism and poverty stifled individuality; they crippled the minds of oppressed and oppressors alike. The liberation of human potential, and the strengthening of a healthy public culture, depended, then, on liberating America -- psychologically, socially and economically -- from the hang-ups of race.

While Clark was a contemporary of Maslow, Skinner, and Rogers, he was a "social psychologist." Chapter four accordingly provides an overview of social psychology, a field that paralleled and overlapped with the other main "forces" in the profession. From there it probes Clark's attempts and struggles to apply social psychology to social reform, specifically in the contexts of the civil rights movement, the war on poverty, and, more broadly, the on-going cold war.

Chapter five parallels chapter three. In chapter three I examine the interactions of Maslow, Rogers and Skinner with the counter culture. In chapter five I focus on Kenneth Clark and the Black Power movement. Clark too was challenged by the self-affirming, defiant confidence of cultural and political radicals. On the one hand, he, like his liberal colleagues, admired the impatience of young idealists with hypocrisy, sham, and

corruption. He too prized authenticity. Yet he was never comfortable with radical agendas of "going-it-alone" – of separating oneself, ideologically and institutionally, from mainstream society. He was especially critical of the Black Power movement, and the varied agendas of black separatism endorsed by its advocates. Unlike many radical black psychologists, he criticized the whole concept of a new field of "Black Psychology," as well as other initiatives endorsed by radicals, such as the creation of Black Studies programs in colleges and universities. Like Skinner, Rogers, and Maslow, however, Clark helped nurture the radicalism that challenged him. His probing analysis of institutional racism and its psychological and socioeconomic consequences, for example, were expanded on by radical black psychologists in their constructions of a black psychology relevant to activist agendas. In chapter five I examine the initiatives and agendas of these radical psychologists, and the ways in which Clark was challenged by and critiqued them. The debates illuminate the extent to which psychology was contentious terrain for conflicting agendas among the African-American community. They also reveal, more broadly, the tense fault lines separating liberalism from radicalism.

My thesis, then, is that these liberal psychologists approached psychology within a distinctive post-war liberal framework. Their agendas resonated with those agendas of other social scientists like William Whyte and David Riesman, who drew attention to the erosion of individualism in a world of expanding bureaucracies, middle class suburbs, and affluence. The attention to individualism translated into probing critiques of the status quo, on the assumption that healthy democratic characters depended on healthy environments and cultures. If such environments and cultures were lacking, it was the

responsibility of social scientists and psychologists to envision them and to take on the challenge of creating them. Liberalism, however, wedded to probing critiques of the status quo and utopian thought, points in the direction of radicalism. Given the right climate and conditions, radical implications of such critiques can be expanded on, explored, and *put into practice.* The 1960s provided these conditions, and psychology was increasingly integrated into radical social and cultural experimentation. An ethos of experimentation endorsed by these psychologists took root and flourished, and they saw much to applaud. They encouraged idealistic people to experiment, often referring to them as allies in the cause for making the world a better place. At the same time, they were challenged by the radicalism of the times. Experimentalism was an elastic, contested practice, and psychology was wedded to experimentalism in all sorts of ways.

The issue of experimentalism is a central concern of this study. Experimentalism was, in my view, a connecting thread between post-war liberalism and radicalism. It partly explains why these psychologists were as popular as they were in the 1960s. In 1972 sociologist Keith Melville noted that much of the liberal social commentary from the 1950s, with its emphasis on saving individualism, seemed "myopic" ten years later when the focus had shifted to "what we have in common, not on our individual idiosyncrasies." The counter culture, thanks in part to "the psychedelic experience," was about dissolving "the individualist assumption" and experimenting with relationships. In his view, the social commentary of liberals like David Riesman and William Whyte seemed out of synch with the times.[17] Melville, however, did not discuss these liberal psychologists, who in many respects were still working within an early post-war framework and yet were still popular into the late 1960s. Situating these psychologists

[17] Keith Melville, *Communes in the Counter Culture: Origins, Theories, Styles of Life*, 179-181.

within the context of the 1950s thus broadens and complicates the picture of the post-war liberal individualism that pervaded so much of the commentary of those years, and it also further lights up the contexts important to understanding the counter culture.

Skinner, Rogers, Clark and Maslow were important to the 1950s *and* 1960s. They were exponents of "liberal" individualism; at the same time, they cultivated agendas of nurturing communities and enriching human relationships. Skinner and Maslow in particular were exploring visions of utopia long before the rather sudden emergence of the counter culture in the spring of 1967. Questions concerning individualism were always integrated with questions involving community, relationship, and social reform. None of these "individualist" liberals embraced the more traditional laissez-faire individualism that had earlier been endorsed by Social Darwinists like William Sumner and Herbert Spencer. In fact, they deplored it. They reflected at length on the importance of community, and they acknowledged the hunger for intimacy and community among people everywhere, particularly young people. Moreover, they stressed the inability of contemporary institutions and environments to nurture qualitative social relationships. Experimenting with individualism, then, involved experimenting with relationships, which also involved experimenting with living and social arrangements. It was this endorsement of therapeutic experimentation that rendered their ideas so appealing to cultural radicals in the late 1960s. And yet, as we will see, it also opened up possibilities for contention.

Why did it open up possibilities for contention? To probe this question one has to probe the liberal orientation shared by these psychologists, and doing so can help us better grasp the complexities of twentieth century American liberalism. I noted earlier

that these psychologists were Progressive liberals. A central premise of Progressive liberalism was that "science" was essential to regulating the fragile human self, with its propensities to excess and wastefulness. By mid-century, in the context of the cold war, the emphasis had shifted somewhat from regulating to "saving" and "strengthening" individualism. Nonetheless, the cautious assessment of human nature remained: the individual had to be awakened, but he or she still had to be "guided," "managed" or "helped" in the process, for human potential was volatile. Liberating human potential was as unpredictable and potentially dangerous as liberating the secrets of the atom. It seemed clear at mid-century that humanity had the capacity to do much good and unspeakable harm. Consequently, visionary liberal psychologists and social reformers found themselves negotiating a spiriting optimism and a sobering pessimism with respect to the human capacity for progress and self-destruction. Negotiation was protection. And negotiation in general translated into creative resistance. Only through such *resistance* could the individual grow. The psychologically, healthy individual, in other words, was one who could stand alone and resist the pressure to conform and get along and merge with the group. The ultimate aim was not solitary grandeur, however, but a democratic public culture conducive to individual growth and creativity. It was this "reconsidered" individualism that nurtured these psychologists' interest in community and/or utopia.

Neither the historiography of post-war psychology nor the 1960s counter culture has lit up and probed this aspect of post-war liberal psychology and its relevance to social reform. These psychologists remain, for the most part, mired in isolated studies and incomplete analyses. Herman's probing study of post-war psychology, for example, does not do them justice. Maslow and Skinner and even Clark are portrayed as troubled

conservatives and reactionaries. "Maslow," Herman claims, "was a self-proclaimed patriot, a supporter of the Vietnam War, and an advocate of restrictive popular and reproductive control politics whose reaction to the political mood of the1960s was to call his activist students and colleagues members of the `Spit-on-Daddy Club.'"[18] Historian Ian Nicholson has portrayed Maslow as a defender of patriarchy on account of his "primate-inspired" conception of human nature. [19] Such assessments are not totally wrong; but they are misleading. Too much of the broader picture has been left out, and the liberal orientation inadequately assessed. I have also noticed that inadequate assessments of liberalism often encourage or reflect inadequate assessments of radicalism.[20] In general, I call for a more balanced and refined criticism of post-war liberalism and radicalism.

A primary reason I decided to group these psychologists together is because they represent, in my view, the sort of visionary, excited, but cautious liberalism that prospered after World War II, in particular among social scientists and psychologists

[18] See *The Romance of American Psychology*, 273. For a brief unflattering mention of Skinner, see 172. Kenneth Clark also gets passed over rather quickly. She acknowledges his sensitivity to institutional racism but faults him for reinforcing patriarchal assumptions about the damaging effects of matriarchy in the black family. "His view that matriarchy had created a `distorted masculine image,' damaging men far more than women…reinforced the rationale that men were the primary concern of psychological theory." This is misleading. If black men were psychologically damaged, it was because of racism, not matriarchy. And racism was damaging to men and women alike, and it was damaging to white men and white women as well.

[19] Ian Nicholson, "GIVING UP MALENESS": Abraham Maslow, Masculinity, and the Boundaries of Psychology," *History of Psychology*, 4:1, (2001): 79-91.

[20] Herman's criticisms of Maslow and Clark, for example, are never balanced with criticisms of the cultural and political radicals with whom they clashed. It is important to note that many criticisms these liberals directed toward radicals, were often directed by radicals toward other radicals. Maslow and Skinner's impatience with uncompromising and irresponsible hippies were echoed by many a hardworking communitarian. Similarly, the emphasis on the biological foundation of human nature that allegedly compromised Maslow's commitment to reform, also pervaded the counter culture. Neither Herman nor Nicholson note that an interest in the physical and biological aspects of human nature was shared by many cultural radicals.

interested in social reform.[21] In this study I try to capture the creative resistance of these psychologists within the contexts of their own fields, as well as with some of the radical, experimental sectors of the counter culture. I consider my stance towards these men, and to the radicals they inspired and were challenged by, to be sympathetic and critical -- sympathetic because life-affirming ideals and visionary agendas are in themselves admirable; critical because navigating the twists and turns of these debates requires a critical temper; one has to grasp the contradictions, inconsistencies, weaknesses, and strengths of the contending interpretations and arguments.

In closing, I want to note that the 1960s provides for the historian a rich context for probing the dynamic interactions of liberalism and radicalism. These years were a historical high point for liberal reform *and* radical experimentation. And psychology was a strong cultural presence. Psychologists were contemplating visions of utopia and the good society at a time when people were literally putting such visions to practice. Liberals and radicals alike were engaged with the challenging task of creating better societies. How to create and design these societies was a highly contentious question. For liberal psychologists the capacity to negotiate and structure liberation was crucial. Change on a massive scale was desirable, but, given the fragility of the individual, it was important to stay vigilant against the menace of those twin-evils -- authoritarianism and

[21] I am not saying these men were typical establishment liberals. They themselves did not perceive themselves as such. They stood out. As Edward Hoffman notes of Maslow: "In retrospect, what amazes me was that he succeeded in becoming an establishment figure in the course of his lifetime. He told me on a number of occasions that it amazed him, too." See Hoffman, ed., *Future Visions: The Unpublished Papers of Abraham Maslow* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 1996), x. Such amazement stems from the fact that Maslow at times seemed more of a "vague idealist" than a rigorous, serious-minded scientist. Skinner, also a prominent scientist, viewed himself as a "utopian dreamer." These psychologists were not the sort of "experts" that Herman writes about. They were idealistic, visionary reformers and public intellectuals as well as scientists. Perhaps they represent the idealistic, reformist wing of post-war American liberalism. In any event, this "wing" prospered due to a number of factors in the post-war cultural climate, and it nurtured the conditions conducive to the radicalism of the 1960s counter culture.

anarchy. “Experimentation” had to be structured within an authoritative framework that was neither too loose, nor too authoritarian. Maslow, Rogers, Clark and Skinner believed that psychology could provide this structure. During the 1960s their faith and confidence would be sorely tested. How and why it was tested will, hopefully, become clear in the following chapters.

Chapter One

Psychology and Public Culture in Post-War America

In September of 1956 the American Psychological Association convened in Chicago, Illinois for its annual conference. On September 4th two reputable psychologists, Carl Rogers and Burrhus Frederick Skinner, engaged each other in a public debate.[1] The discussion was part of a symposium titled "Some Issues Concerning the Control of Human Behavior," and it marked the beginning of what would become an ongoing spirited dialogue between the two psychologists. Their affiliated schools were (respectively) humanistic psychology and radical behaviorism, both of which were often promoted and perceived as inherently antagonistic to one another. Debates between radical behaviorists and humanistic psychologists would become increasingly politicized and polarizing during the 1960s, engaging professional psychologists and various sectors of the general public.[2] Underlying their differences, however, was a shared commitment to promoting and probing the relevance of psychology to contemporary problems. These dialogues involving Skinner and Rogers, highly publicized as they were, reflected the growing influence of psychology to shape and frame public debates.

The next public encounter was in December 1960, at a meeting of prominent psychologists organized by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In June 1962, at the University of Minnesota at Duluth, a nine-hour confrontation over two days drew

[1] See "Some Issues Concerning the Control of Human Behavior," *Science*, 124:3231 (November 30, 1956): 1057-1066. The article was based on material presented by Skinner and Rogers for the Symposium.
[2] Roy Jose DeCarvalho, *The Founders of Humanistic Psychology* (New York: Praeger, 1991). See chapter 4: "Humanistic Psychology and Behaviorism," 33-45.

an audience of over 500 people to hear the two men discuss "Education and the Control of Human Behavior." Two years later both men took part in a symposium at Rice University, titled "Phenomenology and Behaviorism." That same year Rogers criticized Skinner's behaviorist approach in his address to the American Psychological Association at its annual convention. The address, titled "Freedom and Commitment," emphasized what Rogers regarded as the dangerous agenda of social control embodied in Skinner's *Walden Two*. According to historian Roy DeCarvalho, some speculate that B.F. Skinner's best-selling *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (1971) was a response to Rogers' critique.[3]

"Some Issues Controlling the Control of Human Behavior"

To understand debates it is helpful to identify some of the shared premises of the participants. Skinner and Rogers had much in common. Both had obtained their doctorates in psychology in the same year – 1931, Skinner from Harvard University and Rogers from Teachers College, Columbia University. Trained behavioral scientists, both acknowledged their commitment to scientific research and experimentation, and both believed that behavior could be understood in terms of cause and effect, and that, with the help of science, increasingly predicted and controlled.[4] Sometimes it seemed to Rogers

[3] DeCarvalho, 36-37. The transcript of the 1962 dialogue is available in Howard Kirschenbaum and Valerie Land Henderson, eds., *Carl Rogers: Dialogues: Conversations with Martin Buber, Paul Tillich, B.F. Skinner, Gregory Bateson, Michael Polyani, Rollo May, and Others* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989), 82-152. For the transcripts of the papers and questions and answers from the Rice symposium see T.W. Wann, ed., *Behaviorism and Phenomenology: Contrasting Bases for Modern Psychology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

[4] Robert D. Nye, *Three Psychologies: Perspectives from Freud, Skinner, and Rogers* – 5th ed. (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1996.) Brian Thorne, Carl Rogers (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1992). Howard Kirschenbaum, *On Becoming Carl Rogers* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1979). D. Cain, "Carl Roger's Life in Review," *Person-Centered Review*, 2:4 (1987b):476-506. D.W. Bjork, *B.F. Skinner: A Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1993.); R.I. Evans, *B.F. Skinner: The man and his ideas*. (New York: Dutton, 1968); Robert D. Nye, *The Legacy of B.F. Skinner*. (Pacific Grovel, CA:Brooks/Cole, 1992).

that they agreed on so many particulars as scientists that the differences were hard to pin-point. "[T]here is so much in which we are in real agreement," as he put it in 1962. "It is puzzling to know why five hundred people would turn out to see what the differences are."[5] But Rogers immediately went on to concede the presence of "some real differences." Important as those differences were, they stood out against a shared background of scientific training and a shared commitment to promoting psychology for human welfare.

Rogers and Skinners were responsive to the growing prestige and power of science in the atomic age.[6] They acknowledged the danger, past and present, of powerful groups inclined to harness professional science for unsavory agendas involving social control. In post-war America, with its growing affluence and expanding technologies, the mechanisms and possibilities of social control seemed more potent than ever. "Science is steadily increasing our power to influence, change, mold – in a word, control – human behavior," declared Skinner at the outset of the debate.[7] Controlling human behavior was essentially the province of psychology, and it was an issue fraught with disturbing political and ethical associations. "The dangers inherent in the control of human behavior are very real," Skinner went on. "The possibility of the misuse of scientific knowledge

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[5] Carl Rogers, *Dialogues*, 92.

[6] When they referred to the increasing power of science, they included the physical sciences and the behavioral sciences. In this dissertation I focus on the latter. For an interesting insight into the influence of physicists in this period, see Ann Finkbeiner, *The Jasons: The Secret History of Science's Postwar Elite*. (New York: Viking, 2006) See also Gregg Herken, *Brotherhood of the Bomb: The Tangled Lives and Loyalties of Robert Oppenheimer, Ernest Lawrence, and Edward Teller* (New York: Henry Holt, 2002.) For psychiatry, see the works of psychiatrist-historian David Healy, in particular *The Creation of Pharmacology* (New York: New York University Press, 2002.) See also Jean Thuiller, David Healy (ed.), Gordon Hickish (trans.) *Ten Years That Changed the Face of Mental Illness.* (London: Martin Dunitz LTD, 1999.) For psychology see Ellen Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.)

[7] "Some Issues Concerning the Control of Human Behavior," 1057.

must always be faced."[8] On this point Rogers expressed that he and Skinner were "in agreement." Their differences centered on their respective approaches to dealing with this unsettling possibility, and the different roles they envisioned for science in the promotion of social progress, or, as Skinner put it, "the survival of mankind."[9]

Their differences, in general, centered on the proper response to and use of power. Skinner argued that in a world where the mechanisms of social control were so subtle, scientists had no choice but to apply their resources to the design of new environments. Behavioral scientists, he affirmed, were at last beginning to understand the complex, multi-layered mechanisms of variables reinforcing human behavior. They would soon have the capacity to alter environments, to structure them, and to manage them. The idea of scientists wielding such power was, to many, unsettling, but it was important for people to not allow an understandable distrust and fear of power block scientific and social progress.[10] As things stood, power was too often wielded in irresponsible ways. The international scene provided plenty of instances of power wielded by tyrants or self-aggrandizing party machines. Even industrialized, democratic countries failed to engage power responsibly. In the United States there was a tendency to eschew responsibility altogether by taking cover under the protective shelter of bureaucracy; the result being a bureaucratized society under "the rule of nobody."[11] Skinner insisted that the complex power structures at work in modern society had to be properly understood and managed.

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[8] Ibid., 1060.
[9] Ibid., 1065.
[10] The ideal society for Skinner was not one "ruled" by scientists, but a society engineered by scientists with built-in safeguards against the concentration of power in any one person or group. This is why I consider Skinner, like Rogers, a "liberal," and a liberal committed to reconciling the traditional value of individuality with the importance of rational state intervention.
[11] This was Hannah Arendt's oft-repeated phrase. See *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, rev.ed. Harmondsworth: Penguin 1963), 287-289. See also William H. Whyte, *The Organization Man* (New York: Doubleday, 1956.) For another interesting discussion of bureaucracy and morality Mary Midgley, Wickedness: A Philosophical Essay (New York: Routledge, 1992.) See esp. Chap. 3.

Only then could social reforms be effective. Applying behaviorist science to social reform, then, held forth the promise of healthier, happier people and a better world.

To illustrate his vision of such a world, Skinner alluded to the utopian community described in his novel, *Walden Two* (1948). Walden Two is essentially a microcosm of what for Skinner signified a "better" world. All variables are accounted for in Walden Two. The design of the buildings, the division of labor, codes of conduct, child-rearing, marriage, and inter-personal relations, have been crafted to the finest detail using the insights of behavioral science and engineering.[12] Critics of *Walden Two*, Skinner acknowledged, were speaking from an understandable fear of social tyranny and aversive social control. But such fear, taken to extremes, could only have crippling effects. For one thing, they shortchanged the capacity of science to envision better, alternative ways of living:

> A world in which people are wise and good without trying, without "choosing to be," could conceivably be a far better word for everyone. In such a world we should not have to "give anyone credit" – we should not need to admire anyone – for being wise and good. From our present point of view we cannot believe that such a world would be admirable. We do not even permit ourselves to imagine what it would be like.[13]

For Skinner imagining such possibilities was integral to his work as a psychologist.

Rogers was no admirer of *Walden Two*. On a philosophical level he declared the novel indistinguishable from George Orwell's *1984*, which had been published in 1949, a year after Skinner's novel. Orwell had envisioned a world where everything was controlled, including not only outward behavior, but thoughts and feelings.[14] It was no

[12] B.F. Skinner, *Walden Two* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948).
[13] *Some Issues Concerning the Control of Human Behavior*,1059.
[14] George Orwell, 1984 (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1949). Also see the 1961 edition for an interesting Afterword by Erich Fromm (New York: Penguin Books, 1961).

world any sane person would want to live in. Skinner, of course, was advocating community planning by enlightened scientists, not aversive control by a tyrannical "Party" machine. But Rogers was not impressed:

> There is a serious underestimation of the problem of power. To hope that the power which is being made available by the behavioral sciences will be exercised by the scientists, or by a benevolent group, seems to me a hope little supported by either recent or distant history. It seems far more likely that behavioral scientists, holding their present attitudes, will be in the position of the German rocket scientists specializing in guided missiles. First they work devotedly for Hitler to destroy the U.S.S.R. and the United States. Now, depending on who captured them, they work devotedly for the U.S.S.R. in the interest of destroying the United Sates, or devotedly for the United States in the interest of destroying the U.S.S.R. If behavioral scientists are concerned solely with advancing their science, it seems most probable that they will serve the purposes of whatever individual or group has the power.[15]

For Rogers the only way to combat the rising menace of social control was to "liberate" the individual. He advocated what he called a "science of the person." Behaviorists, he argued, were not focused on individuals; for them creative individuals could only flourish in environments designed by expert scientists. Designing such environments was, to be sure, of primary importance. But ordinary people had to be proactively engaged in the process. People had to be encouraged to rely less on "experts" and more on themselves. Rogers was adamant that psychology could unleash human creativity, awareness, and intelligence *starting* at the personal level, and that environments conducive to psychological well-being would follow. Awakened people would offset the current stranglehold of bureaucracy on the human mind and spirit. Creative, sensitive, empowered individuals were, in fact, the best weapons – perhaps the only weapons -- against the expanding corporatism and technological dominance of modern life. The most

[15] Ibid., 1061.

pressing question confronting behavioral scientists, then, was whether or not their skills could nurture creative individuality. "Can science inform us on ways of releasing the creative capacity of individuals, which seem so necessary if we are to survive in this fantastically expanding atomic age?"[16] Rogers faulted Skinner for downplaying the significance of such questions.

Skinner met these criticisms head-on. He would continue to meet them head-on for the rest of his life. And Rogers too would continue to expand psychology in ways contrary to behaviorism. But a point worth noting is the shared concerns of the two in the mid-1950s. Both were clearly responding to specific post-war political, economic, and historical developments. They were responding to advances in technology and scientific insights into atomic energy. They alluded to recent historical examples of the (mis)use of scientific power for destructive ends. The exploits of Nazi scientists were on the minds of both, as well as the role of scientists in the nuclear arms race. Both were responding to the rise of professional science, which included psychology, and its power, in an increasingly bureaucratized world, to control human behavior and human lives.[17]

These debates, then, were not about theoretical issues internal to psychology, and Skinner and Rogers were frank about this. "Had they remained focused on the specific problems presented by their separate work, they might never have clashed publicly," notes Howard Krischenbaum and Valerie Land Henderson.[18] They were liberal social reformers, and they approached psychology in a way that can only, I would argue, be considered "activist." Most scientists, Rogers complained, went through the motions of

[16] Ibid., 1063.
[17] Their warnings resonated with that of other prominent scientists. See, for example, R. Oppenheimer, "Analogy in Science," *American Psychologist* 11:3 (March 1956):127-135.
[18] Carl Rogers: *Dialogues*, 81.

getting degrees and teaching and doing research without concerning themselves with the larger picture and the place of science within it. Such a "laissez-faire attitude" was an attitude both he and Skinner rejected.[19]

Cultural Schizophrenia

An interesting feature of the Skinner-Rogers debates is the tense dynamic and oscillation between extreme pessimism and passionate optimism. Fears of nuclear weaponry and social control in a bureaucratic warfare state frequently give way to utopian visions of an ideal world. The appeal of psychology, on the one hand, was its ability to capitalize on the exciting opportunities made possible by affluence and modern science. On the other hand, as Rogers put it, the world was on the brink of disaster, and the choice between radical behaviorism and humanistic psychology mirrored an ideological crisis demanding engagement at once:

> We can choose to use our growing knowledge to enslave people in ways never dreamed of before, depersonalizing them, controlling them by means so carefully selected that they will perhaps never be aware of their loss of personhood. We can choose to utilize our scientific knowledge to make men happy, well-behaved, and productive, as Skinner earlier suggested. Or we can insure that each person learns the syllabus which we select and set before him, as Skinner suggests. Or at the other end of the spectrum of choice we can choose to use the behavioral sciences in ways which will free, not control which will bring about constructive variability, not conformity; which will develop creativity, not contentment; which will facilitate each person in his self-directed process of becoming which will aid individuals, groups, and even the concept of science to become self-transcending in freshly adaptive ways of meeting life and its problems. The choice is up to us, and the human race being what it is, we are likely to stumble about, making at times some nearly disastrous value choices and at other times highly constructive ones.[20]

[19] "Some Issues Concerning the Control of Human Behavior," 1060.
[20] Ibid., 1064.

Skinner and Rogers at times made it sound as if psychology could save the world or make it much worse, depending on which orientation prevailed. This utopian-doomsday dynamic was not an eccentric tendency common to Skinners and Rogers. The dialectic of pessimism and optimism so pronounced in these debates pointed to wider dilemmas in American social and cultural thought in the 1950s.

Every age has its distinctive moral dilemmas, and in these post-war years America saw new challenges taking shape. Some older concerns were becoming increasingly less relevant, and others more so. The dropping of the atom bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, and the ensuing arms race and cold war, had certainly signified a new and alarming menace that affected American public culture at many levels. Related to this issue was the increasing precariousness of "the individual" in light of the on-going corporatization and bureaucratization associated with modernity. Despite these concerns, Americans were being told that these were the best of times, and many of them believed it. The sense of optimism, observed the political economist Gunnar Myrdal, pervaded the working and lower-middle classes as well as their wealthier counterparts.[21] At the same time, the escalating arms race was difficult to ignore. Social psychologist Kenneth Clark later recalled that in the years following the dropping of the atom bomb he could not get Hiroshima and Nagaski out of his mind. And yet the 1950s

[21] David M. Potter, *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and American Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954; J.K. Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958; David Riesman, "Work and leisure in post-industrial society," In Eric Larabee and Rolf Meyersohn (eds.), *Mass Leisure* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1958), 363-385. There was, of course, poverty in the United States, but as Gunnar Myrdal noted, "the average American" shared this belief in the immense wealth and abundance of America. See *Challenge to Affluence* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), 56. See pp. 50-51 for statistics on poverty in America in 1960. Using the threshold of $4,000 a year annual income for multiple-person families, and $2,000 for "unattached individuals," some "38 million Americans" were living in poverty in 1960, or one-fifth of the nation." See also David Riesman, "The Dream of Abundance Reconsidered," *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 45:3 (Autumn 1981): 285-302.

were perhaps the most optimistic period of Clark's life and career. The permanent threat of nuclear war in peace time could be difficult to live with. For astute observers it was a time of cultural confusion, or, as Kenneth Clark put it, mass "moral schizophrenia."[22]

Moreover, for Clark and other public intellectuals, these dilemmas were not only about confronting weapons of mass destruction and empowering individuals increasingly alienated from the sinister post-war world taking shape. They were approached within a broad framework of reconciling American liberalism to the changing national and international landscapes.[23] There was, of course, nothing new about having to reconcile American liberalism to changing conditions. Earlier in the century Progressive liberals had struggled to negotiate classic American liberalism, with its emphasis on individual sovereignty, with the corporate, concentrations of power that had started taking shape after the Civil War. Laissez-faire individualism had not squared well with unregulated corporate capitalism in a technologically expanding industrial age. The public and private sectors needed (somehow) to be regulated, for the lack of efficient regulation pointed to a society overrun with exploitation, unrest, and violence. Progressive liberals contentiously engaged this dilemma, hoping to negotiate liberalism and corporate capitalism through administrative, institutional efficiency and rational intervention. An ethic of efficiency, regulation, and rational management percolated into public culture and discourse and was

[22] For Clark's recollections and reflections on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, see Kenneth Clark, *Pathos of Power* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), ix-xiv. For Clark's early "optimism" see Ben Keppel, "Kenneth B. Clark in the Patterns of American Culture," *American Psychologist*, 57:1 (January 2002):29-37. For Clark's own discussion of moral and cultural "schizophrenia" see Mary Hall, "A Conversation with Kenneth Clark," *Psychology Today*, 2:1 (June 1968):19-25.

[23] For an interesting discussion of the debates concerning the crisis of liberalism (and radicalism) see Richard King, *The Party of Eros: Radical Social Thought and the Realm of Freedom* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1972.) See Chap. 1.

applied to corporate entities and individuals alike.[24] As I will discuss in chapter two, the appeal of psychoanalysis and behaviorism in these years was rooted in a faith in science to stabilize and regulate individuals and institutions.

In the 1940s and 50s, however, American liberalism appeared to be encountering new dilemmas. In the late 19th century the dangers engaging social critics pointed to inefficiency and wasteful competition. Now it seemed challenged by *too much* efficiency, and, interestingly enough, too much cooperativeness and "groupism." These changes were evident in the concerns raised by psychologists. Whereas earlier they had probed the dangers of wayward emotions and destructive behavior patterns, now it appeared that people were not emotional enough, that they were sunk in complacency and apathy. Cultural observers started arguing that individualism had to be reinvigorated or – as sociologist David Riesman put it – "reconsidered."[25] People needed not so much to be "managed" as to be awakened and challenged, particularly in light of the totalitarian menace. Indeed, the horrors of Fascism were fresh in the minds of public intellectuals, and in the late 1940s the emerging cold war imbued these "reconsiderations" of American culture with ideological significance and moral urgency.[26]

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[24] See Martin J. Sklar, *The Corporate Reconstruction of American Capitalism, 1890-1916: The Market, The Law, and Politics* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Martin Melosi, *The Sanitary City: Urban Infrastructure in America from Colonial Times to the Present* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 180-195. See also Alfred D.Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1977.) For an interesting analysis of the pervasive concern for "regulation" see William G. Roy, *Socializing Capital: The Rise of the Large Industrial Corporation in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.) Roy explores how the loss of faith in the "invisible" laws of the market cut across class lines during the late nineteenth century. Manufacturers, bankers, and reformers, for all their differences, reacted against the competitive market and its consequences.

[25] See David Riesman, *Selected Essays From Individual Reconsidered* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1954). See especially "Values in Context" (1-11) and "Individualism Reconsidered" (12-28).

[26] We have already seen the sense of urgency felt by Skinner and Rogers. For other examples, see Lionel Trilling, *Freud and the Crisis of Our Culture* (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1955, and William F. Buckley, Jr., *Up From Liberalism* (New York: Hillman Periodicals, Inc., 1959).

Rogers and Skinner were, then, articulating and confirming widely circulating concerns. The cold war constituted an important frame of reference for their psychology and the work of other liberal social and behavioral scientists. Among social psychologists like Kurt Lewin and Kenneth Clark, for example, there was a growing interest in the study of totalitarian and democratic cultures and mindsets. Each kind of social system nurtured its distinctive character types.[27] Totalitarian states thrived on lock-step conformity, rigidity and close-mindedness. The surest antidote to such traits, explained Clark in *Prejudice and Your Child* (1955), was creativity. It was important for a democratic society to encourage human creativity and individuality. The individual needed "freedom" to be him or herself, and, moreover, needed a culture that encouraged him or her to cultivate this freedom. If the public culture was not encouraging these ends, then individuality and democracy were in jeopardy. In the eyes of thoughtful critics like Skinner and Rogers and Clark, the public culture was in fact not encouraging them. There were many unhealthy tendencies at work, and social scientists started probing them. Psychoanalyst and social psychologist Erich Fromm stressed the danger of technology: the danger, that is, of "men making machines that make machines out of men."[28] Kenneth Clark pointed to the psychological straightjacket of racism which crippled and closed the minds of oppressed and oppressors alike.[29] Both situated their analyses within the wider context of the warfare state, within which the "individual" was vulnerable. But democracy could not exist without psychologically healthy individuals. Creativity,

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[27] See Kenneth Clark, *Prejudice and Your Child*, Second edition, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), 10. For Kurt Lewin, who was already well-known for his earlier study of the impacts of different leadership styles on children, see James Goodwin, *A History of Modern Psychology*. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1999) 281-282.

[28] See Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society* (New York: Rinehart, 1955). See also his later book, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, New York: Rinehart, 1973).

[29] This was a central theme in *Prejudice and Your Child*, and, for that matter, in all Clark's writings.

assertiveness, and intelligence seemed more important than ever. The problems unleashed by atomic fission and fusion were unprecedented in their catastrophic capacity. Such powerful forces had to be met with forces no less powerful – the "totality of human intelligence" as Clark put it.[30] But how could forces be mustered against these formidable large-scale enterprises without further eroding the prospects of a healthy, democratic culture? A crisis of such immensity called for collective action. And yet the thrust for collective action could further undermine individuality. What was to be done? These and related questions were gradually aired out and wrestled with on the contentious terrain of public culture. And on this terrain professional psychologists were, by mid-century, becoming figures of prominence and influence.

These psychologists were, to be sure, not the only figures of prominence and influence engaging tough questions. Cultural commentary and debate in these years were richly interdisciplinary, as just a brief look at the collection of Carl Rogers' "dialogues" reveals.[31] These "public-intellectual" psychologists were not only addressing each other, they were addressing academics from other disciplines as well as the general public. Psychological forums brought people together from various fields.[32] This helps explain how the Rogers-Skinners debates touched, as Roy DeCarvalho puts it, "a cultural nerve." The debates are helpful, then, as they uncover some of the concerns that were threading their way through different sectors of American public culture. Before turning more closely to the specific contributions of these psychologists to these debates, it would be

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[30] Clark, *Pathos of Power*, 34.
[31] Note the title: *Carl Rogers: Dialogues: Conversations with Martin Buber, Paul Tillich, B.F. Skinner, Gregory Bateson, Michael Polyani, Rollo May, and Others* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989).
[32] The Journal of Humanistic Psychology's editorial board reflected this diversity. Board members in the spring of 1962 included Robert Harman, a philosopher; Aldous Huxley, a novelist; David Reisman, a sociologist; and S.I. Hayakawa, a semanticist. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 2:1 (Spring 1962):II.

helpful, I think, to further probe and unpack American post-war public and popular culture in order to better engage the underlying dilemmas.

The Challenge of Affluence

One such thread weaving its way through American cultural and social commentary was the issue of affluence. Skinner and Rogers were expanding on what had become a contentious, controversial theme among cultural commentators. Affluence was a blessing, a curse, and a challenge, depending on the contexts. On the one hand, post-war American triumphalism capitalized on American affluence. Affluence was essential for democracy – to export it abroad and nurture it at home. On the other hand, affluence could facilitate suburban escapism and passive consumerism. It could, in other words, undermine public culture. In the context of the cold war a weak public culture could be a serious liability.

In their first public encounter Skinner and Rogers both shared an optimistic belief in the power of affluence, or, to put it more accurately, *in the potential power of people to cultivate affluence.* Their optimism resonated with other liberal social scientists such as David Potter, John Kenneth Galbraith, Clinton Rossiter, and David Riesman, who saw in affluence an unprecedented opportunity for Americans to cultivate a freer, more expansive individuality.[33] The more traditional hard-hearted, acquisitive individualism conducive to an era of economic scarcity was no longer necessary in an age where

[33] David M. Potter, *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and American Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954); J.K. Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958); David Riesman, "Work and leisure in post-industrial society" in Eric Larabee and Rolf Meyersohn (eds.), *Mass Leisure* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1958), 363-385 See also Clinton Rossiter, *Conservatism in America: The Thankless Persuasion* – second edition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 71-72.

people's basic physical needs were being met. One of the most eloquent advocates of this newer and better individuality was the sociologist David Riesman, who envisioned new possibilities in consumption, leisure, and well-being. Expanding on the theme of postwar prosperity, he suggested that the older Puritan-capitalist work ethic appropriate to an age of economic scarcity had run its course. Americans had to learn how to cultivate affluence, and, being the richest country in the world, America had to experiment on its own. "[S]o great is the sheer quantity of our available leisure and resources," mused Riesman, "that I do not think we can find very helpful models in other counties."[34] And this was good news. There was so much to learn; an age of abundance opened all sorts of possibilities for people willing to explore them. There was, to be sure, the inevitable transition phase of adjustment to new conditions. The migration from the cities to the suburbs, for example, pointed to new challenges that could be both challenging and unnerving. "The move to the suburb, as it occurs in contemporary America, is emotionally, if not geographically, something almost unprecedented historically." People were uprooting and breaking into a "new frontier" as had generations before them, and with such transitions a period of "loneliness and discomfort" was inevitable. But progress was around the corner. One example of progress were those auspicious tendencies pointing to what Riesman termed "qualitative consumption." "I do believe," he declared, "that discoveries are being made on the frontiers of consumption."[35]

As an example of such "discoveries" he pointed to cooking, an aspect of life that, in an age of affluence, could be cultivated and enjoyed by people in their own kitchens who had access to food, recipes, and appliances. Once "nutritionists" had dominated

[34] David Riesman, "Some Observations in Changes in Leisure Attitudes," in *Selected Essays From Individual Reconsidered* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1954), 129.
[35] Ibid., 139.

dialogues on the American diet – demanding it be "uplifting, salubrious, wasteless." Now, however, the dominance of nutritionists was giving way to more choice and creativity on the part of the consumer. The work of the nutritionists, at least among "the better income strata," was "done" – "incorporated into the formulae of bakers, into the inventories of chain-stores, the menus of restaurants and dining cars." Now people had the time and means to experiment with and enjoy cooking as an art, not a dreary necessity. Progress was being made here. More and more Americans were moving "from the wheat bowl to the salad bowl." For those willing to make the mental adjustment from an economics of scarcity to an economics of abundance, food could be approached not merely as a necessity for survival, but as an art to enhance the quality of life. The suburban shopping centers had all the materials at hand:

> In the middle of a shopping center in this suburb is a store which stocks a stupendous array of delicacies, spices, patisseries, delicatessens, and European gadgets for cooking; the casserole replacing the melting pot![36]

Moreover, it was easier to cultivate the art of cooking if one had a family to cook for, and a spouse who enjoyed food. That young people were marrying at a younger age than their parents was, Riesman suggested, an appropriate response to the emerging culture of middle-class consumption. "Whereas a generation ago a career man and a career girl would have considered marriage an obstacle to their work aims, today marriage and children are in a way part of the consumption and leisure sphere, the side of life currently emphasized."[37]

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[36] Ibid., 141.
[37] Riesman, "New Standards for Old," in *Selected Essays from Individualism Reconsidered*, 159.

Riesman, to be sure, did not expect healthy individualism and "qualitative consumption" to come about on its own. It depended on an active engagement on the part of individuals with their surroundings, not a passive acquiescence that could lead in the direction of mindless consumerism. Shifting from an economy of scarcity to an economy of abundance was a cultural and psychological challenge calling for new mindsets, for a loosening of habitual ways of thought spanning three centuries of western culture.[38] Breaking such historically ingrained patterns could be hard work, and helping people to think and behave differently had for decades been the province of psychoanalysis, psychiatry, and psychology. Riesman himself wrote at length about Sigmund Freud and acknowledged the importance of psychology to broader problems. Whether or not middle class Americans could rise to this challenge was as yet unclear. But in the 1950s Riesman often sounded an optimistic note regarding the future of affluence, and the potential of middle class Americans to cultivate it creatively.[39]

Riesman was focusing primarily on middle class culture. There were other social scientists, notably Kenneth and Mamie Clark, who were attending to racism and poverty, problems quite resilient in this so-called age of affluence.[40] That the country's landscapes were marked by suburbs and ghettos alike was no hidden fact. One just had to turn to the front cover of the December 6, 1949 issue of the popular magazine *Look* to get a glimpse of the conditions in some of America's urban slums. The issue featured a two-part article

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[38]David Riesman, *Selected Essays from Individualism Reconsidered,* 204-205.

[39] Years later, in the 1980s, Riesman had abandoned this earlier euphoric faith in affluence. See David Riesman, "The Dream of Abundance Reconsidered," *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 45:3 (Autumn, 1981): 285-302. "As I reread our essays on abundance and postindustrial work, leisure, and education, I was astonished by an extraordinary provincialism ….It is hard now…to recapture the often euphoric spirit of the 1950s concerning the continuing growth of the gross national product and corresponding surplus." (287-288.)

[40] See Gerald Markowitz and David Rosner, *Children, Race and Power: Kenneth and Mamie Clark's Northside Center* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1996) 25-36. Kenneth B. Clarke, *Prejudice and Your Child*, Second edition, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963).

on "The Negro Problem," in particular the horrific conditions of residents in New York City's Harlem. "Underhoused, underprivileged and herded into three square miles of ghetto, 450,000 Americans live here as second-class citizens."[41] One page sported a full-sized photo of a jaded mother guarding her three sleeping children with a broom from hungry rats. A fourth child, a baby, had died from rat bites one month earlier. Such tragedies, in Harlem, were "anything but rare."[42]

It is difficult to imagine people in such a plight reveling in optimistic scenarios of future prosperity. Nevertheless, despite these interrelated problems of poverty and racism, a growing number of African-Americans were keyed into the post-war climate of affluence and hope. At Howard University, for example, the young Kenneth Clark was deeply influenced by a notable circle of social scientists optimistic in the prospects of a non-racist America.[43] Clark himself believed that post-war triumphalism and affluence had raised the expectations of many African-Americans, particularly young adults. Developments in the post-war world seemed to point the way to change. As he explained in an interview in 1968:

> After World War II, America emerged as the greatest military and economic power the world has ever known. But we also insisted upon presenting ourselves as a great moral power….We embarked on a new kind of imperialism. Moral imperialism. America became in its curious way the champion of economic and political liberation of previously suffocated nations throughout Asia and Africa. And through the Marshall plan we became the champion of economic liberation of European nations.[44]

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[41] "The Negro Problem," *Look*, 13:25 (6 December 1945): 23-32.
[42] Ibid., 27.
[43] Gerald Markowitz and David Rosner, Children*, Race, and Power: Kenneth and Mamie Clark's Northside Center*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 26.
[44] May Hall, "A Conversation with Kenneth Clark," *Psychology Today*, June 1968 (2:1): 22.

In these early years of the cold war, the message that "democratic capitalism" was the "salvation of all mankind" was hammered home to the general public. And many, perhaps most, Clark argued, believed it: "All of us bought it. The Negroes bought it, too. As the darker people throughout the world became politically independent, they began sending delegates to the U.N. Their pictures were in the newspapers. They emerged."[45] Then came that potent boost in morale and optimism with the 1954 Supreme Court decision on school desegregation, which, Clark noted, "reflected the larger world-changes, and accelerated Negro discontent."[46]

These were, then, years of optimism. It seemed a historical door had opened for America. Never before, observers claimed, had so many had access to middle class comforts and security. And with the 1954 Supreme Court ruling on school desegregation it seemed that affluence would (hopefully) extend to African-Americans as well. As Clark recalled years later: "I confidently expected the segregation problem would be solved by 1960. That shows how naïve I was."[47]

While Skinner and Rogers articulated this optimism in the potential of economic prosperity to foster a healthy, democratic public culture, they also expressed genuine alarm that affluence would exacerbate the contemporary crises and undermine people's ability to engage them. They echoed and reinforced the fear that economic prosperity would accelerate the growth of a monstrous warfare state, while, at the same time, dulling the moral sensibility of the middle class by facilitating escapism, consumerism and

[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Richard Severo, "Kenneth Clark, Who Helped End Segregation, Dies," *New York Times*, May 2, 2005, 1.

anxious conformity. In this scenario the prospects of a stable, democratic public culture dwindled considerably.

Indeed, not everyone looked auspiciously on the suburbs as a new frontier pointing to exciting future possibilities. For Americans who had faced the ordeal of financial insecurity and war, suburbia and domesticity were, perhaps, simply welcome enclaves. Perhaps it was unrealistic to expect people to approach consumerism and domesticity in such a creative, conscientious spirit. Many middle class Americans just wanted to work and live comfortably. As Betty Friedan later recalled in *The Feminist Mystique* (1963,) for many Americans the post-war move to the suburbs was in no way an offensive move in a larger ideological battle between contending powers. The suburbs in general signified a welcome retreat from years of economic and psychological ordeals. Domesticity and suburbia were the ideal havens for the war-wearied and love-starved men and women during the late 1940s, and ominous signs of a new "cold" war rendered these domestic and suburban enclaves even more appealing. As Friedan put it:

> There was, just before the feminine mystique took hold in America, a war, which followed a depression and ended with the explosion of an atom bomb. After the loneliness of war and the cold immensity of the changing world, women as well as men sought the comforting reality of home and children. In the fox-holes, the GI's had pinned up pictures of Betty Grable, but the songs they asked to hear were lullabies. And when they got out of the army they were too old to go home to their mothers.[48]

[48]Betty Friedan, *The Feminist Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1963), 182.

This mid-twentieth century obsession with domesticity would be, according to Friedan, disastrous for women – and (for that matter) disastrous for men.[49] But it was important, she noted, to understand the historical and psychological contexts that nurtured suburbia:

> We were all vulnerable, homesick, lonely, frightened. A pent-up hunger for marriage, home, and children was felt simultaneously by several different generations; a hunger in which, in the prosperity of postwar America, everyone could suddenly satisfy. The young GI, made older than his years by the war, could meet his lonely need for love and mother by re-creating his childhood home…For the girls these lonely years added an extra urgency to their search for love. Those who married in the thirties saw their husbands off to war; those who grew up in the forties were afraid, with reason, that they might never have the love, the homes and children which few women would willingly miss. When the men came back, there was a headlong rush into marriage.[50]

In the early 1960s, at the time Friedan was writing *The Feminist Mystique*, observers were noting the alienation of youth in light of the unappealing post-war world that had emerged. The cold war, and the ever expanding military-industrial complex, rendered the outside world intimidating and overwhelmingly impenetrable. Young people were not inclined to shake things up. They were, in fact, marrying and settling down earlier than their parents had.[51] The suburbs were enclaves of comfort and "safety."

In the shadow of growing warfare states, however, no one was safe.[52] Ray Bradbury gave this image of suburban safety a sinister twist in his haunting short story, "There Will Come Soft Rains," which envisions a suburban house still standing after a nuclear attack. The futuristic machinery is still running on schedule, turning on

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[49] She argued that images of suburban manhood were poor, inadequate, unappealing role models for male youth. Friedan, 78-79. In our own time, the popularity of "rap music" among white, middle class suburban youth suggests the relevance of her assessment.
[50] Friedan, 183.
[51] See Erik H. Erikson, ed., *YOUTH: change and challenge* (New York: Basic Books, 1963).
[52] See the introduction to Kenneth B. Clark's *Pathos of Power* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1974,) where he recalls the sobering psychological impact of the dropping of the atom bomb.

sprinklers, making coffee, cooking meals, assembling and disassembling bridge tables. But the human inhabitants are gone, vaporized. All that remains are burnt silhouettes:

> Here the silhouette in paint of a man mowing a lawn. There, as in a photograph, a woman bent to pick flowers. Still farther over, their images burned on wood in one titanic instant, a small boy, hands flung into the air; higher up, the image of a thrown ball, and opposite him a girl, hands raised to catch a ball which never came down.[53]

In this alarming context, then, individuality was crucial. Only the initiative and resilience of spirited, self-confident individuals could offset the dangers threatening "the survival of mankind." For all their differences, Skinner and Rogers were both exponents of "individualism."[54] And their endorsement of "creative" individualism worked from and reinforced probing critiques of the status quo emanating from various sources. They were engaging an issue that was becoming among social critics an on-going obsession. Indeed, in the 1940s and 50s, public intellectuals spanning the political spectrum, from the "conservative" William F. Buckley Jr. to the "liberal" David Riesman to the "radical" Norman O. Brown, were in agreement that individuality seemed everywhere in retreat. Critics warned of widespread moral and ethical complacency, a willingness to surrender one's power of free choice and agency to the organization, the crowd, or the group. Erich Fromm drew attention to the retreat of the self into the "market personality" of contemporary capitalist society – a society that provided all sorts of escape routes

[53] Ray Bradbury, *The Martian Chronicles* (New York: Bantam Books, 1946), 167.
[54] Skinner was as much an individualist as was Rogers. After all, his hero, and the founder of Walden "One," was Henry David Thoreau, a supreme individualist. The elaborately –designed and carefully managed Walden Two might not sound like a peon to individualism. But the construction of such a community could not come about without the sort of restless and imaginative experimentation that only confident and creative individuals could undertake and inspire. Skinner was aware of this, warmly encouraging rebellious young people to "experiment."

through which people could withdraw from the challenge and responsibility of being "free."[55] David Riesman, in *The Lonely Crowd*, studied the increasing precariousness of individualism in a world dominated by group pressure and anxious conformity. [56] Historian Donald Meyer later noted the growing concern regarding a sense of complacency and lack of drive among the younger generation:

> Soon after World War II lamentations were to be heard over the loss of spirit among the young. Bright young men entering business, it seemed, no longer desired to dare. They asked about pensions, they wanted security, upper-middle class salaries, and vice-presidencies just below the level of top and tough responsibility. They were content to be less than the men their (grand)fathers had been.[57]

Such concerns were addressed at length in William Whyte's popular book, *The Organization Man*, published in 1956, the same year as the first Skinner-Rogers debate. Whyte, at the time a business writer for *Fortune Magazine*, argued that an older "Protestant ethic" in American culture had given way to a new "Social ethic." He turned a critical eye on this new "ethic" and examined its influence at work and at home. In the corporate world and in academia he found, with few exceptions, passivity on a grand scale. The pressure to "get along" was hard to resist, and nobody seemed inclined to try. Young corporate employees were the antithesis of entrepreneurs and risk-takers. Scientists too were becoming "organization men."[58] While the new social ethic prevailed at work, so too did it hold sway at home, in "the great package suburbs that [had] sprung

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[55] Erich Fromm, *Escape From Freedom* (New York: Avon Books, 1941); *The Sane Society* (New York: Fawcett Publications, 1955).
[56] David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1953).
[57] Donald Meyer, *The Positive Thinkers: A Study of the American Quest for Health, Wealth and Personal Power from Mary Baker Eddy to Normal Vincent Peale* (Garden City, New York: DoubleDay & Company, Inc., 1965), 171.
[58] William Whyte, *The Organization Man* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002 edition.) See p. 217. "Like his brother in management, the scientist is becoming an organization man."

up outside [America's] cities since the war."[59] The new social ethic seemed to smother people with a heavy blanket of sociability. There was no creative friction or resistance. The situation was no different on college campuses. Students, Whyte observed, were not engaged: "Their conservatism is passive. No cause seizes them….There are Democrats and Republicans, and at election time there is the usual flurry of rallies, but in comparison to the thirties no one seems to care too much one way or the other."[60]

The concerns articulated by Whyte rippled across the political spectrum. In *Up From Liberalism* (1959) William F. Buckley Jr. likewise pointed to the atmosphere of complacency and dullness on college campuses, emphasizing the stark contrast to the 1930s. Individual sovereignty and initiative, he declared, had been rendered ineffective with the rise of corporatism in all its variations. With the rise of the "welfare/warfare" state, with the growing corporatism and bureaucracy of modern life, the individual was lost, disoriented, confused. Whatever the differences between a liberal like Whyte and a conservative like Buckley, both critiqued the pressure of "groupism" and "getting along." Buckley described the times as "an age of modulation." "The tendency, these days, is to yield to the passion for modulation….we are called upon to modulate our voices."[61] "In seeking out the bland, the modulated approach, in blurring distinctions, and in acclimatizing men to life without definition," Americans were eroding the foundations not only of American democracy, but of western culture.[62] There was no resistance to this overriding ethic being propounded by America's "present-day, educated, enlightened,

[59] Ibid., 267.
[60] Ibid., 65.
[61] William F. Buckley, Jr., *Up From Liberalism* (New York: Hillman Periodicals, Inc., 1959), 105.
[62] Ibid.,117.

progressive middle class."[63] And it was being disseminated by people in power. Buckley pointed to the so-called "Eisenhower Program" as a case in point. The program, and its leader, epitomized the rampant obsession with "modulation." It was a program suffering from "the ultimate lifelessness of any program unanimated by definition or principle."[64] And yet it exhibited, in the interest of getting along, "marvelous flexibility." It was a program that stood for everything and nothing depending on the needs of the moment:

> Under the Eisenhower Program one can, simultaneously, declare for a free market economy and veto the gas bill which aims at a free market on gas; stand by a policy of liberation and go to Geneva; lucubrate over constitutional rights and freedoms and forever abandon captured American soldiers; and over the whole package – and this is Mr. Eisenhower's historical skill – there is suffused a general benignity of a kind that, at least until very recent days, bewitched the multitude of the voters.[65]

Communism, meanwhile, was anything but lifeless. Its "dogma," however seductive, was "eschatologically conceived." It promised "the elimination of poverty, war, inequality, insecurity." It mobilized people. It offered "a view of human history," "a millennial vision," and a "vision (revolution) of effecting this millennium."[66] The challenge, for a conservative like Buckley, was not of course to embrace communism, but to mobilize, awaken, and empower Americans to confront it with something better.

Buckley's complaints of an eroding individualism resonated with the warnings of Lionel trilling, a liberal literary critic and public intellectual who also spoke of a "cultural crisis." The individual was being increasingly undermined by interventionist forces

[63] Lionel Trilling, *Freud and the Crisis of our Culture*, 40-41.
[64] Buckley, 115.
[65] Buckley, 116-117.
[66] Ibid., 134.

generally cloaked in benevolence. Again, institutions, an ethos of sociability, "culture" in general, were getting the better of the individual:

> In a society like ours, which, despite some appearances to the contrary, tends to be seductive rather than coercive, the individual's old defenses against the domination of the culture become weaker and weaker. The influence of the family deteriorates and is replaced by the influence of the school.[67]

Trilling did note the existence of "counter-tendencies" at work in American culture, but they were weak in comparison to the dominant trends. "[T]hey [the counter-tendencies] are not, I believe, so momentous as the development of the tendency toward social peace."[68]

The theme of retreating individualism was also taken up by radical intellectuals, like the classicist Norman O. Brown. Brown too had little patience with an ethic of modulation and accommodation. He had been politically active in the 1930s but found the political process to be tedious, superficial, and enervating. As he put it in the Preface to *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (1959):

> I like so many of my generation, lived through the superannuation of the political categories which informed liberal thought and action in the 1930's. Those of us who are temperamentally incapable of embracing the politics of sin, cynicism, and despair have been compelled to re-examine the classic assumptions about the nature of politics and about the political character of human nature.[69]

Like so many others, he acknowledged the inability or unwillingness of people to cultivate genuine individuality. "[M]an is the organism which represses his own individuality…The lilies of the field have it because they take no thought of the morrow,

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[67] Trilling, 49.
[68] Ibid., 50.
[69] Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (Hanover, N.H.: Wesleyan University Press, 1959), xvii.

and we do not."[70] The problem, in his view, was not so much an American problem as a universal one. But the growing stockpiles of nuclear weapons demanded that Americans acknowledge the problem and take action. Doing this required a probing study of human nature, history and culture. If humans were so capable of self-destruction, it was important to understand the roots of this phenomenon. As Brown cryptically put it:

> It…begins to be apparent that mankind, unconscious of its real desires and therefore unable to obtain satisfaction, is hostile to life and ready to destroy itself. Freud was right in positing a death instinct, and the development of weapons of mass destruction makes our present dilemma plain. We either come to terms with our unconscious instincts and drives – with life and with death – or else we surely die.[71]

Popular Culture: An Open Door for Psychology

These themes and fears concerning individual vulnerability in the atomic age were not only stoked by public intellectuals. They percolated into American popular culture. Writers of science fiction, for example, engaged them in the context of technology, expanding a genre wherein exciting dreams of space exploration and attractive futuristic lifestyles jangled alongside doomsday scenarios of nuclear war and sinister new social orders. Isaac Asimov notes in his autobiography that science fiction became "suddenly more respectable" after the war.[72] The atom bomb, the German rockets, and the electronic computer had stimulated the imagination of the general public. According to Asimov, who was also a biochemist and a prolific writer on various scientific subjects, these writers were playing an important role in the culture.[73] They

[70] Ibid., 105.
[71] Ibid., xviii.
[72] See *I. Asimov: A Memoir*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1995), 149.
[73] The cold war also prompted Asimov to start writing scientific non-fiction to a general public. In his autobiography he recalls that "the Soviet Union sent the first artificial satellite and the United States went

were probing pertinent dilemmas and engaging people with contemporary problems. Writers of science fiction forayed into the future and returned "with recommendations for world improvement and warnings of world destruction. In times like these, when humanity is complacently working its own devastation, it *must* be warned – over and over again."[74]

The "warnings" conveyed by science fiction writers like Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke resonated with those conveyed by public intellectuals like Buckley, Trilling, Brown, Skinner, and Rogers. Modulation, security, complacency -- were major cultural and psychological liabilities. The challenge of technology, *challenge in general*, required awakened, sensitized, creative individuals willing to take initiative. Novels often pointed to the dangers of individuals stunted in their evolutionary development. Asimov's *The End of Eternity* (1955), for example, envisioned a future where humans had developed the technology of time travel. The technology, overseen by carefully trained technicians, at first seems empowering. The technicians – or "Eternals" -- are able to monitor "Eternity," preventing wars, natural disasters, and other evils. As the story progresses, however, it becomes apparent that the technology has not at all empowered humankind, that it has, in fact, weakened it. For the agenda of the Eternals is essentially one of damage control – the *prevention* of crises and trouble. Confronting crises, however, is crucial to progress, and by enforcing stable, happy and ordered environments, the Eternals have stunted human development. As Harlan, the main character, puts it: "In a

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into a panic, feeling it would be left behind in the technology race. It seemed to me that it was necessary for me to write science books for the general public and help educate Americans" See Ibid., 253.

[74] Ibid., 222. Some science fiction writers almost got intro trouble, in particular for stories about nuclear bombs written before August 6, 1945. "U.S. intelligent agents," recalls Asimov, "even investigated ASF [American Science Fiction magazine] because it published Cleve Cartmill's "Deadline" in its March 1944 issue. The story described a nuclear bomb with too much accuracy." (221)

stable environment, a species may remain unchanged for millions of Centuries. Primitive man evolved rapidly because his environment was a harsh and changing one. Once, however, mankind learned to create his own environment, he created a pleasant and stable one, so he just naturally stopped evolving."[75]

Similar predicaments were probed in the fiction of Arthur C. Clarke. His novel *Earthlight* (1955) portrays a future where humans have colonized the moon and a number of other planets. Despite the advanced technology, war and competition are still thriving, rendered especially dangerous with the sophisticated weapons at hand. People have not morally progressed at all.[76] In *Childhood's End* (1953) he envisions humanity stagnating under the hovering shadow of advanced aliens who have assumed the role of "benevolent overlords." The satirical description of the utopian "Golden Age" that follows resembles the frequent allusions we have already noted concerning an increasingly affluent and leisured America:

> The Human Race continued to bask in the long, cloudless summer afternoon of peace and prosperity. Would there ever be a winter again? It was unthinkable…Gone were the crises that had produced banner headlines…People could indulge in such whims, because they had both the time and the money…Everything was so cheap that the necessities of life were free, provided as a public service to the community, as roads, water, street lighting and drainage had once been. A man could travel anywhere he pleased, eat whatever food he fancied – without handling over any money. He had earned the right to do this by being a productive member of the community….Yet among all the distractions and diversions of a planet which now seemed well on the way to becoming one vast playground, there were some who still found time to repeat an ancient and never-answered question:
> *"Where do we go from here?"* [77]

[75] Isaac Asimov, *The End of Eternity*, (New York: Lancer Books, 1955),165.
[76] Arthur C. Clarke, *Earthlight* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1955.)
[77] Arthur C. Clarke, *Childhood's End* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1953.), 110-112.

The so-called Golden Age, is, in essence, an extended childhood, locked in place with technological force.

While such writers focused on the intimidating power of technology to undermine individual stability, others probed "unhealthy" aspects of American middle class, suburban culture. As an example we can turn to one of the most popular novels from and associated with the 1950s: Sloan Wilson's *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1956.)[78] Wilson's best-selling novel, which he "regarded as largely autobiographical,"[79] explored the plight of the Raths, a young family trying to "settle to things" in suburban, post-war America. For Tom Rath, a war veteran, the monotonous, intrusive, enervating world of middle class "work" is as psychologically trying as war. "The main problem which concerned Tom Rath," Wilson later observed, "was that he felt the world was driving him to become a workaholic in order to succeed at business enough to support his family well."[80] The novel resonated with the observations of critics like Riesman and Whyte that older approaches to work and play in an age of economic abundance were not only unnecessary, but damaging to the sort of creative individualism that contemporary challenges demanded. The psychological consequences of such cultural deficiencies are visibly apparent in Tom "Rath," a man disconnected from his inner emotions and engulfed with feelings of powerlessness. This veteran finds peace time as terrifying and as psychologically jarring as wartime. "Why the hell should I get scared in peacetime?" he asks. Moreover, it's a deadening anxiety, a feeling of being stuck. During the war, in contrast, with fire and fury all around him, he had experienced powerful emotions and a sexual intimacy sadly lacking from his own conventional marriage. His wife, Betsy,

[78] Sloan Wilson, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1955).
[79] See Wilson's Afterword (c. 1983) to the 2002 edition (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2002).
[80] Ibid.

exhibits the same malaise. She is not poor; the children are healthy; Tom is employed. And yet not all is right. "Tom and I are tense and frantic, and I wish to heaven I knew why." What, she asks herself, could be wrong?

> It probably would take a psychiatrist to answer that. Maybe Tom and I both ought to visit one, she thought. What's the matter? the psychiatrist would say, and I would reply, I don't know – nothing seems to be much fun any more. All of a sudden the music stopped and it didn't start again. Is that strange, or does it happen to everyone about the time when youth starts to go?[81]

Betsy, at least, *is* asking questions. According to Erich Fromm, who situated this kind of psychological suffering within broader cultural and political contexts, many people were not even able to do that. As he put it in his little book, *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (1950):

> We are told that never has America had such a bright future as in the mid portion of the twentieth century, while on the same page the probability of a war is discussed and scientists argue whether the atomic weapon will or will not lead to the destruction of the globe…We are as helpless as they are. We do not know the answer because we even have forgotten to ask the question. We pretend that our life is based upon a solid foundation and ignore the shadows of uneasiness, anxiety, and confusion which never leave us.[82]

The Appeal of Psychology

It is not surprising that Betsy Rath, foraging for answers, would hit upon the idea of consulting a psychiatrist. She is looking for therapeutic insight, and the appeal of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy was widening in these years. David Riesman observed

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[81] *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, 112.

[82] Erich Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (New Haven: Ct: Yale University Press, 1950) 2-3. See also Fromm's Afterword to George Orwell's 1984, (New York: Penguin, 1961.) "[T]he continued arms race, even if it would not lead to the outbreak of a thermonuclear war, would lead to the destruction of any of those qualities of our society which can be called `democratic,' `free,' or `in the American tradition.'" (262).

that people in the 1950s were turning to therapy and analysis for different reasons than they had in the 1920s and 30s. It was no longer primarily for the alleviation of neurotic-related symptoms, but also for help in perspective and being able to find meaning in life when everything on the surface was ostensibly going well. Analysts were increasingly working "with people who [were] not obviously ill – whose "symptom" [was] their malaise, their whole way of life – people who [were] troubled about moral issues, or who ought to be troubled about them."[83] Neurosis was no longer about negotiating conflicts between the demands of the libido and the restraints of society. It now signified "a conflict among moral strivings within the individual himself – though these, of course, reflect the conflicts within society."[84] Similarly, the psychologist Rollo May, in an interview in 1968, noted the changed nature of "neuroses" following World War II. As he told Mary Hall:

> Problems that bring people to therapy in our day become increasingly problems without scientific symptoms, but consisting of depersonalization, alienation, chronic depression. The neurotics we get are rarely, if ever, hysterics. Before World War II, one saw mostly hysterics. They had a specific symptom – lameness or blindness. But we rarely get hysterics anymore.[85]

Public Intellectuals and Psychology: Contending Approaches

I began this chapter with an overview of the first Rogers-Skinner debate. From there I moved into the cultural commentary and literature of the period in order to situate their dialogues within some of the broader contexts of the postwar period. In this final part of the chapter I would like to analyze more closely the different ways public

[83] David Riesman, *Selected Essays from Individualism Reconsidered*, 301.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Mary Hall, "An Interview with Rollo May," *Psychology Today*, 1:5 (September 1967): 26-27.

intellectuals approached and promoted psychology to facilitate social reform. In particular, I want to clarify some of the distinguishing characteristics of radical, liberal, and conservative psychology.

It is important to note that psychology was contentious terrain. A preoccupation with individualism and totalitarianism may have cut across political boundaries, engaging radicals, liberals and conservatives alike.[86] But when it came to conceptualizing strategies for change, consensus broke down. Differences became clear in the conflicting approaches to psychology. I am not only speaking of conflicting approaches *within* the profession. I am also pointing to varied ways in which public intellectuals and social reformers engaged psychology. The psychologists I focus on in this dissertation were all, to be sure, behavioral scientists. But they were also public intellectuals, engaging psychology in ways other public intellectuals did, intellectuals such as David Riesman, Norman O. Brown, Philip Rieff, Paul Goodman, and Lionel Trilling. None of these people were professional psychologists, but they expanded on the relevance of psychology to contemporary problems. As I noted in the introduction, in the 1950s they primarily engaged psychoanalysis. Rogers and Skinner too engaged psychoanalysis. In fact, in the field of psychology all three "forces" continuously engaged each other. In the course of the 1960s, when radical behaviorism and humanistic psychology became more "popular," public intellectuals would come increasingly to engage these schools of thought as well.

[86] Clinton Rossiter argued that in the context of totalitarianism conservatives and liberals were becoming more like each other. See *Conservatism in America: The Thankless Persuasion* – second edition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962. There is some truth to this. And in the 1960s I would say that the upsurge of radicalism challenged both of them.

In the following chapters I am going to focus my attention on the distinguishing characteristics of "liberal" psychology. I want to probe the dilemmas, the contradictions, and the challenges confronting liberal psychologists who were genuinely interested in applying psychology to social affairs. In order to light up the contextual landscapes of these debates concerning psychology and social reform, and to more clearly situate the liberal psychologists within them, I would like to devote this final section to an overview of the more conservative and radical approaches to psychology, approaches with which these liberals had to contend.

It would be helpful, I think, to focus on the polar ends of a hypothetical ideological spectrum, with cultural conservatism on one end, and cultural radicalism on the other. In some respects this is also a mood spectrum, with an extreme pessimism imbuing the cultural conservative orientation, and an extreme optimism imbuing its radical counterpart. In the messy terrain of public culture, people often invoked elements of both orientations. Nevertheless, a framework like this is helpful, and not merely for the convenience of the historian. For indeed, the arguments of people with specific agendas generally point in one direction or another. These ends of the spectrum can be viewed as those blinking destinations to which arguments, if developed and carried through to further arguments, generally and perhaps inevitably beckon.

What will become clear in the following chapters is that liberals like Skinner, Rogers, Kenneth Clark, and Abraham Maslow, feared these blinking destinations. They feared extremes in general and were committed to practicing psychology as a way to negotiate vexing polarities. If they feared extremes, however, they also feared mass inertia and stagnation. They were also emotional men themselves, and emotions can be

difficult to contend with. The confusing climate of the times, as we have seen, nurtured both hope and alarm, and a balanced perspective was not easy to come by. The challenge of negotiating pessimism and optimism can be very difficult when the stakes are high and the emotions potent. But either of these moods, taken to extremes, could lead (in their view) to trouble. To be more specific, they pointed in the direction of authoritarianism or anarchy, both of which were antithetical to democratic cultures and characters. Before moving into this heated, angst-ridden "center," it is important to clarify the "danger" points to the right and to the left of it. What follows is a discussion of the work of Norman O. Brown and Philip Rieff, both of whom actively engaged psychology, and who, in my view, embodied characteristics distinctive of cultural radicalism and cultural conservatism.

To the Left: The Radical Psychology of Norman O. Brown

To understand the radicalism of Brown's approach to psychology and culture, it is important to grasp the relevance of "biology" to debates among conservatives, liberals and radicals. "Biology" was a contentious variable in Freudian psychoanalysis. Anyone who engaged Freud had to engage it and its relevance to human behavior and culture – whether to confirm it, expand on it, minimize it, or negate it. A number of liberal and radical thinkers were receptive to probing and affirming "the relevance of biology and culture."[87] Lionel Trilling, for example, saw in Freud's emphasis on biology a way out of America's cultural impasse. An understanding of human biology and biological needs could inform and empower a resistance to oppressive cultural practices. Trilling was aware of the unsavory reputation of Freud's biological determinism on liberal

[87]Trilling, *Freud and the Crisis of Our Culture* , 55.

intellectuals. Biological determinism, of course, negated cherished values of individual "freedom." But Trilling noted that cultural determinism could be just as insidious as biological determinism. And without a human nature to appeal to, humans were indeed alarmingly vulnerable to cultural conditioning, the tool of tyrants. Thus, while an excessive fixation on biological determinism could be problematic, it was still important to – through psychology -- probe the importance of biology to culture and human behavior. Probing our biologically grounded human nature could, in fact, be liberating. As Trilling put it:

> I think we must stop to consider whether this emphasis on biology, whether correct or incorrect, is not so far from being a reactionary idea that it is actually a liberating idea. It proposes to us that culture is not all–powerful. It suggests that there is a residue of human quality beyond the reach of cultural control, and that this residue of human quality, elemental as it may be, serves to bring culture itself under criticism and keeps it from being absolute.[88]

Radicals, too, increasingly disenchanted with the historical-Marxist dialectic, started probing the biological foundations of Freudianism for constructing a new eschatology or vision of social progress. Dwight MacDonald himself had pointed, somewhat shakily, in this direction in the 1940s in a two-part essay, "The Root is Man,"[89] and cultural radicals like Paul Goodman and Norman O. Brown would expand upon it considerably in the 1950s. Both Goodman and Brown saw in the instincts the power to shatter despotism in all its forms and to liberate humanity. Norman O. Brown's *Life*

[88] Trilling, 48.
[89] Richard King, *The Party of Eros: Radical Social Thought and The Realm of Freedom* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1972.) See pp. 39-43 for an overview of the essay.

Against Death in particular had a strong impact on young people, especially college students. It helped nurture the sexual radicalism of the 1960s. [90]

It is important to note here that Brown's work *pointed* to this radical, optimistic, utopian end of the ideological/mood spectrum. He himself did not *use* this polar end point as a starting ground and was not always comfortable with the radicalism attributed to him. Despite his reputation as a "pied-piper of the young," he did not confine his agenda to encouraging uninhibited instinctual and libidinal release. His agenda, in fact, called for a stance of *resistance*, a willingness to stoically confront challenging and unsettling questions, much in the way that Trilling's agenda did. Again, the potency of biology, of humanity's instinctual nature, needed to be probed, not riotously indulged in. Innate human potency was a weapon to break through obstacles, and weapons needed to be handled with care; one had to learn how to wield them, and, after the fighting was over, to "play" with them in non-destructive and life-affirming ways.[91] In other words, the "abolition of repression" was not just a simple letting go. To just "let go" would lead to "that witches' brew" of cruelty and indulgence notable in the "sexology of de Sade and the politics of Hitler."[92] Without profound changes in culture and consciousness, agendas of instinctual release would hit a dead end and backfire on themselves. In psychoanalytical terminology, so long as the "Death Instinct" was repressed under the "Apollonian" ego, the "Dionysian experience could only be bought at the price of "ego-

[90] See Richard King's chapter on Norman O. Brown in *The Party of Eros*, 157-172.
[91] Brown, 98. In this way Brown assailed neo-Freudians like Erich Fromm, Karen Horney, and Harry Stack Sullivan, all of whom downplayed the importance of instincts. Brown, who wanted to move beyond the bleak pessimism of Freud, saw in Freud's biological framework the tools for breaking into newer and "higher" ground. To take the biological teeth out of Freud's work was to leave the visionary thinker powerless. "It takes only the capacity to endure unpleasant truth to prefer the bleak pessimism of Civilization and Its Discontents to the lullabies of sweetness and light which the neo-Freudians serve up as psychoanalysis."
[92] Brown, 176.

dissolution, the "dissolution of consciousness." To avoid a wanton descent into cruelty and barbarism, a "Dionysian ego" was crucial, and constructing such an "ego" would require hard work. Brown set forth the challenge quite clearly in *Life Against Death*:

> The human ego must face the Dionysian reality, and therefore a great work of self-transformation lies ahead of it……The only alternative to the witches' brew is psychoanalytical consciousness, which is not the Apollonian scholasticism of orthodox psychoanalysis, but consciousness embracing and affirming instinctual reality – Dionysian consciousness.[93]

Furthermore, Brown, without getting specific, acknowledged the deeper social and political implications of his agenda. It was clear that social and political changes would have to accompany these broader changes in consciousness. "The resurrection of the body is a social project facing mankind as a whole," he noted, "and it will become a practical political problem when the statesmen of the world are called up to deliver happiness instead of power, when political economy becomes a sense of use-values instead of exchange-values – a science of enjoyment instead of a science of accumulation."[94]

Despite this acknowledgement of "hard-work," "ego-construction," and the dangers of "ego-dissolution," Brown's work did, however, *point inevitably in the direction of sexual and cultural radicalism.* The inevitability stemmed from his unqualified assumption that human instincts, in their "free," "unrepressed," state, were not only potent, but benign. Brown's agenda was the "abolition of repression." Even his interesting discussion about the hard-work of constructing a Dionysian ego gets lost in his enthusiastic endorsement of "polymorphous perversity" and "erotic exuberance." Similar themes of subversive sexual liberation would be propounded by Hebert Marcuse,

[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid., 318.

dubbed in 1968 "the Philosopher of the New Left."[95] Despite differences between the two philosophers, both eventually became associated with the sexual and cultural radicalism of the counter culture. Brown himself in the introduction to *Life Against Death* applauded the work of Herbert Marcuse, praising *Eros and Civilization* (1955) as "the first book, after Wilhelm Reich's ill-fated adventures, to reopen the possibility of the abolition of repression."[96] This was an extreme that the liberal psychologists I will be looking at tried – not always successfully – to avoid.

To the Right: The Pessimism of Philip Rieff

If Brown's Freudian-based utopianism pointed to the optimistic end of the ideological spectrum, the sociologist Philip Rieff perhaps best lights up the pessimistic extreme. Rieff too engaged Freud's work closely and controversially. In *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist* (1959) and *The Triumph of the Therapeutic* (1966) he portrayed Freud as a tough-minded moralist ideally suited to a modern, post-war world rightly skeptical of collective faiths and certitudes. Rieff, in other words, shared the appreciation of Freud's stance of spirited and stoical resistance to oppressive cultural dogma. He too acknowledged the biological component of Freud's work as profoundly important to understanding culture. But Rieff was no revisionist of Freud. When it came to humanity's innate capacity for destructiveness he took Freud at his word; he assailed efforts to recast instinctual forces as essentially benign.[97] He criticized agendas for the so-called abolition

[95] Andrew Hacker, "Philosopher of the New Left," *New York Times*, March 10, 1968; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2003), p. BR1.
[96] Brown, xx.
[97] Philip Rieff, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959; *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith After Freud* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966.) This theme runs consistently and repetitively throughout this work. See also *Fellow Teachers* (New York: Harper & Row,

of repression and the romanticizing of uninhibited instinctual release. He saw as dangerous the entire tradition of sexual liberation beginning with cultural radicals in Freud's time like D.H. Lawrence and Wilhelm Reich, to contemporary prophets of "Eros" such as Norman O. Brown and Herbert Marcuse. To promote instinctual release without a corresponding accompaniment of cultural "controls" or "interdicts" was to embark upon an unprecedented quest of cultural suicide, an agenda with frightening implications. One had to resist, in the stoic sense that Freud encouraged, compelling and seductive "therapies of commitment." Rieff thus resisted and faulted as dangerous the use of Freud for visionary agendas of "liberation."[98]

Whereas Brown and other radicals looked to biology for empowerment and saw culture as oppressive, Rieff looked to culture as our only bulwark against humanity's innate and biologically grounded capacity for destructiveness and chaos. Individuals needed culture for grounding, sanity, and purpose. For centuries Christianity had provided this structure in the West. To what extent people were believers or not was, he noted, irrelevant. It was a dominant structuralizing force that linked people together, culturally and psychologically. As he put it in *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*: "Christian culture survived because it superintended the organization of Western personality in ways that produced the necessary corporate identities, serving a larger communal purpose institutionalized in the churches themselves."[99]

1972.) "Meaningful interdicts must be taught; we humans are not born with them. On the contrary, the human is born criminal. To praise the infantile is to praise criminality. (93-94)

[98] Rieff's admiration of Freud toned down considerably in his later work. Yet his basic orientation, resistant to instinctual release and to immoderately paced cultural change, remained consistent. See his recent posthumously published work, *My Life Among the Deathworks: Illustrations of the Aesthetics of Authority* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006).

[99] Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*, 19.

A stable culture imposed controls – or "interdicts," and interdicts were crucial to collective civility and sanity. A proper balance between "interdicts" and "remissions" was the hallmark of a "high" or "stable" culture. The "church civilization" of the West, however, no longer had a compelling hold. By Freud's time, the high point of Christian culture was long past, and the idea of resuscitating the past in this sense was neither possible nor sensible nor desirable. Freud was the appropriate guide to the post-Christian world, and analytical intelligence the weapon against illusion and inner chaos. In Freud the Christian motifs of asceticism and renunciation were secularized and recast as repression and sublimation.[100]

That Freud was an appropriate guide for society in a post-Christian, post-Jewish world was, for Rieff, a tragic (and not a welcome) truth. For Rieff believed humanity flowered in proportion to the compelling hold of communal purposes and ideals in the dominant culture. For a while in the early and mid-twentieth century Marxism had held forth the promise of a new communal alternative, but by the 1950s the promise had become a disappointment. As he mournfully noted in *Triumph of the Therapeutic*: "There seems little likelihood of a great rebirth of the old corporate ideals. The `proletariat' was the most recent notable corporate identity, the latest failed god."[101]

One powerful factor blocking the possibility of "a great rebirth of the old corporate ideals" was affluence. Affluence did not generate an orientation sympathetic to asceticism and renunciation – which for Rieff were the structuralizing forces of stable cultures. In fact, in America post-war affluence provided a climate conducive to a new therapeutic sensibility impatient with inhibitions or controls of any kind. "Emancipated

[100] For his thoughts on Freud's legacy and his relevance to contemporary culture, see *Triumph of the Therapeutic*, chaps. 2-3.
[101] Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*, 13.

from the ethic of hard work," as he put it, "Americans have also grown morally less self-demanding." Emulating the self-indulgent rich, the rising middle class was casting off – or trying to cast off – "the old system of self-demands."[102] If there were any glimmerings of hope, it resided in the moral fervor and communal discipline of the civil rights movement. But what would happen to these qualities once African-Americans integrated into the wider, morally decadent culture? Morally charismatic leaders would, he predicted, become an "embarrassment, for they hint at the acquisition of something greater than a place in a vaster suburbia."[103]

Rieff's arguments clearly pointed in the direction of cultural pessimism and conservatism, but it is important to note that he himself was uncomfortable with such labels, just as Brown was uncomfortable with the reputation of being a proponent of sexual hedonism. Some of Rieff's concerns and arguments, in fact, were not so different from liberals or cultural radicals like Brown. His denunciations of suburbia and the moral insensitivity wrought by mindless consumption and preoccupation with one's well-being were, as we have seen, invoked by observers across the political spectrum. Rieff, moreover, valued "communal" ideals and purposes – seeing traces of hope not only in the civil rights movement but the anti-war movement as well. As he noted in *Fellow Teachers* (1972): "I have said many times over that there can be no culture without guilt; Vietnam rekindled our sense of guilt, not widely or deeply; nevertheless, that indispensable and true sensibility seemed alive again."[104] His criticism of a welfare-state

[102] Ibid., 273.
[103] *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*, 241; 23. For his criticism of black militants, see *Fellow Teachers*, 104. "But the new militants only have their appetites for affluence and power whetted by the `buy-off' strategy of modern liberal-rich democracy, while the contempt of the militants for their unmilitant friendly enemy sponsors further sharpens their appetites for what the unmilitant have – and for more."
[104] *Fellow Teachers*, 155.

induced cultural malaise sprung not from a longing for conservative, laissez-faire individualism – which Rieff deplored – but rather from what he saw as its corrosive effect on genuine community.[105] It is also interesting to note that Rieff saw similar insidious influences at work in the United States *and* the Soviet Union. Affluence was already wearing away the foundations of communist eschatology: "the Soviet Union and the United States are engaged in a common race to appeal to, and increase, the new-rich."[106] It is important to point this out because Rieff's work would later be cited by critics hostile to liberalism and radicalism alike. His uptight stance against sexual liberation, and his insistence on the need for cultural "controls" in society, could resonate with the cultural conservatism of Christian evangelicals, for example. But Rieff insisted he was no wistful admirer of the church civilization now waning in the West.[107]

Rieff's orientation, however, conscientiously suffused with pessimism and resistance to change in general, pointed in the direction of rigid cultural and political conservatism, and he himself became a stubborn conservative voice in the so-called culture wars of the 1980s and 90s. Whereas Brown turned to human instincts and instinctual release with radical agendas of change, Rieff turned primarily to *culture* – in other words, the past, for protection *against* such release and a*gainst* agendas for change. Cultural stability was crucial; vital to civilization was a healthy Super-ego, which could

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[105] *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*, 245. "Compassionate communities, as distinct from welfare states, exist only where there is a rich symbolic life, shared, and demanding of the self a hard line limiting the range of desires."
[106] Ibid., 253.
[107] Rieff claimed he was no "advocate" of any "earlier creedal organization," especially the Christian Church. "In particular, I have not the slightest affection for the dead church civilization of the West." *Fellow Teachers*, 51. And yet he was still set against, for example, reforms pointing to "women priests" in the Roman Catholic Church. See his review of A. J. Engel's *From Clergyman to Don: The Rise of the Academic Profession in Nineteenth Century Oxford*, in *Contemporary Sociology*, 14:3 (May, 1985): 347-348. "The pace of secularization increases. Next we shall have, I predict, women priests and antiacademic academics."

contain or provide important structural controls for the Id. High culture, whatever its faults, could not be debunked. One had to, as Freud did, cultivate the "capacity to defend high culture in its failures."[108] Continuity with the past was grounding, so that, with the aid of psychoanalytical insight and detachment, one had to resist sudden and abrupt change. Not surprisingly, Rieff found himself increasingly hostile to and alienated from the general thrust of public culture -- a "therapeutic" thrust being pushed by "therapists" of all kinds. A new therapeutic culture promising release with no "restrictive demands"[109] was on the ascendant, part of and reinforcing a culture of wanton affluence and riotous self-indulgence. There was, he declared, nothing to be done. One could not even resist, for one's efforts would simply be co-opted by the therapeutic culture and seized on as one more "marketable" position to try on in the self's endless quest from one experience to the next. Rieff consciously embraced a platform of "inactivism." In *Fellow Teachers* he exhorted like-minded intellectuals to take refuge in the only "enclave" yet open to them – the university. A stance of inactivism, however, could easily translate into stubborn resistance against any kinds of reform, and an implicit acceptance of the status quo. Rieff was a hostile critic of women's rights, gay rights, "liberation" agendas of all kinds. He himself became, in later years, an ardent cultural conservative. And he remained a steadfast pessimist to the end.[110]

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[108] *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*, 216. It is important to note that Rieff was not a "man of faith" in the way that a conservative like Buckley was. "To raise up faith from its stony sleep encourages the possibility of living through again the nightmare history of the last half century," he declared. (4.) For Buckley, a revival of faith was precisely what was needed to combat the seductive eschatology of Communism.

[109] Ibid., 254.

[110] Robert D. McFadden, "Philip Rieff, Sociologist and Author on Freud, Dies at 83," *New York Times*, July 4, 2006. See also Philip Rieff, *My Life among the Deathworks* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2003). Brown is still fixated on "the coming barbarism, much of it here and now, not least to found among our most cultivated classes." (106)

The Liberal Psychologists: The Challenge of Negotiation

The liberal psychologists I will be examining below struggled to negotiate these contending orientations and in the process clarified their own position. They attempted to negotiate the claims of pessimism and optimism, both of them understandable responses to contemporary challenges, but both of them dangerous if carried too far. They too wrestled with Freud, and the contentious debates concerning biology, psychology, and culture. Like other liberals, they were wary of authority, of power, of oppressive interventionism. At the same time they argued that individuals, fragile and weak as they were, called for the benign and expert intervention of the behavioral scientist. Authority and power had to be cautiously approached; all sorts of safeguards and checks were necessary.

The assumption that human "instincts" were benign but fragile, and that they needed the guiding hand of psychology to grow, is what differentiated this liberal psychology from the more conservative and radical philosophical psychology embodied in the work of intellectuals like Norman O. Brown and Philip Rieff. This difference was evident, for example, in a distinctive nuanced approach to the issue of biology and its relevance to psychology and behavior. Unlike European Existentialists, these liberal psychologists accepted and worked with the concept of human nature, a "nature" grounded in biology and evolution. Yet they tried to avoid romanticizing or pathologizing it wholesale. Human instincts, they argued, were *not* innately destructive as Freud (and Philip Rieff) assumed. They were crucial to growth. But they were *weak*, easily distorted by culture, and in need of therapeutic guidance and nurturing. When these psychologists

spoke of liberation, then, they conceived it as a weighty affair that needed to be "released" *and* "guided," "managed," or – in Skinner's view – "controlled."

It can be very hard, however, to negotiate the complexities of social change when powered by strong emotions. All of these psychologists were passionate critics of the status quo and advocates of large-scale cultural, institutional, and psychological change. Controlling the pace and path of reform when the stakes were so high and the need for reform so intense, was challenging. In the radicalized climate of the 1960s it would be especially difficult. Agendas of unfettered sexual liberation and instinctual release would resonate among growing numbers of rebellious and experimental young people. At times these psychologists, in particular Carl Rogers, did incline to a warmly optimistic assessment of human nature and "liberation." But for the most part these liberals were intent on avoiding what they regarded as lop-sided orientations. Such orientations could be dangerous. They could orient people towards the twin evils of anarchy and authoritarianism. And indeed, both anarchy and authoritarianism colored the varied landscapes of the counter culture. Psychology, it was hoped, would provide the stabilizing, structural functions for public culture that religion or a capitalist work ethic once had. But it was not easy to strike a balance between moral constraint and individual liberation.

I began this chapter with an overview of the first Rogers-Skinner debate. Both of these men were clearly trying to negotiate these concerns. Both were interested in empowering individuals and designing environments conducive to empowerment. Both saw in psychology, in particular their respective schools of psychology, an important conceptual tool-kit for tackling formidable problems. The ways they and their colleagues

constructed, practiced and promoted psychology for these ends will be probed in the following chapter.

Chapter Two

Radical Behaviorism and Humanistic Psychology

Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow and B.F. Skinner had been reared in a profession imbued with optimism from the start. The traditions they built on and worked from, psychoanalysis and behaviorism, had taken root in America during the Progressive years, nurtured by the "Progressive" optimism in science and social progress. The schools had different origins. Behaviorism, founded in part by John Watson, was a home-grown American psychology. Psychoanalysis was of European origin. But following Freud's visit to the United States in 1909 it had taken hold in the United States and prospered, becoming more popular and influential in America, in fact, than in Europe.[1]

The popularity of psychoanalysis and behaviorism points to developments that transcend American contexts. Both were powered by the rising prestige of science in the West, a development going back to the Enlightenment, but receiving a powerful thrust from Charles Darwin in the mid19th century.[2] Darwin, among other things, had

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[1] For the importance of behaviorism in the United States see Laurence Smith and William R. Woodward (eds.) *B.F. Skinner and Behaviorism in American Culture* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1996). For a helpful history of professional psychology see James Goodwin, *A History of Modern Psychology*. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1999). For clinical psychology see John M. Reisman, *A History of Clinical Psychology* (New York: Irvington Publishers, 2nd ed., 1992). For "folk" psychology see Eugene Taylor, *Shadow Culture: Psychology and Spirituality in America*, (Washington, D.C.:Counterpoint, 1999). For an overview of the ways in which professional science – including psychology – was popularized during the twentieth century see J.C. Burnham, *How superstition won and science lost: Popularizing science and health in the United States.* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987). See also B.F. Skinner, "Behaviorism at Fifty," in T.W. Wann, ed., *Behaviorism and Phenomenology: Contrasting Bases for Modern Psychology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 79-108; David Bakan, "Behaviorism and American Urbanization," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, vol. & issue: 2, (1966):5-28; Robert D. Nye, Three *Psychologies: Perspectives from Freud, Skinner, and Rogers* – 5th ed. (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1996).

[2] See Mary Midgley, *Evolution as a Religion: Strange hopes and stranger fears* (New York: Methuen, 1985) and *Science as Salvation: A Modern Myth and its Meaning* (New York: Routledge, 1992.) John

naturalized the human soul. The *Descent of Man* situated humans solidly in nature, as one species among many, their own evolution a (small) part of a much larger history of terrestrial life and death.[3] Darwin's work had important implications for science: elements of human existence formerly the province of religion or philosophy were now subjects for scientific study and explanation. We can see the importance of Darwin's work in the agendas of scientists like Sigmund Freud and John Watson, which took shape within evolutionary frameworks. Both men assumed continuity with humans and other life forms. For Freud, the instincts anchored humanity in nature. For Watson the study of behavior naturally crossed species boundaries. "The behaviorist," he declared in 1914, "in his efforts to conceptualize a unitary scheme of animal response, recognizes no dividing line between man and brute."[4]

This grounding of the human mind, soul, and spirit in evolution and biology partly sheds light on the optimism inherent in the new science. Situating humanity in nature, on the same level with "brutes," was not for these scientists a reduction, a fall in status, but rather an opportunity for science to extend its quest to control nature, a tradition going back to the Enlightenment and threading its way to the present, by which time stunning successes in science had rendered it especially compelling.[5] Science could wrestle with and ultimately subdue human nature. It could bring order to chaos, and both Freud and Watson emphasized the importance of order, structure and control. The

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Durant, ed., *Darwinism and Divinity: Essays on Evolution and Religious Belief* (New York: Basil Blackwell, Inc, 1985).

[3] Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981).

[4] James B. Watson, "Psychology as the Behaviorist Views it", *Psychological Review*, 2:2 (April 1913): 158-177. For biology and Freud see, Frank J. Sulloway, *Freud: Biologist of the Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1979.) Sulloway argues that many of Freud's ideas were not so antithetical to prevalent ideas in the medical community, but that Freud preferred the role of outsider.

[5] See Midgley, *Science as Salvation*, 84-91. See also Ivan Tolstoy, *The Knowledge and the Power: Reflections on the History of Science* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1990).

problem with neurotics, for example, was precisely their lack of structure and control. They were marked by inner turmoil, emotional confusion, and energy flying about every which way. Freudian psychoanalysis was supposed to help people inhabit themselves better, to not be so helplessly at the mercy of destructive forces and sexual desire. It was intended to help people get themselves together, to use and not waste, their energy. [6] Behaviorism too was guided by scientific minimalism and the virtues of discipline and efficiency. Neurotic or destructive behavior stemmed primarily from the force of habit -- learned patterns of behavior in response to certain situations. Whereas Freudians looked to repressed forces to explain problematic behavior, and stressed the necessity to confront and engage such forces in order to stabilize, behaviorists looked for faulty behavior patterns that would have to be unlearned and substituted with more appropriate ones. [7] Adherents of both schools, whatever their differences, pointed a way to more disciplined, structured and stable lives.

Of course, proponents of both schools promoted their views in opposition to one another. Psychoanalysis and behaviorism would become polarized in the professional sciences and in the minds of many people outside the professions. Their proponents worked with different conceptual maps; they had different criteria for recognizing and investigating "facts." For Watson, facts were *observable* phenomena. He sharply distinguished facts from metaphors, which were scientifically irrelevant. His criticisms of Freud pointed to Freud's inability to break down behavior into "facts." To Watson, a

[6] For examples of early popular appraisals of psychoanalysis in the United States, see William M. Brown, "Psychotherapy: An Important Contribution to Medical Science," *Century*, 118:1 (May 1929): 1-12. For an almost euphoric early appraisal of Freud's influence in American public culture see Walter Lippmann, "Freud and the Layman," *The New Republic*, 2, (April 17, 1915): 9-10. See also Peter Clark Macfarlane, "Diagnosis by Dreams," *Good Housekeeping*, volume & issue: 60 (February-March, 1915):125-133; 278-286.

[7] John B. Watson, "How We Think: A Behaviorist's View," *Harper*, 153 (June 1926):40-45.

Freudian concept like the libido was unreal.[8] But Freud himself was no mystic. He was a neurologist and had always claimed to be working within a scientific framework.[9] As mysterious as the Unconscious was – the psyche and all the related phenomena could be analytically probed, understood, and constructively worked with. The "human soul" was now the object of scientific investigation.[10] Setting all differences aside, both were wresting the study of human phenomena from the realm of the mystical, the spiritual, and the religious, and widening the terrain of science.[11]

American Contexts

In the United States, psychoanalysis and behaviorism resonated with the some of the broader agendas of the Progressive Era. They appealed to the progressive values of "rational" intervention and management, and to the progressive critiques of laissez-faire individualism and Gilded Age capitalism.[12] The Progressives, with their faith in efficiency and "rational intervention," were no enthusiasts of unbridled, acquisitive individualism.[13] In this way psychoanalysis and behaviorism embodied the virtues of

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[8] Watson, "The Psychology of Wish Fulfillment," *The Scientific Monthly*, 3:5 (Nov., 1916):479-487; "The Myth of the Unconscious: A Behavioristic Explanation," *Harper*, 155 (Sept., 1927):502-08.
[9] For the importance of Freud's medical training on psychoanalysis, see Frank J. Sulloway, *Freud: Biologist of the Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1979.)
[10] William Brown, "Psychotherapy: An Important Contribution to Medical Science," *The Century Magazine*, 118:1 (May 1929):1-12.
[11] There were also efforts to integrate the two schools in the 1930s. See Barak, 23. See also J. Dollard and N.E. Miller, *Personality and Psychotherapy* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1950).
[12] See Barak. Although he focuses on behaviorism, he also integrates the simultaneous popularity of psychoanalysis into his analysis. See pp. 21-23. Also, there are wider cultural factors involved in the popularity of psychoanalysis, and (later on) "psychotherapy" in general. See Philip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1966,) chaps. 2-3.
[13] Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967.) See also chapter one (above): 10-11. William G. Roy, *Socializing Capital: The Rise of the Large Industrial Corporation in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.) Roy explores how the loss of faith in the "invisible" laws of the market cut across class lines during the late nineteenth century. Manufacturers, bankers, and reformers, for all their differences, reacted against the competitive market and its consequences.

science for the Progressive Era. Neither idealized a crude, laissez-faire individualism. Together they helped undermine any optimistic Spencerian faith in the laws of nature to inevitably work towards progress. In fact, unfettered individualism run amok was viewed as dangerous and destructive. In a school like psychoanalysis where nature was cast as a source of powerful, potentially destructive instincts, there was no faith in "letting nature take its course." Nature, in fact, was neither idealized nor demonized, but brought under the cool, rational eye of science.

The focal areas of Progressive concern in these years of heavy immigration and structural change were the cities,[14] and it is not surprising that Watson cast behaviorism as the perfect urban science. Behaviorism would be the ideal science to bring order to the teeming metropolis. (Watson himself had been born and raised in rural South Carolina, and he later recalled his early urban encounters as traumatic, struck as he was by the dazzling disorder around him.)[15] Psychoanalysis, too, promised order to tumultuous selves and societies in stressful times. The mysterious, wayward, frightening and destructive power lurking in the psyche could be reined in and worked with via the detached practice of objective, analytical intelligence.[16] Many of the popular articles about psychoanalysis in these early years stress the dangerous consequences of ignoring inner conflicts and "losing control." These results included traumatic marriages,

[14] Martin Melosi, *The Sanitary City: Urban Infrastructure in America from Colonial Times to the Present* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.) See Part II for urbanization in the Progressive years.
[15] Barak, 9-13.
[16] As Philip Rieff put it, "A tolerance of ambiguities is the key to what Freud considered the most difficult of all personal accomplishments: a genuine stable character in an unstable time." *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*, 57. To be sure, psychoanalysis appealed to an artistic, bohemian sector in American society, but Freud, a conservative by temperament, never promoted psychoanalysis as a starting-point for hedonism or sexual liberation.

unemployment, and financial hardship.[17] As Peter Macfarlane's article in *Good Housekeeping* warned:

> [T]he greatest message which psychoanalysis can deliver in an article like this is prophylaxis. Individual, guard yourself! Put the range-finders and gun-pointers to work upon your own libido. See that you busy yourself over concerns that effect a safe and full discharge of each day's vital energies – and if nervous disorders exist or come, know where to look for their cause. Parents, guard your children; especially from yourselves; from over-loving, from over-coddling, from under-consideration of the wax-like plasticity and the marble like retentiveness of the child-soul, from shocks, from scenes that have a meaning to the unconscious life at a time when the unconscious life is so much the more powerful element in character determination.[18]

Psychoanalysis and behaviorism became important cultural presences in America, spawning a great deal of attention, popularity, and criticism into the 1920s.[19] They were influential on many levels, and their optimistic faith in science and progress was part of their appeal. Freud himself had never inclined to optimism, but in the United States, a country for which he expressed no special affection, psychoanalysis was tailored to American tastes and "needs." On a professional level it was largely absorbed by psychiatry, where it was often purged of its grim metaphysical overtones.[20] While

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[17] I found it interesting that in some popular magazines from these early years that both men and women are identified as victims of hysteria. Reports of working men waking up "blind" and then finding cure through psychoanalysis are not uncommon. See for example, Peter Macfarlane, "Diagnosis by Dreams," *Good Housekeeping*, Vol & Issue: 60 (Feb-Mar 1915):125-133. "A man may lie upon his back for a life-time with a paralysis that is purely the result of hysteria; he may suffer from an agonizing and treatment-resisting intestinal trouble or go totally blind, either or all for no bodily reason." (127)

[18] Peter Macfarlane, "Diagnosis by Dreams," 286.

[19] John Watson, *The Ways of Behaviorism*, New York: Harper, 1928. See also John Watson and Rosalie Watson, *Psychological Care of Infant and Child* (New York: Norton, 1928.)Rosalie R. Watson, "I am the mother of a behaviorist's sons," *Parents Magazine*, 5, (December 1930):16-18. J.C. Burnham, *How superstition won and science lost: Popularizing science and health in the United States.* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987). See his section on psychology. For psychoanalysis see James Goodwin, *A History of Modern Psychology,* 83-86.

[20] For a sample of Freud's pessimism, see Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, (the standard edition), translated and edited by James Strachey, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1961.) It is interesting to note that many of Freud's more optimistic disciples who broke away from "the master," such as Wilhelm Reich and Carl Jung, had a much more positive outlook on America than did Freud. For a

psychoanalysis had the greater impact on psychiatry, behaviorism came to dominate professional psychology by the 1930s. Indeed, it was their initial reading of Watson in the late 1920s that spirited the young Skinner and Maslow into psychology, fired up with thoughts of science and social progress. As Maslow later recalled to Mary Hall, "I had discovered J.B. Watson and I was sold on behaviorism. It was an explosion of excitement for me….I was confident that here was a real road to travel, solving one problem after another and changing the world."[21]

Professional success, however, does not always bode well for idealism. Once established, formerly innovative schools of thought can succumb to bureaucratic inertia. And for social visionaries like Skinner and Maslow, academic behaviorism by the late 1930s seemed disturbingly remote from social and human affairs. For a number of reasons, the idealism that had powered them into the profession seemed stymied on multiple levels, and the post-war years would find both staking out new ground. Psychoanalysis too paid a price for its success.[22] It would be helpful at this point to survey some of the professional and cultural factors that prompted their later reform initiatives. An overview can help us grasp how and why these psychologists engaged,

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discussion of Jung and Reich see Philip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*. See also William Brown's article, in *The Century Magazine*. Much of the article is devoted to adumbrating the "important contribution" of psychoanalysis "to medical science." Not only did Freud object to this absorption of psychoanalysis into American science, but he would also have debunked the concluding point of the article – which was that psychoanalysis could free a troubled individual from neurotic fixations to become "more capable of true religious experience….the experience of a personal relationship with God." (p.12)

[21] Mary Hall, "A Conversation with Abraham Maslow," *Psychology Today*, 2:2 (July 1968):37. For Skinner's initial encounter of Watson's work see Skinner, *Particulars of My Life*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), 298-303.

[22] See David Riesman's essays on Freud in *Selected Essays From Individualism Reconsidered*. See especially "The Themes of Heroism and Weakness in the Structure of Freud's Thought" (246-275.) Note his criticism of many third generation Freudian psychoanalysts: "Since they want to be just like other doctors, they try to push all problems of ethical responsibility under the tent of `professional [that is, medical] ethics,' an ethics which less friendly critics of the profession might see as principally a code of trade secret and trade association tactics." (275)

defined, and redefined, the concept of "science" to construct a psychology relevant to post-war America.

Science, Psychology and Academia in the 1930s

The rise of American behaviorism in academia was connected to wider institutional and ideological factors at work in America and Europe. The early decades of the twentieth century witnessed the emerging modern infrastructure of universities, where departments staked out the borders of academic disciplines. Staking out specialized fields was a contentious ordeal, as specialists competed for funding and support to stake out new academic ground for themselves. During the inter-war years, physical science was upheld as a model for all disciplines. Justifications for one's specialized field generally depended on the extent to which its methodology was "scientific," that is, modeled after the physical sciences, specifically physics. Just as physics broke down physical objects into their ultimate constituent parts, so too (it was assumed) could moral philosophy, literary criticism, and other emerging specialties break down their subject matter into constituent parts, all of which could be understood according to laws of logic and mathematics. The schools of thought articulating this framework were logical positivism and operationism, both of which carried considerable weight in the social sciences in mid-twentieth century England and the United States.[23]

As behaviorism made headway into academia and professional psychology, it too came under increasing pressure to articulate its theoretical infrastructure. Watson's crude

[23] See Mary Midgley, *Wisdom, Information & Wonder: What is Knowledge For?* (New York: Routledge, 1989). See especially chapter 10, "The Work of Purification"; see also 246-249.

reduction of behaviorist science to a stark stimulus-response model was clumsy and inadequate. If behavior was governed by scientifically knowable laws, there was pressure to articulate just what these laws were. Moreover, Watson's attempt to reduce the "self" to behavior patterns was problematic. The self, subject, or organism, situated between the "stimulus" and the ensuing behavior, was a source of increasing trouble for behaviorists. It was not clear how the intervening organism could be reduced altogether to insignificance. To an increasing number of behaviorists, behavior seemed to include factors inherent to the nature and structure of the organism, factors not subject to direct scientific observation. Motivation, for instance, could not be so easily dispensed with. But "motivation" was itself a "mentalist concept," a "metaphor," something not physically observed but rather inferred. Behaviorism from the beginning had prided itself on a strictly "factual" and "empirical" analysis of behavior. In the 1930s talk of "drives" or "motivation" veered dangerously close to abstract entities deemed irrelevant to serious, scientific study. Behaviorists struggled to meet this challenge with recourse to logical positivism, operationism, and, to a lesser extent, neo-pragmatism. All of these schools in their own way set acceptable guidelines for the use of "language" in scientific practice. For most behaviorists interested in the intervening organism, the preferred framework was logical positivism.[24]

Logical positivism, however, did not simplify behaviorism or resolve the problems internal to the field. In fact, the theoretical infrastructure became increasingly

[24] See Sigmund Koch, "Psychology and Emerging Conceptions of Knowledge as Unitary," in T.W. Wann, ed., *Behaviorism and Phenomenology: Contrasting Bases for Modern Psychology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 10-11. "The sources to which psychology turned in the early thirties for its model of science were primarily logical positivism, neopragmatism, and operationism." See also Goodwin, 322-357, and Lawrence D. Smith, *Behaviorism and Logical Positivism: A Reassessment of the Alliance* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986.)

unwieldy and complicated as behaviorists negotiated the dynamics involving stimulus, organism, and behavior.[25] The terrain between the stimulus and the response became increasingly and problematically larger and more confused. By the late 1930s behavioral scientists like Edward C. Tolman and Clark Hull were constructing a new "neo-behaviorism" and revising the earlier Watsonian model. Hull, a pioneer of "cognitive" behaviorism, sought to accommodate the acknowledged complexities of human motivation and behavior and still remain within the strict confines of logical positivism.[26] Skinner himself in the 1930s expanded upon Waston's S/R (stimulus-response) model with the concept of "operant conditioning."[27]

Back to Humans

As behaviorism became more of a professional power player, the field withdrew increasingly from human and social affairs, insulating itself within the tightly structured confines of the laboratory.[28] Neo-behaviorists like Edward Tolman and Clark Hull constructed excessively complex and formalistic theories, which, despite their elaborateness, rested on, as Goodwin puts it, "a very narrow empirical base – the behavior of simple organisms in artificial, highly controlled, simple environments."[29]

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[25] For an example of such elaborate, theoretical constructions see Clark Hull, "The Place of Innate Individual and Species Differences in a Natural-Science Theory of Behavior," *The Psychological Review*, 52:2 (March 1945):55-60. The question, for Hull, is essentially a formalistic one. The article cannot be understood without a formal knowledge of logic. Hull's conclusions to such an interesting question are almost impenetrable.

[26] Ibid. See also Goodwin, 326-343.

[27] Operant conditioning was, in Skinner's own view and the opinion of other admirers, his most important contribution to American psychology. For an overview of the theory see Robert D. Nye, *Three Psychologies: Perspectives from Freud, Skinner, and Rogers* – 5th ed. (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1996), 48-65. See Goodwin, 350-354. Skinner first elaborated at length on the concept of operant conditioning in his first major work, *The Behavior of Organisms*, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1938).

[28] Sigmund Koch, "Psychology and Conceptions of Knowledge," 30-31.

[29] Goodwin, 342.

Experimentation became increasingly preoccupied with the behavior of rats and pigeons, and it was not always clear how such work could shed light on understanding human behavior and relevant social issues. Skinner's first major work in the 1930s, *The Behavior of Organisms*, only obliquely – and towards the end – made reference to any application of behaviorist principles to human affairs. Maslow himself in the 1930s was studying sexual dominance in apes.[30]

By the early 1940s, however, both Skinner and Maslow were already shifting their attention from rats and apes to humans. The end of the Second World War found both men impatient – even desperate -- to apply psychology to human affairs. They partook of the disorientation experienced by many cultural observers and critics discussed in the previous chapter. They felt stifled in their fields. Initially inspired by the confident idealism of James Watson, they found themselves in a cultural climate and a profession ill-conducive to and at odds with the reformist zeal that had oriented them to psychology in the first place.

Skinner gave form to this mood in the character of Burris in *Walden Two* – a middle-aged, "idealistic" academic trapped in academia. At the outset of the novel, a young former student with his friend comes to Burris' office all fired up with news of a utopian experiment, the brainchild of a former colleague of Burris with whom Burris has lost contact. Burris, hearing the daring exploits of Frazier, the founder of Walden Two, becomes even more despondent with his own life and its apparent pointlessness and visits Walden Two with a sort of resentful curiosity.[31]

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[30] See Edward Hoffman, *The Right to be Human: A Biography of Abraham Maslow* (Los Angeles, Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., 1979), chaps. 4-5. "See also Mary Hall, A Conversation with Abraham H. Maslow," 37; 54.

[31] Skinner, *Walden Two*, (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 5-11.

Skinner clearly projected himself into the character of Burris, who, after the war, finds his interest in social problems amounting to nothing. "My new interest in social problems and my good will appeared to have exactly no effect whatsoever upon society. I could not see that they were of the slightest value to anyone."[32] Would the idealism involved in the war effort continue after peace? Or would things settle down to a numbing "normalcy?" Skinner later recalled his depressing conviction that returning servicemen from the war would fall into the same old rut. He was, in fact, prompted to write *Walden Two* at a suggestion from a fellow guest at a dinner party who encouraged him to put to practice his "experimental attitude toward life."[33] With *Walden Two*, Skinner was clearly moving in the direction of applying psychology to human affairs. As he recalled years later:

> I had been talking about control for many years, but now I began to do so in earnest. With a group of philosophers and literary critics I discussed many of the implications of a scientific analysis of human behavior. Much of *Walden Two* is little more than a rehash of those discussions. What the protagonist in Walden Two called a behavioral technology was at the time still science fiction, but it soon moved into the real world.[34]

Maslow too found professional psychology in need of a shake-up and took action. He had already started to question some of its underlying principles not long after his early research in primate behavior. Years later, reflecting on his move away from behaviorism, he noted the birth of his daughter and his experience as a father as an

[32] Ibid., 8. Note also the similarities in names. Skinner's first name was "Burrhus."
[33] Richard Todd, "'Walden Two': Three? Many More?" *The New York Times Magazine*, 15 March 1970; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2003.)
[34] B.F. Skinner, "Some Thoughts About the Future," *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*, 45:2 (March 1986), 229-235.

important factor.[35] He also pointed to a growing interest in and exposure to Freud.[36] Another important factor was the outbreak of war, which had a traumatic impact on Maslow. The horrors of Fascism and Stalinism convinced him that psychology *had* to understand the reality of good and evil in order to better understand the latter and promote the former. As he later recalled in an interview: "I gave up everything I was fascinated with in a selfish way around 1941. I felt I must try to save the world and to prevent these horrible wars and this awful hatred and prejudice."[37]

An interest in good and evil, of course, could gravitate one toward Freudian psychoanalysis, and Maslow did turn to Freud in these years. He even underwent psychoanalysis and wrote favorably about the experience.[38] But Freudian psychoanalysis also had its limitations. Particularly troubling to Maslow was the tendency of psychoanalysts to center exclusively on human neurosis and pathology, as opposed to health and well-being. During a lecture at Cornell University he described "the psychology of 1949" as "largely a psychology of cripples and sick people." "I see a large portion of the theoretical structure of current psychology as based upon the study of men at their worst, men in dire and acute emergency, men reeling under constant threat and frustration."[39]

In the1940s and 50s, then, Maslow and Skinner steered psychology in new directions. They were psychologists of influence. They coined the terms for the schools they would subsequently be associated with: humanistic psychology and radical

[35] Mary Hall, "A Conversation with Abraham Maslow," 55-56.
[36] Ibid., 55.
[37] Mary Hall, "A Conversation With Abraham H. Maslow," 54. See also Hoffman, *The Right to be Human*, 148-149.
[38] Hoffman, *The Right to be Human: A biography of Abraham Maslow*, 306; 307-08.
[39] Cited in Ibid., 186.

behaviorism. At this point it would be helpful to examine the ways Maslow and Skinner reoriented American psychology to these broader agendas. What follows is an overview of the conceptual structures of the schools themselves, as well as their resonance with and relevance to, post-war American public culture.

Radical Behaviorism

By the 1940s Skinner was theoretically equipped for an activist psychology with the concept of operant conditioning he had constructed in the 1930s. The theory of operant conditioning had important social implications. As Skinner had a major impact on American behaviorism, it is important to understand how Skinner's model of studying behavior different from the stimulus-response model of Watson. In the earlier S-R framework, behavior was indefinitely malleable, directly and wholly subject to external stimuli. The notion of "agency," the idea that any active role on the part of the individual organism could itself shape behavior, was not acknowledged. The organism was passive.[40] Skinner's concept of operant conditioning expanded the role of the organism. Stimuli, to be sure, certainly triggered responses. However, as Skinner explained, the responsive behavior itself could have consequences: it could shape subsequent behavior. For example, an environmental stimulus like drought could obviously trigger changes in an organism's behavior. Yet in response to such a stimulus, the behavior of the organism could have profound effects on *subsequent* behavior. The organism could tap into a new food source, for example, and, reinforced by the satisfaction of hunger, would continue to procure food in this fashion. Thus, it was not simply the stimulus that determined the

[40] See John B. Watson and Rosalie Rayner, "Conditioned Emotional Responses," *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 3:1 (February 1920):1-14. This article discusses the infamous experiments involving "little Albert," where the researchers conditioned and manipulated the fears of a little boy to various stimuli.

eventual behavior; it was the behavior of the organism – behavior, that is, triggered by a particular stimulus, but not determined by it in a direct, simple cause and effect dynamic. The organism was not wholly passive, an inert medium waiting to be acted upon. The organism itself acted. For Skinner it played not so much a passive role, as a *mediating* one.[41]

Operant conditioning had important implications for the role of behavioral psychology in human affairs. It shifted the focus from manipulating individuals to manipulating environments. If one wanted to change behavior, one would have to design appropriate environments. One could not crudely manipulate individuals as if they were wax dolls; individuals were too complex for such crude techniques. One had to carefully alter or design environments where new kinds of behavior would occur. Take the issue of student discipline in a classroom. According to Skinner, one could not or should not attempt to "condition" a change in the behavior of a wayward student by whacking a ruler over his upturned hands. The aim would be to create the proper environment with the appropriate variables, wherein the student could benefit from particular actions. A positive response to an action could reinforce subsequent action geared to elicit similar results. For newer, better forms of behavior to flourish, the *environments* would have to be redesigned and controlled.[42]

Skinner's *Behavior of Organisms* did not probe the wider social implications of his theory of operant conditioning. But *Walden Two* certainly did. The novel reads more

[41] Mary Hall, "An Interview with "Mr. Behaviorist" B.F. Skinner," *Psychology Today*, 1:5 (September 1967):21-23; 68-71. For a discussion of operant conditioning intended for a general audience, see B.F. Skinner, *About Behaviorism*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974). For Skinner's first articulation of the concept see B.F. Skinner, *The Behavior of Organisms*, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1938.) See also Goodwin, 350-354; Robert Nye, 48-65.

[42] B.F. Skinner, *Science and Human Behavior* (New York: Macmillan, 1953).

like science fiction than hard-core science, yet Skinner insisted his intentions in writing the novel were "actually quite serious," and that it was an extension of the ideas staked out in his earlier work.[43] The focus in short had shifted from rats to humans, and from carefully designed rat environments to human environments. It embodied Skinner's dream of extending the refined and rigorous control found in the laboratory to the world outside the laboratory. Indeed, *Walden Two* is essentially a vision of "total control": the construction of laboratory settings expanded to the construction and psychological management of an entire community. The vision involves not just the construction of an institutional social structure, but the design of "culture."[44] Not since Watson had an influential behaviorist so optimistically promoted behaviorism to human affairs and broad agendas of social reform. Skinner, however, extended it in a way that Watson had not to the vision of a utopian society. Skinner in effect reclaimed Watson's optimism, imbued it with visionary utopianism, and placed it securely on a sound scientific footing via operant conditioning. Here indeed was a foundation for social reform. As he explained to Mary Hall in 1967:

> I would still put my basic scientific contribution to operant behavior as the analysis of the contingencies of reinforcement, but what I really expect to be known for is the application of all this to education, psychotherapy, economics, government, religion, I suppose, and its use in designing a world that will make us into the kind of people we would like to be and give us the things that we could all agree that we want.[45]

[43] B.F. Skinner, "Visions of Utopia," *The Listener*, 77 (January 5, 1967):22.
[44] B.F. Skinner, "Utopia Through the Control of Human Behavior," *The Listener*, 77 (January 12, 1967):55-56. See also Skinner, 'The Design of Experimental Communities," in David Sills, ed., *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 16 (New York: Macmillan, 1968):271-275.
[45] Mary Hall, "An Interview With `Mr. Behaviorist' B.F. Skinner," 68.

Skinner staked out a distinct "radical" behaviorism, an activist psychology that would, he hoped, have more social and practical relevance. He sought to liberate behaviorism from the dead weight of formalism and hypothetical and theoretical discourse. As he explained to Sigmund Koch, "I am a radical behaviorist in the sense that I find no place in the formulation for anything which is mental."[46] The "radical" behaviorism he espoused was radical in the sense that it pointed to the roots of behaviorism as a pure science of observation and empirical data-gathering. The theory of operant conditioning was not really a theory, he claimed, but a method. The method involved ongoing experimentation with environments and subjects, and the scientist proceeded from observation alone, not from abstract theorizing. Simply by observing and responding to observations and altering environments accordingly, the data would gradually accumulate, and insights into the general laws of behavior would follow.[47] Skinner professed to have no interest in logical positivism or operationism. Science was not metaphysics. He criticized neo-behaviorists working from a "hypothetico-deductive" model. Hypotheses, he insisted, limited one's power of observation; they stifled experimentation methodologically and imaginatively. People, committed to theories, inevitably observed the subjects of experimental analysis through filtered lenses.[48]

Skinner not surprisingly promoted himself – and the behavioral scientist – not as a philosopher, not even as an intellectual, but as a craftsman. The optimism of radical

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[46] Skinner, "Behaviorism at Fifty," in T. Wann, ed., *Behaviorism and Phenomenology*, 106.
[47] Skinner," What is the Experimental Analysis of Behavior?" *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*, 9:3 (May 1966):218.
[48] See B.F. Skinner, "Are Theories of Language Necessary?" *The Psychological Review*, 57:4 (July 1950):193-216,) and "Operational Analysis of Psychological Terms," *Psychological Review*, 52:5. (September 1945): 270-277. For a helpful clarification of the differences among the different "variants" of behaviorism, see Eckart Sheerer, *Radical Behaviorism: Experts from a Textbook Testament*, in Laurence Smith and William R. Woodward (eds.) *B.F. Skinner and Behaviorism in American Culture* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1996): 151-175.

behaviorism was measured with painstakingly slow and patient empirical research – research that involved the careful construction of "environments" wherein behavior would be watched, predicted, understood. The difference between constructing a Walden Two and a "Skinner box," or between understanding the behavior of a psychologist like Skinner and a rat, was *quantitative*: the difference lay in the fact that understanding the behavior of the psychologist and constructing the human community were more difficult. But in time, behavioral scientists – if they did not get too distracted with theory – would provide the insights. Skinner acknowledged that for the time being radical behaviorism could only promise more than it could deliver; progress called for, among things, "patience." [49] Even an admirer noted that the school offered to the public a "promissory note" and that criticism should be kept in check and radical behaviorism be given some time to deliver on its promises.[50]

Humanistic Psychology

Maslow's construction of humanistic psychology grew out of his early interest and research in primate behavior. Humans too are primates, and he felt that studies of monkeys and apes offered potential insights into human behavior.[51] In the late 1930s he started applying his observations of dominance, assertiveness, and sexual behavior in

[49] Skinner, What is the Experimental Analysis of Behavior?, 218.
[50] Rochelle J. Johnson, "A Commentary on "Radical Behaviorism," *Philosophy of Science*, 30:3 (July 1963):274-285. According to many critics, the field has not come through on its promises. Mary Midgely claims that the behaviorist attempt "to study human life purely in terms of outward behavior – of the movement of human bodies – without reference at all to the thoughts and feelings of the people involved….has been abandoned." See Mary Midgley, *Science and Poetry*, (New York:Routledge, 2001), 2. See also anthropologist Melvin Kooner, *The Tangled Wing: Biological Constraints on the Human Spirit* (revised edition) (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2002.) See also Steven Pinker, *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature*, (New York: Penguin, 2002.) The behaviorist school most widely respected today in professional psychology is "cognitive behaviorism" – a school Skinner consistently rejected.
[51] Ian A. Nicholson, "`GIVING UP MALENESS'": Abraham Maslow, Masculinity, and the Boundaries of Psychology," *History of Psychology*, 4:1, (2001):83.

apes to humans, specifically women. In the late 1930s, thanks to a post-doctoral fellowship in New York City, he was able to foray further into "human" psychology and sexuality. He interviewed students at Barnard College as part of a study of female demeanor and sexual behavior.[52]

The shift to human behavior was inspiring for Maslow. There was much to be learned, he realized, from healthy, happy, productive people. In the course of his interviews with young women he observed that confidence, strong self-esteem, sexual openness and boldness appeared to be markers of psychological health. And it was "health" – not illness – that increasingly engaged Maslow. He conceived a more "humanistic" psychology oriented to the study of healthy, "self-actualized" people – people who lived productive lives cultivating their inner capabilities and talents. Could not psychology shed light on human potential and help people live fuller, richer, more fulfilling lives? As things stood, neither Freudian psychoanalysis nor behaviorist psychology had shed much light on a person-centered psychological health. Neglected was the realm of human subjectivity and its relation to psychological well-being. Maslow thus saw in these self-actualized people a vast, uncharted territory awaiting scientific investigation.

He began, then, to systematically study "healthy" people. "When I started to explore the psychology of health," he later recounted, "I picked out the finest, healthiest people, the best specimens I could find, and studied them to see what they were like."[53] Some of these "best specimens" included prominent colleagues like the anthropologist

[52] Edward Hoffman, *The Right to be Human*, 69-85. See also Mary Hall, "A Conversation With Abraham H. Maslow," 54.
[53] Abraham Maslow, "Lessons From Peak Experiences," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 2:1 (Spring 1962):9.

Ruth Benedict and the psychologist Max Wertheimer. Some included historical saints, heroes, "great men and women" whose lives he closely studied through published biographies and personal writings. Some of them included his students. How to define "psychological health" and how to test people to measure their "health" were questions with which Maslow would grapple for the rest of his life. Nevertheless, in the course of his studies and interviews certain character traits of self-actualized people became clear. These included a clearer, more accurate perception of "reality, self, and others," an intelligent understanding of interpersonal relationships, strong self-esteem, a clear sense of values, a tendency to privacy, and a "quasi-religious or spiritual approach to life."[54]

Maslow's work was not positively received from professional psychologists, for the profession was still dominated by the behaviorist paradigm. By the early 1950s he felt professionally ostracized. He had difficulty getting his work published in journals printed by the American Psychological Association. But professional psychology had its critics. Discontent with the two major forces of psychoanalysis and behaviorism cut across various disciplines. In 1954 he took the first steps to bring these various critics into a movement, by drawing up a mailing list of like-minded intellectuals. Members were encouraged to circulate mimeographed copies of their work to each other, work that had little chance of publication in mainstream journals. The list grew rapidly, and by the mid 1950s members were calling for a professional journal and association.[55] Eventually Maslow and Anthony Sutich, a self-taught psychologist and colleague, started searching

[54] Ibid, 9-19. Robert E. Klavetter and Robert E. Mogar, "Peak Experiences: Investigation of their Relationship to Psychedelic Therapy and Self-Actualization," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 7:2 (Fall 1967):173. See also Hoffman, chap.9: "Glimmerings of Self-Actualization." See especially pp. 170-175, for early forays into personality testing and interviewing.

[55] The first issue of *The Journal of Humanistic Psychology* (JHP) provided a brief history of the journal's beginnings. JHP, 1:1, (Spring 1961): viii. See also Roy DeCarvalho, *The Founders of Humanistic Psychology*, (New York: Praeger, 1991.) See chapter two: "The Institutionalization of Humanistic Psychology," 7-14.

for sponsors and found a receptive audience in the Board of Trustees at Brandeis University, who agreed to sponsor the journal. In the spring of 1961 the first issue of *The Journal of Humanistic Psychology* appeared. In the summer of 1963 the newly formed American Association of Humanistic Psychology held its first meeting.[56]

These institutional developments accompanied the theoretical fine-tuning of humanistic psychology and Maslow and Carl Rogers were key players. Rogers himself had been gravitating toward a "humanistic" orientation in the clinical context of counseling. (Rogers always preferred counseling to academia.) Very early in his career he had worked with "delinquent and underprivileged children" for the Department of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in Rochester, New York. From 1945 until 1957 he worked at the Counseling Center at the University of Chicago, where he provided therapy to war veterans.[57] In the course of this work he had noted that "clients," if provided the right environment and given ample "space," were capable of articulating their problems and getting a grasp on them. In effect, through an empathic and nurturing therapeutic relationship, the healing tendencies that Rogers saw as latent in all people, could manifest themselves and set to work. It was in people's nature, given the right conditions, to grow and self-actualize. Both Maslow and Rogers and indeed all humanistic psychologists invoked the term "self-actualization" as a cornerstone of the "new" psychology.[58]

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[56] *The Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 1:1 (Spring 1961),viii. The word "American" was dropped from the Association's name several years later. Also, in 1965 the journal and the association terminated its affiliation with Brandeis University and was incorporated as a non-profit educational institution. DeCarvalho, 9.

[57] See Robert Nye, 85-86.

[58] See Mary Hall, "A Conversation With Carl Rogers," *Psychology Today*, 1:7 (December 1967):16-21; 62-66. Robert Nye, 85-115. See also, of course, the work of Carl Rogers, particularly *Counseling and Psychotherapy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1942); *Client-Centered Therapy,* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951); and "Toward a Science of the Person," in T. Wann, ed., *Behavior and Phenomenology*, 109-140.

This orientation to inner subjectivity marked a decisive shift away from behaviorism. But it also signified a revision of Freudian "depth" psychology.[59] Maslow and Rogers essentially took the pessimism and the pathology out of the Freudian infrastructure. They kept the instincts, but they recast them as universally benign, constructive, and fragile. For Freud, neurotic and psychotic complexes were all traceable to the primal, turbulent, instinctual drives that could easily result in various psychic and physiological disturbances if not dealt with properly and sublimated. Rogers did not root psychic disturbance in destructive, instinctual drives. Innate tendencies were naturally and potentially *con*structive. Tensions resulted from warped or distorted concepts of self ill-equipped to engage sensations rooted in the physiological apparatus of the human body. Take, for example, the phenomenon of anger. The physiological response of anger -- marked by the tightening and constricting of muscles, was in itself a natural and benign phenomenon. There was nothing innately destructive or sinister about it. It was part of a repertoire of responses available to our species to specific situations. Anger only became a problem when a twisted concept of self precluded one's ability to accept, engage and understand the sensations that mark anger. And twisted self-concepts were rooted in problematic upbringings and deficiencies in the wider culture. Rogers posited the hypothetical example of a woman with a strong self-image of a "good" mother, who would not be able to confront feelings of hostility or rejection towards the child. Similarly, an adolescent raised in an over-solicitous home with a self-image of being grateful to his parents would have a hard time acknowledging the anger he harbors towards them on account of their excessive control over him. "Organically," as Rogers

[59] For a theoretical overview of humanistic psychology, see Carl Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy*. See Chapter 11: "A Theory of Personality and Behavior," (481-533).

put it in his first major work, "he experiences the physiological changes which accompany anger, but his conscious self can prevent these experiences from being symbolized and hence consciously perceived. Or he can symbolize them in some distorted fashion which is consistent with his structure of self, such as perceiving these organic sensations as `a bad headache.'"[60]

But those organic sensations in themselves were good. If people transcended the negative thought patterns and tapped into these natural energies with an open-mind, the energies could be liberated and the individual would experience growth. In the process individuals would grow emotionally, sexually, spiritually – in short, as a whole person. To grow was to self-actualize.[61]

Psychologies for Affluence

These schools, then, clearly signaled a return to a more social-oriented Progressive model of science. At the same time, they marked an adjustment and expansion of this model to American post-war contexts. Skinner and Maslow both tailored their schools to meet contemporary challenges. Viewed together, they reworked Watsonian behaviorism and classic psychoanalysis into psychologies of affluence.

In doing so they were clearly responding to a cultural need. For people centered on affluence, the psychology of Freud and Watson seemed ill equipped to engage the challenges of contemporary society. David Riesman, in a series of essays on Freud, argued that psychoanalysis needed to be recast and adjusted to a very different world

[60] Ibid., 505.
[61] See Carl Rogers, *On Becoming a Person* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961).

from the one that had nurtured it abroad and in the United States earlier in the century.[62] An economics of scarcity had given way to an economics of abundance. Freudian approaches to work, play, sex, and religion had to be updated and tailored to the present. For Riesman, and later for Herbert Marcuse, an economy of abundance made all the difference: there were now plenty of resources to go around, a phenomenon with all sorts of cultural implications. For one thing, values which had perhaps served practical purposes in the past were, in the more affluent present, becoming needless hang-ups.[63]

Riesman focused primarily on psychoanalysis, but Watson's ideas had also been crafted in an economics of scarcity, and the economic factor does seem to have shaped the orientations of both of these men. For Watson and Freud, the available energy to function and work was precious and always in short supply. And work was imperative; in an economics of scarcity work is privileged over play, and both of these men had little use for leisure. This scarcity orientation had implications for the rest of human life. In the realm of love and sexuality, genital sexual behavior was privileged over the cultivation of "affections." For both men, the ideal character type did not revel in the affections. The masculine was privileged over the feminine, and the ideal man was sexual and not emotional; he neither abstained from nor over-indulged in heterosexual/genital sex and he did not romanticize it. He was neither too sexually repressed, nor too sexually

[62] David Riesman, *Selected Essays from Individualism Reconsidered* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1954), 174-302.
[63] David Riesman, "The Themes of Work and Play in the Structure of Freud's Thought," in Ibid., 174-205.For Marcuse see Andrew Hacker, "Philosopher of the New Left," *New York Times*, March 10, 1968; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2003), p. BR1. See also Richard King, *The Party of Eros: Radical Social Thought and The Realm of Freedom* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1972.) See Chap. 4.

free.[64] In the same way, adulthood was privileged over childhood. The goal of childhood was adulthood, and adulthood was defined by work. The adult did away with childish things and did not waste time.[65] The ideal character type did not in general give way to excessive, "childish" attachments. The ability to structure and regulate one's individual self depended on the ability to detach, to acknowledge boundaries and work within constraints. Those were character traits, Riesman argued, appropriate to an economy of scarcity. What was needed was a psychology for a society of economic abundance.[66]

Skinners, Rogers, and Maslow were responding to this so-called culture of affluence. For one thing, they were more interested in leisure and play than in work. In Walden Two people work only four hours a day; much of the remaining time is for cultivated leisure and enjoyment; there is time for painting, music, poetry, theater, and endless socializing. Even the children's schools, while rigorously structured – reminds Burris of a free and airy place conducive to enjoyment:

> The doors and many of the windows stood open, and a fair share of the schoolwork, or whatever it was, took place outside. Children were constantly passing in and out…Everyone seemed to be enjoying extraordinary freedom, but the efficiency and comfort of the whole group were preserved.[67]

Work really is not a problem. For these earlier scientists the scarcity of work was seen as a regular menace, with financial and psychological consequences. Health depended on

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[64] See Riesman, "The Theme of Heroism and Weakness in the Structure of Freud's Thought," in *Selected Essays from Individualism Reconsidered*, 246-275.
[65] See Rosalie Watson, "I am the mother of a behaviorist's sons," *Parents*, 5, (December 1930):16-18. See also John Watson and Rosalie Watson, *Psychological Care of the Infant and Child* (New York, W.W. Norton, 1928). Affection is kept to a bare minimum. Even playing with toys is rigidly structured: the boys can only play with one at a time. Too much play, too much of anything, is discouraged. Even a night-time kiss isn't permitted. A shake of the hand is preferable.
[66] David Riesman, "The Themes of Work and Play in the Structure of Freud's Thought," *Selected Essays From Individualism Reconsidered*, 174-205.
[67] *Walden Two*, 118.

regular work. Watson in the 1920s had traced behavioral disturbances in women to their difficulty in finding meaningful work due to the paucity of options available to them.[68] But in Walden Two there is equality between the sexes[69] and plenty of work and even more leisure to go around. Childrearing is taken care of. Women are encouraged to have children while still in adolescence in order to free themselves for subsequent life experiences.[70] With sex and reproduction and child-rearing "managed," the emphasis is on cultivating the affections. The behavioral conditioning of children is also geared more to an economics of abundance. Watson had insisted that children be conditioned to work, to get ahead, to survive, to acquire, to mate and reproduce. In Walden Two, the emphasis is on freeing the child from obstacles to good living. Good living is privileged over risk-taking. No one in Walden Two exhibits the self-initiative that Watson did as he zealously worked – first in academia, and then in advertising. Watson had been wary of leisure. Too much could be enervating. People had to be conditioned to be stoic, resilient, and hardworking. During the 1930s, he had been a staunch Republican and critic of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, seeing in the New Deal a menace to initiative, vitality, and self-reliance.[71] Walden Two is a welfare state writ large, and Skinner is not worried at all about self-initiative. People are not even expected to be political: the managers in charge

[68] John Watson, "The Psychology of Wish Fulfillment," *The Scientific Monthly*, 3:5 (November 1916):486. "Women in the present state of society have not the same access to absorbing kinds of work that men have (which will shortly come to be realized as a crime far worse than that of the Inquisition.). Hence their chances of normal sublimation are limited." Watson's contemptuous portraits of woman suffragists, however, and his dismissal of women's capacity to be "good" mothers, have not endeared him to feminists. See Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of Experts' Advice to Women* (New York: Anchor Books, 1989, c1978.)

[69] *Walden Two*, 54. "The sexes are on such equal terms here that no one guards equality very jealously."

[70] Ibid., Chapter 16.

[71] K.W. Buckley, *Mechanical Man: John Broadus Watson and the beginnings of behaviorism* (New York: Guilford Press, 1989).

of that issue simply tell people who to vote for – that is, if they want to vote.[72] Frasier, the founder of Walden Two, is certainly not compulsively working. Frazier has done the work in designing the community. Now he can leisurely show his guests around as the community runs itself. Indeed, one cannot imagine Watson idly flinging himself on the ground and stretching out melodramatically in the way Frazier does to his guest:

> He was lying flat on his back, his arms stretched out at full length. His legs were straight but his ankles were slightly crossed. He allowed his head to fall limply to one side, and I reflected that his beard made him look a little like Christ. Then, with a shock, I saw that he had assumed the position of crucifixion.[73]

Humanistic psychology was also a psychology for the well-fed and comfortable. Once the "lower needs" could be met, there were the higher pursuits to explore. And America had the affluence to spread the resources and meet the lower needs.[74] People were now free to explore themselves. They could prime themselves, for example, for "peak experiences." Maslow spoke and wrote at length about peak experiences – profound mystical and emotional experiences that could shatter inhibitions, open new vistas for growth, and change one forever. But to have a peak experience, you had to let down your guard, you had to let your boundaries dissolve.[75] This was markedly different

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[72] *Walden Two*, 197.
[73] Ibid., 295.
[74] Maslow acknowledged that a degree of physical, social and economic security was indispensable for self-actualization. The prospects of "higher needs" being probed depended, to a significant extent, on more basic physical needs being met. See Abraham Maslow, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* (New York: Viking Press, 1971), 8. See also Abraham Maslow, "Eupsychia: The Good Society," *The Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 1:2 (Fall 1961):1-11.
[75] For peak experiences, see A.H. Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences* (Columbus: Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1964; Paper ed., New York: The Viking Press, 1963.) See also Abraham Maslow, "Lessons From Peak Experiences," *The Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 2:1 (Spring 1962):9-18; and Robert E. Klavetter and Robert E. Mogar, "Peak Experiences: Investigation of their Relationship to Psychedelic Therapy and Self-Actualization," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 7:2 (Fall 1967):171-177.

from Freud and Watson – for whom boundaries and constraints were crucial.[76] Different too was the privileging of youth and play over adulthood and work. The ability to cultivate leisure and play was as important as the ability to work, perhaps more so as economic prosperity and increasing automation in production rendered work less arduous. In fact, one should *not* grow up too fast. Maslow saw no need for youth to rush into the adult workaday world. Youth was a valuable opportunity to play around, do crazy things, and experiment. Later on, when such people had gotten older, their creative qualities would be valuable assets for any organization. His ideal character stands in marked contrast to the disciplined, organized, self-regulating character endorsed by Watson. For Maslow a bohemian, disorganized lifestyle was actually a sign of health:

> They [primary-creative people] tend to be unconventional; they tend to be a little bit queer; unrealistic; they are often called undisciplined; sometimes inexact; "unscientific," that is, by a specific definition of science. They tend to be called childish by their more compulsive colleagues, irresponsible, wild, crazy, speculative, uncritical, irregular, emotional, and so on. This sounds like a description of a bum or a Bohemian or an eccentric. And it should be stressed, I suppose, that in the early stages of creativeness, you've got to be a bum, and you've got to be a Bohemian, you've got to be crazy.[77]

There was also a marked difference in the attitude toward intimacy. Cultivated detachment was no longer necessary in an age of abundance. The need to consolidate one's energy and avoid emotional entanglements was no longer so important, for the restless striving for gain and acquisition had been rendered obsolete. In affluent contexts personal boundaries would more likely be oppressive and a hindrance to higher growth.

[76] Philip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*, 60. "To be truly free and yet social means to cultivate detachment, as opposed to alienation."
[77] Maslow, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, 90.

The group-encounter therapy that Maslow and Rogers championed was about breaking boundaries, releasing emotions, and expressing oneself through group interactions.[78] The middle class family, no longer centered on survival, or the endless pursuit of gain for financial stability, had time now for therapeutic "play." They had leisure to explore their group dynamics. In encounter marathons, parents would sit on the floor with their children and draw on giant sheets of paper. Family members would watch video-tapes of confrontations and dialogues and observe their behavior and the social dynamics at work. People, guided by psychologists, were encouraged to experiment with social roles.[79]

These psychologies, then, were clearly tailored to a context of economic prosperity. They were psychologies for middle-class suburbia.[80] And they were, moreover, psychologies for American liberalism in the unsettling post-war world taking shape. I noted earlier that Skinner and Rogers were liberals, "activist" liberals, and their promotion of psychology resonated with ideological significance. In such a context their differences were often polarized – by themselves and others – and reduced to a stark choice between two opposing proposals for confronting the major challenges of the time. For both Skinner and Rogers and Maslow, however, the "survival of mankind" was the overriding objective in the atomic age.

These schools also in their own way were tailored to confront the challenges of liberalism in the post-war world. These psychologists promoted psychology as a means for nurturing individuality, and for designing environments and cultures conducive to

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[78] See Carl Rogers, *Carl Rogers on Encounter Groups* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970); and *Becoming Partners: Marriage and its Alternatives* (New York: Delacorte, 1972).
[79] See *Psychology Today*, 1:7 (December 1967). The issue featured several articles about "The Group Phenomenon." See especially Federick H. Stoller, "The Long Weekend," 28-33.
[80] See Maslow, "Defining the American Dream," in Edward Hoffman, ed. *Future Visions: The Unpublished Papers of Abraham Maslow* (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, 1996): 141-146.

psychological health, well-being, and strength. They were, in general, very sensitive to the issue of authority and power. They were fearful of the power of the physical sciences in the atomic age, and they were also cognizant of the growing power of the behavioral sciences. Individuality was crucial in the fight against totalitarianism, and yet authority and power misused and abused could easily crush individuality, which was perceived as dangerously fragile. The challenge of psychology was to use its authority and power to strengthen and not further undermine democratic individualism and public culture. How to "manage" this authority was a contentious question, and radical behaviorists and humanistic psychologists negotiated power in different ways. Skinner tried to resolve the problem of authority in Walden Two by emphasizing the irrelevance of the community's founder to its daily routine. Indeed, he casts Frazier as a complacent, self-satisfied, silly man – certainly not a desirable leader. The scene where Frazier flings himself on the ground and compares himself to Jesus Christ makes Burris wince and the average reader laugh. One can just imagine a delusional Frazier bloated with self-importance presiding tyrannically over his flock. *But Walden Two is not run by Frazier*. In fact, it is not run by anyone. It was possible, Skinner insisted, for people with flawed characters to create something good, and then to step aside and let the machinery work on its own.[81] Rogers too in his own way wrestled with the issue of authority. His approach to the problem was to diffuse authority by sharing it. Classrooms would be student-centered, therapies client-

[81] See "Some Issues Concerning the Control of Human Behavior," *Science*, 124:3231 (November 30, 1956): 1065. Skinner says of Frazier: "The founder of Walden Two…has built a community in which neither he nor any other person exerts any *current* control...when he boasts of this…we do not fear him but only pity him for his weakness."

centered and non-directional, and group encounters dominated by participants with the counselor serving as moderator.[82]

The avowed commitments of people with power to renounce, share, or diffuse authority are not always convincing. Authority and power can operate in subtle ways, sometimes under the guise of benevolence. The exploits of these psychologists were not always persuasive, particularly to "classical" liberals or libertarians wary of state-sponsored meddlesomeness. The libertarian psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Thomas Szasz, for example, blasted Skinner's notion of a community where all are ruled and no one rules as "simple-minded" and odious.[83] Rogers himself, as I noted earlier, regarded behaviorism as a serious menace. But Rogers did not necessarily resolve the power issue either. As Skinner rightfully pointed out, these therapeutic, client-centered environments were presided over by the authoritative presence of the therapist, upon whom everybody depended for "guidance." And authority, Skinner declared, is not rendered less innocuous for being more subtle and less conspicuous. In fact, it could even be more insidious.[84] Thomas Sasz, for that matter, hostile as he was to Skinner's behaviorism, was by no means endeared to the growing popularity and influence of "group" therapy promoted by Rogers. "The new psychiatric terms -- `group psychotherapy,' `family therapy,' and, most recently, `community psychiatry' – are," he warned, "symptoms of an ominous trend."[85]

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[82] See Roger's chapter on "student-centered teaching" in Carl Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy*, 384-428.
[83] Thomas Szasz, "Against Behaviorism: A Review of B.F. Skinner's About Behaviorism," Libertarian *Review*, No.111 (December 1974.) The article can be accessed at http://www.libertarian.co.uk/lapubs/psycn/psycn005.pdf.
[84] See "Some Issues Concerning the Control of Human Behavior," 1065. See also B.F. Skinner, *Science and Human Behavior* (New York: The Free Press, 1953), 438-440.
[85] Thomas Szasz, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis: The Theory and Method of Autonomous Psychotherapy* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1965), 28-28.

Endorsing Experimentation: A Double-Edged Sword

Skinner and Rogers' critiques of each other generally stemmed from these questions of authority and power. What is interesting is that, despite their differences, both of them stressed the importance of "experimentation" as a safeguard against authoritarianism. Experimentalism was important to their liberal psychology and to their worldviews. Both of them warmly endorsed an "experimental approach to life."[86]

Experimentalism, in general, was good for democracy. It kept one open to possibilities and sensitive to new insights. It encouraged creativity and flexibility. In promoting psychology to a wider public, then, these psychologists widened the concept of experimentalism, extending its relevance from the laboratory and experimental science to society at large. For all their disagreements and differences, Skinner, Rogers and Maslow encouraged people to experiment, and it was this optimistic message that tended to catch on and resonate with the public, particularly young people.[87]

But an ethos of experimentalism is open-ended and applicable to all kinds of agendas, including escapist and narcissistic ones. It can mean different things to different people. These psychologists sought to ground experimentation in moral imperatives for progressive change. They wedded experimentation to broad, reformist agendas. But not everybody receptive to experimentation did so[88], and experimentation divorced from broader agendas can become an end in itself. It can become a fad. The appeal of experimentation, then, worked both for and against liberal reformers. On the hand, the

[86] Skinner himself used this expression to refer to his own approach to life. See Richard Todd, "`Walden Two': Three? Many More?," *The New York Times Magazine*, 15 March 1970; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2003.) As we will see in the following chapter, Rogers and Maslow endorsed an ethic of experimentation as well.
[87] Ibid.
[88] As we will see in chapters 3 & 5, even people who did consciously wed experimentalism to progressive agendas did so in different ways and often clashed.

1960s saw ardent admirers of Skinner and Rogers take up the call to experiment in radical ways and for noble ends. But experimentation and psychology, spread out and diffused as they were, took on all kinds of forms. In some cases experimentation was indeed reduced to an end in itself to the detriment of these wider agendas.[89]

Take, for example, group encounter therapy. When it came to shoring up or reinvigorating a healthy individualism, the psychologist was often cast as a sort of psychic fitness trainer. If Skinner and Rogers were intent on "waking" people up, it was so that people could go on to creatively engage contemporary challenges. In the context of encounter therapy, however, the agenda at times seemed to go no further than the triggering of dramatic, intense experience. The basic premise of encounter therapy was designed to shake people into awareness, to challenge boundaries through confrontation, to "encounter" people through emotional violence. This was especially evident in the group marathon, pioneered by Frederick Stoller, a colleague of Rogers. The marathon was essentially a group "encounter" lasting for hours, sometimes a whole weekend. An article in *Psychology Today* in 1967 notes their rising appeal, describing them as "explosive," "unpredictable."[90] They were long, intense affairs sometimes lasting "from 24 to 30 hours, often without a break for sleep." The emphasis was on responding to and coping with "undiluted, intense experience." Stoller recounts dramatic episodes – of people breaking down and crying and claiming to have been touched and moved by others for the first time. He describes family workshops with mothers stepping out of

[89] For critics of this sort of self-centered psychology see Paul Wachtel, *The Poverty of Affluence: A Psychological Portrait of the American Way of Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1983); Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism* (New York: Norton, 1979); Michael Rossman, *New Age Blues: On the Politics of Consciousness* (New York: Dutton, 1979); and Richard Sennet, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Knopf, 1977).

[90] Frederick H.Stoller, "The Long Weekend," *Psychology Today*, 1:7 (December 1967):28-33.

parental roles and becoming "playmates" with their children, of families imagining the hidden contents of a box so as to "share their fears," or kneeling down on the floor and drawing a design together on a "large piece of paper" in silence. Encounters were videotaped and played back to participants so that individuals could see and "confront" themselves directly. The objective was empowerment and personal growth, and, in the long run, social progress. As Stoller confidently declared, "Gradually, the inhabitants of the small world learn to act upon their environment as well as to be acted upon. It becomes apparent that the larger world can be altered in similar fashion. This is my deep belief."[91]

But was this the belief – or the concern -- of *everybody* who participated in group encounters? According to some observers, like Philip Rieff, it was not. [92] Even more liberal observers could be skeptical, even – at times – Rogers himself. For Rogers frankly acknowledged that assessing the long-term impacts of encounter therapy on individuals was difficult. Although convinced that encounter groups could change people profoundly, he could not back up these claims with sufficient evidence. And for a classically trained behavioral scientist like Rogers, that could be troubling. There were simply no reliable techniques for assessing long-term impacts of encounter therapy on individuals. As he confessed to Mary Hall in 1967: "I feel very perplexed. A lot of my life has been devoted to measuring; I keep being sure it can be done with the group experience, and then failing."[93]

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[91] Ibid.

[92] Philip Rieff, *Fellow Teachers* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 46; 61.
"Encounter-group teachings…mainly by the revolutionary rich, follow the precedent set by the technological radicalism of those same rich in their earlier scramble: for more."

[93] Mary Hall, "A Conversation with Carl Rogers," 20.

In general, some degree of skepticism was, I would argue, justified. For indeed, the connection between individual experience and the wider culture, which psychologists in their best moments sought to elucidate, often did give way to platitudes. Expressions like "Liberation" and "Do It Now" could circulate as hackneyed slogans. The experience of a group marathon, or of a commune experiment, could be enjoyed because it was "hip," while the larger questions would take care of themselves. Experiments in community would be confused with, as Skinner wryly remarked, "Woodstock," which, however special, "[had] no future."[94]At the same time, experiments in community could result in an intentional community like Twin Oaks – a commune founded by admirers of Skinner in 1967 and still going strong today.[95] In the counter culture there was no telling what experimentation could lead to.

In general, the radicalism of the 1960s counter culture challenged Maslow, Rogers and Skinner. The willingness of the young to experiment was encouraging. But in a radical climate they themselves helped nurture they saw psychology and experimentation expanded on in all sorts of ways by professional colleagues and people outside the profession. As the ethos of experimentation took root in the wider public, particularly among idealistic young people, the practice took on a multiplicity of forms.

Sometimes, however, the experimental "interests" of these psychologists clearly did resonate with people outside the field. An example of such an interest was the idea of utopia. Skinner, Maslow and Rogers all reflected on and wrote about utopia and they encouraged others to engage and experiment with visions of utopia as well. The

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[94] Richard Todd, `Walden Two': Three? Many More?, 118. See also B.F. Skinner, "Humanistic Behaviorism," *The Humanist*, 31, (May/June 1971):35, and "Humanism and Behaviorism," *The Humanist*, 32, (July/August, 1971):18-20.

[95] See their website at http://www.twinoaks.org/. (date accessed: 12/01/2007)

communal phenomenon of the 1960s and 1970s reflected and expanded this interest. But questions of utopia and community were themselves open to varied and conflicting applications. Communes came in varied shapes and sizes. Some were chaotic and anarchistic, others authoritarian with strict disciplinary codes of conduct. As we have seen, authoritarianism and anarchy did not sit well with liberals, and these psychologists could be ambivalent and downright critical of communes and indeed of the counter culture, generally speaking. It was not always clear whether psychology was alleviating or compounding broader problems in American public culture, whether experimentation was becoming a fad, an end in itself, or practiced as a genuine means to cultural and social transformation. Interactions between these experimental liberal psychologists and experimental radicals were dynamic, ambivalent, and contentious. We will probe some of these interactions further in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

Navigating the Counter Culture

The boundaries between cultural radicalism and liberalism can be contested terrain. Ideas, values, agendas can easily cross boundaries, a tendency which can put people committed to either side of the divide in predicaments. This was visibly evident in various sectors of the American counter culture of the 1960s and 70s. In their political and social objectives, radicals were often helped along by changes in the mainstream culture, by, for example, liberals sympathetic to civil rights, feminist, and anti-war agendas.[1] The boundaries between counter culture and mainstream culture were, in other words, not always clear. It was also apparent to even sympathetic observers that the counter culture was depressingly vulnerable to exploitation by the mass media. This blurring of boundaries could be unsettling for serious-minded radicals. The prospect of succumbing to pressure from the "Establishment" was worrisome. Compromise, concessions – the reliance of gasoline-powered machinery in communes, or the pressure to shift from experimental sexual arrangements to more conventional, monogamous ones – could be painful business and the cause of heated debate.[2]

For liberals like Rogers, Maslow and Skinner, people who did not "drop out" yet encouraged experimentation, this borderline could be also quite difficult to navigate. On

[1]An interesting point made by Lawrence Veysey, *The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Counter-Cultures in America*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 467-477. "In all these respects, radicals may be said to have received a `free ride' from the society that surrounded them."
[2] See Ibid. See also Keith Melville, *Communes in the Counter Culture: Origins, Theories, Styles of Life* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1972). Veysey and Melville, I should note, both sociologists, drew from their notes and observations acquired over a series of lengthy visits to communes.

the one hand they wedded probing critiques of the status quo to clarion calls for radical social and cultural experimentation. Yet they promoted psychology as a needed structuralizing framework to guide and facilitate such reform. Moreover, they insisted that change had to start from and take root within the mainstream culture itself, with ordinary, everyday people. Working within the cumbersome institutional infrastructure of mainstream society could certainly test one's patience and one's idealism, but genuine reform depended on the engagement of the middle class majority. These visionary aims were not uncommon among liberal psychologists interested in social reform. They were articulated quite eloquently, for example, by George Miller in his 1969 presidential address to the American Psychological Association. For Miller the new "psychological revolution" had to engage the general public in order to facilitate those reforms essential for the survival of "civilized society:"

> The heart of the psychological revolution will be a new and scientifically based conception of man as an individual and as a social creature. When I say that the psychological revolution is already upon us, what I mean is that we have already begun to change man's self-conception. If we want to further that revolution, not only must we strengthen its scientific base, but we must also try to communicate it to our students and to the public. It is not the industrialist or the politician who should exploit it, but Everyman, every day.[3]

The hope was that awakened, psychologically empowered people would transform schools, corporate environments, prisons, hospitals and public culture. Psychological growth and awareness could not, then, be confined to hippies and exploratory young people. These young people, though, had much to offer, and it was important that they dynamically engage mainstream institutions. Their dropping out permanently would

[3] George Miller, "Psychology as a Means of Promoting Human Welfare," *American Psychologist*, 24 (1969):1067).

entail a serious loss – for them and for everybody.[4] At the same time, Skinner and Maslow themselves were utopian dreamers. They took the idea of utopia seriously, and their encouragement of the young to experiment – not just with their heads, but with their bodies – certainly had radical implications. They affirmed there was much to be learned from communal experimentation, and from serious-minded experimentation in general.

Interactions between these liberal psychologists and the counter culture in general could be very tense, particularly in the case of Maslow, Skinner, and Clark.[5] In terms of ideals, visions, values, there was a good deal of overlap. But that border area was contentious territory. In this chapter I hope to show how Skinner, Maslow and Rogers were committed to the trying task of trying to ride two horses at once, the twin horses of reform and revolution.[6] As not uncommonly happens in such situations, they were often assailed by opponents more interested in letting one of the horses go. Perhaps this is partly why these liberal psychologists, Skinner and Maslow in particular, were and have been and still are vulnerable to all sorts of conflicting assessments.[7] As I pointed out in

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[4] Even Rogers, who tended to get along the best with everybody, argued that a growth center like the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California really had to broaden its appeal in order to set important trends. Esalen, as Rogers explained to Mary Hall in 1967, "is a little too involved with the sort of hippie culture that has tended to limit the kind of people who participate in seminars there. See Hall, "A Conversation with Carl Rogers," *Psychology Today*, 1:7 (December 1967):65.

[5] I discuss Clark's interactions with the counter culture in chapter five. Rogers was the least contentious of the group, and the most optimistic of all of them. Unlike Skinner and Maslow, he was a psychotherapist, and focused more on nurturing reform at the individual level, through therapeutic relationships. Skinner and Maslow were more concerned with reforming and humanizing "institutions." And institutions – in particular large, bureaucratic ones, are notoriously more resistant to change than individuals.

[6] The term "revolution" was in the air and they made use of it. Maslow, in the preface to the second edition of *Toward a Psychology of Being*, spoke of the humanistic revolution as comparable to "revolutions" in thought and culture inspired by the likes of Copernicus and Darwin. In 1969, George Miller, in his presidential address to the APA linked the "psychological revolution" at work to "vast social changes in the making."

[7] For critics of Maslow see Ellen Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology*, 269-275 and Ian Nicholson, "`GIVING UP MALENESS': Abraham Maslow, Masculinity, and the Boundaries of Psychology," *History of Psychology*, 4:1 (2001):79-91. Both fault Maslow for a rather rigid conservatism, and an inability to follow through on the radical implications of his own work. As Nicholson puts it, "Sadly, Maslow was ultimately unable to `give up maleness' with respect to science, and toward the end of his life he felt himself trapped between a freewheeling and daringly transgressive sense of humanistic

the introduction, I feel the stories of post-war liberal social reformers have, in general, been inadequately probed and assessed. I will say though that the plethora of conflicting assessments is not surprising, and that the attempts of these liberal psychologists to negotiate cultural radicalism inevitably beset them with contradictions and inconsistencies – problems they themselves, in humbler moods, acknowledged.

The Challenge of Utopia

Negotiating reform and revolution, then, was no easy task, particularly in the radicalized climate of late 1960s when differences were highly politicized. Negotiation often gave way to haphazardly hopping from one platform to the other. Messages could be contradictory and paradoxical. Thus Skinner acknowledged that piece-meal reform was laudable; he pinned high hopes on the cadres of young people embarking on careers in the behavioral sciences. As he explained to Mary Hall, "the whole thing is not to turn the world over in a day."[8] But in *Walden Two*, the sort of book to reach a wide audience, the message conveyed is that incremental reform will not work. We encounter this "all or

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potential and an equally strong desire for patriarchal order, discipline, and respectability. Edward Hoffman, on the other hand, believes that the full impact of Maslow's work has yet to be grasped. See the introduction to Edward Hoffman, ed. *Future Visions: The Unpublished Papers of Abraham Maslow* (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, 1996). Historian Eugene Taylor also views Maslow and Rogers in a positive, progressive light. See Taylor, *Shadow Culture: Psychology and Spirituality in America* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1999). See his chapter on Esalen, 235-259. For widely disparate assessments of Skinner, see Laurence Smith and William R. Woodward, eds., *B.F. Skinner and Behaviorism in American Culture* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1996). See pp. 294-308 for a discussion of anti-behaviorist "attacks" from scholars, politicians, and laypersons. Noam Chomsky, left-wing linguist, viewed Skinner's behaviorism as the scientific road to totalitarianism with "gas ovens smoking in the distance." The philosopher Karl Popper, described Skinner as "an enemy of freedom and democracy" in favor of "a behavior dictatorship." In the early 1970s Skinner was criticized by Vice President Spiro Agnew as a radical bent on undermining the American family and human freedom.(295). For a defense of Skinner see James Dinsmoor, "Setting the Record Straight: The Social Views of B.F. Skinner," *American Psychologist*, 47:1 (November 1992):1454-1463.

[8] Mary Hall, "An Interview with `Mr. Behaviorist' B.F. Skinner," 23. See B.F. Skinner, *Science and Human Behavior*, (New York: The Free Press, 1953.) See especially chap. 28: "Designing a Culture."

nothing" mandate in the character of Burris, an academic who visits Walden Two and then, after a brief struggle, decides to turn his back on mainstream society:

> Now, fresh my experience at Walden Two, I saw that [the contemporary state of affairs] could not go on. But I also saw that educators themselves could not save the situation. The causes were too deep, too remote. They involved the whole structure of society. What was needed was a new conception of man, compatible with our scientific knowledge, which would lead to a philosophy of education bearing some relation to educational practices. But to achieve this, education would have to abandon the technical limitation which it had imposed upon itself and step forth into a broader sphere of human engineering. Nothing short of the complete revision of a culture would suffice.[9]

Humanistic psychologists could be just as demanding. Minor reforms were important, but in the long run inadequate. As Maslow explained during a radio interview in 1960, the time had come to envision new and better societies using the insights of modern psychology:

> The fact that America is very rich – that all the things for which most cultures have struggled throughout history have been achieved here – is tending to push our thoughts to higher needs and therefore to higher levels of frustration….For these reasons I think it is entirely valid to be imagining better societies in America at this point in our history; but, I think we are now ready to conceive of a "Eupsychia" – a psychologically healthy culture – rather than just another materially-based Utopia.[10]

Utopian dreaming for these liberal psychologists was not an optional challenge to take on when one had the time; in these years of affluence and "cold war" it was a responsibility. In light of the cold war the status quo *had* to change and psychology was indispensable. Empowered by the prestige of a rising profession, these psychologists gave the moral imperative of resistance a psychological twist. In their attempts to reach a

[9] B.F. Skinner, *Walden Two* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948), 312.
[10] Abraham Maslow, "Eupsychia: The Good Society," *The Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 1:2 (Fall 1961):2.

general audience, they widened the appeal of cultural criticism and popularized an ethos of "rebellious" experimentation. In this way they helped nurture the climate of cultural radicalism that would flower in the 1960s. Indeed, Skinner, Rogers, Maslow, as well as their likeminded idealistic colleagues, were smashing idols and calling for change long before the rise of a rebellious youth culture.[11] While they acknowledged a past when individualism was stronger, when it was easier to know right from wrong, they had their eyes set on a better future.[12] But getting there demanded a willingness to experiment and think in new ways. As Abraham Maslow put it in his little book *Religion, Values and Peak-Experiences*:

> We can no longer rely on tradition, on consensus, on cultural habit, on unanimity of belief to give us our values. These agreed-upon traditions are all gone. Of course, we never should have rested on tradition – as its failures must have proven to everyone by now – it never was a firm foundation. It was destroyed too easily by truth, by honesty, by the facts, by science, by simple, pragmatic, historical failure.[13]

Skinner too had no faith in existing mainstream institutions, and saw no reliable guide in

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[11] See, for example, Robert Vidor, "Toward a Humanistic Renaissance in Psychotherapy," *The Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 2:2 (Fall 1962):112-122. This article from this early issue of the JHP sounds prophetic of things to come. "In the United States….the spreading malaise of guilt, the sick, self-contempt of aimless satiety, the revolting professionalism of the apologists of a vulgar and acquisitive culture, the gnawing consciences of men who slowly discover that their lives are spent in useless and anti-human pursuits – all the psychic and physical ugliness which men have created in a kind of adolescent triumph over their better selves – have begun a cycle of awakening. Certain springs are beginning to flow."

[12] Despite their hopes for the future, liberals like Maslow and David Riesman and Skinner often seemed wistful of the lost so-called inner-directed individualism of the past. Richard Sennett, in a critical of review of Skinner's *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, observed this longing on the part of Skinner for the sort of culture that had nurtured his hero, Thoreau. "The actual text of Skinner's new book reveals a man desperately in search of some way to preserve the old-fashioned values associated with 19th-century individualism in a world where self-reliance no longer makes sense." See Sennett, "Beyond Freedom and Dignity," *New York Times*, October 24, 1971; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (18512003): BR3. Critics have made similar comments about the persistence of old-fashioned individualism in the humanistic psychology of Maslow and Rogers. See Paul Wachtel, *The Poverty of Affluence: A Psychological Portrait of the American Way of Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1983).

[13] Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences* (New York: Penguin Books, 1970):9-10.

tradition. As he declared in the opening pages of *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, traditional approaches to understanding human nature and society "[had] been available for centuries, and all we have to show for them is the state of the world today."[14] Psychology would have to pick up where the general culture failed.

Utopian-Dreaming: Eupsychia and Walden Two

Maslow discussed his vision of a psychologically healthy society, which he termed "Eupsychia," during a radio interview by Trevor Thomas of the Pacifica Foundation in August, 1960, and in a brief book titled *Eupsychian Management: A Journal.*[15] Like Skinner, Maslow admitted to reveling in utopian "dreaming," at the same time acknowledging that it was a matter he took quite seriously. As he put it to Thomas: "creating an imaginary culture, a Eupsychia, is a game that I enjoy playing. At the same time it is a game from which very serious consequences can flow; all the more if I can remain spontaneous about the concept and let the fantasies roam free."[16] Fantasies may have roamed free, but they needed to roam within the confines of specific questions, questions Thomas was quick to ask: What kind of society would this Eupsychia be? What obstacles stood between the "vision" and the actual prospects of creating the real thing? And, finally, what was the strategy, the steps needed for going about the construction of this psychologically healthy society?

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[14] Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), 4-6.
[15] Abraham Maslow, *Eupschian Management: A Journal* (Homewood, Ill.: Irwin-Dorsey, 1967). An edited version of the interview with Trevor Thomas was published in 1961. See "Eupsychia – The Good Society," *The Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 1:2 (Fall 1961): 1-11.
[16] Maslow, "Eupsychia – The Good Society," 7.

Maslow's answers to these question calls to mind the contentious issue of biology that I noted in the opening chapter. As liberals, these psychologists set themselves to negotiating the nature/nurture polarity. Individual freedom was fragile and needed watching from excessive biological and cultural determinism alike. But human instincts could not simply be liberated to bring about revolutionary change. Instinctual health required the benign and nurturing intervention of the psychologist. Constructing a Eupsychia, Maslow explained, entailed the creation of environments that would "protect" and encourage the expression and developments of "instincts." People were alienated from their instincts. And instincts, contrary to Freud, were not innately destructive and overpowering, but easily "warped" by lop-sided cultures that did not provide adequate room for them to develop.[17] And what would a society be like if instincts were nurtured and if people developed into psychologically healthy individuals? Maslow placed much emphasis on two distinguishing markers of psychological health: "creativity and spontaneity." People would demonstrate both in abundance; they would be flexible to adapt to changes and meet new challenges. With such a high proportion of creative and spontaneous individuals embodying the distinct characteristics of self-actualized people – tolerance, flexibility, empathy – the need for authoritarian codes and oppressive legal constraints would be minimal. The resulting community, Maslow affirmed, would be

> a democratic culture. The trend might even be toward what the philosophical anarchists used to talk about. Certainly there would be less crime, less impulse toward it, less need for it. There would perhaps be no laws or constitutions, except those written to protect the society from the insanities, the feeble-mindedness, the illnesses which can produce evil: brain fever, for example, which produces uncontrollable hostility, and so on. But these laws would be in the background. We certainly wouldn't need armies. Our isolated group of healthy individuals

[17] Ibid., 6-7.

> would certainly transcend nationalism, our great curse at present – the local patriotism which may kill us all yet.[18]

But how were committed, imperfect people expected to go about the business of creating a utopia? The prime blockage between people and their instincts, the cause for the lack of creativity and spontaneity, was "fear." And the way to go about confronting fear and (re)connecting with oneself was, of course, a crucial concern for a utopian visionary/psychologist. Maslow listed three suggestions for engaging fear: the first was psychoanalysis with a trained professional – an attractive but not very "practical" or realistic suggestion. The second was the education and the deployment of "mass techniques" to foster psychological awareness and intelligence in people. And the third was "self-therapy."[19]

The concept of self-therapy is especially important here, because it would become popular and contested practice throughout the counter culture. Self-therapy was open-ended: there were not, Maslow suggested in the early1960s, many reliable models to choose from. As he explained to Thomas: "Self-therapy is applicable to all of us, although it is an extremely difficult job; we have only a few guide lines, a few models."[20] Self-therapy could mean many things; it could include just opening oneself to thinking about and experimenting with the concept of Eupsychia – not, of course, as a mere intellectual exercise, but with the whole of oneself. It was a private as well as a public endeavor.

Maslow himself did not explicitly advise people to form communes. He did not, in fact, get very specific as to what people should do. He himself sought to apply

[18] Ibid., 10.
[19] Ibid., 8.
[20] Ibid.

psychology to modern institutions and bureaucracies.[21] He was not only an academic psychologist, but a consultant, and encouraged the application of psychology to institutions and settings outside the classroom and laboratory. But people had to choose themselves what to do, and choosing what to do started with rejecting conventionality. The young were at an advantage here: it was "very frequently possible, especially for the young person who doesn't yet have many commitments, to simply get off the merry-go-round – to say `nuts' to cultural pressures." Older people, on the other hand, with their commitments to family and work, had fewer options. They had too many investments, and the best they could expect from therapy was to acquire "the strength to bear with fortitude what they have to bear." But the young had the opportunity to experiment with life. Unfortunately, many of Maslow's students at Brandeis University chose the safe route – of doing what was expected of them and getting good grades, etc. But little would come of that. At best they would be "educated, but not all educated people are wise – not all educated people keep on growing."[22]

The passion was strong, evidently, but the agenda was vague. Breaking down the wall of fear and cultivating one's inner instinctual self was the key dynamic. The resulting increased capacity for creativity and spontaneity would be the crucial markers of a Eupsychia as well as the factors most conducive to its realization. It was an open-ended process, an orientation, so to speak, but the effects would be collective as well as personal; institutions and living arrangements would be changed along with states of mind. For indeed it was not about people working on themselves in isolation, but collectively with the shared agenda of social progress,

[21] See Maslow, *Eupsychian Management: A Journal* (Homewood, Ill.: Irwin-Dorsey, 1965; Japanese translation, Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1967).
[22] Maslow, "Eupsychia: The Good Society," 9-10.

> where everyone by definition would be psychologically healthy, everyone would be able to handle spontaneous ideas, and because there would be fewer personal hostilities there would be very little fear – and thus great spontaneity and creativity. People would trust themselves; they would look forward to new ideas, to novelty, to change. There would be no need to hang on to the past – people would happily adapt to changing conditions.[23]

This emphasis on spontaneity, creativity, and self-initiative stands, at first glance at least, in marked contrast to Skinner. Designing communities and cultures, in Skinner's view, was monstrously difficult, and relying on spontaneity and creativity was wishful thinking. Individuals needed culture for insight and empowerment, and contemporary culture was sorely deficient. Individuals were adrift; people were disorganized in their personal lives. In this respect the legions of young idealists and reformers were at a marked disadvantage as compared to Skinner's hero, Henry David Thoreau, who had flowered in a cultural climate much more conducive to individual enterprise and ethical discipline. For better or worse, the cultural climate that had nurtured Thoreau was no longer with us, and individuals were in no position to be so easily self-reliant when it came to meeting the exigencies of the modern world with designs for alternative living arrangements. In these times, Skinner argued, one could not so readily reject "punitive" and destructive social practices with appeals to personal freedom as Thoreau had:

> For Thoreau the alternative to the punitive sanctions of daily life seemed to be personal freedom. The feeling of freedom is associated with doing the things a person wants to do. But why does he want to do them? Thoreau never had to ask. He could also neglect other requirements of the good life. How many people today have the ethical training which gave Thoreau an interest in doing things? His fellows thought him *lazy*, but he knew that you "could not kill time without damaging eternity." He employed himself but he did it because of his education and the ethic he had received from his culture.[24]

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[23] Ibid., 4.
[24] B.F. Skinner, "Walden (one) and Walden Two," *The Thoreau Society Bulletin*, Volume & Issue: 2 (Winter 1973):1-3.

If the dominant culture of the times failed to provide sound "ethical training," then spontaneity, creativity, and good intentions in and of themselves could accomplish little. To compensate for these wider deficiencies one needed science – particularly behaviorist science – to "design" the proper environments most conducive to individual happiness and social progress. One had to apply the rigor of the laboratory to the community and the culture under design. In *Walden Two*, everything is "managed." The community has been crafted down to the finest detail by experts. Child-rearing, for example, is "managed" according to a strict regimen. Babies spend their first year in solitary air-conditioned cubicles; their second and third years in air conditioned rooms with a "minimum of clothing and bedding," and finally graduate at the age of 5 or 6 to "clothes and a cot in a dormitory."[25] Kids and adults alike are psychologically "managed" and the emphasis is generally more on control than on creativity. Frazier makes this quite clear when discussing the "code of conduct" at Walden Two, and the challenge of managing behavior without making people into automatons:

> The code would keep things running smoothly if everybody lived up to it. Our job was to see that everybody did. Now, you can't get people to follow a useful code by making them into so many jacks-in-the-box. You can't foresee all future circumstances, and you can't specify adequate future conduct. You don't know what will be required. Instead you have to set up certain behavioral processes which will lead the individual to design his own 'good' conduct when the time comes. We call that sort of thing 'self-control.' But don't be misled, the control always rests in the last analysis in the hands of society.[26]

Skinner, to be sure, was not contemptuous of creativity. Writing a novel like *Walden Two* was itself a creative endeavor. He had a great appreciation for the arts,[27] and

[25] *Walden Two*, 111.
[26] Ibid., 105.
[27] See Skinner, *Particulars of My Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976.) See especially Part IV where he talks about his early literary ambitions.

there is much painting, reading, dancing, and music in Walden Two. The point was that without the proper environmental and structural controls, creativity could not be counted on to promote well-being.

The contrasts are also evident in the realm of personal relations and growth. Humanistic psychologists valued therapy and group encounters as a means to self-knowledge and self-actualization. The good society would be one where people could engage themselves and others openly and without fear. Skinner was no enthusiast of group encounters or "humanistic" psychotherapy.[28] Again, the kind of "behavior" necessary for a new and better culture had to be carefully managed from the moment of birth.[29] This is, perhaps, why Skinner placed such emphasis on child-rearing and education. In Walden Two the first few years of a child's life were wholly free of anxiety and conflict. In the ensuing years great care was taken to equip children with the capacity to meet challenges, to cope with trouble, and to live productively. The practice was to introduce "obstacles gradually as the baby grew [sic] strong enough to handle them." This would involve putting the children in all kinds of control-building situations – like having them stand over a dish of food while hungry without eating. "We introduce annoyances slowly, according to the ability of the baby to take them."[30] And the result would be a capacity for work, enjoyment, and social intimacy far more enduring than any

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[28] See B.F. Skinner, "Humanistic Behaviorism," *The Humanist*, 31 (May/June 1971): 35. "We are told that he [the autonomous individual] is `a person…as himself,' a man-in-person, an individual `in his wholeness and uniqueness,' and so on. He is not only hard to define; he is hard to reach. How does one self get at another self in order to help it? (The encounter method suggests breaking and entering.)"

[29] Actually, it had to be managed from before birth. The practice at Walden Two was for women to have children in their late teens, thus allowing them to lead productive and fulfilling lives in their young adulthood. In Walden Two, the point is emphatically made that the "sexes" are held in "complete equality."

[30] *Walden Two*, 99.

insights gleaned from group encounter sessions. In fact, with such individuals group encounters and the like would not even be necessary. As Fazier puts it:

> What they get is escape from the petty emotions which eat the heart out of the unprepared. They get the satisfaction of pleasant and profitable social relations on a scale almost undreamed of in the world at large. They get immeasurably increased efficiency, because they can stick to a job without suffering the aches and pains which soon beset most of us. They get new horizons, for they are spared the emotions characteristic of frustration and failure.[31]

Of course, most people in Walden Two were not born and raised there. But even these people, living wholly in a carefully managed environment, did succeed, over time, to adjust to a new environment. But adjustment takes work, and Walden Two does have its version of group therapy sessions in the form of the "Sunday meetings" where works of literature were read, lessons learned, and problems addressed. Frazier describes the Sunday meeting or "weekly lesson" as

> a sort of group therapy. And it seems to be all we need. If the Code is too difficult for anyone or doesn't seem to be working to his advantage, he seeks the help of our psychologists. They're our 'priests,' if you like. The treatments prescribed are very much like those of the psychological clinic except that the disorders are almost always comparatively minor and the therapy therefore usually successful.[32]

It is not inaccurate to see differences in these orientations as ones of emphasis. Anyone endorsing a vision of "the Good Society" had to tackle some tough questions and negotiate vexing polarities – namely the polarity between individual freedom and collective constraint. But utopian visions and a remarkable faith in progress guided by psychology transcended the divide. Skinner and Maslow, for all their differences, were

[31] Ibid, 112.
[32] Ibid., 199.

united in the belief that radical cultural reform was needed, and that nice ideas had to translate into practice.

Redefining the Family

Trumpeting calls for a Walden Two or a Eupsychia fostered a counter cultural orientation. Indeed, to imagine a vastly different and psychologically healthy society required a willingness to critique the fundamental institutions of the contemporary one. The nuclear family, perhaps *the* fundamental institution of modern society, soon took a pounding. For these psychologists, the rise of the nuclear family called to mind the demise of the extended family, a process at work since the Industrial Revolution but rapidly gaining momentum in the sprawling suburban landscapes of the United States. The extended family had certainly fared badly in the disorienting urban centers of the early twentieth century.[33] But if the Zeniths of Babbit's America were psychologically taxing, suburbs were worse. The nuclear family, walled in by the proverbial white picket fence, was expected to fulfill needs it could never satisfy. Cultural and social change on a large scale, to be successful, called for new living arrangements and a reconsideration of the nuclear family as the bedrock of middle class culture. Despite their relatively stable marriages and contentment with family life, psychologists like Skinner, Maslow and Rogers hammered away at the nuclear family; at its isolationism, at its being cast adrift in suburbia away from extended familial and durable social networks. Skinner, in this respect, did not really depart from his behaviorist predecessor, John Watson, who had been no admirer of the standard household and the conventional practices of child-

[33] See David Bakan, "Behaviorism and American Urbanization," *The Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, Volume and Issue: 2 (1966):5-28. According to Bakan, these developments were important to the popularity and prestige of behaviorism and psychoanalysis.

rearing.[34] "The home is certainly a lousy place to raise a child," declared Skinner in a 1967 interview for *Psychology Today*. "I despair of teaching the ordinary parent how to handle his child. I would prefer to turn child- raising over to a specialist. I just can't believe that an ordinary parent can do a good job."[35] Specialists certainly do not sound as intimate as aunts, uncles, and grandparents, but in Walden Two the networks are envisioned as strong, intimate, and conducive toward psychological well being. Humanistic psychologists for their part could be just as critical towards the nuclear family and the impossible needs it was expected to satisfy. "[I]t is much too small in the social sense," argued Maslow. "Kinship systems and obligations do not spread wide enough, there is too much dependence upon one or two individuals, i.e., the mother or the father."[36] Carl Rogers, in *Becoming Partners: Marriage and Its Alternatives* (1972), praised communes for rejecting a culture obstinately wedded to, among other things, "permanent marriage and the nuclear family."[37] For Maslow constructing new social and living arrangements was the pressing question of the day. As he put it in this unpublished paper in 1968:

> How can we re-create the positive aspects of the old Greek letter fraternities and sororities and the local church organizations? Is it possible to organize our society at its base in terms of such extended groups? Is it possible to have groups of perhaps 20 or 40 people somehow keep touch with one another, just as close-knit relatives in the past have done? How can this situation be accomplished in our highly mobile society? How can this goal be reconciled with the mass needs of an industrial civilization that casually transfers employees from place to place?[38]

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[34] For Watson's views on child-rearing see *Psychological Care of Infant and Child* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1928); for a feminist critique of them see Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women* (London: Pluto Press, 1979).
[35] Mary Hall, "Interview with `Mr. Behaviorist' B.F. Skinner," *Psychology Today*, 1:5 (September 1967):23.
[36] Cited in Edward Hoffman, *The Right to be Human: A Biography of Abraham Maslow*, 146.
[37] Carl Rogers, *Becoming Partners: Marriage and its Alternatives* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1972),155.
[38] Edward Hoffman, ed. *Future Visions: The Unpublished Papers of Abraham Maslow* (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, 1996), 138.

Influence

In the 1950s David Reisman had pointed to the dearth of utopian thought in American culture.[39] By the early 1970s one encounters it in abundance.[40] Psychology was an important link in these intervening years. When students started questioning mainstream values and social arrangements, they had models to turn to. Skinner's. *Walden Two* had been quietly available for commentary since 1948. Sales shot up rapidly in the 1960s and no one, perhaps, was more surprised than Skinner.[41] As he noted during a lecture in 1973:

> In the first fourteen years, the book sold only ten thousand copies; last year it sold a quarter of a million. Something had happened in the interim. The world has come round to the necessity of doing something about the ways in which people live, and the initiative is being taken by young people.[42]

Skinner had been amassing a youthful audience since the early 1960s, when he started traveling to colleges across the country giving lectures on experimental communities. An article in *Harper's* in April 1963 noted the marked rise in receptiveness to *Walden Two*, which had not met much enthusiasm in 1948. In 1963 people were expressing an

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[39] David Riesman, "Some Observations on Community Plans and Utopia," in *Selected Essays from Individualism Reconsidered* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1954), 67-104. The article was first published in The Yale Law Journal, 57, December, 1947.

[40] Kathleen Kinkade, *A Walden Two Experiment: The First Five Years of Twin Oaks Community* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1973). Keith Melville, *Communes in the Counter Culture: Origins, Theories, Styles of Life* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1972). Carl Rogers, *Becoming Partners: Marriage and its Alternatives* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1972). Maslow, *Eupsychian Management: A journal* (Homewood, IL: Irwin Dorsey, 1965). Walden Two was reissued in hardcover in 1969. See also John Loflan, *Doomsday Cult*, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1966); Robert Houriet, *Getting Back Together* (New York: Coward, McGann, and Geoghegan, 1971); Richard Fairfield, *Communes, U.S.A.: A Personal Tour* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1972); Ron E. Roberts, *the new communes: Coming Together in America* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1971); Paul Goodman, *Utopian Essays and Practical Proposals* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964).

[41] Skinner, on his office wall, actually had a graph charting sales of the book: as Richard Todd's article in the New York Times Magazine noted in 1970: "the curve hugs the bottom axis for several years, and then accelerates upward at a rate that will take the total to a million very soon." By 1970 the book had sold over 600,000 copies. See `Walden Two:' Three? Many More?, 24-25.

[42] B.F. Skinner, "Walden (one) and Walden Two," *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, vol & issue: 122 (Winter, 1973):2.

interest, most of them college students. Some of them wrote to Skinner for suggestions regarding the construction of communities modeled after Walden Two. It appears that Skinner himself at this time toyed with the idea of raising funds and starting a community. As Spencer Klaw pointed out:

> The size of his audiences, and their apparent enthusiasm, has given Skinner a good deal of encouragement. "I think I could get about a thousand people to come along if I gave the clarion call," he told me when I visited him in Cambridge not long ago."…He has also been sounding out people who might help finance the experiment, which he believes could point the way to a harmonious world in which being good would be as natural and automatic as breathing.[43]

The popularity of Skinner, Maslow and Rogers in the 1960s also reveals the dynamic interplay of social and intellectual forces at work. For one thing, the rise of student activism and the radical offshoots that followed were prompted by factors external to professional psychology. The civil rights movement, which exposed and introduced many college students to activism for the first time, was a factor.[44] But even here humanistic psychology had provided an appealing theoretical framework as well as a moral and ethical imperative for social reform. Optimism from influential people can be empowering, and many students were inspired by an optimistic and influential psychologist like Maslow. One such student was Abbie Hoffman, a psychology major at Brandeis University in the 1950s. "I loved Abe Maslow," writes Hoffman in his autobiography, *Soon to be a Major Motion Picture*. "I took every class he gave and spent long evenings with him and his family. There was something about his humanistic

[43] Spencer Klaw, "The Last of the Utopians," *Harper's Magazine*, 226:1355 (April 1963):46.
[44] It is important to note that psychologists played an important role in the *Brown* decision. Kenneth Clark felt that the 1954 Supreme Court decision in the *Brown* case was, in fact, the "real impetus to the Civil Rights movement." See Mary Harrington Hall, "A Conversation with Kenneth Clark," *Psychology Today*, 2:1 (June 1968): 19-25. And the civil rights movement was the impetus to much of the radicalism in the 1960s.

psychology (considered radical at the time) that I found exhilarating amidst the general pessimism of Western thought."[45]

Maslow too was surprised at the extent to which his ideas were being taken up by young people in the early 1960s. The Esalen Institute, for example, had opened soon after the publication of his widely read *Towards a Psychology of Being*, and was committed to championing humanistic principles. Maslow came upon the Esalen Institute purely by accident in the summer of 1962. His biographer Edward Hoffman relates how Maslow and his wife, Bertha, driving along California's coast on Highway 1, had stopped at what they thought was an inn for lodgings. They encountered a young man at a desk, who was not altogether friendly until Maslow signed his name on the register. Edward Hoffman recounts the scene:

> [The man at the counter] began bowing and repeating loudly, "Maslow! Maslow! Maslow!" Richard Price, the cofounder of Esalen, rushed in and introduced himself. Smiling with delight, he told Maslow that the entire staff was sharing several copies of *Toward a Psychology of Being* and explaining that Big Sur, Hot Springs was a new venture hosting workshops led by writers and therapists interested in humanistic psychology and it ramifications.[46]

The endorsement of group and encounter therapy was also taken up by an increasingly receptive public. Rogers was quite explicit about his commitment to writing to a general audience, [47] and his work in the 1960s increasingly explored psychology,

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[45] Abbie Hoffman, *Soon to be a Major Motion Picture* (New York: Perigree, 1980),26. Qtd. in Hoffman, *The Right to be Human*, 219. See also Ellen Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 274.

[46] Hoffman, 272. Eugene Taylor, Shadow Culture: Psychology and Spirituality in America. Washington D.C.:Counterpoint, 1999). See Taylor's chapter on Esalen, 235-259. The Esalen Institute opened in 1962. In 1968 the AHP newsletter cited 32 growth centers in the country; it cited 112 in 1972 and 281 in 1975. DeCarvalho, 9; 13. I should point out that growth centers were not the only public places where psychologists lectured or conducted workshops. Psychologists often visited college campuses, clinics, and even communes.

[47] See the preface to *On Becoming a Person* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961).

relationships, and therapeutic group activity.[48] He and psychologist Frederick Stoller were leading promoters of group encounter therapy, which was visibly popular by the late 1960s. In December 1967 the encounter rage was announced across the pages of *Psychology Today*: "From Maine to California – and from the company president to the harried housewife – America is in group." The group-encounter phenomenon, of course, did not casually translate into an anti-Establishment counter cultural perspective. But it did resonate with the counter culture in important respects. It flourished in counter cultural enclaves like Esalen and "Esalen-inspired institutes like Kairos in Southern California and Shalal in Vancouver," where it nurtured denunciations of the status-quo and the alienation it fostered.[49] At Esalen group therapy took place in all kinds of formats: there were group massage sessions, group marathons and various group therapy workshops utilizing a variety of sensory techniques. Esalen co-founder Mike Murphy even alluded to human "sandwiches" with "six or eight people lying side by side… or rolling over one another to sense the presence of others, and to learn it's all right to touch each other."[50] Esalen was a cultural nerve center. People came and went and helped circulate ideas. Many of these young people were students who left school and went elsewhere. They took ideas with them. Not surprisingly, group encounters showed up at communes; sometimes trained therapists showed up to conduct them.[51]

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[48] Carl Rogers and Barry Stevens, *Person to Person: The Problem of Being Human: A New Trends in Psychology* (Lafayette, CA: Real People Press, 1967); see also Carl Rogers, *Carl Rogers on Encounter Groups* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970) and *Becoming Partners: Marriage and its Alternatives* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1972).
[49] See Mike Murphy, "Esalen: Where It's At," *Psychology Today*, 1:7 (December 1967), 34-40.
[50] Ibid., 36.
[51] See Laurence Veysey, *The Communal Experience*, 392; 412.Kat Kinkade also writes about people arriving in Twin Oaks with Esalen-inspired ideas. See Kathleen Kinkade, *A Walden Two Experiment: The First Five Years of Twin Oaks Community* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1973), 161-163.

The communal movement also reflected the inroads of psychology into the wider culture. It revealed the diffusion of behaviorist and humanistic principles alike. To many observers the humanistic influence was most apparent. "In many respects, the communes are," mused sociologist Keith Melville in 1972, "experiments for the recovery of human potential"[52] The Ananda Cooperative in the foothills of the Sierras self-realization was paramount. Members encouraged self-realization "by the operation of a meditation center for outsiders."[53] At Harrad West, a small commune in Berkeley, members hired a trained therapist who met weekly with them over a period of nine months "to help in self-exploration and to teach people how to communicate their differences."[54] Personal liberation, moreover, was intertwined with group solidarity, recalling the humanistic linkage between modern, impersonal bureaucracies and alienation. The Bruderhof Community incorporated "a variety of Esalen-developed techniques for sensory communion." Libre, "one of the Colorado communes," ritualized childbirth with chanting and group attendance at deliveries."[55] Members of communes often referred to their ventures as experiments in relationship. As Mr. Solnit, a California "planner," explained, there was more at stake than simply reclaiming the lifestyles of the agrarian past: "Instead of claming new lands as the pioneers of the eighteen hundreds did, they [communitarians] are claiming new human relationships."[56] For Steve Diamond, a former participant of the 1968 student revolt at Columbia University, reform had to take root at the personal level, in the day-to-day interactions of people, and communes – like his 11 member commune

[52] Melville, *Communes in the Counter Culture: Origins, Theories, Styles of Life*, 28.
[53] Ibid., 24.
[54] Ibid., 191.
[55] Ibid., 185.
[56] Bill Kovach, "Communes Spread as the Young Reject Old Values," *New York Times*, December 17, 1970, 1; 84.

in western Massachusetts, were doing just that. "What we have isn't farming or dropping out or revolution," he explained. "It's just people relating to people."[57]

This hands-on approach to communicating and relating to others was just the sort of thing to endear a humanistic psychologist like Carl Rogers to communes. Take for example the contentious debates among "Peter," "Claudia," and "Elaine," members of a commune at odds with how to engage the neighboring community. In the transcript of their debates, Rogers noted, could be found

> an excellent example of the kind of feedback and forthright expression of real feeling which, for many communes, as well as other groups, appears to constitute the best means of bringing out into the open and resolving simmering negative interpersonal reactions. It might of course have been a dialogue taken from an encounter group, except that this is not an artificially organized session and its members will continue to be together day after day. When the feelings really *have* been expressed, as they seem to have been here, the result is the transmutation of negative to equally real positive feelings, as symbolized by Elaine's kiss and Claudia's hug.[58]

This was the hallmark of humanistic psychology: growth through therapy, in both individual and group settings, often (but not necessarily) under the supervision of a trained counselor. Some communes hired trained counselors to facilitate group discussions. Many appropriated the practice on their own to the task of fostering group cohesiveness and harmony.[59]

The communal movement was diverse, with communities spanning a spectrum from loosely-structured, anarchistic orientations to rigid, highly structured organizations

[57] "Many Religious Communes of Young People Are Under Sway of Compelling Leaders," *New York Times*, Dec. 14, 1969, 82.
[58] Carl Rogers, *Becoming Partners: Marriage and its Alternatives*, 134.
[59] See Kathleen Kinkade, 161-163.

sometimes dominated by an authoritarian figure.[60] When sociologist Keith Melville visited dozens of communes across the country, he observed that the majority inclined to a more loosely-structured system. Walden Two was not the favored model among the majority of communitarians.[61] This is not to say, however, that Skinner's vision had no influence on the communal phenomenon. Lawrence Veysey in *The Communal Experience* surveyed the on-going attempts by small groups to form communities along the Walden Two model during the 1950s.[62] But the most important offshoot of Walden Two was the Twin Oaks community. Twin Oaks wonderfully captures the dynamic interactions of psychology and radicalism in these years.

Twin Oaks

The Twin Oaks community was founded in 1967 by a group of eight people. In the winter of 1970 there were 24 members living on a 123 acre farm in Virginia. The community used a "labor-credit" system, just as the fictional community does in Skinner's novel. Least-desired menial jobs were no less respected than more agreeable or "advanced" work. Drugs were prohibited, and, as in Walden Two, people followed a behavioral code of conduct: "All subscribe to the behavioral code, which includes the sanctity of private rooms, never talking behind another's back, abstinence from drugs, forsaking personal property. (A $1 per-week allowance is provided.) A few practice auto

[60] For a discussion of the diversity found in communes, see Timothy Miller, "The Sixties Era Communes," in Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle, eds., *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and 70s* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 327-351. See also Timothy Miller, *The 60s Communes: Hippies and Beyond* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999).
[61] Melville, 114-121.
[62] Veysey, 39-40.

behavioral training, keeping track of unwanted habits with wrist-counters."[63] For practical reasons after the first few years, the admission of people with young children into the commune was discouraged, but plans were made to raise the children when they did arrive in strict conformance to behaviorist principles. Punitive controls would be shunned. Members even attempted to construct an "air crib." Even animals, in accordance with the practice of Walden Two, were not to be punished on any account. "Punishment, for that matter, is forbidden now, even for animals. A chart records how often the dogs foul the floors, but no one lifts a hand against the dogs."[64]

Walden Two was evidently a compelling vision for the founders of the community, especially Kat Kinkade, who wrote a moving account of the community's first five years. As her 17 year old daughter Sally put it during an interview in 1971: "We're like the real Walden Two in many ways. Except we are not rich, and we haven't been going for 10 years."[65] The not being rich, however, was the key obstacle between Kat and her fellow communitarians and the Walden Two ideal. Like many communes, they struggled to survive and Kinkade in her book recalls moments when the commune came close to collapse. The attrition rate was quite high in these years.[66] Disagreement and differences within the community often strained interpersonal relations. Skinner endorsed the community, but kept a distance, acknowledging the problem of capital but not having any solutions.[67] Social experimentation was hard work, but, in the eyes of the most committed reformers, it was worth it. As "Rudy," a graduate of Emory University

[63] Richard Todd, `Walden Two:' Three? Many More?,124.
[64] Ibid. See also Kathleen Kinkade, *A Walden Two Experiment*, chap. 11 – "Children in Community."
[65] Richard Todd, "`Walden Two:' Three? Many More?" 122.
[66] See Kinkade, A Walden Two Experiment, chap. 9 – "They Come and They Go – Selection and Turnover."
[67] See Ibid. See also Melville, 120.

and member of Twin Oaks put it: "I realized that it's not a matter of reforms. It's an over-all problem. What we have here is a postrevolutionary society, a model so that society can look at it and know: "There's a better way.' We're building a sane society from the ground up."[68]

Twin Oaks was not the only "behaviorist" commune. After the 1960s similar Walden II communities were founded in Mexico, Kansas, Michigan and Canada.[69] Many created in the late 1960s did not survive. Twin Oaks is a thriving community to this day, although it broke away from its behaviorist moorings in the mid 1970s.[70] According to Skinner himself, the community that most approximated the Walden Two vision was the "Comunidad los Horicones" – a community founded in October 1973. Several of its six founders had studied behaviorist psychology and education at the National Autonomous University of Mexico in Mexico City. The community over the years sustained itself through farming and educational programs for children. By 1989 the community had 39 permanent residents and 11 children. As an article in the *New York Times* put it in 1989: "Dr. Skinner, who complains that many of his concepts were distorted during the hippie era by `the Maharshi and whatnot,' says los Horicones comes closest to the idea of the `engineered utopia` that he put forth in Walden II."[71]

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[68] Richard Todd, `Walden Two:' Three? Many More?, 125.
[69] Larry Rotherlos, "Isolated Desert Community Lives by Skinner's Precepts," *New York Times*, November 7, 1989, C1; C8. There were also some Skinner-inspired communes that sprang up before Twin Oaks. See Veysey, 39-40.
[70] See Kathleen Kinkade's later book, *Is It Utopia Yet?: An Insider's View of Twin Oaks Community in its 26th Year* (Virginia: Twin Oaks Publishing, 2nd ed., 1994).
[71] Larry Rotherlos, "Isolated Desert Community Lives by Skinner's Precepts," New York Times, November 7, 1989, C1; C8. For more information about the Comunidad los Horicones, see their website at http://www.loshorcones.org/Site/Inicio.html.

Radical Behaviorists and humanistic psychologists, then, were not the only people sorting through the multifaceted difficulties of creating "the good society." In the late 1960s and early 1970s thousands of young people took psychology even further away from the laboratory and into the public world.[72] Experimentation was a public practice; the "laboratory" was defined and constructed in new ways. Skinner and Rogers, for all their differences, encouraged this experimentation. They applauded the young experimenting with communes across the country. When Skinner received mail from people interested in a commune venture, as he often did, he would generally refer them to people engaged in communal projects. But he himself kept a distance; he did not "interfere" with Twin Oaks, for example.[73] He watched from the sidelines. Rogers, too, wrote about communes as an observer; his chapter on communes in *Becoming Partners: Marriage and its Alternatives* drew from the reports of assistants who visited communes, conducted interviews, taped dialogues, and took notes. Watching from a distance, Rogers was delighted with the social experimentation going on. Young people were putting psychology to action, closing the gap between theory and practice.[74]

> They seem to be performing a most convenient function in our culture. They are, at little psychological or financial cost to all of us, conducting the laboratory experiments to determine what place marriage partners, interpersonal relations, technology, and social organization may have in the future. Our culture, in all probability, can't continue as it is. The flaws and fissures, the injustices and hypocrisies are too great. What, then, *will* it become? Communes, with all their mistakes and privations and failures and regroupings, seem to be exploring the way.[75]

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[72] A *New York Times* inquiry in 1970 identified some 2000 communes in 34 states, but it was suggested that the number was "conservative because it no doubt missed some smaller communes and does not include hundreds of small, urban cooperatives and collectives." Bill Kovach, "Communes Spread as the Young Reject Old Values," *New York Times*, December 16th, 1970, 1; 84.

[73] See Richard Todd, `Walden Two': Three? Many More?, *New York Times Magazine*, March 15, 1970, 24-25; 114-126.

[74] See Carl Rogers, *Becoming Partners: Marriage and its Alternatives*, 125-160.

[75] Ibid., 159.

Skinner too was often enthusiastic about the communal activity going on. He had already endorsed social experimentation in 1948. "What is Walden Two but a grand experiment in the structure of a peaceful world?"[76] To be sure, his admiration was at times selective. He was, for example, more optimistic about technology than many communitarians and hippies. But he encouraged long-haired idealists all the same:

> Young people today do not mind wearing patches – they even sew patches on where there are no holes, just to prove their point. Like Thoreau, they are arguing that "Life is an experiment largely untried." Their communes are a step in the direction of new social structures.[77]

I noted at the outset of this chapter that the borders separating cultural liberalism from radicalism can be blurred and contested. Skinner, Maslow and Rogers, from the start of their careers, had lent their support to endeavors that would later be expanded on by experimental youth. Observers of the counter culture have, in general, emphasized the influence of more radical thinkers on the youth culture. Richard King, for example, in The Party of Eros (1972), accurately noted that apologists of the counter culture such as Theodore Rosczack, Philip Slater, and Charles Reich, could not have written what they did without the conceptual schemes laid out by Paul Goodman, Norman Brown, and Herbert Marcuse.[78] But Skinner, Rogers, and Maslow also provided the counter culture with a conceptual and motivational thrust. These psychologists were more situated in the mainstream; as I noted earlier, they did not "drop out" or exclusively target young people. But the idealist orientation among liberal psychologists in post-war America certainly

[76] *Walden Two*, 203.
[77] B. F. Skinner," Walden (one) and Walden Two," *The Thoreau Society Bulletin*, Volume & Issue:2 (Winter 1973):2.
[78] Richard King, *Party of Eros*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 3-9.

nurtured the intellectual and cultural contexts within which a rebellious youth culture would emerge.

That these psychologists were influential does not mean they necessarily had a *direct* influence on people who formed communes or "experimented." The influence perhaps is not so much intellectual as cultural. They nurtured a climate that in turn made their own work more appealing. Skinner for example never claimed that *Walden Two* had helped start the hippie movement. As he put it during an interview in 1970:

> I don't claim to have invented the hippie movement…but the idea of communities seems to have come around again…"Walden Two" is not a handbook for hippies, it has sparked no revolution; but it has championed principles which are now very much in the air.[79]

It might seem contradictory that Skinner, who approached experimentation with meticulous detail in carefully controlled environments, could be so enthusiastic at the prospect of "lay" people haphazardly experimenting with communes. Skinner in fact readily acknowledged that most communes could not be started by experimental "experts." No matter. Even the smartest of scientists often made discoveries by going out on a limb and taking risks. It was a tendency to be encouraged altogether, even if the final products fell short of the perfection of a vision like Walden Two. Thus Skinner did not condemn Twin Oaks for failing to meet the rigorous standards of Walden Two. The point was that people tried. Skinner, in his preface to Kathleen Kinkade's account of the commune's early years, noted that Twin Oaks

> was not approached through the application of scientific principles. Kat and her friends simply muddled through. But the important point is that they got through. And if Twin Oaks is now on its way to something close to Walden Two – and I

[79] Richard Todd, "`Walden Two': Three? Many More?," 25.

> think it is – it is because certain principles stood the test. There is much more in an experimental analysis of behavior that is useful, and I shall be surprised if it is not eventually used. One great source of wisdom is now about to be tapped: Twin Oaks is ready to raise children. IF the lives of those children are properly managed, lessons will be learned of extraordinary value to the community and to us all.[80]

Humanistic psychologists like Maslow tended to affirm the importance of creative play, the importance of being a bohemian and experimenting playfully and passionately. Like Skinner, Maslow encouraged the young to experiment, but he tended to place more emphasis on playful rebelliousness. He would not have deemed "lazy" or "reckless" the likes of Bob Bowen – a young college student on full scholarship at Spring Hill College, who decided to drop out for awhile and join a commune in New Jersey. When asked about his future plans, his "main ambition" for the near future sounds like something right out of a humanistic handbook for the young: "to grow my hair down to my waist and drive a motorcycle as fast as I can."[81] Indeed, Maslow encouraged students to let their guard down, to make crazy mistakes, to experiment. The industrious, ambitious students at Brandeis University, where Maslow worked, did not strike him as specimens of psychological health and growth and were poor models to emulate.[82] Young people needed to loosen up and bum around and do crazy things. In his posthumously published book, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, he made the point quite clear:

> And it should be stressed, I suppose, that in the early stages of creativeness, you've got to be a bum, and you've got to be a Bohemian, you've got to be crazy. The "brainstorming" technique may help us toward a recipe for being creative as this comes from people who have already successfully been creative. They let themselves be completely uncritical. They allow all sorts of wild ideas to come into their heads. And in great bursts of emotion and enthusiasm, they may scribble

[80] See his preface to *A Walden Experiment: The First Five Years of the Twin Oaks Community*, x.
[81] Tom Buckley, "Young Rebels Set Up Own Community in Jersey," *New York Times*, August 26, 1968, 41.
[82] Maslow, "Eupsychia – The Good Society," 9.

> out the poem or the formula or the mathematical solution or work up the theory, or design the experiment. Then, and only then, do they become secondary, become more rational, more controlled, and more critical." Make the "crazy mistake" – you have to.[83]

It might be even more accurate to identify the influence of these psychologists as *therapeutic*. Their appeal to a wider public rested not on the theoretical merits of their respective schools, but rather on the sense of optimism they conveyed, the confidence that psychology could guide people to alternative ways of living. The most influential books were not concerned with the logistics of empirical science, although the prestige of professional psychology did undoubtedly strengthen their reception. The reception of Maslow's *Toward a Psychology of Being* (1962), for example, reveals the extent to which inspiring ideas in favorable climates can catch on and start circulating. His biographer, Edward Hoffman, himself a college student in the early 1960s, recalls the impact of the book:

> Toward a Psychology of Being was the kind of book, passed around from person to person, that not only inspired but changed people's lives. Many more were affected by its message than actually read it. Terms like peak-experience and self-actualization began to penetrate the popular vocabulary and help shape the zeitgeist of the 1960s. Before long, nearly every college student in the country was hearing such phases, as legions of admirers promoted Maslow's approach.[84]

By the late 1960s Skinner was receiving a daily influx of mail by people moved by *Walden Two* and interested in joining communes. As one psychologist put it: "I have honestly become convinced that *Walden Two* is the most significant book of the 20th century."[85] Another student saw in *Walden Two* a light at the end at the end of the long

[83] Maslow, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* (New York: Viking Press, 1971), 90.
[84] Edward Hoffman, *The Right to be Human: An Autobiography of Abraham Maslow*, 266.
[85] Richard Todd, `Walden Two': Three? Many More?", 25.

dark tunnel of life in the modern world: "The idea of living a life of quiet depression does not appeal to me…I have read it with my friends. It seems to be a ray of sanity and hope in the midst of an otherwise insane confusion…"[86] "Dick," who encountered *Walden Two* in college, was convinced that genuine social experimentation was the only way to actualize the potential of Skinner's radical behaviorism. "I made a statement to myself that if such a place ever existed I would come to it." Dick was a graduate student of psychology at the University of Florida when he heard of the Twin Oaks Community, the commune based on *Walden Two*. He left the program and joined the commune.[87] One of the most moving accounts of embracing the Walden Two vision was articulated by Kathleen Kinkade, one of the founders of Twin Oaks. It is worth quoting in full:

> At the time I read Walden Two I was thirty-four years old, divorced, raising a child, and making a living working at office jobs. I disliked office work very much, finding it boring and meaningless, and I wanted to get into an environment where I could find more interesting people to talk to. Though I lacked a college education, I thought I might be able to get a degree slowly by taking night classes, and with a B.A. might qualify to teach in a junior college – maybe English, maybe philosophy. It was in an extension course in philosophy that I ran into *Walden Two*, recommended by the professor as "sinister" and "dangerous." *Walden Two* for me was a brilliant flash of light. I cannot exaggerate the excitement I felt as I read it. The community it depicted was everything I had ever wanted, everything I had ever believed in, and everything I needed to be happy. It was impossible to believe that there was no such place in real life. I could not squarely face that fact, and I haven't faced it yet. There has *got* to be such a place…In a few months I had made contact with other interested people, and two years later we began on the land. Though our Community is still a long way from the Walden Two of the book or my dreams, I have not personally been disappointed in my hopes. The building of the dream has turned out to be as satisfying as moving into it could possibly have been.[88]

[86] Ibid., 24-25.
[87] Ibid., 125.
[88] Kathleen Kinkade, *A Walden Two Experiment*, 7.

Dilemmas and Conflicts

This warm endorsement on the part of these psychologists toward experimentation can seem paradoxical, for the interactions between them and cultural radicals were often contentious. Maslow, for example, was quite critical of the counter culture. He was no advocate of LSD, and he resisted the application of his theory on peak experiences to the allegedly mind-enhancing effects of acid trips. He was often critical of "groups like SDS, the hippies, and black militants."[89] He had bemoaned the complacency of college students in the 1950s but could be just as critical of the activist and outspoken students that succeeded them, his own classroom witnessing some uncomfortably heated conflicts.[90] He frequently criticized the ways in which people outside the profession "practiced" psychology, specifically at Esalen and similar growth centers.[91] Moreover, even though he himself had engaged in some communal experimentation in the late 1930s, he was ill at ease with the willingness of hippies and communitarians to "drop out."[92] If he was a "hero" of the American counterculture, he was, as his biographer puts it, an "uneasy" one.[93]

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[89] See Maslow, "Defining the American Dream," in Edward Hoffman, ed. *Future Visions: The Unpublished Papers of Abraham Maslow* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1996), 141-146. Maslow acknowledged distinctions within the counterculture: "The SDS types are more active, aggressive, and violent, whereas the hippie types are more passive, receptive, and quiescent. But it should be pointed out that their ultimate goals are identical." I should point out that he admired these goals, but rejected the methods by which activists and hippies sought to attain them. "The hippie creed does offer the highest values. But these young people don't at all know how to attain these, and wind up destroying the very goals for which they wish." (144.)

[90] Hoffman, *The Right to be Human*, 313-314.

[91] See his short piece, "A Critique of the Esalen Institute," in Hoffman ed. Future Visions, 129-131. See also Eugene Taylor, *Shadow Culture: Psychology and Spirituality in America* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint,1999). See especially chap. 6, which is about Esalen, 235-257.

[92] See Maslow, "Defining the American Dream," in Edward Hoffman, ed. *Future Visions: The Unpublished Papers of Abraham Maslow* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1996), 141-146.

[93] See Hoffman, chap. 16: "Uneasy Hero of the Counter Culture," 287-314. See also Herman, 269-275. I should note here that, while I focus on Maslow, there were other humanistic psychologists at odds with certain aspects of the counter culture. Rollo May for example, a severe critic of Western civilization, and an anti-war activist, was critical of the human potential movement and the popularity of encounter groups, for what he considered their naïve optimism. He was also critical of certain tendencies within the women's

Take for example Maslow's ambivalence toward the psychedelics. He had written at length in the 1950s and early 1960s on the importance of "peak experiences," which could range from momentary flashes of insight to "mystic or oceanic experiences so profound as to remove neurotic symptoms forever." [94] Colleagues and young people outside the profession increasingly explored the therapeutic effects of psychedelics, but Maslow, though intrigued by the research, was resistant. There were, he argued, no smooth roads to peak experiences and self-actualization. To have a peak experience and meaningfully integrate it into one's life required a great deal of work. There was much damage that had to be undone and the psychedelics could easily hold out the false promise of a seductive short-cut. "It's too easy," he would say to Timothy Leary. "To have a peak experience, you have to sweat."[95] In lieu of psychedelics Maslow preferred "`Taoistic' or uncovering kinds of psychotherapy."[96]

Humanistic psychology, for Maslow, was a powerful tool kit for creative and responsible living. But people need to know how to use tools. Therapy would help them. Therapy was essentially a means to structuring one's life and thereby doing more with oneself. He described self-integration as a process, and therapy a commitment. Only then, he argued, would an individual be equipped to "grow" (for example) from a peak experience. For a peak experience entailed opening up the mind to other (i.e. irrational or non-rational) aspects of consciousness, which could be dangerous for people not

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liberation movement, particularly the tendency of radical feminists to deny any notion of objective nature or human nature. See DeCarvalho, 26-27.

[94] Abraham Maslow, "Cognition of Being in the Peak Experience," *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 94 (1959):43-66.

[95] Hoffman, 266.

[96] For a good articulation of Maslow's views regarding the psychedelics, see Maslow, *Critique of Self-Actualization Theory*, in Hoffman, ed. *Future Visions* (London: Sage Publications), 26-32. For his views on the sort of work needed to psychologically grow see *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, 81-95.

accustomed to such experiencing. For a psychically ill-equipped or unprepared individual, a peak experience could, he warned, actually lead to insanity.[97] The rational ego could not smoothly open the floodgates of the unconscious. A process of long-term negotiation between the different aspects of the self was necessary, and this was the business of psychotherapy. LSD promised the lure of a quick-fix as well as the danger of a bad trip or psychotic breakdown. Therapy and experts were essential:

> This whole business of psychotherapy, of self-therapy, of self-knowledge is a difficult process because, as things stand now for most of us, the conscious and unconscious are walled off from each other. How do you get these two worlds, the psychic world and the world of reality, to be comfortable with each other? In general, the process of psychotherapy is a matter of slow-confrontation, bit by bit, with the help of a technician, with the uppermost layers of the unconscious. They are exposed and tolerated and assimilated and turn out to be not so dangerous after all, not so horrible. Then comes the next layer, and then the next, in this same process of getting a person to face something which he is terribly afraid of, and then finding when he does face it, that there was nothing to be afraid of in the first place…the conscious must become strong enough to dare friendliness with the enemy.[98]

His disagreements with professional colleagues interested in psychedelic research[99] mirrored his disagreements with non-professional advocates of the drugs. Again, the message was: "you have to sweat." He clearly had LSD in mind when criticizing "the hippies" for their (as he put it) "Nirvana Now" approach to liberation: "Foolishly, the hippies are seeking to achieve instantaneously all the noble goals of the Tzaadik (Hebrew for saint) – love, lack of domination, community,

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[97] Maslow, "The Health Implications of Peaks-to Completion," in Hoffman, ed., *Future Visions*, 39-41. "It seems possible that a person with great inner ambivalence and many warring, intrapsychic aspects could literally become insane from an inability to integrate peak-experiences."
[98] Maslow, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, 86-87.
[99] For an example of the willingness of colleagues to integrate peak experience theory with psychedelic drug therapy, see Klavetter and Mogar, "Peak Experiences: Investigation of their Relationship to Psychedelic Therapy and Self-Actualization," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 7:2 (Fall 1967): 171-177.

brotherhood/sisterhood, and the like – immediately and without effort, seemingly just by willing it to be so."[100] Only extensive psychotherapy could help people negotiate and integrate the unconscious and conscious dimensions of the human mind. The person capable of negotiating and integrating would then be "ready" for "natural" or "healthy" peaks, in contrast to (drug-triggered) "psychotic" peaks.

Skinner likewise had his reservations about the counter culture. He too dismissed the fascination with drugs, as well as the fashionable dabblings in Eastern mysticism. Cultural change was hard work; it required a degree of seriousness, responsibility and commitment. He encouraged community, but Woodstock was certainly not the solution to widespread alienation. His view of hippies was also tinged with both admiration and skepticism:

> They [radical youth] don't want to reason. But what heartens me is that some of them want to do better, to go beyond smoking pot. My readers have long hair and beards, but they realize you need more than love. I *have* had people call me in the middle of the night on pot, and one day a fellow came to my office and said: `You could save the world. You and Bucky Fuller could save the world.' What he wanted me to do was take LSD with Bucky Fuller, and he left me a sugar cube.[101]

These criticisms of young radicals, however, were themselves often full of contradictions. If they point to legitimate problems within the counter culture, they also point to inconsistencies within these liberals' own approaches to radical reform. Take the humanistic emphasis on creativity and spontaneity. Maslow, like many humanistic psychologists, at times seemed to privilege play and experimentation over "work." Diligent ambitious college students at Brandeis were no models to emulate. Yet

[100] Maslow, "Defining the American Dream," in Hoffman, ed., *Future Visions*, 144.
[101] Richard Todd, `Walden Two': Three? Many More?,118. See also Daniel N. Wiener, *B.F. Skinner: Benign Anarchist*, (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1996), 159-160 on his mixed attitudes towards student protestors at Harvard.

Maslow's suggestions that young people loosen up, bum around and "make the crazy mistake" contrasts markedly with his approach to therapy as a process of "slow-confrontation, bit by bit, with the help of a technician." Also, it is not clear how a psychology premised above all on creativity and spontaneity could – or would – humanize the large, informal, indomitable institutions of the modern world that seemed primed to squelch the creativity and spontaneity so important to Maslow and Rogers. In the end, Maslow really *did* privilege work over play. He himself labored obsessively, writing and speaking extensively even when poor health dictated he relax a bit. For Maslow youthful creativity and spontaneity should be encouraged not so young people could stay young, but so that they could mature into sensitive, productive, creative adults. As he explained in *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, one would eventually have to cut the hair, don the suit, and go to work. Hopefully, one would bring a creative freshness and inventiveness to one's work, but one still had to work nonetheless.[102] Skinner, for that matter, was no slacker either. He too worked diligently, perhaps obsessively. On the one hand, he called for open-mindedness, a willingness to eschew theoretical attachments in order to experiment. He endorsed experimentation as an open-ended process of discovery. Outside the professional laboratory, people were encouraged to play around with social and living arrangements and to be open to learning from their experiences and hitting upon truths. But Skinner, like Maslow, demanded hard work from visionaries.

[102] Maslow, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, 90-93. Young people were only supposed to drop out temporarily; they were not supposed to make a lifestyle out of voluntary poverty. To cut oneself off from affluence was silly. Affluence had to be cultivated in healthy ways, not rejected outright. The problem was ignorance, not affluence, and to drop out was to evade the problem. "It is not necessary to develop, as the hippies do, a reaction formation against what they call the `plastic' or materialistic culture – which is all that they know – and then to reject it entirely and drop out of it." Maslow, "Defining the American Dream," in Hoffman, ed., *Future Visions*, 143.

Both men, in fact, hearkened back to and endorsed a traditional work ethic. Both admired the inner-directed individualism of the past, and tried to resuscitate it in order to engage the challenges of the modern world.[103] For people so willing to discard tradition and move on from the past, they sometimes did, in fact, look back on a more stable and structured past as longingly as cultural conservatives. The notion that a culturally reinforced inner-directed individualism was lost was, as I discussed in chapter one, shared by liberals and conservatives alike. The loss of cultural structure bred anxiety and disorientation, especially with parents. "My parents came from a very strictly defined culture," Skinner explained to Mary Hall. "My mother knew exactly what was right, or what I should do or shouldn't do. The rules were right there in the culture; there was never any question. Well, now that's all gone; we have thrown that over, but we have to go on designing from moment to moment to produce a better way."[104] Politicians and diplomats were also at a loss in the new post-war world taking shape. "When you had strict nationalistic lines," Skinner went on, "territories to be defended, methods of defending them, nationalism, national honor, it was different. Now we don't know. Should we appease, should we threaten? We're asking our statesmen now to use a more creative application of principles that have not gotten into international cultures." The "cold war," pointing as it did to a more global, interconnected world where threats rippled across boundaries, undermined traditional concepts of nationalism and even of war itself.[105] This sense of cultural loss and disorientation was echoed by humanistic

[103] See note 12. Veysey noted that in highly structured communes where people made a virtue of hard work, frugality, and diligence, members were more likely to cut their hair and look not so very different from hard-working people in mainstream society. See *The Communal Experience*, in particular the closing chapter: "The Trend of American Cultural Radicalism."
[104] Mary Hall, *An Interview with `Mr. Behaviorist' B.F. Skinner*, 27.
[105] Ibid.

psychologists, and it clearly provided shared terrain for debates. Thus Rollo May, a humanistic psychologist passionately critical of Skinner, sounded just like Skinner in his assessment of contemporary culture:

> The psychological problems in our day are related to the disintegration and loss of the symbols and myths around which man finds meaning in his life… If you and I had been born a hundred years ago, we would have our myths. Our churches and our philosophies would have given them to us. But our philosophies have gone to the dogs and our churches are not very relevant.[106]

Rollo May wanted individuals to strive and engage life passionately. Maslow wanted people to tackle contemporary bureaucracies and humanize them. Skinner wanted people to experiment with patience, focus, imagination, and zeal. All of them wanted people *to work*. And by work they did not mean the tedious, arduous work crucial to putting food on the table. But it was work all the same, requiring discipline and a high-level of psychological maturity. What they wanted to nurture, in other words, was a contemporary version of a traditional *work ethic.*

But is it possible to resuscitate a work-ethic? How could a culture encourage hard work, particularly in a more affluent, post-Christian age, where the Protestant work ethic, or even the hard-working orientation of immigrants powered by ambition, seemed dated?[107] "Comfort," observed Philip Rieff in 1966, "is the great social tranquilizer."[108] Contemporary culture was *not* nurturing a work ethic. Meanwhile, the world edged closer to atomic warfare while at home middle class Americans sank deeper into apathy and passive consumerism. Liberals like Skinner and Maslow bemoaned contemporary

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[106] Mary Hall," An Interview with "Mr. Humanist" Rollo May," *Psychology Today*, 1:5 (September 1967): 27.
[107] Walden Two might privilege leisure, yet it takes a lot of work to get to that point. The novel begins after the hard work is done. Only then does Frazier not have much to do.
[108] Philip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966),63.

tendencies as passionately as did conservatives like Willam F. Buckley and Philip Rieff. Something vital was missing; somehow people had to be engaged and fired up. "Some cultures," as Skinner put it in 1970, "are smart enough to induce their members to work for the general survival. Lately, our culture has been missing out. We've failed in countless instances. Religion has failed – it's a supernatural fraud anyway – and the big companies have failed."[109]

Where liberals like Maslow and Skinner parted from conservatives like Buckley and Rieff was in their promotion of psychology to fill the cultural void. Psychology – behaviorist or humanistic – could provide the infrastructure once provided by religion and tradition. It could ground confused and anxious housewives like Betsy Rath and bored secretaries like Kat Kinkade. It could address the problem of alienation in general. It was also hoped that psychology could safeguard society from the twin evils of authoritarianism, cultural or political, or mind- numbing chaos and anarchy. But could it? Could psychologists wield their authority as experts without themselves being authoritarian? These liberals took efforts to insure that they could. One way was, as I have noted, to endorse an ethic of creative and open-minded "experimentation." And experimentation did indeed catch on in the radical, rebellious climate of the late 1960s. But experimentation as a public practice can, as we have seen, become open-ended and difficult to control. Experimentation can mean anything. These psychologists were intent on wedding it to serious-minded agendas of radical social and cultural change, but not all people enamored of experimentation were so serious-minded. To be sure, many were, and with such people, who tended to be diligent, hard working visionaries themselves,

[109] Richard Todd, "`Walden Two': Three? Many More?" *New York Times Magazine*, March 15, 1970, 116.

these psychologists had more in common, despite their ambivalence to the concept of "dropping out."[110] Skinner and Maslow, for better or worse, were neither able nor willing to drop out, and their "support" of people who did drop out was at best ambiguous. Rogers, excited as he was about communes, seemed to assume most communitarians would eventually make their way back into mainstream society, and hopefully improve it. Even Skinner, who saw much to admire in Twin Oaks, viewed communitarian experiments mainly as a means to an end. As he explained to Richard Todd, "In the long run, of course, we must dispense with utopian simplifications, for the real test of a culture is the world at large."[111]

In closing, it is helpful to point out that some of these ambivalent and contentious interactions between these psychologists and young radicals were to be found throughout the counter culture in general. Cultural radicals were a varied, assortment of people. Not all "hippies" were slackers and self-indulgent. The commitment to experimentation wedded to the big picture was demonstrated by many a hard-working communitarian. Some of the communes visited by researchers like Keith Melville and Lawrence Vessey were remarkably focused, the members driven and disciplined.[112] At the same time, Melville (as I noted earlier) observed that the majority of communes did not look to

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[110] See Veysey, 476. He notes that many hard-working, diligent communitarians by the early 1970s were eschewing exhibitionism. "Quite a number of hip youth in these environments have cut their hair and begun dressing like everybody else." Generalizations like this, however, need watching. Much reading for this dissertation was done in the café run by a local commune on Staten Island, called Ganas, which has been around for some thirty years. Commune members dress very much like hippies, and yet are incredibly hard working, adept with technology, and astute with running a business. See their website at http://www.well.com/user/ganas/etgstores/bookcafe/.

[111] See Richard Todd, `Walden Two': Three? Many More?, 125. Maslow, as I pointed out, felt it was unnecessary for people to drop out in order to individually and collectively cultivate affluence for noble ends.

[112] See Veysey, Chap. 5. See also Kathleen Kinkade, *A Walden Two Experiment*, 19-20. "If anything, we are more inclined to criticize ourselves for the same faults that the Establishment sees in us – namely, laziness, slovenliness, and a trifle too leisurely a pace toward our goals."

Walden Two as a model, most of them inclining to a more anarchistic orientation. But these more "relaxed" communes tended to be disorganized. Kat Kinkade of Twin Oaks discussed the recurring problem of visitors from neighboring communes not inclined to work hard. (Such communes, she notes, did not last long.[113]) It was very taxing for people caught up in the counter culture to negotiate sacred moments of transcendence, release and "communitas" to an ethic of hard work and achievement-oriented goals.[114] The complaints about "hippies" from Skinner and Maslow could be no less intense than the complaints from other radical communitarians, some of whom swerved to an authoritarian orientation neither Skinner nor Maslow would have found acceptable.[115] One thing to be said for the liberal mindset of these psychologists is that it sought to guard against swerves to either anarchistic or authoritarian extremes. Perhaps it is this rather traditional commitment to "balance" and "equilibrium" that distinguished cultural liberals from radicals. But such balance depends on a cultural infrastructure. Skinner and Maslow and Rogers hoped psychology would provide this infrastructure, as opposed to serving as a mere method or "tool" for the smoother functioning of mainstream institutions or for individuals trying to adjust to the norm. It is not clear that psychology was or has been able to provide the framework for such an inclusive world-view. But in post-war America these particular schools were intent on grounding experimentation in ethical imperatives and a broad, philosophical framework, an agenda they contentiously shared with a younger generation of radicals.

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[113] Kathleen Kinkade, *A Walden Two Experiment*, 15-24.
[114] Veysey, 479.
[115] Ibid., 478. Veysey notes: "The propensity among recent radicals to continue running after `inspired' leaders in the time-honored way is profoundly discouraging. Even in the academic world, the revival of an intense humanism during the past few years has been accompanied by a shameless emphasis upon the teacher as guru or prophet." See his closing chapter: The Trend of American Cultural Radicalism" (409-480).

CHAPTER FOUR

Kenneth Clark: "A Psychologist For Society"

In the 1950s Skinner, Rogers and Maslow were busy orienting psychology to the demands and problems of the post-war world. Like other social observers, they acknowledged the increasing fragility of the individual in the face of alarming developments such as the nuclear arms race. In the Unites States, rising affluence was paradoxically furthering this weakening of the individual and blanketing a deepening sense of powerlessness with suburban comforts and domestic escapism.[1] But if affluence boded ill for "healthy" individuality, so too did poverty, and there was poverty in America.[2] Both poverty and affluence, interrelated as they are within wider social systems, condition people psychologically. The physical realities of each can generate their respective psychological complexes, and these complexes can be debilitating when it comes to understanding and "helping" oneself and others, particularly if one is not aware of them. Such complexes are especially troublesome if the factor of race is involved, and in the United States issues of race and class have historically been intertwined. Rogers, Maslow and Skinner acknowledged but did not dwell at length on

[1] See Reuel Denney, "American Youth Today: A Bigger Cast, A Wider Screen," in Erik H. Erikson, ed., *Youth: Change and Challenge* (The American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1961; New York: Basic Books, 1963), 131-151. See also, in this same collection, Kenneth Keniston, "Social Change and Youth in America," 161-187.

[2] See Gunnar Myrdal, *Challenge to Affluence* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962). See pp. 50-51 for statistics on poverty in America in 1960. Using the threshold of $4,000 a year annual income for multiple-person families, and $2,000 for "unattached individuals," some "38 million Americans" were living in poverty in 1960, or one-fifth of the nation."

these problems of race and poverty and their relevance to psychology.[3] Kenneth Clark, a prominent social psychologist and public intellectual, examined them at length.

Clark liked to refer to himself as a "psychologist of society."[4] He emphasized the importance of the behavioral sciences to nurturing a healthy, democratic public culture.[5] But to the lengthy list of obstacles standing in the way of progress, Clark added and emphasized the importance of "race" and, in doing so, reinforced the wider agendas of his colleagues and problematized them. His contributions to these agendas and public dialogues are important to understanding the interplay of psychology and public culture in these years.

Social Psychology: An Overview

Kenneth Clark was neither a radical behaviorist nor a humanistic psychologist. He was a "social psychologist." Social psychology was another growing field at mid-century, with a history that seemed to parallel and overlap with that of behaviorism and psychoanalysis, and (for that matter) with radical behaviorism and humanistic psychology.[6] The field had been heavily influenced by the "Gestalt" school, which came to America from Germany in the early 1930s when its leading proponents fled the Nazi regime. The Gestalt psychologists drew from developments in contemporary science,

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[3] None of the issues of the *Journal for the Experimental Analysis of Behavior* during the 1950s and 1960s deal exclusively with race. Also, despite Maslow and Rogers's support of the civil rights movement, none of the early issues of *The Journal of Humanistic Psychology* focus on race either.

[4] Mary Hall, "A Conversation with Kenneth Clark," in *Psychology Today*, 2:1 (June 1968):3.

[5] This is essentially the message to white parents in *Prejudice and Your Child* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955; Second edition, enlarged, Boston: Beacon Press, 1963.) "White parents, then, can make a major contribution to America. They can strengthen the democratic foundations of our nation by helping their children to be free of the distortions inherent in racial thinking, and thus helping them to attain strong and creative personalities." (129.) See also Mary Hall, "A Conversation with Kenneth Clark." See also Clark, *Pathos of Power* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).

[6] See James Goodwin, *A History of Modern Psychology*. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1999). Chap. 5 (255-288).

particularly Max Plank's work in physics. Developments in modern physics were undermining the certainties implicit in "positivist" science. They called into question the positivist tendency to approach observable phenomena by breaking it down to its constituent elements.[7] This approach had been based on the earlier, billiard-ball model of physics, which conceived all observable phenomena as the result of indestructible atoms crashing and colliding against one another. The emerging school of Quantum physics, with its emphasis on fields and forces, pointed to a radically different framework. There was no stable, uniform atomic substratum underlying appearances. The whole notion of separate atoms opened up to a more mysterious picture of subatomic particles that could only be understood through their interactions with other particles. The foundational metaphor so important to positivism was giving way to a more complex and indeterminate picture. Matter generated different kinds of order at different levels, and order could not make sense without an understanding of the relevant "fields" within which forces worked.[8]

The Gestalts applied these insights to psychology, particularly to cognition and sensory perception. Two points of light, for example, shining on a wall, under certain conditions, could easily appear as a horizontal line of light to an onlooker. One could not understand the perception without understanding the whole environment first, and seeing

[7] See Sigmund Koch, "Psychology and Emerging Conceptions of Knowledge as Unitary," in T. Wann, Ed., *Behaviorism and Phenomenology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964):1-46. Skinner, an unwavering positivist, was, of course, in no way ignorant of developments in modern physics; he simply felt that theories of indeterminacy did not undermine the prospects for controlling behavior. See B.F. Skinner, *Science and Human Behavior* (New York: The Free Press, 1953),17. Some aspects of human behavior "may involve processes to which the Principle of Indeterminacy applies…Most students, however, would be willing to settle for the degree of prediction and control achieved by the physical sciences in spite of this limitation."

[8] Goodwin, 256. Mary Midgley, *Science as Salvation: A Modern Myth and its Meaning*, (New York: Routledge, 1992). See especially Chapter 18, "Quantum Quandaries." For a wonderful reader-friendly guide to these relevant changes in twentieth century physics, see Albert Einstein and Leopold Infeld, *The Evolution of Physics: From Early Concepts to Relativity and Quanta* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1966.)

how the various parts worked within that whole. To the Gestalt psychologist, the "whole" or "Gestalt" was always greater than the sum of its parts.[9]

The work of Max Wertheimer and other pioneering Gestalts had a major influence on Kurt Lewin, generally considered the "founder" of modern social psychology. Lewin was a contemporary of the Gestalt psychologists, emigrating like them to the United States in the early 1930s. He applied the insights of Gestalt psychology to the study of various social phenomena and their importance in understanding human behavior. He developed the terminology of "fields," "vectors," and "valences," the key words of social psychology in the 1950s. He studied social phenomena such as prejudice, public opinion, and crowd behavior.[10]

Of particular importance to the field of social psychology was his work on leadership in the mid 1930s, when he studied the effects of different leadership styles on small groups of ten year old boys. The boys were given craft work projects to complete, and different groups were subject to different kinds of leadership: authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire. The findings revealed some pronounced impacts of leadership style on behavior. In the laissez-faire environment indecisiveness and lack of structure led to poor work performance and group interaction. In authoritarian contexts boys displayed a marked contempt or lack of interest in their work, were in general meaner towards each other, and consistently looked for ways to evade or dodge the control of the leader. Lewin was struck by the rapidity with which boys in a democratic environment moved into the mindset of the authoritarian one. Moreover, once exposed to

[9] Goodwin, 257-259. See also Wolfgang Kohler, "Max Wertheimer: 1880-1943,"*The Psychological Review*, 51:3 (May 1944):143-146.
[10] See Leon Festinger, ed., *Retrospections on Social Psychology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980). Kurt Lewin died in 1947.

the authoritarian leader, boys had a difficult time making the transition back to a democratic environment. The project, a classic in the annals of social psychological research, revealed that groups worked best under democratic leadership.[11]

This was the sort of research for which Lewin became famous. It revealed the importance of such research to social and political affairs, an importance Lewin took seriously. He found it imperative that social scientists work to affect social policy and bring about needed reform. As Goodwin puts it, Lewin became the "prototype of the scientist-activist." He promoted a distinctive kind of "action research" oriented to bring a about tangible results in the real world.[12]

While Lewin was an influence on Kenneth Clark, [13] he was one of many. As with Skinner, Maslow and Rogers, Clark was influenced by social scientists and intellectuals from various disciplines – including anthropology, psychology, and philosophy. Assessing his own career, he emphasized the importance of the psychodynamic theories of Alfred Adler, a contemporary of Freud who had broken away from orthodox psychoanalysis and developed a more "social psychological" approach less focused on instincts. Clark first encountered Adler's work at Howard University, through his teacher and mentor, the psychologist Francis Cecil Clark. He was also influenced by a number of reputable academics at Howard intent on applying social science to the problems of race

[11] Goodwin, 281-282.
[12] Goodwin, 274-285. See also Henry S. Kariel, "Democracy Unlimited: Kurt Lewin's Field Theory," *American Journal of Sociology*, 62:3 (November 1956):280-289.
[13] For Clark's thoughts on Kurt Lewin, see Clark's Kurt Lewin Memorial Award Address, "Problems of Power and Social Change: Toward a Relevant Social Psychology," given before the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, at the American Psychological Association, Chicago, September 1965. See an edited version of the speech in *Pathos of Power*, 66-91. For Lewin's influence on Clark see Ben Keppel, "Kenneth B. Clark in the Patterns of American Culture," *American Psychologist* 57:1 (January 2002):29.

and racism in the United States in the belief that a "nonracist America" was possible.[14] Such influence was reinforced at Columbia University (where Clark received his doctorate) through his encounters with the anthropologist Franz Boas, his students Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead, and the social psychologist Otto Klineberg. Clark also expressed strong admiration for the political economist Gunnar Myrdal, in particular to his "monumental" study of race in the United States: *An American Dilemma* (1944.)[15] All of these social scientists, probing as they did the environmental and social factors on human behavior such as education and test-taking, undermined traditional assumptions regarding racial differences and the nature of such differences. Many questioned the viability of the concept of race altogether.[16] All of these intellectuals had major impacts on Clark's approach to social psychology and activism. Of particular importance was Myrdal's argument that the oppressors and oppressed were both "victims" of racism. That racism crippled and twisted whites as well as blacks was a point Clark stressed to the end of his life.[17]

Clark and American Liberalism

Social psychology, then, was quite interdisciplinary. Methods, research findings, and insights from various disciplines made their way into Clark's approach to psychology

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[14]Gerald Markowitz and David Rosner, *Children, Race, and Power: Kenneth and Mamie Clark's Northside Center* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 26.

[15] Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1944).

[16] See Otto Klineberg, "Negro-White Differences in Intelligence Test Performance: A New Look at an Old Problem," *American Psychologist*, 18:4 (April 1963):198-203); *Negro Intelligence and Selective Migration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935); *Characteristics of the American Negro* (New York: Harper, 1944). See also Clark, *Pathos of Power*, 103.

[17] See "Just teach them to read!" *New York Times*, March 18, 1973; Proquest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2003.): 256-264. "And I've been saying for a long time – but nobody listens to this --- that the perpetrators, and the children of advantaged schools, are harmed by segregated schools, too." (259)

and social change. Moreover, like Skinner, Rogers, and Maslow, Clark situated himself within the broader traditions of Western liberalism and American intellectual history. Clark's work further underscores the post-war importance of philosophical psychology to American liberalism, and (for that matter) of American liberalism to philosophical psychology. The borderline between philosophy and psychology has gotten more pronounced in the past four decades.[18] But there was a strong strain of philosophy in the psychology of these behavioral scientists. Clark identified himself as a liberal. He extolled the virtues of "Jeffersonian Democracy" embodied in the Declaration of Independence – that nagging, moral "monkey our back," as he called it.[19] He included John Locke on his top-ten list of history's greatest men.[20] It was Locke (Clark argued) who had laid out the conceptual groundwork for modern social science and its relevance to social change. Moreover, in combining a "literalistic concept of the equality of man" with a "form of environmentalism," Locke had cast the social scientist in the role of social critic, and from social critics had come the rationale for the major political revolutions of the modern age.[21]

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[18] See Ian Nicholson, "GIVING UP MALENESS:" Abraham Maslow, Masculinity, and the Boundaries of Psychology, History of Psychology, 4:1 (2001):79. See also Clark, *Pathos of Power*, 67. Clark admired philosophers like John Locke and Bertrand Russell. "But few social psychologists seem to be influenced by the reflections of philosophers, and a cursory review of the recent literature of social psychology reveals that power has been dealt with minimally as a theoretical problem and virtually not at all as an empirical one." (67)

[19] Mary Hall, "A Conversation with Kenneth Clark," 21.

[20] Ibid., 23. Others on the list included Socrates, Jesus Christ, John Locke, Gandhi, Einstein, and Bertrand Russell. I am critical of recent attempts to situate Clark within an "Africanist" framework. See Layli Phillips, "RECONETEXTUALIZING KENNETH B. CLARK: An Afrocentric Perspective on the Paradoxical Legacy of a Model Psychologist-Activist," *History of Psychology*, 3:2 (2000):142-167. Phillips seeks to recast Clark "as an exemplary Afrocentrist scientist-activist." She defines Afrocentric as "a general term that refers to people of African descent who have retained psychocultural remnants of their African heritage." I do not find this convincing. Clark's influences stemmed from his childhood in Harlem, and his experiences in Howard University and Columbia University. His intimate connection with the ideals of "Jeffersonian democracy" anchors him in an American and Western framework.

[21] Clark, *Pathos of Power*, 125.

Ideals, of course, have a habit of not always translating into practice in ways that suit everybody. The presence of slavery in the United States after the American Revolution mocked the ideals embodied in Lockean liberalism and Jeffersonian Democracy.[22] But the ideals themselves, Clark contended, were worthy ones. Greater social reforms were needed to do them justice, and social scientists as social critics had vital roles to play. Unfortunately, social science could just as easily be used to shore up existing power structures as to challenge them. The social scientist could eschew the role of social *critic* for the role of social *apologist*. And many social scientists, particularly in the latter half of the 19th century, had been apologists for the status quo. Popular creeds like Social Darwinism and laissez-faire capitalism, as well as pseudo-scientific, mystical theories about race, had facilitated a "stance of accommodation." Such theories, promoted to the public as solid, empirical science, had done much harm.[23]

The Progressive Era, however, nurtured, in Clark's view, a climate more conducive to the social scientist as social critic. It was precisely the Progressive faith in science and social reform that had inspired Maslow and Skinner to become psychologists. Clark too viewed behaviorism as a welcome change. To him the work of John Watson and Ivan Pavlov marked "a curious return to seventeenth-century Lockean environmentalism and egalitarianism." The psychology of Watson and Skinner had to "be understood in terms of the ability of man to modify human behavior through controlling the social and political environment."[24] These schools once again imbued the role of the social scientist with that of the social critic. This trend, in the United States at least, continued to gain momentum into the 1930s and 40s, peaking in 1954 with the famous

[22] Indeed, none of the "Founding Fathers" were included by Clark on his list of history's greatest men.
[23] Clark, *Pathos of Power*, 125-127.
[24] Ibid., 126.

decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, where the Supreme Court ruled against racial segregation in public schools. As Clark later recalled, the *Brown* decision capped years of interdisciplinary commitment to social research and criticism:

> Certainly, in the work of such social anthropologists as Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict as they influenced the social psychology of Otto Klineberg; and the contributions of such giants in American sociology as Louis Wirth, Charles S. Johnson, E. Franklin Frazier and the pioneer work of Gunnar Myrdal, the role of social critic was resumed. Their contributions led inevitably to the historical Brown decision of the United States Supreme Court in May of 1954; and to its footnote eleven citing those social scientists who dared to be social critics, who dared to be unapologetic exponents of social justices – and who rejected the silent or active role of defenders of the status quo. [25]

The Challenge of Integration

In some respects Clark was in a different situation from that of Skinner, Maslow and Rogers at mid-century. These men felt stifled in their profession. It seemed that for behaviorism and psychoanalysis success had come with a price: academic insularity, professional complacency and rigidity. Radical behaviorism and humanistic psychology signified attempts to render psychology once again more relevant to social and human affairs. Clark, however, was already working within a field attuned to social affairs. Social psychology had always been interested in actual people and communities; there was no possibility of getting too preoccupied with studying rats or pigeons in laboratories. Nevertheless, the post-war climate posed challenges for social psychologists, and Clark too was pressured to stake out new ground. The *Brown* decision

[25] Ibid.

was an important factor. Social psychologists had played an important role in the case,[26] and by 1954 the challenge of integration called for the direct application of psychological theory to practice. As Kenneth Clark later recalled, the political impacts of this research had been an eye-opening experience, even for people like himself and his wife Mamie Clark who had been conducting relevant research since the 1930s. As he recalled in *Pathos of Power*:

> The earlier studies of the development of self-identification and evaluation in children with Mamie Clark were not motivated by or conducted with any direct concern for their applied or policy implications and consequences. The fact that the United States Supreme Court in handing down the Brown decision in May 1954 cited these findings and other relevant research….was a gratifying illustration of the possibility that even in the social and psychological sciences what is called `pure' research can sometimes have some direct social policy and applied social change effects.[27]

The *Brown* decision had opened a new door for social psychology, and this was only the beginning. Government support for integration was crucial, but beyond that the transition to an integrated, democratic society would have to depend on unsettling social and psychological adjustments on the part of *all* Americans. Social psychology would have to reach out to the public; it would also have to actively engage itself with social reform. What was needed then was an effective conceptual and practical approach to social change. Constructing such an approach became the primary objective for Clark in the years ahead.

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[26] See Kenneth Clark, *Prejudice and your Child*, Preface to the Paperback Edition (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963). "Prejudice and Your Child is itself the revised or book version of the manuscript "Effect of Prejudice and Discrimination on Personality Development," which I prepared for the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth, 1950, and which the Supreme Court cited in footnote 11 of the Brown decision, in 1954.), xi. See also Ben Keppel, "Kenneth B. Clark in the Patterns of American Culture," *American Psychologist* 57:1 (January 2002):29-37; and Benjamin Lundy, Jr. and Ellen M. Crouse, "The American Psychological Association's Response to Brown v. Board of Education: The Case of Kenneth B. Clark," *American Psychologist* , 57:1 (January 2002):38-50.

[27] Clark, *Pathos of Power*, 157.

Psychology for Everybody

The broader political, economic, and cultural contexts of post-war America are important for probing the nature and significance of Clark's work. His attention to racism and poverty itself needs to be situated within the broader concerns of the time. Clark, like his visionary colleagues, looked to psychology to navigate the confusing optimism and pessimism, the hopes and fears, circulating widely in these years of economic prosperity and "cold war." On the one hand, the destructive power of thermonuclear weapons dampened optimistic forecasts for progress. The dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Clark later recalled, profoundly affected him:

> I found myself re-examining my ideas about the characteristics of human beings; the problems of justice and injustices; possible safeguards against human cruelties; the role of religion, philosophy, and science as realistic, moral and practical barriers to human chaos and ultimate destructiveness. I had previously thought about these questions somewhat leisurely and abstractly; now they increasingly dominated my thinking with a persistence and intensity that frequently interfered with clarity and coherence.[28]

The menace of "impending doom" in "an age of ultimate destructive weaponry" was impossible to dodge or minimize. It also compounded other problems, in particular "the persistence of human cruelty and injustice" evident in, among other places, the ghettos of America, by diverting energy, resources, and talent into the construction and maintenance of a warfare state. These fearful developments were putting the constructive capacity of humanity to the test. There were no short-cuts to solutions. The "liberation of mankind" from such evils would have to "come from the totality of human intelligence."[29] And yet, at the same time, there was cause for hope. America's post-war economic prosperity, and

[28] *Pathos of Power*, x.
[29] Ibid., 34.

its avowed commitment to supporting democracy, were (Clark argued) nurturing, reinforcing, and encouraging tendencies abroad and at home. People in Third World countries were throwing of the yoke of colonialism; democracy was in the air. The civil rights movement was part of these larger developments. As Clark put it in 1962:

> The democratic idea has become infectious on an unprecedented world scale, a fact which is sometimes obscured by phenomena of nationalism, economic change and cold war ideological distortions. Racial desegregation in the United States is inseparable from this wider historic process, and in fact vitally influences the position of the United States in our evolving world.[30]

One had to, in these years, negotiate optimism and pessimism. When it came to integration Clark, in fact, was very optimistic in the aftermath of *Brown*.[31] The *Brown* decision revealed that the highest court in the United States was on the side of racial integration. The expectations of African-Americans, already keyed into the atmosphere of affluence, were thus given a powerful boost. The sense that progress was possible continued -- albeit tenuously – into the 1960s, with the passing of important civil rights legislation and the so-called war on poverty. If affluence facilitated the growing war-machines of the atomic age, it also provided Americans with an unprecedented opportunity to eradicate poverty and racism. "A genuine war on poverty is possible," declared Clark and Jeanette Hopkins in 1969, despite their growing frustration with the shortcomings of anti-poverty programs. "This nation has the intellectual and material

[30] Clark, *Prejudice and Your Child*, ix.
[31] As Clark later recalled: "I confidently expected the segregation problem would be solved by 1960. That shows how naïve I was." See his *New York Times* obituary. Richard Severo, "Kenneth Clark, Who Helped End Segregation, Dies," *New York Times* (May 2, 2005): 1.

resources to plan and win this war." What it needed more than anything else was "commitment."[32]

Clark then, like his visionary liberal colleagues, appealed to middle class Americans in the 1950s to cultivate affluence, and to not get passively swept up into a culture of mindless consumption.[33] To mobilize people, he appealed to good old middle class ambition. Did parents want their children to succeed and effectively compete in an increasingly global economy? The world was changing; developments in transportation were facilitating mobility; a growing economy linked to international markets called for an ability to interact and work constructively in diverse environments. In such a context, old "primitive hatred and fears" were more of a liability than ever. As he put it in *Prejudice and your Child*:

> No normal parent would deliberately block his child's opportunity to obtain the preparation he needs in order to meet the demands of the present and future. Racial attitudes which may not have been clearly inconsistent with the world in which the present generation of parents and grandparents grew up is clearly inconsistent with today's world…..Narrow provincial attitudes are no longer appropriate.[34]

Thanks to affluence, the pressure on whites to eradicate racism was not only moral, but practical. Clark, echoing Gunnar Myrdal, noted that in the current climate of affluence

[32] Kenneth B. Clark and Jeanette Hopkins, *A Relevant War Against Poverty: A Study of Community Action Programs and Observable Social Change* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), xiii.
[33] Clark, *Pathos of Power*. Without a strong public culture, he argued, affluence would numb people's moral sensibilities. In general, white middle class youth had not benefited, morally and psychologically, from affluence. "Ethically neglected and glutted by insensitive affluence, young economically privileged whites have been the victims of indifference disguised as permissiveness, robbed of a sense of identity and personal worth and integrity by the moral equivocation and inconsistencies of their successful parents and peers." (47)
[34] Clark, *Prejudice and Your Child*, 10.

"moral force and practical advantage" were "united."[35] There was growing "evidence" that business leaders were slowly coming to realize that it was "not in the interest of the capitalistic system to have one-tenth of our nation underemployed and blocked from the consumer market." [36]

Psychology had the potential to wake people up, to empower them, to prevent them from falling into what Skinner decried as "the same old rut." Individualism needed to be revived and recast in accordance to contemporary conditions. Like David Riesman, Clark envisioned a psychologically healthy individualism superior to the cruder acquisitive kind promoted by the likes of William Graham Sumner and Herbert Spencer during the Gilded age.[37] This was individualism recast in a psychological form, and, once again, tailored to an economy of abundance. It was an individualism that would have to contend with and negotiate the needs of others. It would have to, in other words, take community seriously. Like Skinner and Rogers, Clark shared the hope that psychology could guide the construction of healthy, democratic "communities." As opposed to restless ambition, empathy and sensitivity would be the distinguishing features of the "new" individualism. Such capacities had to be instilled in people, especially in children. It was with these agendas that Clark and his liberal colleagues applied psychology to education.[38] People had to learn how to cultivate leisure and affluence and psychological

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[35] See Gunnar Myrdal, *Challenge to Affluence* (New York: Vintage, 1962.) See p. 20 – "we shall find that at this juncture of history there is a striking convergence between the American ideal of liberty and equality of opportunity on the one hand, and of economic progress on the other."
[36] Clark, *Prejudice and Your Child*, 9 -10.
[37] See William Graham Sumner, "The Absurd Effort to Make the World Over," March 1894, reprinted in Richard Hoffstadter and Beatrice Hoffstadter, ed. *Great Issues in American History*, Vol. III (revised edition) (New York: Random House, 1982), 84-92. Mary Midgley discusses the popularity of Herbert Spencer and Social Darwinism in *Evolution as a Religion: Strange hopes and stranger fears* (New York: Methuen, 1985).
[38] B.F. Skinner, *The Technology of Teaching* (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1968.) See also Hall, "An Interview with `Mr. Behaviorist' B.F. Skinner," *Psychology Today*, 1:5 (September 1967)69. See Carl

skills like empathy. That communities had to address the basic physical needs of its members could be taken for granted. But Clark thought it important to stress that

> genuine communities must plan also for the less tangible needs of man. The richness of a real community must provide education that accepts as its primary goal the training and strengthening of man's empathic capacity – man's ability to be identified functionally with the human needs of his fellow man. It must prepare man for creative and meaningful work that will contribute to the needs of others; it must prepare man for constructive leisure as the basis for creative human relationships.[39]

This emphasis on the importance of providing "for the less tangible needs of man" might seem strange coming from Kenneth Clark, a keen observer of America's urban slums. But it does not sound strange when one situates Clark alongside these other liberal psychologists and public intellectuals during the early post-war period. The problem of race was a part – albeit a crucial part – of more broadly conceived agendas. Cultivating affluence and recasting individualism were connected to capitalizing on the potential of democracy and resisting totalitarian forces abroad (and, for that matter, dangerous conformist forces at home.) The civil rights movement was not only about helping African-Americans. At heart it was, Clark noted, "the fight for the ascendancy of reason and humanity over ignorance and inhumanity."[40]

Thus Clark's psychology too was cast to a growing middle class. Middle class Americans had to feel connected and engaged to these struggles to end racism and poverty. They had to realize how they themselves were damaged in an environment where both flourished. They needed to understand that an affluent society presiding over

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Rogers, chapter on "student-centered teaching," in *Client-Centered Therapy*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951), 384-428. For Clark see "Just teach them to read!" *New York Times*, March 18, 1973; Proquest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2003.): 256- 264.

[39] Clark, *Pathos of Power*, 10.

[40] Ibid., 210.

poverty and urban slums was economically, socially, and psychologically unsound; that racism crippled individuality and mocked the notion of liberated minds; that it stunted one's capacity for empathy and stymied human potential. Eradicating racism, then, was (among other things) a psychological affair, and, in the context of the cold war, an ideological one. Healthy individualism could never thrive in a racist society, and healthy individualism was regarded as an essential component of a democratic society. Creative individualism was the antithesis of authoritarianism. As Clark explained in *Prejudice and Your Child*: "The concern with the dignity of the human being – with the opportunity for the development of the moral potentialities of all individuals – distinguishes a democratic society from a totalitarian one."[41]

In the mid 1950s, then, as Skinner, Rogers, and Maslow were applying psychology to human affairs, Clark too was expanding on the power of psychology to empower people to facilitate social change and to invigorate American democracy. Psychology had helped bring about legal reform, and now it had to go further and help people engage the psychological, social and economic transition to an integrated and more democratic society. Such transitions are never easy, but social science, in particular social psychology, could help minimize "social conflict and confusion."[42] If the research findings of social scientists had enlightened the Supreme Court justices, then they should be made available to a general audience. The public "needed access to the same type of objective information."[43] People should not just be told racism was wrong; they had to understand *why* it was wrong. More importantly, they needed to situate the challenge

[41] Clark, *Prejudice and Your Child*, 10.
[42] Ibid., 12.
[43] Ibid., 12-13.

within the broader context of democracy and communism. As Clark eloquently put it in an appeal to middle class readers:

> White parents, then, can make a major contribution to America. They can strengthen the democratic foundations of our nation by helping their children to be free of the distortions inherent in racial thinking, and thus helping them to attain strong and creative personalities. In doing this they will help not only their own children, but all children.[44]

Prejudice and Your Child accordingly provided data and advice for middle class parents, black and white; it included a compendium of the research studies and documents presented to the Supreme Court during the *Brown* case.

Negotiating Power

In the opening chapter I noted that Skinner and Rogers, in their dialogues, were essentially engaging the problem of power. The behavioral sciences were sources of power – power that could either resolve the dangers of the modern world or reinforce them. Clark too engaged the issue of power, and, like other liberal social reformers, wrestled with the specters of authoritarianism and chaos. The physical sciences were unleashing the secrets of atomic fission and fusion and opening new roads to destruction. The social and behavioral sciences had to expand in kind and provide people with a stable framework for understanding and confronting this challenge. Like other like-minded liberals, Clark stressed the importance of using authority in non-authoritarian ways and, like them, understood this was a daunting challenge.[45]

The focus on race and poverty further revealed the challenges involved in negotiating power. Kenneth and Mamie Clark's research had probed the damaging

[44] *Prejudice and your Child*, 129.
[45] This theme threads its way through all his major works.

psychological effects of racism on the self-concept of African-American children. Children, and all African-Americans living in poverty, needed to be empowered. But how could they be empowered, and how could psychology empower them? As we have seen, liberal psychologists like Skinner and Rogers generally acknowledged the importance of designing healthy communities and environments. The problem of power is what divided them. Rogers placed primary emphasis on liberating human potential and creativity as a starting point for community. Skinner argued that change had to start with experts in social and rational planning, a position Rogers challenged on the premise that experts could not necessarily be trusted. Clark brought to this debate the problems of race and poverty, and in doing so staked out his own contributions.

The problems of race and poverty problematized Skinner and Rogers' position alike, and highlighted the need to negotiate them. The plight of African-Americans, in other words, underscored the importance of individual empowerment and initiative *as well as* "rational" planning and intervention. Accordingly, Clark's social psychological approach negotiated the orientations of Rogers and Skinner in dynamic ways. Like Rogers, he acknowledged the liberating potential inherent in all people. Such latent energy had to be unleashed and liberated just as the energy of the atom had been. At the same time, low-status people certainly could not be psychologically "enlightened" and expected to transform their environments on their own without outside assistance. Empowerment had to come from without as well as from within. Just as laborers in the early 20th century had had to rely on others with specific organizational and legal skills, Clark explained, so too did the poor need "help." But it had to be the right sort of help –

help that facilitated independence, not dependence.[46] Up until the present, public and private social welfare organizations had in fact provided the "wrong" kind of help. Clark, then, was as wary of "experts" as was Rogers. There were indeed plenty of reasons not to trust them.

A distrust of intervention and social planning, however, could not obscure the fact that the problems of racism and poverty required them. Focused as he was on ghetto communities, Clark was more open to the necessity of rational intervention and social planning than were some humanistic psychologists.[47] This insistence on rigorous environmental analysis and rational social planning does suggest an affinity with Skinner's radical behaviorism, and there were certainly overtones of behaviorism in social psychology.[48] I noted earlier how Clark looked favorably on the rise of American behaviorism in so far as it marked a return of the social scientist to the role of social critic, theorist, and reformer. But while Clark respected the sophisticated environmental analyses of Skinner, he was no admirer of *Walden Two*, "in which the capacity for reason

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[46] Kenneth Clark and Jeanette Hopkins, *A Relevant War Against Poverty*, 128-129. Such outside sources of help, to be effective, would have to demonstrate: "The ability to operate without a condescension which contributes to powerlessness and dependency…the ability to maximize whatever power does reside within the people; and…the ability to define as accurately as possible what power is really there." (129)

[47] Humanistic psychologists were at times highly critical of the war on poverty, on the grounds that real progress had to start from changes in an individual's consciousness, and that to rely on bureaucracy for progress was a seductive way to evade self-confrontation and transformation. Thus Rollo May insisted on the primacy of cultivating in people's hearts and minds an "ethos of care." "It's possible if one starts not at the level of the great society, which I must say nauseates me." Mary Hall, "A Conversation with Rollo May," 29.

[48] See Eckart Sheerer, Radical Behaviorism: Experts from a Textbook Testament, in Laurence Smith and William R. Woodward (eds.) *B.F. Skinner and Behaviorism in American Culture* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1996):156. For attempts to integrate social psychology into the confines of behaviorism, see Neal E. Miller and John Dollard, *Social Learning and Imitation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941.) See also Goodwin, 284. Goodwin discusses how the Gestalt psychologists arrived in the 1930s, just as American psychologists "were caught up in the new wave of behaviorism." Behaviorists had a tendency to selectively assimilate aspects of social psychology into their own framework. There were even concerted attempts to combine the two schools altogether. Social psychologists, however, resisted these attempts, as there were differences. Social psychologists like Clark, while sharing the interest in rigorous environmental analysis, did not minimize the importance of human motivation to the extent that most behaviorists, including Skinner, did.

itself is denied to all but a few."[49] In contrast to this "authoritarian planning" Clark preferred rational "democratic planning, in which men are not conditioned like rats to be happy according to a master plan, but are encouraged to achieve the fullest measure of their own ability to think, to be troubled, to grow, and to develop their capacity to respond with depth of feeling and understanding."[50] But how was such planning to be brought about, and, moreover, effectively implemented? Rational planning and intervention, if not sensibly conducted, could have consequences as unfortunate as "planlessness." If social psychologists wanted power to be deployed in productive, progressive ways, then they had to probe and understand the nature of social power.[51]

Clark took seriously -- and urged other liberals to take seriously -- this issue of power. We have already noted the unease with which liberals like Skinner and Rogers approached this issue. Skinner had tried to reconcile the "authoritarian" overtones of *Walden Two* by having its founder relinquish all authority. The system itself would run things on its own. Such a move did not impress suspicious liberals and libertarians. It did not impress Clark. But social psychologists and political liberals in general could not dodge the issue of social planning altogether. In the behavioral sciences, the tendency of social psychologists to evade it had, Clark complained, left the field open to behaviorists and crude theorists of power. "Social psychologists cannot leave such important decisions to those who see psychology only as a strategy for mechanistic control and mindless reinforcements."[52] Nor could the crude mechanistic model of behaviorism be countered with an unbridled faith in spontaneity and creativity. That too pointed to unsavory

[49] Clark, *Pathos of Power*, 90.
[50] Ibid.
[51] See Clark, *Pathos of Power*, Chap. 4., "Toward a Unifying Theory of Power." See also Clark and Hopkins, *A Relevant War Against Poverty*, 259-60.
[52] *Pathos of Power*, 90.

scenarios of random, chaotic, unpredictable experimentation that could waste valuable time and resources. As Clark explained in *Dark Ghetto*:

> Suspicion of planning, however related to a healthy concern for freedom, has its negative aspects. Intelligent planning, which rationally would seem obviously desirable, is rejected; for example, cities are allowed to grow at random without anyone effectively anticipating the problems of transportation, space, and esthetic needs. Planlessness is reinforced by apathy and intellectual laziness. It has, furthermore, a potentially exploitative aspect. If one makes a virtue of not planning, then it is easier for individuals, under the guise of freedom, to use a situation for selfish ends.[53]

Like his liberal colleagues, Clark was struggling in the 1950s and 60s to negotiate power. Attempting, that is, to render psychology a potent yet *constructively* powerful force in contemporary society, or – to put it another way – to enable psychology to save and not sabotage democracy.

At this point it would be helpful to unpack Clark's contribution to these debates concerning psychology, social reform, and power. As I noted earlier, he stressed the need for all social scientists and reformers to construct and work from a "unified theory of power." If people wanted to deploy power for noble ends, they needed to understand how power worked. It was important not to get duped, taken in, and manipulated. Ignorance could have serious consequences.[54] In order to go about constructing such a framework, psychologists needed, Clark argued, to do a number of things. They had to probe the sources of social power, and the consequences of its use and deployment by people or institutions. They had to grasp distinctions between real political power and "pseudo-power." There were also the difficulties of "sharing" or "transferring" power. (Perhaps it

[53] Kenneth Clark, *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 212.
[54] Clark himself tentatively outlined a "unifying theory of power." see Clark, *Pathos of Power*, Chap. 4., "Toward a Unifying Theory of Power." See also Clark and Hopkins, *A Relevant War Against Poverty*, 259-60.

could not be shared or transferred.) Even attaining power could be problematic; it could easily atrophy from disuse or containment; it could stagnate in contexts of chronic indecisiveness and inaction.[55]

Moreover, social psychologists also had to be able to read and study and understand *themselves*. Power worked in the minds and hearts of individuals who were themselves part of larger power structures. People, even the most benevolent, were affected by power. It was important, Clark stressed, for people – especially psychologists and social reformers -- to grasp the psychological dynamics of power, to understand how one could crave it, protect it, and reinforce it – without even consciously realizing what one was up to. Understanding how power worked in various social systems entailed understanding how it worked within one's own interactions with others, including one's interactions with one's own self. Social psychologists, in other words, needed to include themselves as part of their subject matter, as part of the broader social systems under observation. Their work called for the integration of a scientific understanding of how power works in social systems with a psychological and philosophical understanding of how it worked within the individual. Self-analysis and sociological analysis could no longer be separated from and practiced without reference to one another.[56]

This was Clark's approach to saving and shoring up the fragile self and nurturing a democratic public culture. It was an approach that stressed *integration*. Understanding one's self and one's social world were complementary. There was no need to collapse the personal and the public aspects of life into one another: what was needed was a way to intelligibly relate them. Such skills were crucial to understanding the dynamics of social

[55] Clark and Hopkins, *A Relevant War Against Poverty*, 259-260.
[56] Kenneth Clark, *Pathos of Power*, The epilogue, 153-179. See also the Introduction to his earlier book, *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965).

power and for engaging poverty, social injustice and a cadre of other contemporary problems. Social psychologists needed to use their authority and expertise in democratically-responsible ways, and the skills and the insights they encouraged needed "to be given away." But social psychologists, to "give psychology away," would first have to responsibly practice it in their own lives.[57] As Clark forcefully put it in *Pathos of Power*: "A search for congruence and consistency among the various aspects of one's being would seem mandatory, if not inevitable, for those who are arrogant enough to use the discipline of psychology to legitimize their functioning."[58]

Clark and Experimentation

This emphasis on integration translated into Clark's approach to "experimentation." We have already noted the importance Skinner, Rogers, and Maslow placed on experimentation, how they promoted an "experimental approach to life" as good for democracy and a democratic public culture. Kenneth Clark also endorsed an experimental ethos. For the social psychologist, he argued, experimentation and the laboratory transcended the research clinic. "Society is the laboratory of the social psychologist."[59] And experimentation involved working with individuals, communities, institutions and networks of institutions. Experimentation, via social psychology, was wedded to social reform:

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[57] The message "to give psychology away" was being widely circulated at the time, even by the president of the American Psychological association. See George Miller, "Psychology as a Means of Promoting Human Welfare," *American Psychologist*, 24 (1969):1063-1075. "Our responsibility is less to assume the role of experts and try to apply psychology to ourselves than to give it away to the people who really need it – and that includes everyone." (1071.)

[58] Kenneth Clark, *Pathos of Power*, 153. Clark was demanding on himself and others. He had no patience for rhetorical posturing. As he told Mary Hall: "[M]y standard is total commitment, not just a verbal commitment." See Hall, "A Conversation with Kenneth Clark ," *Psychology Today*, 2:1 (June 1968):23.

[59] Clark, *Pathos of Power*, 97.

> I believe that to be taken seriously, to be viable, and to be relevant social science must dare to study the real problems of men and society, must use the real community, the market place, the arena of politics as its laboratories, and must confront and seek to understand the dynamics of social action and social change.[60]

In an earlier chapter I discussed some of the problems inherent in an experimental approach to life as a platform for social and cultural activism. Divorced from a wider, coherent picture of society and social change, experimentalism can become random, haphazard, unpredictable, and even narcissistic. It can become an end in itself. If potentially subversive, it can be neutralized by counteracting measures. Skinner, Rogers and Maslow all struggled, as I have noted, to negotiate an experimental approach to life with a serious commitment to changing the world. Their criticisms of hippies and communitarians often pointed to their lack of rigor, their unwillingness to approach experimentation with the zeal and intensity of a more traditional work ethic. For Clark the challenge was even more urgent. The seething restlessness of urban youth, the outbreaks of urban violence, and the growing appeal of Black Separatism, put a timer and pressure on experimentation. Experimentation could not proceed haphazardly. It had to be efficient, systematic, and enlightening. Moreover, in light of the seething urban tensions in America it needed to translate into genuine social change quickly.[61]

HARYOU: Putting Theory to Practice

Clark himself experimented with these agendas in mind, most notably as president of Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited (HARYOU.) HARYOU was an organization and program financed by President Kennedy's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and

[60] Kenneth Clark, *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power*, xxi.
[61] Ibid., 199-222.

by the Mayor of New York. Its mission was to set up offices, hire staff, and study the conditions of youth in Harlem for two years, and then to submit a plan for funding and implementation. From 1962-1964 Clark served as HARYOU's chairman and chief project consultant. Starting in June of 1962, he presided over this two year research project, enlisting the help of hundreds of young people from middle class communities and local neighborhoods in Harlem. In 1964, the findings and proposal of the organization were submitted to a review panel of the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency in a report titled "Youth in the Ghetto: A Study of the Consequences of Powerlessness and a Blueprint for Change." Clark subsequently expanded on and interpreted the findings in his book *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power*, which was written for a general audience.[62]

Clark's work with HARYOU illustrates his integrated and nuanced approach to experimentation. The objective was to learn about the Harlem community and to direct that knowledge to policy initiatives which would have direct impacts on the community. But the project involved more than merely amassing and analyzing data. *It involved learning about how to learn about and "help" the Harlem community.* One had to approach the community with an open mind. One could not impose order on this complex subject of study with rigid methods constructed in academia and promoted as universally applicable. Clark and his staff had to experiment here and take risks. The challenge confronting the HARYOU Staff, Clark observed,

> was to discover and probe the dimensions of the ghetto with the most appropriate methods. It was hoped that the social phenomena would determine the methods instead of the methods distorting or determining the phenomena. It was necessary, therefore, to run risks, to establish as many contacts as possible with groups in the

[62] Ibid., xiii-xiv. See also Clark and Hopkins, *A Relevant War Against Poverty*, 4-6; 34-36; 167-177.

> community; to organize groups of young people; to plan confrontations and conflicts among individuals within groups and between groups in order to draw forth deep feelings and ambivalences, and to see how these individuals responded to and interpreted and resolved those conflicts.[63]

Moreover, the staff were themselves part of the subject matter under scrutiny. I have noted Clark's integrated approach to experimentation, his emphasis on the importance of relating the subjective and objective viewpoints. He saw himself as an "involved observer." Integrating the objective and subjective points of view was a challenging orientation for a responsible social scientist like Clark. An excessive emotional or personal involvement could lead to "distortion of vision and confusion" and prompt critics to fault the research for a lack of "objectivity."[64] And yet Clark found fault with social scientists wedded to an ideal of scholarly detachment. To be sure, he did not jettison detachment altogether. (*Dark Ghetto* is, among other things, a specimen of rigorous, detailed research.) Rather, he stressed the importance of negotiating objectivity and subjectivity. He was also interested in negotiating social science and moral philosophy. There was more involved in studying an urban ghetto community than amassing data. There was a moral dimension to such a project. Indeed, the reasons for choosing subjects of study were essentially moral issues, not factual ones. At the same time, a social scientist was still a specialist; he still had to construct methods appropriate to his discipline and to practice them consistently. Clark negotiated these dynamics in *Dark Ghetto* in a way that makes the book (at least for this reader) not only informative, but compelling. Reading it gives one penetrating insights not only into the Harlem community in the early 1960s, and ghetto life in general, but also into the mind and

[63] Kenneth Clark. *Dark Ghetto*, xix.
[64] Ibid., xvii.

character of Kenneth Clark himself. Clark was quite explicit about this integrated approach to practice, which included the writing of a book like *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power.* As he explained in the introduction:

> *Dark Ghetto* is, in a sense, no report at all, but rather the anguished cry of its author. But it is the cry of a social psychologist, controlled in part by the concepts and language of social science, and as such can never express the pure authenticity of folk spontaneity or the poetic symbolism of the artist…..the reader should know that the author is a Negro, a social psychologist, a college professor, and that he has long been revolted by those forces in American society which make for Harlems and by the fact of Harlem itself; and that he has not lived in Harlem in more than fifteen years. These and other facts do not make for absolute objectivity in judgment and they might lead a critical and exacting reader to suspect distortion and bias. Some form of subjective distortion seems inevitable whenever human beings dare to make judgments about any aspect of the human predicament.[65]

To be an "involved observer," despite potential pitfalls, was crucial to the work of social criticism. But it required skills and tenacity. "It is the ultimate test of strength, which this observer did not always pass, as the pressures intensify and as the examples of equivocation and broken agreements accumulate, to discipline himself and attempt to control his defensiveness, his doubts concerning the adequacy of self, and above all, his desire to escape before the completion of his task." One had to take precautions. One had to cultivate "a commitment to the quest for understanding and truth and a compulsion to persist in this quest in spite of personal hazards." It was also important to have trusted consultants nearby as "counter checks." Clark cited the importance here of Dr. Hylan Lewis, a sociology professor at Howard University, who had worked with Clark "as consultant to Haryou from its inception."[66]

[65] Ibid., xx-xxi.
[66] Ibid., xvii-xviii.

The HARYOU Project had *many* "involved observers." The staff included hundreds of young people "from various social, economic, and educational backgrounds." Such collaboration brought out into the open interesting dynamics of class and race. Middle class participants interacted differently than did participants who were living in Harlem and thus more directly connected to the community. These latter participants actually organized their own sub-group, HARYOU Associates, and they set themselves to probing, planning and testing various "program ideas." But all of these young people, Clark noted:

> formed a valuable social laboratory for direct observation and study of the human forces at work in the larger community. They were a microcosm of the Harlem community, though in a technical sense not totally representative of the people of Harlem. Through them it was possible to see more clearly the struggles and patterns of adjustment of the ghetto. Their problems, conflicts, defenses, and fantasies, their strengths and their weaknesses, their perspectives of themselves, their doubts and their aspirations, their defiance and their defeat or their affirmation and success were living experiences and more valuable than statistics.[67]

And what did the HARYOU project reveal about the wider Harlem community? The findings were laid out in the final 620 page HARYOU report.[68] The HARYOU staff was interested in tapping into and unleashing the liberating potential of the poor, and the report clarified the factors stifling this potential, and proposed specific plans to counteract these factors. It targeted a number of areas. It cited, for example, problems with public education. There was evidence that teachers and administrators had "given up" on young Harlem students. Students were increasingly treated as if they were culturally crippled

[67] Ibid., xx.
[68] *Youth in the Ghetto, A Study of the Consequences of Powerlessness and a Blueprint for Change*, Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Inc., New York, 1964. See Clark and Hopkins, *A Relevant War Against Poverty*, 5-8; and Mary Hall, "A Conversation with Kenneth Clark," 25.

and deprived. Older, unsavory theories of genetic deprivation had been replaced with assumptions of "cultural deprivation" that could be just as damaging. But data suggested that children from poor backgrounds had the ability to learn and "catch up" to their middle class peers – so long as they were responsibly taught. The data suggested they were not responsibly being taught. If students *were* damaged, as cultural-deprivation theorists contended, then the schools perhaps were primarily responsible for the deficiencies. Indeed, the HARYOU report cited evidence that "the deterioration in learning" occurred later than was generally assumed – "between the third and sixth grades, not in the first and second grades." The "inference" was that "underachievement [was] the result of an accumulation of deficiencies while in school, rather than the result of deficiencies prior to school."[69]

The obstacles to sound teaching were not only institutional (such as the deplorable physical conditions of schools and classrooms,) but psychological. The perceptions and motivations, conscious or not, of people in positions of power also had to be addressed. Engaging these problems demanded, then, not only institutional changes, but a willingness on the part of educators and relevant policy-makers to assess and *critique themselves*. In *Dark Ghetto* Clark noted the ironic fact that many of the "teachers and scholars" working (consciously or not) from a cultural deprivation model themselves came from so-called "culturally deprived" backgrounds. The zeal among some educators to "help" students they regarded as "culturally deprived" certainly needed watching. As Clark observed:

> Many of today's scholars and teachers came from "culturally deprived" backgrounds. Many of these same individuals, however, when confronted with

[69] Kenneth Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, 139.

> students whose present economic and social predicament is not unlike their own was, tend to react negatively to them, possibly to escape the painful memory of their own prior lower status. It is easy for one's own image of self to be reinforced and made total by the convenient device of a protective forgetting – a refusal to remember the specific educational factor, such as a sympathetic and understanding teacher or the tutorial supports which made academic success and upward mobility possible in spite of cultural deprivation.[70]

This phenomenon underscored the importance of integrating self-knowledge – an understanding of one's motives – with sociological knowledge, for it was important that people (Clark included himself here) be always open to the possibility that there was more to their own behavior than met the eye.

Education was one of many concerns addressed in the report. There were proposals for junior and senior academies (as opposed to "reformatories") to provide work experience and education for young people with criminal histories.[71] There was a controversial proposal for a "Cadet Corps" as a more suitable variant of the more middle-class oriented Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.[72] Other proposals targeted problems like unemployment and drug addiction.[73] Whatever the problem, the approach staked out in the HARYOU report and in *Dark Ghetto* reflected Clark's "integrated" and "democratic" approach to social reform and planning. Individuals had to be proactively engaged with the process. It was an approach that prioritized community action and participation. Community action would, it was hoped, safeguard the needed social planning and rational intervention from the authoritarianism that had so often undermined social

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[70] Ibid.,132. Clark would later respond similarly to the willingness of "articulate" teachers to promote "Black English" in public schools. See "Just teach them to read!" *New York Times*, March 18, 1973; Proquest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2003.): 256- 264. "As I observed in Washington, the people who were talking about teaching these children black English spoke impeccable English…People can be damned condescending about lower status people." (263)
[71] Kenneth Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, 101-102.
[72] Ibid., 98.
[73] Ibid., 104.

welfare programs in the past. Indeed, the HARYOU approach signaled a shift from more traditional mechanisms of poverty assistance, specifically the social work, case study, service-provider approach. To be sure, the report acknowledged the importance of providing social services to the poor. But it also warned that such services could compound the problems if not "managed" properly. Genuine assistance needed to be free of the old ethic of *noblesse oblige*. "Assistance" and "help" would never empower people if they reinforced negative self-concepts and feelings of shame. Handing out welfare checks in dilapidated buildings, hustling the poor from one agency to the next, engaging them with polite condescension, actually did harm. Clark made the point quite forcefully in *Dark Ghetto*:

> Social service agencies cannot be relevant to the pathology of the ghetto, except to reinforce it, if it encourages even subtly the dependency of the people in the ghetto – because to encourage dependence is to rob the individual of the sense of his own dignity and to strengthen feelings of inferiority. Relevant and human social services must dare to run the risks of being a part of a real and comprehensive program of social action and social change.[74]

The War on Poverty: An Experiment for Progress

The early 1960s was an auspicious time to be probing these questions. For social psychologists the war on poverty initiated by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations signaled an extraordinary opportunity. Social psychologists had the potential to guide and enlighten the whole practice of rational intervention and democratic planning, for they were being taken seriously by those in positions of power. The HARYOU report was well received by the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency.[75] Dr. Leonard

[74] Ibid., 30.
[75] The PCJD had been organized by the Kennedy Administration and "became the foundation for the national anti-poverty program." Clark and Hopkins, *A Relevant War Against Poverty*, 4.

Cottrell, head of the review panel, allocated an initial one million dollars to the program; while the City of New York allocated 3.5 million from its Anti-Poverty Program funds. (The Department of Labor also contributed 5 million for job training and placement.) The Haryou Report also had an impact on federal legislation, specifically the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. The part of the act that dealt with community action programs (Title II A, Section 202 (a)) drew directly from the HARYOU approach as laid out in the report. This act was a breakthrough for social reformers and psychologists. Despite some ambiguities in the definition of community action programs, this was, Clark noted, progressive legislation:

> [The Economic Opportunity Act] was the first of any federal legislation concerned with matters of public welfare to require community action and to provide the basis for governmental support for this type of activity. Among the most significant of the many precedent-breaking aspects of this legislation is the fact that it marks a major break with the traditional social service, welfare, dole approach to the amelioration of the conditions of the poor.[76]

President Johnson's war on poverty set the stage for the application of social psychology to the eradication of poverty. For Clark it provided solid ground on which to confront the challenge that so tantalized Maslow, Rogers, and Skinner: the challenge of humanizing the bureaucratic institutions of modern society and cultivating a democratic public culture. In the end, however, despite this opportunity to put theories of experimentation to practice, the problem of humanizing bureaucracies and organizations that troubled Maslow towards the end of his career also exasperated Clark. The late 1960s found Clark increasingly pessimistic. The war on poverty had opened a historical door for Americans, as had the *Brown* decision ten years earlier. What was subsequently

[76] Clark and Hopkins, *A Relevant War Against Poverty*, 7.

needed more than anything else was genuine commitment and psychological maturity. By 1969 it did not seem to Clark that social reformers, social psychologists, or (for that matter) most middle class Americans, were willing or able to meet the challenges confronting them.[77]

What were these challenges? The HARYOU report had clarified them at length, and they pointed to those "dilemmas of social power" that Clark urged social scientists to probe. The war on poverty made it especially imperative to understand the social and psychological intricacies of power. The community action approach endorsed by the Johnson administration, for example, acknowledged that the poor needed to be actively engaged in the process of social change. But could the federal government fund and thus support the initiative of poor communities to fight poverty and, ultimately, challenge the status quo? Eradicating poverty depended on wide scale social and structural change. Was the Johnson administration aware of that? What was the middle class threshold for "subversive" structural change? Would middle class Americans feel threatened by such change? People, when threatened, could respond in all sorts of ways to protect their interests. They could respond crudely – with violence, for example, as some outspoken racists did. Or they could respond in sophisticated, unconscious ways to diffuse, redirect, or co-opt power perceived (again, consciously or not) as threatening to themselves.

There was also another challenge. Did the majority of middle class Americans see these civil rights and anti-poverty struggles as directly related to *themselves*? Or did they project pathology and problems onto the poor and oppressed? If they did indeed project pathology onto the victims in this way, then they could not be expected to be seriously engaged in these struggles. "Social change that appears on the surface to benefit a

[77] This is the primary theme of *A Relevant War Against Poverty*.

minority…rarely engage[s] the commitment of the majority," noted Clark in *Dark Ghetto*.[78] After an initial bout of optimism, Clark became increasingly pessimistic about middle class involvement. In 1964 he had noted the "[c]ontinuing evidence of the pervasive moral apathy and political cynicism in the American mass culture [as] a significant negative in weighing the possibilities for social democracy."[79] The situation looked no more promising in the late 1960s.[80]

And there were other challenges. Even if white middle class professionals were able to share or preside over transfers of power (and Clark was not sure it was realistic to expect that they would) – would African-Americans be able to navigate the challenge of dynamically engaging "the organization" (to use William Whyte's term,) or would they too succumb to inertia and apathy and moral insensitivity, particularly those who rose up bureaucratic hierarchies? If so many whites fared badly here, why should blacks be expected to prevail? Still, it was essential that they try. Just as Whyte had urged his middle class readers to actively wrestle with the "organization" *as individuals*, so too did Clark stress the importance for blacks, in particular civil rights leaders and people involved in anti-poverty programs, to not allow bureaucratic politics to numb their moral sensitivity. Crucial were the psychological skills of self-awareness, open-mindedness, and the ability to be constructively self-critical.

Finally, social scientists and psychologists also had to guard against unsavory tendencies, in particular that "humorless dogmatism and egocentric fanaticism" that "too

[78]Kenneth Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, 204.
[79] Ibid.
[80] "He retired from City University in 1975 and, looking back on more than a third of a century of work there, said he thought that the students of the 1940s and '50's had been better at asking probing questions. Dr. Clark was not so impressed with the students of the 1960's and said he thought their revolution `was pure fluff.'" Richard Severo, "Kenneth Clark, Who Helped End Segregation, Dies," *New York Times* (May 2, 2005), 1.

often" contaminated "social criticism."[81] It was depressingly easy for differences to harden into feuds, with opponents feeding off of and becoming indistinguishable from one other. With social psychologists it was precisely these frailties of character and temperament – not weaknesses in professional competence – that most often got in the way. And yet the "antidotes," as Clark put it in *Pathos of Power*, "are embarrassingly simple – humor, empathy, compassion, and kindness."[82]

Idealism Under Strain

The appeal to "humor, empathy, compassion, and kindness" displays a "naiveté" quite common among these idealistic psychologists.[83] One of the most striking traits of these behavioral scientists was their ability to combine "embarrassingly simple" insights with rigorous academic discipline. Their insistence on authenticity, their visionary idealism, as well as their passionate faith in the potential of the behavioral sciences to facilitate reform, clearly helped nurture a climate conducive to an idealistic counter culture. But they reached the peak of their optimism and idealism before the rather sudden emergence of a youthful counter culture in the spring of 1967. For Clark pessimism had set in early, and he was exasperated by liberals and radicals alike. By 1968 he declared that the war on poverty was not "seriously" being fought. The Johnson administration and indeed many middle class professionals supportive of this so-called "war," were either unable or unwilling "to realize the full implications of the program's

[81] Kenneth Clark, *Pathos of Power*, xiii.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Clark frankly admitted his "kooky idealism." "There are some people who just aren't realistic, who remain kooks in their dedication…These people generally don't have direct power, that's true, but when you come right down to it, over the course of history, these kooky idealists are the fundamental realists." Clark, "Just Teach Them to Read!" 264.

stated goals and the probable political consequences."[84] And a war poorly fought can have disastrous after-effects. In any event, it was clear, Clark concluded in 1969, that the status quo was not going to change, and that there would be "no fundamental social reorganization."[85]

He shored up these assertions with hard data. Two years after the passing of the Economic Opportunity Act Clark he oversaw and participated in a nationwide assessment of community action programs. Observers visited twelve cities to survey the progress on the war on poverty. They also assessed some fifty-one "community action" programs. The findings of the assessment, reported and analyzed in *A Relevant War on Poverty* (1969), were not encouraging. To be sure, many of these programs had been operating just a little over two years at the time of assessment, and Clark harbored no illusion of poverty being wiped out in a few years. The project's findings, however, offered no grounds for expecting any major changes down the road. The anti-poverty mechanisms in most of these cities posed no serious challenge to the status quo. In Boston community action programs were "totally dominated City Hall," with data suggesting that "meaningful changes in the conditions of the poor of Boston were practically nil."[86] In Cleveland they were dominated by "vested social agency interests." In cities like New York they had been exploited by self-serving politicians and rendered less threatening.[87]

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[84] Clark and Hopkins, *A Relevant War Against Poverty*, ix.
[85] Ibid., vi.
[86] Ibid., 229-230.
[87] Ibid., 80. In New York City the early aggressiveness of a community action group like Mobilization for Youth was, following the Harlem riots in the summer of 1964, "tempered" following "a noisy investigation of charges and counter charges." Moreover, following the approval of the HARYOU report, controversy arose concerning the "control of the program" even before the implementation of the report's proposals could be put into effect. Clark's conflict with Congressman Adam Clayton Powell prompted his (Clark's) resignation from HARYOU. "Adam Clayton Powell was the first major political figure to understand the political implications and dynamite inherent in the community action components of the HARYOU planning document. Seeing this, he insisted that it if were going to operate in his district, it would have to

Of the fifty-one community action programs studied, forty-one of them prioritized services like Head Start. "Only five projects," the Clark and Jeanette Hopkins noted, "operated programs which were specifically described in terms of `organization for community social action.'" For the most part, the traditional social service model prevailed. Dominating the machinery of community action and anti-poverty initiatives were cadres of middle class professionals, with the poor cast in the traditional role "as the recipients of their skills and beneficiaries."[88] This approach had not been effective in the past, and there was no data to assume it would be effective in the present and near-future.

That social services like Head Start were absorbing a disproportionate amount of energy and monies was especially troubling. The aim of a "war on poverty," Clark insisted, had to involve more than simply ameliorating the conditions of poverty. Poverty had to be eradicated, and a war on poverty, like any war-effort with supporting, demanded commitment and a mobilization of resources. A preoccupation with providing services could actually weaken this war-effort by diverting energy away from the task of understanding and tackling poverty at its sources. Hence, services like Head Start and Project Upward Bound were, in the absence of data to show these services challenged the status quo, at best of limited value. Tutorial services and community recreational programs likewise were not pivotal to a serious war on poverty. "Even where effective," Clark pointed out, "such services tend to obscure the problem and divert potential energy

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be under his control…The Powell forces were victorious in this initial state of controversy and the program was damaged and its momentum stopped before any overt encounter with the institutions of the city and governmental leadership could take place." 220-221.

[88] Ibid., 69.

from more effective protest and action directed toward the goal of more efficient education for lower-status children."[89]

Meanwhile, the "participation of the poor" in community action programs, despite all rhetoric to the contrary, was more often than not "a kind of charade."[90] "Indigenous" spokespersons of the poor were, in fact, usually not "indigenous," but highly articulate people who had used their skills "to remove themselves from the status of the poor long ago."[91] The presence of poor people at meetings, conventions and conferences was more symbolic and ritualistic than practical, their anger and militaristic spirit being "easily absorbed" by "condescending indulgence." "The poor are permitted to blow off steam; a proportion of agenda time is, as it were, allocated to group therapy. But it seldom affects the outcome of policy."[92] At the same time, organizers foolishly expected "middle class etiquette" from the poor – the "etiquette of indirection, circumlocution, or equivocation" which (Clark argued) reflected a middle class tolerance for slow change not shared by people living in poverty.[93] The poor themselves were usually sensitive to sham, and it was not surprising that turnout for elections for neighborhood and community action boards in troubled cities like Los Angeles was so low.[94]

The conclusion of *A Relevant War on Poverty* was not optimistic. Clark and Hopkins did acknowledge some notable exceptions to the bleak findings. Some cities had more effective anti-poverty programs than others.[95] But a war on poverty, to be genuine, needed to challenge the status quo. The quality of life for the majority of America's poor

[89] Ibid., 68.
[90] Ibid., 125.
[91] Ibid., 247.
[92] Ibid., 246.
[93] Ibid., 196.
[94] Ibid., 119.
[95] See Ibid., 207-229, for the rankings and assessments of cities cited.

needed to change. And by 1969 it was clear the status quo was relatively intact: "the data collected lead to the considered judgment that federally financed community action programs have so far not resulted in any observable change in the predicament of the poor."[96] The status quo, in fact, was being *reinforced* by the layers of bureaucracy and the cadres of professionals involved in some way or another with the war on poverty. The resilience of the more traditional approach to poverty, with its vested hierarchies and power dynamics, did not bode well for low-status Americans of whatever race or ethnicity. "Politicians, social workers, social scientists, community activists, and some indigenous workers have all benefited to one degree or another from anti-poverty programs. The poor seem to have benefited less."[97]

Looking to the Young

It is interesting that all these influential psychologists we have examined were finding it increasingly difficult to negotiate the cultural pessimism and optimism in American public culture by the late 1960s. They had begun the decade with grand, visionary agendas for psychology. They continued to propound these agendas, but by the decade's end confidence more frequently gave way to pessimism and exasperation. All of these men, at the peak of their popularity and influence, felt alienated in their own professions and from social reformers and radicals in general. Skinner saw in his theory of operant conditioning powerful tools for progress and yet "nobody was listening." Maslow complained that not enough people were expanding on the potential of

[96] Ibid., 249.
[97] Ibid., 252.

humanistic psychology to provide a framework for radical change.[98] As will become clear in the next chapter, Clark himself grew increasingly critical of fellow social psychologists.

Increasingly impatient with their own contemporaries, and with the apathy of most middle-class Americans, these psychologists all turned to the young as a potent source for change. Indeed, there are times when Skinner, Maslow and Clark seemed unwilling to trust anyone over thirty. When Maslow expanded on the importance of experimentation, it was the young he had in mind. They were free of commitments, open and accessible to experimenting and learning about life. Older people were something of a lost cause; the only way out for them was prolonged psychotherapy. "They are already committed to so many things that about the only thing that therapy can do for them is to give them strength to bear with fortitude what they have to bear."[99] Even Skinner in *Walden Two* acknowledged that only so much could be expected from adults; the future was in the children's hands. And, as we have seen, in the 1960s he was intrigued by the willingness of young people to experiment with intentional communities. Clark too saw young people as a sign of hope. Authenticity mattered to them. In 1968, after a meeting of the National Industrial Conference Board that he himself had co-chaired, he ruminated

[98] Too many self-serving humanistic psychologists, he complained, were inclined to navel-gazing and publishing material that was just "routine mediocre, or even outright crap." And rebellious young people were not grasping the radical implications of humanistic psychology. "A sad thing about this whole business is that we can interpret one aspect of the radical youth rebellion and the black rebellion as a reaching-out precisely for this humanistic personal ethic and philosophy. They reach out for it as if it didn't already exist. Yet, it does exist. The political rebels just don't know about it. In a way, we could call this humanistic system an answer to their prayers and demands. In principle, it is something that should satisfy these rebels, because it is a system of values that involves a reconstruction of science as a means of discovering and uncovering values (rather than allowing it to be value-free.)" Maslow, "The Unnoticed Psychological Revolution," in Hoffman, ed., *Future Visions: The Unpublished Papers of Abraham Maslow*, 122-125.

[99] Maslow, "Eupsychia: The Good Society," 9-10.

to Mary Hall on the contrast between some of the young people invited to the meeting and the jaded bureaucrats in attendance:

> Those young people are wonderful. They are the hope. Do you think the men at the meeting were listening to what those young people were saying? I can't tell, because I go to too many such meetings. They get to be like our Fourth of July speeches. Our Fourth of July speeches are now canned. You go to any small town in the United States, and you will hear the same speech about the glory of the American democratic system. And the very same people who are making these speeches will, on the same day, make persuasive arguments for maintaining racial and social injustices.[100]

But if Clark appealed to the idealistic, rebellious young, his interactions with the counter culture were as dynamic, tense and ambivalent as that of his colleagues. By the late 1960s many of the ideas raised in *Dark Ghetto* were "in the air" and being worked with in controversial ways, in particular by advocates of "Black Power." Clark was challenged by and ambivalent towards the counter culture in general. He was passionately opposed to the Black Power movement, and he clashed with radical black psychologists spirited by "the black revolution." But radical black psychologists practiced and engaged psychology as passionately as did Clark. Psychology was a pertinent, empowering, and controversial presence in the black liberation struggles. It was, once again, contested terrain for conflicting agendas.

[100] Mary Hall, "A Conversation with Kenneth Clark, 24."

CHAPTER FIVE

Kenneth Clark and Counter Culture: A Tense Dynamic

Liberalism, wedded to visionary social agendas, can open doors to radical experimentation. I have been arguing that the idealism of influential liberals in the social and behavioral sciences, in particular psychology, helped nurture the radical climate of the 1960s, and that the counter culture, varied and volatile as it was, challenged them. Clark too was challenged, his interactions with the counter culture, dynamic and contentious. He himself had been and remained a strong if exasperated critic of the status quo. His research in the 1940s had probed the pathology of racism and its damaging psychological impacts on African-American children. Racism, he argued, was woven into America's institutional infrastructure; it distorted people's minds and characters. And it was, in fact, just one symptom of more widespread, pervasive pathology. Liberation, then, involved liberating people from "pathology." Clark, like other liberal, visionary psychologists, believed psychology could, in other words, liberate people, individually and collectively, from the complex and multilayered obstacles thwarting their potential. As we have seen, however, liberation was an elastic contested agenda in the 1960s. In these years advocates of Black Power also invoked agendas of liberation, and among these advocates was a vocal coalition of black psychologists. The approaches of these psychologists to psychology and social reform overlapped and clashed with Clark's approach.

The debates that ensued, like the other debates I have tried to probe in this dissertation, stemmed from and pointed to some of the broader dilemmas in post-war America overviewed in the opening chapter. Like other public intellectuals and cultural critics, Clark acknowledged the importance of nurturing democratic characters and a public culture conducive to them. Aware that American culture was deficient in this regard, he struggled to stake out a role for the social sciences, in particular for social psychology, to provide structure and guidance for America at a time when the survival of democracy was rendered especially pressing. Like Skinner, Maslow and Rogers he turned to psychology to help steer America through the evils of authoritarianism and chaos, orientations antithetical to democracy. We have seen, however, how critiques of the status quo and calls for reform can be steered in directions troubling to liberals fearful of extremes, particularly in a climate when emotions are tense and volatile, as they were in the urban ghettos throughout the 1960s. Clark struggled to avoid such extremes without undermining prospects for genuine social, cultural, institutional, and psychological change. Like other "psychologists of society" he realized the negotiations his framework required could be difficult to manage.

The Influence of Kenneth Clark on Public Culture

By the late 1950s Clark had staked out the groundwork of his social psychological approach to social change. His important role in the *Brown* decision, expanded on in *Prejudice and Your Child* (1955,) confirmed his reputation as a nationally-renown

psychologist.[1] By the mid 1960s his influence had spread beyond academia and professional psychology into the wider public. He became a controversial public intellectual – "the most important social scientist to reach the public on the subject of race," according to historian Ben Keppel. Ideas advanced by Clark in the 1950s were now in the air. Ten years after its publication *Prejudice and Your Child* found a "steady readership"[2] Clark's visibility as a public intellectual was evident in his televised interviews with Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., and James Baldwin in 1963. These interviews exposed many Americans for the first time to the conflicting agendas among black leaders and the African-American community. They also revealed the willingness of these leaders to, through Clark, engage professional psychology. The agendas of all three, each in their own way, acknowledged the importance and power of psychology for African-Americans, and for social progress in America.[3]

The civil rights movement, as I noted earlier, played an important role in the diffusion of psychology in public culture. The research of psychologists had been influential in the *Brown* decision, and had, in effect, helped catalyze the civil rights movement. Also, the civil rights movement, by drawing young people into activism, rendered them more receptive to the optimistic and activist psychology promoted by liberals like Skinner and Maslow.[4]

The civil rights movement's influence was even more direct when it came to circulating the work of Kenneth Clark. Conscious of the role of psychologists in the

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[1] Ben Keppel, "Kenneth B. Clark in the Patterns of American Culture," *American Psychologist* 57:1 (January 2002):29-37. See also Gerald Markowitz and David Rosner, *Children, Race, and Power: Kenneth and Mamie Clark's Northside Center* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 34-35.
[2] Keppel, 31.
[3] Kenneth Clark, *Three Interviews: King, Malcolm, Baldwin* (Middletown, Ct: Wesleyan University Press, 1985). See also Keppel, 35.
[4] See p. 117.

Brown decision, civil rights leaders were aware that psychology was important to the movement,[5] and, keyed into Clark's research, they capitalized on its role of elucidating the consequences of institutional racism.[6] As the civil rights movement gained impetus, Clark became an important public figure, and the research he and his wife Mamie had conducted in the 1930s and 40s became widely known. "[E]ven people who knew nothing of the Clarks' projective research," notes historian Ben Keppel, "were exposed to their message about the psychological damage inflicted on children by a society that consistently valued white over black."[7]

Martin Luther King Jr., thanks in large part to the efforts of Kenneth Clark, actually addressed the American Psychological Association in person at its annual convention in 1967.[8] In the course of his lecture, titled "The Role of the Behavioral Scientist in the Civil Rights Movement," King criticized the unwillingness of most social scientists to address problems related to racism and poverty. It was not on account of them that increasing numbers of Americans were learning about the realities of racism

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[5] Clark himself viewed the Brown case as "the real impetus to the Civil Rights movement." See Mary Hall, "A Conversation with Kenneth Clark," *Psychology Today*, 2:1 (June 1968):19-25. "The most immediate and important result," Clark notes, "was the Martin Luther King Jr. Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott which came the following year." (22).

[6] According to historians Benjamin Lundy, Jr. and Ellen M. Crouse, civil rights leaders were more intent on applying psychology to issues of race and poverty than were most psychologists. Kenneth Clark was not the norm. In general, the American Psychological Association had a mixed record when it came to race. There were a number of psychologists who endorsed racial segregation, notably, Henry E. Garrett, APA president in 1946 and, later on, a founder of the International Association for the Advancement of Ethnology and Eugenics. Even psychologists averse to segregation were reluctant to involve the APA in contentious political affairs, as evident in the APA's unwillingness to acknowledge – let alone congratulate – Clark after the Supreme Court's ruling in 1954. See Lundy and Crouse, "The American Psychological Association's Response to Brown v. Board of Education: The Case of Kenneth B. Clark," *American Psychologist*, 57:1 (January 2002):38-50. "Following the 1954 Supreme Court decision, there was apparently no formal or official recognition from APA for any of the psychologists participating on *Brown*. There were no commendations from the APA board or APA council, no letters of congratulation of commendation from the office of the APA executive secretary." (43)

[7] Keppel, "Kenneth B. Clark in the Patterns of American Culture," 32.

[8] Invited Distinguished Address presented to the meeting of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C., September 1967. The title of the address was "The Role of the Behavioral Scientist in the Civil Rights movement." A transcript of the speech was published in *American Psychologist*, 23 (1968):180-186.

and inner city ghettos. "It was the Negro who educated the nation by dramatizing the evils through nonviolent protest. The social scientists played little or no role in disclosing truth. The Negro action movement with raw courage did it virtually alone."[9] This was unfortunate, King noted, because black liberation was a complex psychological and sociological phenomena, beset with difficulties. Such difficulties were disturbingly evident in the outbreaks of urban violence, the backlash of white racists to integration, and the growing appeal of black separatist groups in African-American communities. Behavioral scientists, had they applied their skills in studying, controlling, and predicting behavior, could perhaps have helped the country prepare for and engage these problems. "Science should have been employed more fully to warn us that the Negro, after 350 years of handicaps, mired in an intricate network of contemporary barriers, could not be ushered into equality by tentative and superficial changes."[10]

Psychologists, King affirmed, did indeed have a pivotal role to play in the civil rights movement. Their field promised scientific insight into understanding human behavior and motivation; it provided a growing conceptual tool-kit for tackling an array of social problems, including the problem of racism. Its expanding institutional base and political clout also rendered it a potential force for shaping public policy. Moreover, the ideological and psychological transformations at work among African-Americans were truly a momentous change crying out for professional attention. New identities were being defined and old ones discarded. Perceptions of race were changing. As King put it:

> Negroes today are experiencing an inner transformation that is liberating them from ideological dependence on the white majority. What has penetrated substantially all strata of Negro life is the revolutionary idea that the philosophy

[9] Martin Luther King Jr., "The Role of the Behavioral Scientist in the Civil Rights Movement," 180.
[10] Ibid., 181.

> and morals of the dominant white society are not holy or sacred but in all too many respects are degenerate and profane.[11]

Traditional associations of Blackness with inferiority were giving way to feelings of pride, evident in the popular slogan "Black is Beautiful." Blacks were liberating themselves from negative thought patterns which were as oppressive as any racist institution. "To lose illusions is to gain truth," declared King. And shedding illusions had always been considered an aim of psychology – and indeed of science altogether.[12] Furthermore, these widespread psychological changes had social implications of importance to a social science like psychology. Psychologists were increasingly pressured to clarify and expand upon the social implications of their work, and to rethink their assumptions if necessary. The notion of adjustment was one theory, for example, that, in light of the growing acknowledgement of institutional and cultural racism, demanded re-examination. As King put it:

> You who are in the field of psychology have given us a great word. It is the word maladjusted. This word is probably used more than any other word in psychology. It is a good word; certainly is good that in dealing with what the word implies you are declaring that destructive maladjustment should be destroyed. You are saying that all must seek the well-adjusted life in order to avoid neurotic and schizophrenic personalities…But on the other hand, I am sure that we all recognize that there are some things in our society, some things in our world, to which we should never be adjusted. There are some things concerning which we must always be maladjusted if we are to be people of good will. We must adjust ourselves to economic conditions that take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few. We must never adjust ourselves to the madness of militarism, and the self-defeating effects of physical violence.[13]

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[11] Ibid., 184.

[12] Influential Radical black psychologists endorsed this liberating view of science as "freeing" people from ignorance. To liberate blacks from ignorance was to liberate the black mind, and "the liberation of the black mind" was, according to Cedric Clark, the aim of Black Psychology. "There is nothing ," declared Cedric Clark, "in promoting such a goal, for science involves precisely that: freeing people from irrational fears and superstitions." Cedric Clark, "Black Studies or the Study of Black People," in Reginald L. Jones, ed., *Black Psychology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972):5.

[13] King, "The Role of the Behavioral Scientist in the Civil Rights Movement," 185.

King's rejection of the traditional agenda of "adjustment" resonated widely among social and cultural critics. Maslow had been speaking out against the "adjustment" agenda since the 1930s.[14] Skinner wrote *Walden Two* spirited with the conviction that "adjustment" to the status quo stifled human potential. According to Clark adjustment to the status quo would perpetuate the social pathology pervading America. But this critique of adjustment to the status quo was also a departure point for varied conflicting agendas. These agendas became more visible, and more contested, as the counter culture gained momentum.

African-Americans and Counter Culture

The "sudden" emergence of a counter culture in the mid 1960s took America by surprise, including the youth swept up by it.[15] The passivity, apathy, and inertia pointed out by cultural critics and public intellectuals were now challenged by an unexpected surge of rebelliousness. A visible swathe of white middle class youth, particularly college students, rejected the escapist retreat into suburban domesticity. Traditional middle class cultural restraints were dismissed in favor of overt sexual, psychedelic, communal and cultural experimentation. LSD, for example, took root in the emerging counterculture in

[14] In an unpublished paper titled "The Necessity of a Social Philosophy of Mental Hygiene," he railed against the preoccupation with adjusting and treating individuals, and not treating and adjusting environments, including whole social systems. "The plain truth of the matter, is that twisting and warping a human being is far easier than changing the social structure, and takes less courage besides." Cited in Edward Hoffman, *The Right to be Human*, 43.

[15] From what I have read, the counter culture announced itself like a thunderclap. Lawrence Veysey, charting the communal activity in the early 1960s, observes that there were no signs of the coming communal explosion starting in 1966. Writing in 1973, he observes how "the counter culture began to astonish us in the 1960s" (3). See Veysey, The *Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Counter-Cultures in America* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1973), 3. See also Keith Melville, Communes in the Counter Culture*: Origins, Theories, Styles of Life* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1972), 214. See Camille Paglia, "Cults and Consciousness: Religious Vision in the American 1960s," ARION 10:3 (Winter 2003):6.

the mid-sixties and spread with extraordinary speed.[16] In the ghettos, where "repressive" middle class cultural and sexual constraints were lacking, "difference" from white middle class norms was affirmed with defiant pride.[17] Among black youth a pride in "Blackness" manifested itself in all sorts of ways, in hairstyles, clothing, music, and militancy. The "generation gap" widened in the ghettos as it did in the suburbs, as growing numbers of black youth shook off what they saw as the passivity of their elders.[18] American post-war affluence had raised expectations, and disappointed expectations spawned rebelliousness and rage. Clark had himself noted such developments in the Harlem riots in the summer of 1964. They were, he noted, "not mob-run race riots," but something different. "The revolts in Harlem were, rather, a weird, social defiance. Those involved in them were, in general, not the lowest class of Harlem residents – not primarily looters and semi criminals – but marginal Negroes who were upwardly mobile, demanding a higher status than their families had."[19]

The "change in consciousness" among black urban communities even at the time seemed sudden and striking. As Berkeley sociologist Harry Edwards notes in a recent documentary on the 1960s, a sudden affirmation of blackness took place in "over a period

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[16] Melville, 65. Jeff A. Hale, "The White Panthers' "Total Assault on the Culture," in Braunstein and Doyle, eds., *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and 70s*, 125-156. See also in that collection David Farber, "The Intoxicated State/Illegal Nation: Drugs in the Sixties Counterculture," 29.

[17] For insightful commentary on this phenomenon, see Floyd B. Barbour , ed. *The Black Seventies*, (Boston: Porter Sargent Publisher, 1970).

[18] Gary T. Marx, *Protest and Prejudice: A Study of Belief in the Black Community* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967); Paul Jacobs, *Prelude to Riot: A View of Urban America from the Bottom* (New York: Random House, 1968). See also a review of both books by Martin Duberman, "Baby, You Better Believe," New York Times, January 21, 1968; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2003): BR8. "In the ghetto, as elsewhere, a profound generation gap exists, and those who under-sample youthful opinion fail to gauge the extent of current disillusionment. It is not clear if it is the racist brand of nationalism that has captured a majority of the ghetto young, but apparently it has captured a considerable minority; and a determined minority can set the tone and establish the options which their fellows, however reluctantly or apathetically, will accept."

[19] Kenneth Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, 15-16. See also Clark, "Explosion in the Ghetto," *Psychology Today*, 1:5 (September 1967):31-31; 62-64.

of less than a year," evident in black music, hairstyles and even African dress. "There's nothing more exhilarating or seductive," observes Edwards, "than a change in consciousness, and in the 1960s blacks made a transition, especially on the college campus, from being Negros to being black to being Afro-American."[20] For psychologist Luther S. Distler, working with (troubled) adolescent hippies in Berkeley, California, the growing affirmation among black youth was setting a valuable precedent for young people elsewhere. "Among today's black youth there is a dramatic effort to directly obtain affirmation and positive evaluation of themselves as individuals as well as to obtain increased freedom to choose the style and course of their lives. This phenomenon is aptly captured in their affirmation that `Black is beautiful.'"[21] Poet and activist Larry Neal, writing in 1970, looked back on what was apparently a historical high-point for American blacks:

> At times one would walk the streets and feel it in the air – black people asserting that they were each the bearers of an ethos. The beautiful became more beautiful; the black woman assumed more of her rightful place in the psyche of black artists; brothers greeted each other warmly. This was especially true after some catastrophic upheaval like Newark or Watts. Black people spoke to each other in strange tongues which they did not understand, but yet spoke well. Harlem, blighted and dope-ridden, oozed an atmosphere of love and concrete spirituality. Black consciousness manifested itself collectively and resolutely upon large segments of the black community.[22]

Woven into this pride in "Blackness" were calls for ideological, cultural, and even physical separatism from whites. In the mid-1960s such agendas were endorsed under the

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[20] *The 1960s: The Years That Shaped A Generation*, PBS Home Video, 2005.
[21] Luther S. Distler, "The Adolescent `Hippie' and the Emergence of a Matristic Culture," *Journal for the Study of Interpersonal Processes*, 33:3 (August 1970):368. The article (362-371) was based on a paper read at the American Psychological Association's annual convention in August 1968.
[22] Larry Neal, "New Space: The Growth of Black Consciousness in the Sixties," in Floyd B. Barbour, ed., *The Black Seventies* (Boston, MA: Porter Sargent Publisher, 1970), 12.

banner of "Black Power." Like many "movements" of the 1960s, Black Power was a diverse and somewhat amorphous phenomenon, evident in the rhetoric that included calls for violence and revolution as well as calls for discipline, common sense, and a renewed Protestant worth-ethic.[23] Threading through the disparate elements of Black Power, however, was an emphasis on Black Pride, an affirmation of Blackness. This emphasis on "identity" and "Black Culture" generally implied a critique of white mainstream middle class culture, which is why it is accurate to situate Black Power among the varied sectors of the 1960s counter culture. This critique of "mainstream" culture spawned agendas of separatism that were themselves quite varied in content. There were calls for blacks to relocate to other countries and set up alternative communities.[24] Many advocates concentrated on building up the ghettos, institutionally and culturally. There were calls for decentralized schools with decision-making power shifted to local community boards. There were calls for black-run hospitals, transportation systems, legal associations, and other entities.[25] Some radicals explicitly rejected middle class suburbia as the embodiment of the American Dream, arguing the blacks had to construct their own alternatives. As Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton put it in *Black Power* (1967), integration into such culturally empty environments was to be actively discouraged:

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[23] See Charles V. Hamilton, "An Advocate of Black Power Defines It," *New York Times*, April 14, 1968, SM22-23; 79-83. ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2003.) See "The Black Manifesto," in Floyd B. Barbour, ed., *The Black Seventies*, 296-308; and Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Vintage, 1967).

[24] See King, "The Role of the Behavioral Scientist in the Civil Rights Movement," 184. Malcolm X in 1963 was calling for "complete separation; not only physical separation but moral separation." See Kenneth Clark, *Three Interviews*, 45.

[25] Charles Hamilton, "An Advocate of Black Power Defines It." See especially his discussion of the black-run, economic self-organization in New York – National Economic Growth and Reconstruction Organization (N.E.G.R.O.):80.

> The goal of black people must *not* be to assimilate into middle-class America, for that class – as a whole – is without a viable conscience as regards humanity. The values of the middle class permit the perpetuation of the ravages of the black community. The values of that class are based on material aggrandizement, not the expansion of humanity. The values of that class ultimately support cloistered little closed societies couched away neatly in tree-lined suburbia.[26]

Black Power and Psychology

The rising wave of radicalism also spirited and challenged a number of black psychologists in the profession. What had formerly been a quiet minority in the APA was now mobilized by the revolutionary developments taking place.[27] In 1968, at the annual APA convention in San Francisco, signs were posted in the conference hotel announcing a meeting for "Those interested and concerned about the plight of what is happening in the Afro-American community."[28] The meeting went well; morale was high, and the Association of Black Psychologists was formed to the enthusiastic support of some 200 psychologists. The association confronted APA officials at once with a list of demands.[29] The annual convention the following year (1969) would witness even more activism, when the newly formed Black Students Psychological Association (BSPA) took over the stage as George Miller prepared to give his presidential address. The next several years would, in fact, see tense, heated, and fruitful negotiations between the ABP and BSPA and the APA.[30] They would also see the emergence of a new field of Black Psychology.

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[26] Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*, 40.
[27] For information and statistical data regarding African-American psychologists in the profession, see Lauren Wispe, Joseph Awkward, Marvin Hoffman, Philip Ash, Leslie Hicks, and Janice Porter, "The Negro Psychologist in America," *American Psychologist*, 24:2 (February 1969):142-150. See also R.L. Williams, *History of the Association of Black Psychologists: Early Formation and Development, Journal of Black Psychology*, 1:1 (February 1974):9-24. See also B.H. Williams, *Coming together: The founding of the Association of Black Psychologists*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Saint Louis University, Missouri, 1997.
[28] Birdean Williams, *Coming together: The founding of the Association of Black Psychologists*, (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Saint Louis University, Missouri, 1997), 123.
[29] See Wade E. Pickren and Henry Tomes, "The Legacy of Kenneth B. Clark to the APA: The Board of Social and Ethical Responsibility for Psychology," *American Psychologist*, 57:1 (January 2002):51-59.
[30] Ibid.

The founding members of the Association of Black Psychologists endorsed agendas of Black Pride and Black Power. They expanded on the issues of identity – Black identity – and "difference." As founding member Robert Williams later recalled, this was in fact the paramount issue for radical black psychologists in these years:

> The issue of who we are, commanded an inordinate amount of African-Americans' time and energy…..For me the 1960s involved reclaiming our African identity and culture. We went through a period of appreciating our Blackness, declaring that "`I am Black and I am Proud and Black is Beautiful.' I think the identity problem during those years was number one for us."[31]

These radical black psychologists were committed to promoting psychology with an activist spirit. "When we came out of graduate school," recalls Robert Green another founding member, "African Americans looked to us for leadership in the resolution of the issues confronting the community." [32] They had the expertise to empower people, and they began to stake out relevant roles for themselves. "We know," declared psychologist Jesse Johnson, "that they [psychologists] can help an individual to learn by changing his self concept, his expectations of his own behavior, and his motivations, as well as his cognitive style and skills. It is imperative that we as black psychologists get this message to the millions of blacks who are fraught with frustration and despair and who have a deeply ingrained sense of incompetence."[33] Even Paul Smith, Jr. who acknowledged the legitimacy of "street psychology" and affirmed that blacks had been practicing psychology on their own for over three centuries, went on to note that this sort of psychology could not on its own tackle the challenge involved in social reform. It was

[31] Cited in Birdean Williams, 82
[32] Ibid., 91.
[33] Jesse Johnson, "The Black Psychologist: Pawn or Professional?" in Reginald L. Jones, *Black Psychology* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1972),362.

"abnormal to think that liberation [would] come from such an unorganized force."[34] Liberation needed two things to combat racism and chart new programs for self-transformation: direction and expert help. Specialists were indeed crucial and there were "none more important than Black psychologists." As Smith optimistically explained:

> These brothers and sisters have an informal, as well as a formal understanding of human behavior. They should be capable of organizing a structure of practical and theoretical psychological phenomena to move African-American people more rapidly toward self-determination.[35]

Some of these psychologists worked from a counter cultural orientation with revolutionary rhetoric. Paul Smith saw a Black Psychology as crucial to "motivate the mass of Blacks intrinsically" in order to effectively resist "the Monster's reward and punishment system of materialism."[36] Ferdinand Jones pointed to the predicament of black therapists trying to "assess" individuals according to the "diseased" standards of the mainstream culture. The standards were morally bankrupt, "contaminated with anti-human qualities such as greed, unscrupulousness, and selfishness."[37]

Over the next few years, then, black psychologists experimented with constructing a Black Psychology. There were competing approaches and conceptualizations.[38] Some psychologists reworked the humanistic theories of Maslow and Rogers into a black framework, promoting a "self-centered" psychology grounded in African or African-American culture and history. "African psychology defines as an

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[34] Paul Smith, Jr., "Let's Psyche' Em," *Journal of Black Psychology*, 1:2 (February 1975): 43.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid., 47.
[37] Ferdinand Jones, "The Black Psychologist as Consultant and Therapist," in Reginald L. Jones, ed., *Black Psychology*, 372.
[38] See Reginald L. Jones, ed., *Black Psychology* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1972,) which includes a collection of over thirty-five papers written in the late 1960s and early 1970s. There was a Second Edition published in 1982. Also informative are the exploratory articles in *The Journal of Black Psychology,* which first appeared in the Winter of 1975.

important content area, the nature of the self," explained Cedric X (Clark) in an early issue of *The Journal of Black Psychology*.[39] Roderick Pugh in a paper about "Black Psychology" pointed to the "self-actualizing goals of the Revolution" and noted the "changed attitudes and behavior which result from a reintegration of a sense-of-self which has been long in the making."[40] Many dialogues among radical black psychologists rippled with talk of love and liberation. Paul Smith, Jr. called for a black psychology to work "in the interest of Black love."[41] "The aim of a black psychology," Cedric Clark contended, was "nothing neither more nor less than in the liberation of the black mind."[42]

In the late 1960s radical black psychologists took the initiative and produced a flurry of studies investigating different aspects of the black protest movement. Thomas O. Hillard detailed the findings of a study assessing "the personality characteristics of black student activists and non-activists." The findings shattered "the often presented `riffraff' theory of activism" which portrayed black activists as maladjusted, troubled, and pathological. Black student activists, in fact, appeared to have all the markers of psychological health. They demonstrated the humanistic traits of self-actualized people, notably "a greater degree of humanistic concern and a greater need to be generous and to help others."[43] Although Rogers was not mentioned, Hillard's discussion of the importance of "self-concept" and psychological insight confirmed Rogers' earlier theories regarding the importance of self-concept to behavior.

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[39] Cedric X (Clark), D. Phillip McGee, Wade Nobles, and Luther X (Weems), "Voodoo or IQ: An Introduction to Black Psychology," *The Journal of Black Psychology*, 1:2 (February 1975): 21.
[40] Roderick W. Pugh, "Psychological Aspects of the Black Revolution," in Reginald L. Jones, ed., *Black Psychology*, 346.
[41] Paul M. Smith, Jr., "Let's Psyche Em?" *The Journal of Black Psychology*, 1:2 (February 1975): 52.
[42] Cedric Clark, "Black Studies or the Study of Black People?" in Reginald L. Jones, ed., 5.
[43] Thomas O. Hillard, "Personality Characteristics of Black Student Activists and Nonactivists," in Reginald L. Jones, ed., 142.

> Black student activists have more positive self-concepts, are more self-enhancing behaviorally, and are more aware of their motives. Conversely, the nonactivists have negative self-definitions, are more self-effacing and self-abasing, and are unaware of their motives. It is inferred, based on self-theory, that a person who conceives of himself negatively is more likely to accept social conditions consistent with his self-definition.[44]

There were other studies. One article in *Black Psychology* detailed the study and findings of a group of psychologists concerning "black identity transformation." Special attention was given to a "process-oriented" framework "to describe each of several stages, states, or levels that a person or group traverses in identity transformation," as well as to "uncover some of the mechanisms that initiate and consolidate many of the stages."[45]

Edward Barnes, in a paper titled "The Black Community as the Source of Positive Self-Concept," surveyed the extant literature and methodology for understanding "the behavioral changes occurring in blacks, especially young blacks, during [the 1960s.]" Barnes himself favored a humanistic approach and referred to the work of Maslow and Rogers as useful models, at the same time acknowledging that studies of black children in black contexts called for "the extension or modification of self theory."[46] Some psychologists expanded on the work of Kenneth and Mamie Clark, using dolls to assess the self concept of black children in integrated schools. Pearl Gore Dansby in 1970 cited research findings revealing improvements in the self-esteem of black children. Two psychologists working in Lincoln, Nebraska discovered that, regardless of the race of the "examiner," "black children preferred the black doll."[47]

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[44] Ibid., 140.
[45] William S. Hall, William E. Cross, Jr., Roy Feedle, "Stages in the Development of Black Awareness: An Explanatory Investigation," in Ibid., 157.
[46] Edward J. Barnes, "The Black Community as the Source of Positive Self-Concept for Black Children: A Theoretical Perspective," in Ibid., 166-192.
[47] Pearl Gore Dansby, "Black Pride in the Seventies: Fact or Fantasy?" in Ibid., 145-155. There were differences among the black children, however, linked to gender and class. More middle-class girls chose black dolls with straight hair, for example, as opposed to lower-status girls. Incidentally, recent "doll studies" have shown black children preferring the white doll. For an intriguing look at contemporary black

The emerging field was exploratory and diverse. Not everyone favored a humanistic orientation. Some participants reworked the radical behaviorism of Skinner into a "radical black behaviorism."[48] In general, black psychologists acknowledged the importance of environmental analyses for the study of behavior. Through various research studies and projects, they probed the subtle workings of institutional racism, showing how practices in testing, job hiring, and counseling worked against blacks and helped perpetuate poverty. In 1970, for example, Robert Williams reported a study conducted by psychologists to test the usefulness and reliability of performance tests as predictors of job performance. A group of one hundred minority postal workers were hired without the usual barrage of testing. After a year they were assessed and "by and large" found to have performed favorably. They then took the ability test routinely used to screen applicants and all of them failed. "The tests would certainly have led to the unemployment of qualified persons."[49] Testing was thus clearly implicated in the perpetuation of poverty and the psychological damage wrought by poverty. Others noted similar findings in other contexts. Indeed, the study reported by Williams was one of many studies conducted to investigate the accuracy, reliability, credibility and social and psychological implications of testing.[50]

In their analyses of testing, assessment, and other practices, radical black psychologists like Green were expanding[51] on the insights of Kenneth Clark, who had for

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girls and racial self-image in our own time, go to http://youtube.com/watch?v=z0BxFRu_SOw. Bleaching creams are back?

[48] William A. Hayes, "Radical Black Behaviorism," in Ibid., 51-59; William A. Hayes and William M. Banks, "The Nigger Box or a Redefinition of the Counselor's Role," in Ibid., 225-232.
[49] Robert L. Williams, "Abuses and Misuses in Testing Black Children," in Ibid., 77-90.
[50] Reginald L. Jones, ed., *Black Psychology*. See Part II: *The Psychological Assessment of Blacks*, 61-110.
[51] Although Clark did not endorse the concept of a "black psychology," and although some radical black psychologists were critical of Clark for such positions, a number of them, such as Edward J. Barnes, Pearl

years been probing the workings and consequences of institutional racism on African-Americans.[52] Many of them, like Clark, acknowledged the "dilemmas of social power," in particular the difficulties of advancing social reform while caught up in institutions and bureaucracies that could easily stifle reform. William Hayes and William Banks expanded on the concept of the Skinner box and constructed a new theoretical model: "The Nigger Box." The aim of the model was to analyze and probe the myriad and interrelated reinforcements at work in so-called "problematic" behavior, the behavior, that is, of African-Americans. They stressed that counselors in particular needed to grasp the hierarchies and power structures in which they themselves were embedded, for counselors were influenced by them in subtle, complex ways. "They are utilized," argued Banks and Hayes, "by institutions to mollify and dull the sensitivities of blacks concerning their status as members of an oppressed group."[53]

Such analyses, as we have seen, had implications for public policy, particularly the programs associated with the "war on poverty." Radical black behaviorists like Banks and Hayes were passionate in their denunciation of federal programs such as Project Head Start and Project Upward Bound. The conceptual groundwork for assessing and critiquing anti-poverty programs had, as we have seen, already been staked out by Clark during his years with HARYOU. By the late 1960s many radical black psychologists

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Gore Dansby, Edward K. Weaver, Reginald Jones, John L. Johnson, and Lloyd T. Delany, nevertheless did turn to his work as an important reference.

[52] Kenneth and Mamie Clark, working in the Northside Center in the 1940s, regularly encountered distressed parents whose children had been tested and psychologically assessed with disturbing results. Upon retesting the Clarks found most of these assessments to be flawed. As Kenneth Clark later recalled: "We just started testing those children, and found that these parents were right: that 80% of those children were being condemned to classes for retarded children illegally…This was common practice." Cited in Gerald Markowitz and David Rosner, *Children, Race, and Power: Kenneth and Mamie Clark's Northside Center* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1996,) 24.

[53] William Hayes and William Banks, "The Nigger Box or a Redefinition of the Counselor's Role," in Reginald L. Jones, ed., *Black Psychology*, 231.

were as critical of the way the war on poverty was being fought (or not fought) as Clark was. "Compensatory" programs were attacked on a number of grounds, all of which had to do with the lack of consistent attention paid to the complexity of environmental factors in the perpetuation of poverty. Many radical black psychologists argued, as Clark did, that an authentic (as opposed to rhetorical) war on poverty had to have as its aim the eradication of poverty, not the amelioration of lower-status suffering. And there was no data supporting the claim that such programs posed any serious threat to the status quo. Programs like Head Start, critics argued, only "helped" children by temporarily taking them out of their family environments, inculcating them with middle class values, and then returning them to these same environments afterwards. As psychologist Thomas Gunnings, a critic of Head Start, explained:

> The child's environment is ignored and downgraded, yet it is this environment to which he must return at the end of the day." He returns not necessarily by choice, but he returns to a fate dictated by a circumstance of birth. This is an inadequate foundation upon which to build any program.[54]

Edward K. Weaver viewed such programs as a convenient cop-out to avoid tackling tough questions:

> Hence, the `new' literature postpones to another generation any real solution of ghetto problems. It also places the burden for change upon the shoulders of the black ghetto children who must be changed, not the centuries-old conditions which have perpetuated disadvantage. Many black people find these programs much less thrilling, as having not too much potential, and as a delaying tactic.[55]

[54] Thomas Gunnings, "Effects of Compensatory Education Program on Blacks," in Reginald L. Jones, ed. *Black Psychology*, 282.
[55] Edward K. Weaver, "The New Literature on Education of the Black Child," in Ibid., 271.

In the meantime, radical critics argued, compensatory programs, nourished with public and private funds, swelled into a massive big-business in itself, spawning new layers of bureaucracy and steady jobs all of which depended on the existence of a permanent underclass, which itself guaranteed the continuation of poverty. Hays and Banks argued that such programs did more harm than good:

> pre-school programs are a disservice to the poor and black people in America. These programs have discouraged investigation into the real causes of the educational problems while supporting the belief that a correction factor could be developed in the form of educational intervention programs to fill the alleged gaps left by oppressive social environments…In their treatment of the symptoms, interventionists have institutionalized preschool programs – by establishing thousands of jobs whose existence is contingent upon the existence of a class of children called *culturally deprived.*[56]

Clark and the Counter Culture: Dilemmas

In chapter three I noted the resurgence of utopian literature in the 1960s, a phenomenon helped along by Skinner and Maslow. Clark did not like to consider himself a "utopianist."[57] At the same time, his critique of the status quo, of mainstream American middle class culture, was as passionate as theirs. And while they fused it to visions of a Walden Two or a Eupsychia, he could be quite idealistic and visionary himself. He stressed the importance of taking ideals seriously with the intent of implementing them

[56] William A.Hayes and William M. Banks, "The Nigger Box or a Redefinition of the Counselor's Role," in Ibid., 227.

[57] See, for example, "Just teach them to read!" *New York Times*, March 18, 1973; Proquest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2003): 256- 264. "I, oddly enough, am not a Utopian thinker; I don't believe that human beings anywhere have found the answer to how to be happy throughout life." Later in the interview, however, he affirms, in all seriousness, that "kooky idealists are the fundamental realists." There is also a pronounced utopian theme in *Pathos of Power*, his final book, published a year after the 1973 *New York Times* interview. See especially the Prologue, 3-16. In effect, Clark suggests that although a utopian society is not really possible, one must still dream and work to such an end as if it were. This is really no different from the approach of Skinner and Maslow to social change.

into action; he too was a "dreamer" who promoted "dreaming" as a necessary endeavor, as a sign of psychological health, in fact.[58] He focused insistently on the glaring discrepancy between theory and practice, between the ways things could and should be and the way things are. He too wanted people to wake up, to become more sensitized and engaged and ready to confront contemporary challenges.

There are different ways to move and awaken people. I noted in the previous chapter that Clark focused heavily on the consequences of social pathology, at the same time acknowledging that sensitizing and mobilizing people required strategies that went beyond diagnosing people. He sought to integrate moral *and* economic considerations, criticizing assumptions that such considerations inevitably clashed. He rejected the common assumption that virtue was impractical, and that humans by nature privileged self-interest over and above a social morality. Such assumptions, in his view, more often than not served as easy rationalizations for irresponsibility and complacency. He rejected, for example, historical arguments that approached the American Civil War as motivated primarily by agendas of economic self-interest. Such an interpretation, leaving out the moral dimension, left out a crucial part of the picture. As he put it to Mary Hall: "I think it's just another attempt on the part of Americans to handle the crisis of morality by cynically blotting out moral imperatives and reinterpreting history to minimize the conscience problems."[59] In this time of economic prosperity Americans had even fewer excuses to pit economic self-interest and moral sensitivity against one another. Americans, he pointed out, had the choice of either probing the progressive potential of American democracy or eschewing the challenge altogether, as had so many before them.

[58] Clark, *Pathos of Power*, 12.
[59] Hall, "A Conversation with Kenneth Clark," 22.

Negotiating practicality with imaginative dreaming engaged and challenged Clark for much of his life. It was important to be practical, but it was no less important – perhaps it was more so – to be imaginative and experimental, even if that meant being impractical. Like Skinner, Maslow, and Rogers, Clark believed that in an affluent, imperfect society dreaming was not only a sign of health – a sign that affluence had not corrupted and crippled one's mind and moral sensitivity – but a moral responsibility. In an "organization society" dreamers were, to be sure, at a disadvantage. They were not practical. They were not efficient "organization men." With their visions of improving and reforming institutions, such starry-eyed, vague and abstract characters were an irritant to men and women of action concerned primarily with getting things done. "The men of action want to get things done," mused Clark. "There are x number of housing units that must be built; x number of schools to be planned and designed with x number of classrooms united to educate the growing number of school-age children in a given community, industrial parks and shopping centers to be built and maintained and roads and transportation to be provided to link these necessary parts of a viable and social community." And what could the dreamers get done? "They [could] not produce charts, profits, dividends, or other immediately quantifiable indices of values."[60] All the same, it was crucial that they dream, that they nurture the atmosphere surrounding practical people in positions of power with visions of progress. "Whether or not the practical men can be persuaded to listen to the conviction that only dreams are practical and that plans without dreams are doomed," as Clark put it, "the dreamers will continue to dream. They

[60] Ibid., 8.

have no choice. They must respond to the inadequacy of what is by imagining and struggling for what could be."[61]

The counter culture was about, among so many other things, dreaming, creatively resisting affluence and apathy. Clark could appreciate idealistic people's impatience with sham, corruption, hypocrisy, and greed. Whatever their faults, they sensed the moral deficiencies of American middle class culture. Most people's essential physical needs were being met, but the culture was unable to engage "higher needs." Erich Fromm had earlier pointed out that the most affluent countries in the West had the highest suicide rates.[62] Clark noted that existential problems seemed to grow in tandem with economic prosperity:

> Where the promises of material and ideological, democratic and socialist utopias have almost been fulfilled for the majority, "identity crisis," "alienation," "existential ennui" become fashionable phrases of sophisticated contemporary discourse. "Urban unrest," "riots," "rebellions," "anticolonial movements," "black liberation," " women's liberation," "gay liberation," "student liberation" reflect the anger of realization that the promises of personal and social identity have not been kept. The end of colonials, expanded education for the masses, the production of more telephones, more washing machines, more airplanes, better wages and more leisure, larger libraries with more books and more lavishly equipped museums, all encouraged expectations that remain unfulfilled.[63]

Moreover, in many respects Clark's own ideas and agendas pointed towards or perhaps resonated with the agendas of Black Power advocates. He himself had expanded at length on the pervasiveness of racism in America, on the complicity of whites in the perpetuation of racism and the poverty that accompanied it, and the necessity of profound cultural and structural change to combat the problems. As he put it in *Dark Ghetto*: "The

[61] Ibid., 9.
[62] Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 155),12-20. See pp.17-18 for statistical data regarding suicide rates in different countries.
[63] Clark, *Pathos of Power*, 4-5.

culture of the ghetto must be reshaped so as to strike at the very roots of the ghetto's social malaise. Nothing short of a concerted and massive attack on the social, political, economic, and cultural roots of the pathology is required if anything more than daubing or a displacement of the symptoms is to be achieved."[64] Also, like many radical blacks in the late 1960s, Clark acknowledged the inability of whites – including white liberals – to seriously engage the issues of racism and poverty in northern cities. Fighting racism and poverty in the north required different tools than had been used in the south. Racism was more subtle and insidious in the north; the problem of urban slums called for changes potentially subversive to the status quo, and to professional and middle class whites. Thus, the eruption of violence and the appeal of black nationalism were not at all surprising. "Responsibility for the displacement of the sane approach by the militant reaction to frustration and failure must be laid at the feet of the white community, and the blame for the current unrest and rebellion must be largely born by it."[65]

He also acknowledged the understandable appeal of separatist groups like the Black Muslims. With their radical separatist agendas, they tapped into potent emotions of anger and even hatred. Clark conceded that Black Muslims were engaging powerful emotions that needed to be engaged, and, moreover, enabling people to contend with these emotions and not get destroyed by them. It was a fact that Black Muslims empowered people mired in drug addiction, despair, and feelings of self-loathing. "They recruit most successfully from the lower socio-economic and marginal classes…this group does a most effective job in rehabilitating its members."[66] Clark even conceded ---

[64] Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, 107.
[65] Kenneth Clark, "Explosion in the ghetto," 32.
[66] *Dark Ghetto*, 216. He alludes to C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961.)

somewhat resentfully -- that Black Muslims with their fiery rhetoric had the capacity to energize, mobilize and excite people, while the "prolonged, nondramatic planning" required for social progress – the sort of work that had made possible the *Brown* decision – often went on quietly behind the scenes.[67]

Finally, his criticisms of the cultural emptiness of suburbia echoed in the rhetoric of some Black Power advocates. Indeed, his commitment to integration notwithstanding, Clark's comments on mainstream suburban culture could be as cutting as that of any thoughtful, intelligent communitarian forsaking the suburb for the commune. In *Dark Ghetto*, for example, where he argues for the racial integration of suburbia, he also stresses the importance of recognizing that the suburbs themselves are rife with dysfunctionalism:

> There is a tendency toward pathology in the gilded ghetto, too; an emptiness reflecting the futile struggle to find substance and worth through the concretes of things and possessions. In the struggle for affirmation and status a homogenous, antiseptic environment is sought, artificially isolating segments of the population in patterns of sameness; the same income level, the same-sized plot, the same neatly painted ranch houses; but, even more confining, the same color of people, the same ethnic and religious background, the same age group (young couples with children), the same juvenile activities – ballet, piano, or the Little League – and the same kind of adult parties. And in this sameness, the possibility of the richness of life that can only be found in variety and individuality is negated.[68]

There were not many escape routes from misery in such a stifling environment. Clark pointed to the tendency of people to seek out relief in the "deadly ritual of alcoholism," the "absorption in work," and in the "artificial and transitory excitement of illicit affairs."[69] Although he pointed to the ethnic and religious "sameness" of these

[67] Ibid., 213.
[68] Kenneth Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, 108.
[69] Ibid.

environments as a symptom of their problems, he had no illusions that integration would remedy them.[70] Like Skinner, Maslow and Rogers he emphasized the dearth of "authentic" community in these middle class "neighborhoods." Large, public gatherings were a farce; 4th of July speeches the country over were hackneyed, hypocritical, and "canned." It was understandable that young people were struggling to break through boundaries and to connect:

> The yoke of alienation is the anguished, identity-destroying burden which youth throughout the world seek to avoid through rebellions, communes, rock festivals, by return to primitive religions, by `now cultures,' by defiance and rejection of the values and standards of the past, by ridicule of adult ideologies ad mocking of adult hypocrisies, and by escape through drugs passivity, and inner emptiness.[71]

Young people everywhere, in suburbs and ghettos, were alienated. It was interesting to Clark that disaffected white middle class youths were starting to adopt the same coping mechanisms of low-status black youths. "In their desperation they have imitated the outward symbols of dress, speech, and music of the most deprived segment of our society, the blacks, and they have been ignored and at times stigmatized or beaten as if they were black."[72]

In general, Clark himself was losing faith in white middle class America's ability or willingness to rise to the challenge of affluence. A culture of affluence was getting the better of Americans. Into the 1960s he became more vocal in his disgust with the "glut of affluence" and the "worship of material things." I have noted that Clark struggled to avoid an undue emphasis on "pathology" in his attempts to reach and engage middle class white and black Americans. By the late 1960s, however, pathology was becoming more

[70] See "Just teach them to read!" 256- 264.
[71] Clark, *Pathos of Power*, 13.
[72] Ibid., 47-48.

pronounced in his criticisms. In his 1968 interview with Mary Hall he spoke of "moral schizophrenia" and the need for massive "social therapy" and collective psychoanalysis.[73] Formerly he had hoped that appeals to pragmatism and democracy would inspire people to rise to contemporary challenges. Now it was presumed that only the threat of more violence and riots would compel people to realize that racism and poverty were serious social and moral problems implicating and affecting everybody.

Conflicts

Despite these connecting threads between Clark's views and the perspectives of cultural radicals and advocates of Black Power, counter cultural radicalism challenged Clark, much as it challenged Maslow, Skinner, Rogers, and other visionary, liberal social scientists committed to social reform. This tension marked Clark's own relationship with Malcolm X in the early 1960s, a relationship he later described as "cautious."[74] Clark was and remained a steadfast critic of black separatism, and passionately disagreed with the uncompromising militant stance of the "Black Muslim movement" and the Garvey movement from which it descended. Yet his interactions with Malcolm X were, if ambivalent, not antagonistic. He was aware that the young people involved with the HARYOU project were "unanimous in admiration of Malcolm." And when Malcolm was invited to speak at luncheon meetings Clark found more to admire than condemn. Malcolm X, Clark later recalled, downplayed racist rhetoric in these talks:

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[73] See Mary Hall, "A Conversation with Kenneth Clark," *Psychology Today*, 2:1 (June 1968):19-25. "And here we must psychoanalyze a whole society that has been reared on a system of grand delusions: the delusion of optimism, the delusion that things will work out somehow." (23)

[74] Kenneth Clark, *Three Interviews*, 10.

> Rather, he emphasized the importance of young people preparing themselves for a constructive role in our society. He talked of the importance of education, the need to avoid drug abuse, and their obligation to become models for other young people in the prevention of crime and delinquency. During this period, my respect and admiration for Malcolm X increased significantly.[75]

Malcolm X's radicalism altered somewhat in the years that followed. Towards the end of his life he had started to distance himself from his militant separatism, and by the time of his assassination in February 1965 he had broken away from the Nation of Islam and had developed an appreciation for Martin Luther King.[76] After his death, however, the Malcolm X of the 1950s and early 1960s predominated – at least in the minds of many militant black separatists -- over the more integrationist-friendly Malcolm X that came later.[77] Meanwhile, as dozens of urban ghettos across the country erupted in violence, the appeal of Black Power spread, particularly among the young. This situation was further inflamed with King's assassination in April of 1968.[78]

I have observed that keeping a passionate yet cautionary approach to reform can be very difficult when the stakes are high and the emotions strong.[79] In particular, anger and rage can be very hard to manage and negotiate, and such emotions were seething in America's urban ghettos. Also, when understandable impatience sets in with the slow pace of reform, it happens that people look for radical departure points for accelerated change. In the counter culture such impatience often spirited initiatives to "go-it-alone."

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[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid., 11-13.
[77] See William H. Grier and Price M. Cobbs, *Black Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1968),169-171. The authors were wary of this tendency to privilege the memory of the younger Malcolm X over the older one.
[78] Tom Wicker, "In The Nation: Black Power and White Liberalism," *New York Times*, Feb. 15, 1968, 42; "Carmichael Says the Time Has Come for Guns," *New York Times*, April 13, 1968, 12; Charles V. Hamilton, "Topics: Color the City in Riotous Black and White," *New York Times*, April 13, 1968, 24; M.A. Farber, "Integration Is No Longer `the Main Goal,'" *New York Times*, Feb. 25, 1968, E11.
[79] See pp. 62-63.

Going it alone meant many things, depending on contexts. For some people it translated into constructing intentional communities outside the social and institutional mainstream. For others it simply meant "dropping out," or traveling abroad. Others joined religious organizations. For Black Power advocates this also translated into different initiatives. Separatism was an elastic term. In the early 1960s Malcolm X clarified to Kenneth Clark that he was calling for "[c]omplete separation; not only physical separation but moral separation."[80] In the early 1970s, with the growing appeal of identity-based social movements, the call was more for cultural separation based on an acknowledgement of cultural "difference." There was also an emphasis on the need for de-centralized schools, with curricula and methodology designed for the particular needs of African-American students in the inner-cities.[81]

Clark, like other liberal psychologists, despite his probing critiques of the status quo, was never comfortable with radical agendas of "going-it-alone." His ambivalence stemmed from considerations of pragmatism and ideology. On the pragmatic side, the issues were in general financial. Again, a comparison with Skinner, Rogers and Maslow is helpful. All of them critiqued a culture of affluence, but none of them endorsed a platform of relinquishing affluence altogether or even jeopardizing one's access to economic power. Economic prosperity was a historical opportunity for America; it gave people the means to cultivate and experiment with and realize the American Dream, which entailed (so they hoped) more than a home in the suburbs.[82] Economic power was important, especially for blacks struggling to create or control institutions such as local

[80] Clark, *Three Interviews*, 45.
[81] See, for example, Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton, *Black Power*, 9-10; 165-171.
[82] See, for example, Abraham Maslow, "Defining the American Dream," in Edward Hoffman, ed. *Future Visions: The Unpublished Papers of Abraham Maslow* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1996), 141-146.

schools. Clark's controversial dismissal of school decentralization, for example, pointed to the economic problem. Decentralization meant little if African-Americans did not control the "purse-strings." "And to me," he noted in 1973, "the heart of an education system or any other social system is who controls the money. Believe it or not, the people in Negro communities don't control the money. They have no taxing power there."[83]

Ideologically, a radical policy of "going-it-alone" challenged his liberal orientation. It reflected and demanded, in his view, an uncritical confidence in oneself and one's group that Clark was never comfortable with. I have noted that Clark, like Maslow, Rogers and Skinner, was working within the tradition of Progressive liberalism. This was a framework that emphasized the importance of the rational, expert intervention of the behavioral scientist to "help" people. In the post-war years this meant "carefully" liberating them. As we have seen, the agenda by this time had shifted from controlling the excesses of acquisitive, "unregulated" individualism to awakening the latent individuality stifled by a prevalent "organization" ethos, the seductive lure of passive consumerism, and the rapid rise of a monstrous warfare state. In such a context, probing and fostering "healthy" individuality was challenging, for "individuality" was difficult to nurture and to maintain. It was easily threatened by "power" – from without and from within. For Clark, a nuanced understanding of power was thus necessary for the structural and cultural safeguards needed to render power conducive, or at least not destructive, of democratic individualism and culture. This nuanced approach translated

[83] Clark," Just Teach Them to Read!" *The New York Times*, March 18, 1973, 61.

into a social science approach. Such an approach, while respecting emotions such as anger, did not proceed from anger as a starting point.[84]

This nuanced, liberal social science approach to power also translated into a nuanced approach to those contentious issues I discussed in the opening chapter, such as the issue of biology and its relation to psychology, behavior, and culture. It provided a distinct approach to arguments about the nature of nature and human nature, and to controversial agendas of instinctual liberation (or repression.) For liberals like Clark it was very important how one conceptualized such issues, and they stressed a cautious, holistic approach with the behavioral scientist playing an important role. When it came to assessing human nature, their approach tended to emphasize neither innate destructiveness and policies of repression, nor innate goodness and policies of instinctual liberation. It was an approach that emphasized the need to cultivate, guide, and negotiate "power" with the help of psychological skills.

It is worth looking at Clark's approach to the contentious issue of biology and culture more closely, for this issue was, in my view, a contentious fault line between radicalism and liberalism. It was certainly a tense area of disagreement between Clark and many advocates of Black Power.

(Black) Biology, Pathology, and Liberation

[84] Nor did it start from "love." If the Black Separatists' focus on anger was problematic, so too was Martin Luther King's call to "love the oppressor." However noble, it did place "an additional and probably intolerable psychological burden" on black Americans. A social science approach would acknowledge but not be controlled by such emotions. It would help people to situate themselves within a broader picture. As Clark put it in *Dark Ghetto*: "The issue of the rights of the American Negroes will probably not be resolved either by verbal or strategic preoccupation with love or with hatred. The issue may be more realistically resolved by less tenuous emotions, such as enlightened self-interest on the part of Negroes and whites, a shared destiny, and the imperatives of the contemporary threat to the national survival." (219)

Kenneth Clark clearly advocated a balanced approach to the issue of biology. For one thing, he certainly took biology seriously. The opening sentence of *Pathos of Power* affirmed the biological grounding of human consciousness: "Consciousness is an artifact – the most important artifact of the universe – a consequence of the unique evolutionary complexity of the billions of cortical cells which constitute the human brain."[85] This was a truth "intolerable" to people intent on distancing themselves from terrestrial nature and shoring up their egos with delusions of God-like grandeur. Difficult to accept or not, the relation of biology to psychology and culture had to be sensibly engaged. It was especially important for intellectuals and social reformers to not dismiss the biological constraints of human nature altogether, and to assume human nature was indefinitely malleable. The reality was, Clark insisted, more complicated. As he put it in *Pathos of Power*: "Man is divided within himself; he is both a predatory animal and a sensitive, moral, aspiring ethical human being. Man the animal is primitive, barbaric, ego-centric. The Freudian id and the Hobbesian man cannot be ignored."[86]

The capacity for anger and fear, then, was built into our genetic makeup and it certainly caused trouble. At the same time, "a reflective and introspective consciousness" was also *rooted* in our evolutionary past and grounded in our inherited nature. Thus the crude social-Darwinist understanding of human life and society was deficient, a self-serving way to rationalize human callousness and selfishness.[87] Human virtue was as real a part of the repertoire of options available to our species as was human vice. In fact, for

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[85] Clark, *Pathos of Power*, 3.
[86] Ibid., 6. I noted at the outset that all of these liberal psychologists took biology, evolution and genetics seriously. Even Skinner, a radical behaviorist, acknowledged the relevance of genetics and biology to human behavior. "The more thoroughly we understand the relation between human behavior and its genetic and environmental antecedents, the more clearly we understand the nature or essence of the species." Skinner, *About Behaviorism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974) 226.
[87] Ibid.

a social, cooperative species like homo sapiens, a morality was an imperative for survival. A social species dominated by competition and fighting with no built-in capacity for cooperation would certainly have perished. The idea that humans were innately and inevitably antagonistic and destructive made no sense at all from an evolutionary standpoint. Morality was a universal imperative. "The increasingly complex human brain," as Clark put it, "determined the search for social morality; functional ethics has an organismic base, it is a biological imperative for man."[88]

Human nature, then, had potential, but was volatile and wayward. Humans had the built-in capacity to construct cultures to provide stabilizing structures of order and meaning, but the capacity was messy and obviously not fool-proof. It was important that human intelligence be cultivated, expanded on, probed, and nurtured to facilitate the construction of stable, productive, and psychologically healthy cultures and societies. But this called for hard work. The human self, we will recall, was generally understood to be fragile and weak. Empowering it was not only a private therapeutic affair between patient and therapist, but an institutional one requiring major structural and cultural – and if you will – therapeutic changes. To begin one had to acknowledge the difficulty of engaging human nature, with its propensities to excess, and to take pathology seriously. Romanticizing human nature was foolish and dangerous.

The counter culture, however, rippled with talk of universal love and sexual liberation.[89] Advocates of Black Power imbibed and reinforced an exuberant faith in

[88] Ibid. The notion that morality has a biological base is still a contested issue, especially in the social sciences. I personally feel the question needs to be seriously engaged by more social scientists outside the fields of anthropology and ethology.

[89] It also contended with excessively negative assessments of human nature. Lawrence Veysey's observations on authoritarian communes reveal an excessive asceticism, a willingness to discipline and punish and break down human propensities to selfishness, self-indulgence, and other vices. See Veysey,

human nature, encouraging African-Americans to get in touch with themselves, with their own genetic and cultural realities. The first issue of *The Journal of Black Psychology*, for example, emphasized the need for blacks to both acknowledge their genetic and biological "difference" from whites and to affirm such difference with pride. A group of psychologists called for more research to ascertain whether the parapsychological capabilities of many Africans, evident in the practice of Voodoo, were not so much grounded in environmental factors as genetic ones (which they themselves believed.) There was also speculation on the possible influence of Melanin on human behavior, that it "refine[d] the central nervous system" and "produce[d] a highly sensitized, sensory-motor network."[90] The authors affirmed that "non-whites, [were] indeed `more emotional' than whites" -- just as middle class white racists had traditionally supposed. These differences were real, physiologically grounded, and a sign of strength, intelligence, and connectedness to nature – a connectedness African cultures encouraged. To acknowledge such differences was empowering. [91]

The biological basis of human behavior and culture was clearly a contentious issue. On the one hand, biology and evolution had in the past been used to legitimate assumptions of racial inferiority (or superiority.) On the other hand, as we have seen, denying the importance of biology altogether, jettisoning the whole notion of human nature, also pointed to trouble. Cultural conditioning could be as deterministic as genetic inheritance. Whereas a reductionist emphasis on biology had fed into unsavory theories

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The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Counter-Cultures in America (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1973), Chap. 5 (279-406).

[90] Cedric X (Clark), D. Phillip McGee, Wade Nobles, and Luther X (Weems), "Voodoo or IQ: An Introduction to African Psychology," *Journal of Black Psychology*, 1:2 (February 1975): 9-29. For their stress on the importance of melanin to emotional sensitivity, see 16-18.

[91] Ibid., 18.

of racial inferiority, a reductionist emphasis on environmental conditioning often pointed to theories of cultural deprivation that many African-Americans, Clark included, deemed oppressive in their own right.[92] In the opening chapter I discussed how an emphasis on the innate potency of "nature" or "human nature" was an empowering departure point for liberals and radicals alike. For radical blacks, a biologically grounded Black or African ethos was a valuable conceptual tool kit for empowerment.

Clark, on the other hand, always struggled to negotiate and strike a balance between optimism and pathology. Social pathology encompassed everybody, and it was rooted in an intricate web of cultural, evolutionary and biological realities. A conceptual scheme integrating biology and culture *had* to take pathology seriously. The more volatile and non-rational aspects of our nature, for example, had to be responsibly probed and reckoned with. The human individual self, fragile and weak as it was, needed psychological empowerment to understand and negotiate the contrary forces and impulses that all had roots, to some degree or another, in our biological make-up. Failure to do so would manifest in flawed and de-humanizing social institutions. Enthusiasts of black culture could not take it upon themselves to mystify human instinctual nature and indulge in fantasies of instinctual release.[93]

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[92] See Edward J. Barnes, "Cultural Retardation or Shortcomings of Assessment Critiques?" Reginald L. Jones, ed. *Black Psychology*, 66-76. For Clark's critique of the cultural deprivation model see *Dark Ghetto*, 129-133.

[93] For a conservative critic like Philip Rieff, this romanticizing of emotional arousal not only reinforced racist imagery, but pointed to a glorification of "transgressive" behavior in general. See Philip Rieff, *Fellow Teachers* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972.) "Transgressive behavior spreads in countless unrecognized particular rites, as if to appease instinctual demands while grossly exaggerating the burden of `white' inhibitions. We jiggle our bodies, as if dancing. How gross those gestures are; when Africa danced erotically, it also danced ceremoniously. We re-educated ones dance to rid ourselves off any lingering ceremoniousness. How graceless do we wish to become?" (102-103.) Rieff in general saw genuine potential in a slogan like "Black is Brilliant," as opposed to "Black is Beautiful." "`Black is Brilliant' demands full membership in high culture, not further playings of the remissive roles assigned in our racist drama to the black." (93, note).

The contentious debates regarding sexual liberation and instinctual release, were, as we have seen, confronting other liberal psychologists as well. In the African-American community, the historical contexts of racism rendered these debates even more sensitive and contentious. Associations of Blackness with uninhibited, instinctual release were woven into the history and psychology of racism. In Clark's view, endorsing Black Liberation on a platform of such "release" while projecting pathology onto white middle class constraint was fraught with problems. He insisted that it was destructive to play into white, racial and racist stereotypes of the uninhibited, primitive, black man and black woman. For middle class African-Americans it was downright self-destructive. As Clark pointed out, some of the "advocates and interpreters of the Black Power movement [were] middle class," and it was impossible for such people to project pathology onto the middle class without implicating – that is, pathologizing -- themselves. There were, he argued, clearly unresolved psychological dynamics at work here, involving negative, racial self-concepts, a phenomenon Clark's research had years earlier confirmed as one of the consequences of a racist culture. As he put it in *Pathos of Power*:

> many…advocates [of the Black Power movement] are dominated by deep feelings of racial self-hatred. Part of the pattern of pretense and posturing includes a suicidal eagerness to ascribe all middle-class patterns of speech, grammar, dress, manners, and style of life to whites, while reserving for the exclusive use of Negroes the uncouth and the vulgar. This is garden-variety racism at its most obscene – and no less so because it is now being sold by Negroes rather than by whites. Some racial "militants" have accepted the white man's negative stereotype of the Negro. It was not acceptable when fostered by white oppression; it cannot be acceptable in the guise of flamboyant black militancy.[94]

Clark's cautionary approach to reform and "liberation" calls to mind Maslow's ambivalence towards drug-induced peak experiences. LSD trips, Maslow had insisted,

[94] *Pathos of Power*, 115.

could not be relied on to break through the confines of rationalism and open oneself up to the non-rational aspects of consciousness. Opening the floodgates of consciousness in this way could lead to insanity and psychiatric breakdowns. One had to slowly, through therapy, through hard work, engage, probe, and negotiate the different aspects of one's self. With Clark, too, our more aggressive or potentially destructive innate tendencies could neither be ignored, relegated to a specific group of people, nor recast as benign. That would be evading the hard work upon which genuine, effective, large-scale social and structural reform depended. It was misleading to project pathology onto whites and revel in agendas of black liberation, because blacks (Clark argued) could not get themselves together unless whites got themselves together, or were at least willing to try. Pathology, vivid as it was in the ghettos, was not confined to race or to class. It was counterproductive to speak of white pathology and a Black ethos. Everybody was damaged.[95]

A central premise of Black Power, however, was that Blacks had "to get themselves together" on their own. This generally translated into affirming, probing, and reassessing the concept and reality of "difference" – be it biological, cultural, historical, and/or behavioral. The pressing agenda for many radicals was to stoke the empowering aspects of a Black or African *ethos*. Pathology did not fit well into this scheme.

[95] Mary Hall, "A Conversation with Kenneth Clark," 23. "And here we must psychoanalyze a whole society that has been reared on a system of grand delusions: the delusion of optimism, the delusion that things will work out somehow." It was also, of course, counterproductive to get preoccupied with "Black pathology," to approach black pathology as racially grounded, and not socially grounded. The preoccupation with "black" pathology could easily waste energy and distract people from the hard work of social reform. See Clark's negative review of Grier and Cobb's *Black Rage* – "As Old as Human Cruelty," *New York Times*, September 22, 1968; ProQuest Historical Newspapers *The New York Times* (1851-2003): 373.

Examining the pathology of middle class whites and racist institutions was welcomed, but stressing the pathology of blacks would be, many argued, counterproductive.[96]

Clark himself was an "expert" on pathology. He insisted on the importance of grounding pathology not in race and poverty, but within the broader social systems of which they were a part. Without losing sight of this broader picture, knowing full well that middle class suburbia was also rife with dysfunctionalism, he probed the "social" pathology of the "dark ghetto," and his detailed observations pointed to a deadening passivity and despair among African-Americans, in particular children and young adults. One might not have found those retreats into domestic escapism common to middle class young people. But there were other forms of escapism or coping mechanisms – such as drugs, sexual encounters, and random violence. "For many ghetto young people," he observed in *Dark Ghetto*, "narcotics offer a life of glamour and escape, or the illusion of personal importance of even success." He cited the remarks of Reverend Norman C. Eddy, director of the Narcotics Committee, East Harlem Protestant Parish, Inc. For Eddy the "drug" problem showed no signs of abating. "The young boys and girls who use heroin love it, and they don't want, really, to give it up."[97] The fleeting relationships common to ghetto youth also functioned as a refuge from misery. "The marginal young people in the ghetto, through their tentative and sporadic relationships, are seeking love, affection, and acceptance perhaps more desperately than young people elsewhere.

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[96] Larry Neal, "New Space: The Growth of Black Consciousness in the Sixties," in Floyd B. Barbour, ed., *The Black Seventies* (Boston, MA: Porter Sargent Publisher, 1970), 9-32. See also Part I in Reginald L. Jones, ed. *Black Psychology*. See especially, Cedric Clark, "Black Studies or the Stud of Black People?" (3-17); Wade Nobles, "African Philosophy: Foundations for Black Psychology" (18-32); and Joseph White, "Toward a Black Psychology" (43-50).

[97] Kenneth Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, 91. See also Clark, "Explosion in the Ghetto," *Psychology Today*, 1:5 (September 1967):31-38; 62-64.

Person-to-person relationships are, for many, a compensation for society's rejection."[98] The sense of alienation common to middle class youth was, then, common to black youths as well. To many white youths confronting the rising corporatism and cold war machinery in post-war America, a sense of alienation and powerlessness was prevalent. The world and its problems seemed more menacing, more confusing, and more formidable.[99] For ghetto youth the targets against which to rebel were likewise vague and obscure. Clark noted that even organized gang violence common during the 1950s had given way to random acts of "general vandalism." In the 1960s, "delinquency" had given way to "a general `nothingness;' without style or meaning."[100]

For many radical black psychologists, emphasizing pathology was not the sort of talk to empower people. How could blacks be able to radically resist the status quo if they were saddled with assumptions that they were sick and damaged? To a psychologist like Jesse Johnson, Clark's work belonged in the "genre" of "Psychological Invalidism." Johnson argued that the conclusions in *Dark Ghetto* and *Black Rage* carried the message "that the black community abounds with psychological cripples." He thought of the black readers of such books, many of whom were raised in the ghetto, and doubted whether they could "recognize themselves in these [pathologized] portraits." But more importantly, blacks had to feel "good' about themselves in order to proactively strike out on their own, and psychologists could empower them or debilitate them in this regard. "I insist," declared Johnson, "that we, as black psychologists, must get the message to the black masses that they can choose whether they will view themselves as having been

[98] Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, 72.
[99] Reuel Denney, "American Youth Today: A Bigger Cast, a Wider Screen," in Erik Erikson, ed., *Youth: Change and Challenge* (New York: Basic Books, 1961).
[100] Ibid., 89.

scarred for all eternity."[101] As Reginald Jones explained in the preface of *Black Psychology*, black psychologists were attempting to send a more empowering message to African-Americans. "They perceive the need to move away from pathology oriented notions about the behavior of black people toward creating, interpreting and reinterpreting the psychological literature on blacks."[102]

Many radical black psychologists, in their efforts to "de-pathologize" behavior, started looking at "black behavior" in ways that Clark found troubling. This was a potent source of contention between Clark and radical colleagues. Where Clark saw "institutionalized pathology" at work in the ghetto, they saw different things. They looked, for example, at the extended familial networks of black Americans. Where others saw dysfunctionalism and maladaptive behavior, they saw supportive communities and dynamic cross-generational interaction.[103] Was not the suburban nuclear family under assault by white visionaries and idealists? The ghetto was marked not only by extended kinship networks, but by freer expressions of sexuality and emotion than was the case in middle class communities. They even pointed to the prevalence of the "matriarchal family" in the ghetto, a reality viewed by many social scientists and policy-makers as dysfunctional. Psychologist Doris Mosby pointed to new assessments portraying such phenomena as "constructive adaptations *[sic]* to the reality of life conditions."[104] Even drug use in the ghetto was perhaps not as mired in pathology as was often supposed. Martin Jones argued that marijuana use in the ghetto should not only be viewed as one more avenue of escape from abysmal surroundings. He cited the results of a study

[101] Jesse Johnson, "The Black Psychologist: Pawn or Professional," in Jones, ed., *Black Psychology*, 362.
[102] Reginald L. Jones, in Ibid., xi.
[103] See for example, Joseph White, *Toward a Black Psychology*, in Ibid., 44-45.
[104] Doris Mosby, "Toward a New Specialty of Black Psychology," in Ibid., 34.

conducted by a "University of California team" who went into the East Oakland ghetto to study marijuana use among low-income residents, and their findings differed from conventional "textbook" assumptions. Smoking pot, they concluded, was not escapist and pathological. "Among young ghetto people," Jones explained, "marijuana is a social, cohesion factor. It is used in conjunction with the group; to use marijuana is to belong, and its use is a factor in group acceptance. Thus it is exactly the opposite of an escape or a withdrawal, and the findings of this team contradict the traditional literature and attitudes on the subject."[105]

The Conflicts Intensify

Interactions between Clark and his more militant colleagues (and advocates of Black Power outside the profession) were quite contentious in the late 1960s. None of the papers included in *Black Psychology* (1969) were authored or co-authored by Clark. The relationship between Clark and the Association of Black Psychologists was tense. As Wade Pickren and Henry Tomes have pointed out, founding ABPSi members were suspicious of Clark, some regarding him as a "tool of the white establishment."[106] These contentious interactions were not necessarily counterproductive. In September 1971 Clark became the first African-American president of the American Psychological Association, and when it came to opening up and diversifying the profession there was much for Clark and ABPSi members to agree on. Negotiations between ABPSi members

[105] Martin H. Jones and Martin C. Jones, "The Neglected Client," in Ibid., 197-198.
[106] Wade E. Pickren and Henry Tomes, "The Legacy of Kenneth Clark to the APA: The Board of Social and Ethical Responsibility for Psychology," 54.

and APA officials during Clark's tenure were, for the most part, fruitful.[107] Nevertheless, Clark remained adamantly opposed to separatism of any kind. He could be as critical of black separatists as he was of white supremacists, not to mention apathetic types who avoided taking risky positions altogether.

In 1967, two years after he resigned from HARYOU, Clark became president of Metropolitan Applied Research Center, an organization committed to "fact-finding, analysis and program development" and to influencing government officials and agencies working on behalf of the poor.[108] The organization, founded in 1967, was intended to (among other things) resolve the problems revealed by the "`black power' controversy.'" There was, Clark contended, too much reliance on slogans, and not enough evaluation of "programs" and "tactics."[109] Over the next several years, MARC evaluated these programs, tactics and positions, and published reports. These reports and the proposals they supported were bitterly contested, particularly in the area of education. By the mid-1960s, many black leaders, frustrated with the ongoing problem of "de facto" segregated schools in Northern cities, starting calling for the reorganization of public schools toward decentralization, on the assumption that pressure from parents in local communities would increase accountability and enhance the quality of education for the students. Experiments with decentralization took place in New York City, specifically in Harlem and Ocean Hill-Brownsville, Brooklyn. After an initial period of support, Clark became an opponent of decentralization, referring to the experiments in New York as a

[107] Ibid., 54. "Despite ABPSi's suspicions that Clark was a tool of the White psychological establishment, Clark's insistence that APA become socially responsible ultimately moved the association toward the demands for inclusion and opportunities iterated by ABPSi."
[108] Clayton Knowles, "Group Formed Here to Influence Government Decisions on Aid to Urban Poor," *New York Times*, March 9, 1967; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2003): 31.
[109] Ibid.

"disastrous experience." The issue, as he saw it, became another distraction, with people increasingly preoccupied with politics and power struggles to the detriment of the students. His criticism and loss of faith in school decentralization agendas provoked much criticism from fellow liberals and radicals. As he explained in 1973: "People got very emotional about who was controlling or not controlling the school rather than about whether the schools were performing their job of teaching children to read and do arithmetic. Now lots of people, black and white, are disturbed by my blasting. They consider it traitorous or something."[110]

The debates over education were not confined to the issue of decentralization. In 1970 he submitted the "Washington Plan" for improving basic skills in arithmetic and reading. The "Plan" was passionately resisted by the predominantly black teacher's union in Washington D.C. and turned down by local officials. Radical critics pointed to the white middle class bias of the plan, a criticism warmly debunked by Clark. He assailed proposals to teach black students in "black English" or "ghettoese," as he called it. When confronted with the claim that students from the ghetto had special needs, Clark countered that there was no evidence suggesting students from so-called culturally deprived backgrounds were significantly less capable of learning than students from more affluent, middle class backgrounds. Black students from ghettos needed what all students needed – acceptance. Emphasizing their differences from whites and grounding those differences in race could, in fact, compound their sense of alienation from the broader culture – even more so as proponents of "difference" were often themselves middle class professionals who spoke "impeccable English." In general, Clark was opposed to reforming education on the basis of racial identity and difference which became

[110] Clark, "Just Teach Them To Read!" 61.

important to social-identity movements in the 1970s and 1980s. As he told an interviewer in 1973, "What I try to help my students to understand is the commonality of man."[111]

Clark, then, consistently denounced separatism wherever he found it. Romantic appeals to Africa had to be seen for what they were – "props to sagging egos" not all that different from racial props shoring up white egos.[112] He viewed the shift from broad, integrative social psychological frameworks about "man and society" into more racially circumscribed black frameworks at retreats – and retreats were seductive when the magnitude of social problems seemed so overwhelming. Black Studies programs, warmly endorsed by radical black psychologists, were (he argued) a case in point. Black students needed to be alongside whites studying physics, engineering, history, literature, etc. The presence of programs largely appealing to and staffed by black students would be one more force segregating them from white students. As he put it in 1973:

> I think they [Black Studies programs] are a hoax….It's an easy out. It's an easy way of dealing with an emotional problem. If you contrast the method of setting up black studies with the methods of setting up a serious thing such as nuclear physics or serious courses in the humanities, you will see that black studies have just become the colored section, the Jim Crow section. They reflect segregated academia, which is to me intolerable.[113]

These were impassioned debates. They parallel and overlap with some of the debates that engaged Skinner, Maslow and Rogers in the late 1960s. Clark's tense encounters with radicals, in other words, further highlight some of the challenges confronting liberal reformers in these years. For a liberal like Clark, democratic individualism was always paramount. And democratic individualism required constant

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[111] Ibid., 63.
[112] Kenneth Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, 219.
[113] Kenneth Clark, "Just Teach them to Read!" 64.

and vigilant awareness – personal and sociological – from threatening forces. In the early post-war years public intellectuals and cultural critics had identified such threats in the rise of "groupism" or the organizational ethos. The solution, as William Whyte had argued, was not to reject all organizations, but to creatively resist them from within *as individuals*. Clark was a champion of creative resistance. It was the safeguard against authoritarianism, against illusion, against being taken in. As the human ego was so fragile, creative resistance included a critical awareness of one's self, of one's own motives, the motives of others, and the relevance of power to human motivation, generally speaking. One always had to be on the look-out for danger signs. In the cold war era, an era of affluence and organizationalism, danger signs were everywhere. There was so much pressure to step in line and "get along."

For African-Americans, Clark insisted that it was especially crucial that they cultivate this capacity for creative resistance – *as individuals*. Whites, dulled by affluence and poverty alike, were remarkably deficient in this regard. Blacks, tuned into the darker elements of American public culture, had – like many young white idealists – the moral high ground. "Resistance" was admirable and to be encouraged. At the same time, the menace of "organizationalism" could never be ignored. One had to keep one's critical faculties alert, even – and especially – with regards to one's own group. For one's own affiliated group, without the creative and critical resistance of its "members," could become another "organization." Whites in general were succumbing to the organizational ethos *en masse*. Blacks, then, would have to take the initiative. They would have to save themselves and whites as well. "The ultimate irony of contemporary America," as Clark put it, "is the fact that it might be imperative for the Negro to assume the decisive and

difficult role of the critical intellectual if America is to be saved."[114] This also meant that the black intellectual would have to have the courage of critiquing fellow blacks, even if it meant being disagreeable. "Like E. Franklin Frazier, he [the black intellectual] must be free to criticize the moral erosion and spiritual emptiness in his own group, even if his impatience and empathy seem to result in intemperance and lack of compassion."[115] The duty of the creative individual was, in effect, to stand alone.

To stand alone is difficult and demanding, especially when the need for community is intensely felt as it was in the 1960s. It is important to note that Clark, like Rogers, Maslow and Skinner, valued community and saw in authentic community the sign of "real" progress.[116] In his view, creative resistance or "standing alone," was, paradoxically, what authentic community required. It saved a community from a number of evils, including groupthink. Groupthink was antithetical to genuine community. Groupthink smacked of that anxious conformity that rendered the fragile self vulnerable to – in middle class suburbia -- apathy, passivity, and mindless consumerism, and -- in the counter culture -- to faddishness, anarchy, or the sway of compelling leaders. To engage reality with creative resistance, then, was crucial. It required work. On a cultural and societal level it demanded, in fact, a work *ethic.*

The issue with work brings us back to what was a thorny dilemma for liberal cultural critics in the 1940s and 50s. Clark and his colleagues were committed to that difficult feat of nurturing a work ethic in affluent times. But a work ethic depends on an authoritative or stable cultural framework, and for liberals the crisis of authority in the post-war decades remained a formidable problem. How to ground public culture with the

[114] *Pathos of Power*, 23.
[115] Ibid., 26.
[116] Ibid., 8.

values of a "work" ethic without being authoritarian, morally or politically, remained an unresolved dilemma. For these liberal psychologists it was clear that religion and capitalism no longer – as Skinner put it – induced members of the culture to work for their welfare and "general survival." Like Skinner, Clark hoped the social sciences could fill the void, in particular psychology. Psychology would supersede religion and capitalism by equipping people with skills to understand themselves and their society. It would elicit that "totality of intelligence" and cultivate that moral sensitivity that Clark saw as crucial to social reform.

Psychology, and indeed the social sciences in general, were not able to adequately fill this role, and it is not clear how they could have. The radicalism of the 1960s was incredibly diversified. As influential as psychology was, many people did indeed turn to religion for guidance, structure, and inspiration. Many hippies and communitarians were drawn to Eastern religions, but many experimented with Christianity as well.[117] In the African-American community religion was a potent force, exemplified in the appeal of both the Reverend Martin Luther King as well as – in the northern cities – that of Black Muslim leaders like Malcolm X. Furthermore, the social and behavioral sciences, especially psychology, were highly contentious fields. And many of the radical black psychologists with whom Clark clashed were motivated social scientists who took their work and the methods of their work very seriously. When it came to methodology and promoting psychology for human welfare consensus was often hard to come by.

It is worth noting that Clark, like his visionary colleagues, became increasingly skeptical of the ability of psychology to facilitate the sort of authentic, social and cultural

[117] For experiments with religion, see Melville, *Communes in the Counter Culture: Origins, Theories, Styles of Life*, chap. 9: "The Search for Alternative Realities." "Who would have guessed five years ago that there would be a religious explosion among the middle-class young?" (14)

reform he considered necessary for a democratic public culture. Social scientists, black and white, liberal and conservative, were succumbing in general to the organization ethic, and becoming "organization men." In the context of "the organization" whether one was a conservative, radical or liberal made little difference: in any event it was unlikely social science would seriously shake things up. The gap between theory and practice, and academia and its relevance to social change, would, in fact, widen. In *Pathos of Power*, his last book, Clark noted the demoralizing "organizational" tendencies at work in the growing numbers of psychologists working as consultants to people in positions of political power. Proximity to power can corrupt, and social and behavioral scientists were no less immune than most people to the seductions of power. The 1940s and 50s had been, in Clark's view, the heyday of social science as social criticism, peaking with the *Brown* decision. But it was later followed by the "Moynihan era," a time when "certain social scientists, those who are most widely publicized, offer themselves as agents of those who are in political power."[118] This shift marked a depressing return to the social scientist as social apologist, and the use of social science "as a weapon for the maintenance of things-as-they-are."[119] There was also the equally demoralizing tendency on the part of "most social scientists" to retreat into professional and academic escapism. "Retreating [sic] to the sterilities of the past, they tend to remain detached, deliberately uninvolved in the problems of social justice and social change, safe from controversy and protected from being accused of availability for hire."[120]

Clark felt increasingly alienated in his later years, from liberals, conservatives and radicals alike. In his interview with Mary Hall in 1968, he noted that he was planning to

[118] Ibid, 129.
[119] Ibid.,130.
[120] Ibid., 127.

write at length about problems in public education, particularly the problems in inner city schools. He predicted that his work would generate much interest and discussion among well-meaning people, but that little in the long run would change beneath the surface. Twenty years later he declared grimly that his predictions had rung true, and that problems plaguing public education in American inner city schools were practically as bad as they had been two decades earlier.[121] The organizational ethos in general got the better of people. Yet if Clark regarded the radical initiatives of the counter culture as "fluff," as he later did, looked critically on the "flawed" initiatives of radical psychologists committed to social change, and criticized social scientists for becoming "organization men," he was no less critical of himself. As he frankly confessed to Mary Hall in 1968, "To be quite candid about the success of my attempts at being a psychologist for society, I have to state that I have failed. I've produced documents. Documents and memorandums. The involvements in social action and social change that have dominated my life add up to one big failure."[122] Of course, we need not be as hard on Kenneth Clark as he himself was. He did indeed accomplish much. But his agendas, like those of Maslow and Skinner and Rogers in the early post-war decades, were grand and all-encompassing. The agendas included and transcended black liberation. They centered on the survival of democratic culture, and indeed of humanity itself. They called for revolutionary changes in institutions and consciousness. In Clark's case this entailed

[121] See his New York Times obituary: Richard Severo, "Kenneth Clark, Who Helped End Segregation, Dies," *New York Times,*(May 2, 2005, 1. His assessments on the public school situation are regrettably accurate. What strikes me is the extent to which the deplorable quality of education was such a potent issue in the 1960s. Today, despite so much concern, we seem used to it. But anyone with even minimal exposure to inner city public schools has encountered the blatant class inequities in the system. See Antonia Cortese, "Get Real: Here's the Boost that Poor Children, Their Teachers and Their Schools Really Need," *American Educator* (American Federation of Teachers, Spring 2007), 4-9. The article however, highlights problems most people are aware of, and points to no solutions that haven't been trotted out again and again.
[122] Mary Hall, "A Conversation with Kenneth Clark," 21.

the eradication of poverty and racism and all the interrelated factors perpetuating them. Nothing short of that would suffice. It is in this light that he so harshly judged himself, his profession, and the legacy of the counter culture.

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