ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DEMOCRACY: PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCEPTS IN AMERICAN CULTURE, 1940-1965

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This dissertation examines some of the ways that mid-century American culture represented mental health and employed psychology to understand and describe America and Americans during and after World War II. I argue that Americans used psychology both to describe and define the ideal to which Americans should aspire. This ideal differed widely among authors, but almost always included an embrace of a "free" society, which among other things meant free of neuroses. Neurotic people were seen, in this literature, as not having rational free choice in their actions, and such unfree people created unfree forms of government. Psychological health was therefore not only necessary for individuals, it was also an issue of public concern. This meant, for example, that the ability of a woman to achieve sexual satisfaction was not just a question of her own physical contentment, but also of the very survival of American democracy. Mid-century authors feared that the mental health of Americans was especially vulnerable in the modern era, and that this vulnerability might plunge America into

authoritarianism. These authors were most concerned that Americans were too often tormented by feelings of inferiority.

This dissertation demonstrates the connections between psychology and political ideals, shining new light on both the views of postwar liberals and on the rising "new Right." In addition, it shows how the anxiety that Americans felt over modernity affected discussions of democratic social structures. It also demonstrates the vital ways in which these discourses were connected.

This work relies largely on mass-culture sources, including magazines, films, popular books, and television programs. These sources are supplemented by the papers of the American Psychological Association, the works of publicly influential intellectuals, and by government documents.

The chapters of the dissertation deal specifically with the supposed effects of child discipline on the formation of political beliefs, the role of masculine autonomy in a democracy, the effects of women's sexuality on American society, the effects of racial prejudice on both the prejudiced themselves and on the victims of prejudice, and the place of juvenile delinquency in a democracy.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DEMOCRACY:
PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCEPTS IN AMERICAN CULTURE, 1940-1965

by

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Chapter 1: Introduction: The Psychology of Democracy

Discussions about American society--what was wrong with it and how to improve it--often took psychological form in mid-century America. The successes and failures of America, in the words of Franklin Roosevelt, were "measured, not by the extent of territory, financial power, machines, or armaments, but by the desires, the hopes, and the deep-lying satisfactions of the individual men, women, and children who make up its citizenship."[1] This dissertation examines some of the ways in which Americans employed psychology to understand and describe their society during and after World War II. Because I am interested in how ordinary Americans understood and used psychology to understand their world, I have analyzed the use of psychology in mass-circulation magazines, popular books and films, and documents routinely referenced in those widely distributed cultural products.

I argue that Americans used psychology both to describe problems with American culture and to define the ideal to which Americans should aspire. That ideal differed widely among commentators, but it almost always included a "free" society, which meant among other things free from neurosis. Neurotic people were seen as not having rational free choice in their actions and such unfree people were believed to create unfree forms of government. Indeed, Psychology became central to both liberalism and conservatism in the mid-century, but liberals and conservatives developed differing ideas about what kind of government best promoted psychologically healthy citizens. My interest is in

[1] Franklin Roosevelt quoted, "General Report of the Conference," in United States Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, *Proceedings of the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy* (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1940), 1.

finding the ways that authors sought to understand the psychological make-up of a good American citizen and how these understandings related to definitions of democracy itself.

For the purposes of this dissertation, I have defined "psychology" rather broadly. I am interested in understandings of the human mind, and especially of behavior and emotions. Most importantly, I am focusing on minor deviations from what authors I discuss might describe as healthy or normal psychological development (though they certainly differed on what was healthy and normal), and how such deviations affected the individual, the family, and American society as a whole.[2] My interests in this dissertation revolve around what might be called the pathologies of every day life, small psychological problems believed to haunt almost every individual. Mass culture in the mid-twentieth century portrayed people as suffering from small complexes, repressions, and other neuroses that made them less happy and less rational in their lives, but did not send them reeling into mental hospitals.[3] People suffering from such neuroses were generally described as "normal" or as seeming normal, but the symptoms of their neurosis caused problems both in their own lives and in the lives of those around them. Americans in this period seemed to be more interested in the meaning of neuroses for American culture than in psychosis.

The authors I discuss in this dissertation defined good government, family structure, and social structure with reference to psychological health. They argued accordingly that the most desirable form of government was not so much the government

[2] I will only occasionally differentiate between psychology and psychiatry, and only when my sources did so. Most mass culture sources talked about psychology generally, and rarely differentiated between sub-professions (see Jum Nunnally, *Popular Conceptions of Mental Health*: *Their Development and Change.* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1961), 59.

[3] A "neurosis," for my purposes, is a physical or behavioral symptom of a psychological problem—this is how the term was most often used in mass culture. The term was generally used without specificity; that is, most authors would say people developed neuroses without describing the psychological process, and often with little detail about the cause. This is not the medical definition of neurosis.

that provided for the material or physical needs of its citizens but the one that satisfied its citizens' psychological needs. Likewise, the best form of government was one created by the most psychologically healthy individuals. For these authors, democracy was not only the healthiest form of government, but it was also the form of government created by the healthiest individuals.

The discussions I follow here are not, however, works of homage to the psychologically perfect democracy of the United States. Instead, America was seen as facing new psychological challenges in the postwar world. These discussions created a picture of an America falling apart under the psychological strains of modernity, for just as the psychologically healthy citizen created the perfect government, the psychologically unhealthy citizen undermined it in important ways, even with the smallest of neuroses. Images of Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia loomed large in American culture as both a predictable result of modernity and as a warning to the United States of what could happen if too many Americans became psychologically weak. According to my sources, the ability of a woman to achieve sexual satisfaction affected both her own physical contentment and American democracy's survival. A man's self-confidence was not only likely to shape his own life but also the very structure of his government. Psychological satisfaction was not just important to individuals; it was an issue of vital public concern.

This mid-century use of psychology was rooted in changes that had been taking place in the half-century before World War II. The growth of psychology accelerated in the late 1800s, just as industrialization boomed in the United States. This growth reflected the rising emphasis on rationality that was a part of modernity.[4] Those who

[4] Peter Bürger, *The Decline of Modernism,* trans. Nicholas Walker (University Park, P.A.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 3.

studied psychology believed that the science of understanding human thought and emotion could be as rational as physics or chemistry. At the same time, however, psychology itself often denied the rationality of humans, especially in the modern era. The majority of the popular books dealing with psychology, and many of the mass-circulated articles that pared their arguments down for the casual reader, contended that the twentieth century was a particularly uncertain age, one that could plunge the United States (and often the Western world) into a future of tyranny and oppression or usher in a new era of democracy and self-fulfillment. Authors concerned with the psychological health of Americans during and after World War II worried that modernity had removed structures of authority (usually defined by hierarchical relations both within the household and in the larger society) that had traditionally provided psychological security for Americans. This change meant that Americans had new opportunities and new degrees of freedom, but these new possibilities could be psychologically challenging. The goal of psychology was not only to understand humans, but also to help people become more rational, which would enable them to take advantage of the freedom offered by modernity. The psychological ideal of the mid-century United States was the rational man, and anything that interfered with rational decision-making was considered neurosis.[5]

[5] I say "rational man" because women were still generally considered less rational than were men. The same general idea still applies, however. Irrationality in women was likewise seen as a sign of neurosis, though what was deemed irrational behavior for women was different from what was deemed irrational for men. This mass culture use of psychological concepts bore striking resemblances (and some overlap of authors, especially Erich Fromm and Alfred Adler) to the ideas of both the Frankfurt School and to existentialism. Both were attempting to understand the effects of freedom on both humanity and on forms of government. See Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), passim; and Albert B. Hakim, *Historical Introduction to Philosophy* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1992), 789-790.

The postwar period was especially marked by a concern that Americans were increasingly suffering from feelings of inferiority, which interfered with their mental health. According to my sources, a sense of inferiority was one of the supposed effects of life in the modern world, where the individual was not sure of the meaning of life or of her or his proper role in society. Many writers believed that one of the markers of modernity was the "uncanny insecurity" it created, and the psychological damage wrought by this insecurity.[6] People who felt insecure were construed as particularly vulnerable to inferiority complexes or other inferiority feelings which, according to mid-century authors, left them vulnerable to undemocratic forms of government.

The idea of the inferiority complex came from the work of psychoanalyst Alfred Adler. A one-time follower of Sigmund Freud, Adler broke from Freudianism and founded the school of "individual psychology," which emphasized the relationship between individuals and society.[7] Overcoming a sense of inferiority was central to treatment in Adler's view. He downplayed the role of innate drives, especially libido, and focused instead on the ways that external factors (society) affected the development of the individual. Adler believed that people suffering inferiority complexes were marked by timidity, insecurity, submissiveness, and obedience, or that they might compensate by becoming rebellious, impudent, aggressive, or by striving for superiority over others.[8] Some people suffering from inferiority complexes made a more concerted attempt to fit into society—to conform. Others tried to establish their security by

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[6] Friedrich Nietzsche quoted in David Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity: Theories of Modernity in The Work of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin* (Cambridge, M.A.: MIT Press, 1986), 31. In mass culture literature, inferiority feelings were often conflated with the inferiority complex (the first seemingly fully conscious, the second unconscious). On conflation of these concepts in mass culture, see H.J. Eysenck, "What's The Truth About Psychoanalysis?" *Reader's Digest*, January 1960, 41.
[7] David Hothersall. *History of Psychology*3rd edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995), 296.
[8] Robert I. Watson, *Basic Writing in the History of Psychology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 343.

exerting power over others through prejudice, hyper achievement, or aggression. Still others reacted against society with violence, apathy, or delinquency. All of the symptoms that Adler described became part of the image of totalitarian citizens and their leaders in the mid-century United States.

The effects of inferiority feelings were seen as especially problematic for identity development. Psychologist Erik Erikson, whose understanding of childhood became very influential in the postwar United States, argued that people had to form a sense of autonomous identity (usually in adolescence), which meant they had to develop their individuality and continuity of personality. The alternative, for Erikson, was "role diffusion," in which the individual failed to form his or her individuality or a stable personality.[9] Many authors tied Erikson to Adler, and argued that inferiority complexes or feelings could prevent successful resolution of the identity crisis, thus making both the cause of neuroses in adults.

The concern with the psychological effects of modernity increased as Americans sought to comprehend events in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s. The rise of fascism belied the expectation that modernity brought inevitable progress toward democracy, leading Americans, along with others in the western world, to struggle to understand how modernity might lead to authoritarianism. While definitions of modernity varied, they usually included urbanization and suburbanization, greater mobility of the population, men leaving the home during the day for white collar jobs with increasingly large corporations, and lack of economically valuable work for women and children.[10] These changes were seen as having created disruptions in gender roles, traditional social

[9] Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1950), 242-243, 265.
[10] Some traced modernity back to the enlightenment, but argued that its strongest effects on daily life had come with the second industrial revolution of the late 1800s. See below, chapters three and four.

hierarchies, and the value systems of Americans. My sources saw Nazism in Germany as the result of similar disruptions, and worried that America needed to change course to avoid authoritarianism. They looked to psychology both to understand how these disruptions had promoted authoritarianism and for a defense against this threat.

Although psychology was making its way into mass culture before World War II, it changed its focus during the war. Attempts to comprehend differences between the democratic and authoritarian personality moved to center stage at this time and profoundly shaped the postwar era. Americans would come to identify the Soviet Union as a totalitarian government in the tradition of Hitler and rely on the same psychological explanations for describing and understanding communism that they had developed to understand fascism in the 1940s.[11] Like fascists, communists were assumed to be fleeing the freedom potentially obtainable in a democracy for the horrible security of a totalitarian government.

Preserving American democracy against totalitarian threats was, of course, a central concern of mid-century liberalism. And, while mid-century liberals believed capitalism the best economic system, they saw it as flawed. Government action could, they believed, compensate for capitalism's deficiencies by providing consumers and workers a modest level of economic security. [12] In the atmosphere of postwar anti-communism, however, liberals downplayed arguments for economic intervention by the federal government to protect Americans from the caprices of a market economy. The Red Scare that began in earnest in 1949 with the "fall" of China, a successful atomic test

[11] Historian Eric Foner argued that "totalitarian" was being used as a synonym for America's Cold War enemies by 1950 in Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1998), 261.
[12] Alan Brinkley, *Liberalism and Its Discontents* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 38, 60.

by the U.S.S.R., and the trial of Alger Hiss, made such arguments suspect and left their advocates open to charges of treasonous behavior.[13] As previous historians have shown, psychology provided a powerful language for critiquing American culture and free market capitalism in this context.[14]

Similarly, liberals used psychological concepts both to explain and solve the problem of racism. Gunnar Myrdal, a Swedish economist and critic of Nazism, wrote about the social and psychological problems suffered by racists in 1944 in his *An American Dilemma*.[15] The NAACP used this study, among others, to show the destructiveness of segregation on the psyches of African Americans in *Brown v. The Board of Education.* The use of psychology here was not only about providing economic security to Americans, but also about using the government to create social structures that promoted mental health.

This use of psychological concepts was part of a larger American trend to view national problems as manifestations of the personal weaknesses of individuals.[16] I began this project expecting to find that Americans who imagined social problems as psychological problems undercut collective action, that they would argue that social problems needed individual cures, rather than social reform. However, what I found was far more complicated. Certainly, the use of psychological language by postwar liberals

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[13] See James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 169-179 on the opening events in the Red Scare.
[14] Daniel Horowitz, *The Anxieties of Affluence: Critiques of American Consumer Culture, 1939-1979* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004), 4.
[15] Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and American Democracy* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1944).On Myrdal's World War II critiques of Nazism, see Walter Jackson, *Gunnar Myrdal and America's Conscience: Social Engineering and Racial Liberalism, 1938-1987* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), xi.
[16] See May, 14, and Jennifer Terry, "'Momism' And The Making of Treasonous Homosexuals," In Molly Ladd-Taylor and Lauri Umansky, ed., *'Bad' Mothers: The Politics of Blame in Twentieth Century America* (New York: New York University press, 1998), 172.

moved them toward justifications of social reform based on reform's supposed effects on individuals. For example, the psychological emphasis often led those pushing for equality for African Americans and women to deemphasize equality as an end in itself, and to rely instead on arguments about the mental health of the individual who suffered because of inequality. Still, according to many liberal authors, mental health could be restored only through collective action, through the reform of basic social and economic relations.

Indeed, I kept finding myself reminded that the civil rights movement, feminism, and liberalism often relied on psychology in some form to talk about the issues they hoped to address through social reform or even through revolution. I cannot simply argue that these groups made a mistake in their tactics, for such tactics proved effective, most obviously in the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954.[17] Indeed, psychological concepts became central to liberalism in the postwar era. While, in hindsight, this reliance on psychology seems destined to create a society more interested in individual rights than in greater social and economic equality, it was initially used to contend for the latter. Psychology provided liberals with an effective resource for explaining, describing, and perhaps for solving social problems.

I have concluded that the postwar focus on psychology did not necessarily signal an exclusive interest in individuals. Social structures, political opinions, and economic conditions were all seen as both cause and consequence of psychological problems in liberal literature. Often, liberal authors suggested social solutions to psychological problems—a "personal is political" kind of view that anticipated some of the uses of

[17] Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (Supreme Court, 1954); reprinted in Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 779-785.

psychology in the feminist movement in the late 1960s and 1970s. Individual psyches were, according to this literature, both shaping and shaped by economic, social, and political relations in the United States. The solutions were at least as often to change the structure of society as they were to try to change the psychology of the individual.

The liberal understanding of psychology faced a challenge in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when political conservatives began to critique the power of psychology, and contradictorily to use psychological arguments to support politically conservative policies.[18] Conservatives employed both of these tactics to make a case against the liberal view of security, arguing that Americans were too secure, and that this security threatened America's ability to fight the communist threat by weakening citizen's individual autonomy and incentive to sustain free-market capitalism. They believed that federal reliance on psychology to justify social programs was not only bad government but also bad psychology. The conservative understanding of psychology rose in the wake of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, as the emerging "new right" began to voice its opposition to federal involvement in social and economic matters.[19]

Methodology

Because my interest is in the most widely-circulated ideas, mass-circulation magazines were the starting point for all of my research. I surveyed a number of

[18] I am using both liberal and conservative here fairly broadly. By "liberal," I generally refer to the New Deal liberals in the postwar era as defined by Brinkley (See above, page 22). Conservative is a more vague term here, though generally refers to the growing New Right, which resisted integration and began to argue against the welfare state in the late 1950s.

[19] Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001, 10.

magazines through the entire period, and used indexes to locate relevant articles from a number of other magazines. In surveyed magazines, I relied on titles to identify useful articles in each issue; looked through indexes for relevant articles where indexes were available; and gave a more thorough reading to issues from April and October of each year.[20] I chose widely circulated magazines that corresponded to different target audiences.

For general material read widely by a diverse audience of Americans, I surveyed *Reader's Digest* and *Science Digest.* Both magazines printed original articles and reprints of articles from other magazines. *Reader's Digest* was the most widely disseminated magazine of any type throughout this time period, with circulations growing throughout and reaching over 14 million by 1965.[21] *Science Digest*, while less popular, was the most popular science magazine, and pooled many articles on psychology and psychiatry from other magazines. I also examined relevant indexed articles in *Life, Look, Collier's, Coronet,* and *The Saturday Evening Post*.[22]

For news and opinion magazines, I chose to study one self-proclaimed conservative magazine and one self-proclaimed liberal magazine. Unfortunately, the conservative magazine was not published throughout my time period (there was no real conservative magazine of record for the 1940s-early 1950s). I therefore surveyed *The National Review* from its inception in 1955 through the end of 1965. For a liberal magazine, I surveyed

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[20] I chose April and October because I wanted to look at magazines in six month intervals, but chose these the two months largely at random (I did want to avoid certain months in which some magazines tended to be focused on special issues, such as December (Christmas articles predominated in many magazines), or September (*Parents'* magazine was focused on back to school information).

[21] Alan Nourie and Barbara Nourie, ed., *American Mass-Market Magazines* (Westport, C.T.: Greenwood Press, 1990), 431.

[22] These were the highest circulation general audience magazines throughout this period. For magazine circulations, see Nourie, 56, 73, 76, 209, 210, 230, 431, 447. *Collier's* ceased publication in 1957, *Coronet* ceased publication in 1961.

The Nation. In addition, I read indexed articles from *Time, Newsweek*, and *U.S. News and World Report*. I found that the last of these also provided a more conservative point of view on most issues, especially on race and the role of government.

For women's magazines, I surveyed the most widely circulated, *Ladies' Home Journal*. I also analyzed indexed articles from *McCall's, Good Housekeeping,* and *Better Homes and Gardens*.[23] For men's magazines, I examined the two most popular. *True* was the most widely circulated men's magazine early in this period, but it was overtaken by *Playboy* in the mid-1950s.[24] Since neither had a comprehensive index, I surveyed both.

I also read magazines specifically targeted at African American readers. This proved the most difficult, for many magazines in this category did not run through this entire period, and others were difficult to find. I relied most heavily on *Negro Digest* and *Ebony*, both of which I surveyed. *Negro Digest* was published between 1942 and 1951, then again between 1961 through the end of the decade.[25] *Ebony* began publication in 1945 and continued publishing throughout my time period.[26] I also examined *Sepia* and *Hue*. I was able to read *Sepia* from 1959 to 1965 (it began publication in 1952), and *Hue* from its first issue in 1953 through 1959.[27] Neither was indexed, so I surveyed both.

Finally, I examined a few magazines targeted at specific audiences in whom I have a special interest. Since so much of the psychological literature from this period was

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[23] Mary Ellen Zuckerman, *A History of Popular Women's Magazines in the United States, 1792-1995* (Westport, C.T.: Greenwood Press, 1998), 205-208. McCall's actually overtook *Ladies' Home Journal* in the last three years of my period, but did not have a higher total circulation in this period than did *Ladies' Home Journal*.
[24] Robert Pinkerton, "Man to Man Answers," *True*, April 1954, 66; Nourie, 373-375.
[25] Daniel, 159, 164.
[26] Ibid., 159, 162, 163.
[27] Unfortunately, I could find no library that had all issues of *Sepia,* and even more unfortunately, some of the issues at the New York Library's Schomburg Center, where I read these magazines, had been recently damaged and were unavailable for my use. For *Sepia* publication information, see Daniel, 345.

focused on childhood, I surveyed *Parents'* magazine from 1940 through 1965. Since sexuality was a large issue in this psychological literature, I surveyed two of the magazines from this period written by and targeted at gays and lesbians. I surveyed *The Ladder*, the publication of the lesbian rights group the Daughters of Bilitus, from its inception in 1956 through the end of 1965. I also surveyed the *Mattachine Review*, published by the Mattachine Society, from its inception in 1955 through the end of my period. While these two magazines hardly qualify as "mass" culture, they were the most widely disseminated magazines published in this period which dealt specifically with gay and lesbian issues.

For many of my other sources, I worked backward from magazines. This was especially true of books, newspaper articles, government documents, and television sources. When such sources came up repeatedly in the magazine literature, I examined them directly. All of the Congressional hearings I read were widely discussed in magazines. I looked at Congressional reports and hearings related to juvenile delinquency, psychological testing, and school integration. I also read a report by the Department of Labor, commonly called the "Moynihan Report," which dealt with African Americans in American society. I occasionally examined newspaper articles for more detail on news events that were mentioned in numerous magazine articles. Generally, I used the *New York Times* as my most significant source for news, though I turned to *The Washington Post* for events that involved politics and the federal government. With books, I read both bestsellers and books that received heavy attention in magazines.[28]

[28] I used the top ten fiction and non-fiction book lists for each year in Alice Payne Hackett, *70 Years of Bestsellers, 1895-1965* (New York: Bowker Co., 1967). I did not examine books that appeared to be

While television was difficult for me to study systematically due to the poor cataloging of television sources, I was able to use television programs when led to them by other sources. For instance, I was able to survey the program *The Eleventh Hour*, a prime-time NBC drama from the early 1960s, which followed a psychiatrist and a psychologist team as they sought to help the mentally ill.[29] The fact that the program had a panel of psychiatrists and psychologists on staff to help ensure accurate portrayal of the work of psychiatrists and psychologists did not stop members of those professions from complaining about the inaccuracies of the show.[30] Likewise, I was able to view individual episodes of news programs that had stories on psychology when they came to the attention of the American Psychological Association. For films, I looked at *Variety* magazine's ten highest-grossing films every year, using descriptions of film plots from multiple sources to determine if they were relevant to my study.[31] I also watched films that, though not among the highest grossing films, were discussed in mass circulating magazines in psychological terms. For example, *The Home of the Brave*, a film which dealt with the relationship between psychology and racism, was not one of the highest grossing films of 1949, but was discussed in both African-American and white-produced magazines in articles about psychology and race.[32]

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cookbooks, how-to guides, or biographies. For fiction, I limited myself to the most popular bestsellers and books that came up often in magazines, or whose authors wrote other pieces with psychological content.

[29] I watched one of every three episodes, chosen at random.

[30] See, for example, Charles E. Osgood and Arthur Brayfield, News Release from the American Psychological Association, December 2, 1962, Papers of the American Psychological Association, Manuscript Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. on the consulting panel of psychiatrists and psychologists for the show, see Metro-Goldwyn Mayer, Inc. Press Release, December 2, 1962, Papers of the American Psychological Association, Manuscript Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[31] I used descriptions from imdb.com (a very thorough internet movie database), and from Jim Craddock, ed., *VideoHound's Golden Movie Retriever (Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2004).* If I was unable to find an adequate description of a film in these two sources, I watched the first thirty minutes of the film to judge its relevance.

[32] *Home of the Brave.* Directed by Mark Robinson. United Artists, 1949.

I also examined some sources from professional psychologists. I was able to review the papers of the American Psychological Association, which often included material that discussed the popularization of psychology.[33]

I began my research with this extensive survey of mass-cultural sources, looking at the ways that psychology was used to understand race and gender. Finding in those sources that psychology was being woven through discussions of the most significant political issues of the day, including race relations, crime, and even the meaning of democracy, I shifted my focus toward the political uses of psychological concepts. I realized that psychology was, among its other roles, an integral part of postwar liberalism itself. As I discovered this, I broadened the scope of my research to include a wider range of sources, but always included only discussants identified by my original mass-culture sources. I maintained this focus to ensure that I could make claims about the widest possible discussion of political issues, that is, to show how psychology was used in conversations readable in the barbershop, the doctor's office, or in many living rooms, and viewable on television or at a movie theater.

I broadened the scope of my research in two directions. First, I began to look at the work of authors who were widely discussed in mass culture, even when their original work was not widely circulated. For example, Theodor Adorno's *The Authoritarian Personality* was never a best-selling book, but his theories from this work came up regularly in *Parents' Magazine, The Nation, The National Review*, and in more popularly

[33] I was not able to gain access to the papers of the American Psychiatric Association, the other major professional association of those working on the human mind in this time period.

read books.[34] By looking directly at Adorno's work, I was able to understand better how this mass-culture coverage used and differed from Adorno's own views. I also expanded my sources to include government documents that were often discussed in mass-culture sources. These included transcripts of congressional hearings, Supreme Court decisions, and government reports on both children and on the black family. These sources revealed how Americans used psychological concepts to affect real political change.

I chose to look at psychological concepts widespread in American culture, rather than in institutions and professions, because I believe psychology had its greatest power outside of those institutions. As historian Elizabeth Lunbeck argues of psychiatry, the "official guises" of these disciplines, in hospitals, prisons, asylums, and practices, remained marginal both within the medical community and in American science more generally. It was in the spread of psychiatric (and psychological) perspectives that these ideas truly gained power.[35] Indeed, the ideas of some of the most professionally influential psychological experts of the day were barely ever mentioned in mass cultural articles.[36] While most Americans had little or no experience with actual psychologists or psychiatrists, they were still probably conversant with various psychological concepts as they were portrayed in mass culture. Even high school courses often used articles from *Reader's Digest, Saturday Evening Post, Life* and *Colliers* to teach psychology to their students.[37]

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[34] For discussion of Adorno, see chapter two.
[35] Elizabeth Lunbeck, *The Psychiatric Persuasion: Knowledge, Gender, and Power in Modern America.* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 4.
[36] B.F. Skinner's views offer an example of this. While occasional articles spoke directly about Skinner's ideas and experiments, few articles combined Skinner's ideas with a discussion of American society more generally.
[37] T.N. Engle, "Report on Visitation in High Schools Teaching Psychology," Papers of the American Psychological Association, Manuscripts Collection, United States Library of Congress, Washington D.C.,

But how do we measure the impact on Americans of psychological ideas as they circulated in American culture? What power did they have? We can tell, obviously, that not all Americans read each and every book or article that dealt with psychological concepts, or agreed with every word of those they did read. Parents did not read parenting advice literature and follow every directive, and we cannot tell which they followed and which they ignored. Indeed, no one could follow every piece of advice because the literature often contradicted itself.

At the same time, it is equally unwise to believe that Americans neither listened to nor followed the advice of any of this literature, and thus that such literature is irrelevant to the study of American culture. This is almost as unlikely as the idea that they believed every word of it. Mass culture itself demonstrates the widespread use of psychological concepts. For every letter to the editor critiquing a psychological interpretation offered in an article, it seems, there was a letter praising it. Both types of letters seemed to accept that psychological interpretations were commonplace. Additionally, many of the letters to the editors of these magazines used the same psychological language as the articles. Even teenagers wrote letters to magazines that talked about "self-identity" and other quasi-psychological concepts.[38] I also believe that the use of psychological terminology by non-psychologists, even in print, shows some of the ways in which non-"experts" viewed these ideas. For example, how did someone like Grace Metalious, author of *Peyton Place*, view psychology and use psychological terms? Certainly she was not, like some of the psychologists, sociologists, and even journalists who wrote for various magazines and newspapers, some kind of "expert" involved in the process of translating

15. Of two hundred and seventy three teachers polled, ninety three percent said they used such articles. Alternately, only ten percent used articles published by the American Psychological Association.
[38] G. Gerrish Williams, "Letters to the Editor" *Look*, October 8, 1963, 20.

psychological concepts for a popular audience; she herself was part of their popular audience even while she was writing for it. Still, Metalious's characters talked about Freud, complexes, maladjustments, and psychological drives, revealing a non-professional understanding of psychological ideas.[39] Ultimately, there were too many articles by writers without professional credentials in psychology or related disciplines who used these concepts and too much consistency in mass cultural understandings of psychology to believe that every author was simply twisting professional views of psychology in idiosyncratic ways meaningless to other people.

Moreover, psychologists and psychiatrists who worried about popular views of their professions generated a body of information that allows historians a peek at how Americans received popularized psychology. A number of studies contributed to the distress of psychiatrists by showing what they believed to be mass "misconceptions" of psychology. For the historian, these studies offer rich evidence of how laypeople understood psychological concepts. Although none of these studies asked the questions I would have asked, they show that mass culture and popular understandings of mental health differed markedly from those of the professionals.[40]

The power of psychological concepts is also apparent in the attempts of some authors to break away from or change them. For example, the effectiveness of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* seems to have come both from Friedan's critique of a pre-existing psychological discussion on women and from her ability to tap it at the same

[39] Grace Metalious, *Peyton Place* (New York: Julian Messner, Inc., 1956); reprint (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999), 191, 217, 267.
[40] Jum Nunnally, "The Communication of Mental Health Information: A Comparison of the Opinions of Experts and the Public with Mass Media Presentations," *Behavioral Science* 2 (1957), 222-230; Nunnally, *Popular Conceptions of Mental Health*; Shirley Star, *The Dilemmas of Mental Illness: An Inquiry into Contemporary American Perspectives* Report no. 51, Chicago: National Opinion Research Center, c 1951, photocopied.

time. She believed that American women were dissatisfied with their lives because their constricted positions within the home did not allow them to develop their identities.[41] This argument applied to women a pre-existing understanding of the psychological needs of men for identity and autonomy.[42] At the same time, Friedan critiqued the Freudian interpretation of women's dissatisfaction, which she held placed the blame for women's unhappiness on a lack of sexual fulfillment.[43] Likewise, the adoption and concurrent critique of psychology by the new right shows a similar need to engage psychology in political discussions.

It is true that different people likely had different responses to the same concepts. It would be impossible for me to account for every possible understanding Americans formed of psychology as it was portrayed in American cultural literature. But, in the words of Susan Bordo, "to focus *only* on multiple interpretations is to miss important effects of the everyday deployment of mass cultural representations."[44] The psychological concepts I discuss in this dissertation had real effects on governmental policy, politics, and culture in American life.

The psychological discussions I engage had their roots in discussions among the white middle class, and took place mostly in white-authored sources. As a result, I am on strongest ground in my conclusions about the white middle class. Most of my writers fit into this group, and the mass culture magazines I examine seem to have circulated most widely among this group. I am on weakest ground, I think, in discussing racial and

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[41] Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1963), 77.
[42] See below, chapter three.
[43] Friedan, Chapter 5. For more on Friedan having tapped earlier discourses from mass culture magazines, see Eva Moskowitz, "It's Good to Blow Your Top," *Journal of Women's History* Volume 8, no 3 (Fall 1996), 87; and Joanne Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946-58," *The Journal of American History* Volume 79, no. 4 (March 1993), 1480-1482.
[44] Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and The Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 24.

ethnic minorities. I do not, therefore, claim to understand how American Indians, Puerto Ricans, or other relatively small minority groups understood or employed psychological concepts, even though mass culture authors occasionally offered analyses of these groups. Likewise, I do not discuss the political far left, which was marginalized in the postwar era as the Cold War escalated.

I do, however, talk extensively about African Americans. I do this for a number of reasons, the most important of which is that they were so central to politics in the mid-century both as participants and as objects of discussion that to leave them out would skew this history. This period saw, after all, the height of the civil rights movement, and even white-produced literature was not blind to the questions raised by the movement. In addition, a number of widely circulated African American magazines do provide information on how black authors employed psychological concepts, even if that information is extremely limited by contrast to the information I have on the white middle class. No magazine, for example, focused specifically on parenting for an African American audience. No magazine targeted only African American men. The African American magazines I discuss came from only two publishers, Johnson Publishing (in Chicago) and Sepia Publishing Company (in Fort Worth, Texas), and were targeted especially at the black middle class.[45] It is also difficult to tell how widely African American audiences read white-dominated publications, or how they interacted with these magazines. Therefore, my ability to draw conclusions about African American mass culture is largely limited to the middle class, and even there my conclusions are weaker than they are in regards to the white middle class. I use these sources to show

[45] Walter C. Daniel, *Black Journals of the United States* (Westport, C.T.: Greenwood Press, 1982), 159, 345.

how African American sources picked up on or responded to discussions going on in white mainstream culture.

Gunnar Myrdal, Kenneth and Mamie Clark, and sociologist E. Franklin Frazier brought psychological interpretations of African-American culture and families into both black and white magazines, but these discussions remained marginal in those magazines until after the Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education.*[46] After that decision, white conservative writers began to claim that African-American families and culture, along with liberal attempts to promote desegregation and African-American civil rights, caused psychological problems among African Americans. While the use of psychology in African American magazines was not solely a response to the white literature on African Americans, these magazines never made psychology as central to their understandings of African American culture as did white magazines, which used psychology to understand both black and white Americans. Psychological understandings never overwhelmed economic and structural understandings of race relations in *Ebony, Sepia,* or *Hue* as they did in so many white-dominated magazines. The use of psychology in mid-century culture was, then, race-specific.

Historical Literature and Psychology in the Mid-Century United States

Studies of "therapeutic culture" in American history, especially in histories focused on the turn of the century or the postwar era, have been rife in recent years. Historians generally use the term "therapeutic culture" to refer to the late-nineteenth and twentieth century turn in American culture toward an ethos stressing self-esteem and self-

[46] For discussion of these writers, see chapter four.

realization, and a concurrent rise in interest in psychology. Historians generally describe therapeutic culture as focused on psychological causes for all problems, rather than on economic or social causes. Likewise, they argue that those in therapeutic culture look for psychological cures to social problems, rather than economic, social, or religious solutions.

The literature on therapeutic culture began mostly as a negative critique of the culture it was examining, and lamented the replacement of individualism and morality with self indulgence and psychology. Philip Rieff's 1966 work, the first to talk about the rise of the therapeutic ethos, is largely about the decline of religion and its replacement with an embrace of "meaninglessness."[47] Likewise, historian Christopher Lasch criticizes American culture for its turn to the therapeutic over individualism.[48]

Other writers have since attempted to understand the cultural milieu in which such an ethos rose to prominence. Historian Warren Susman's 1979 essay on personality traces a new understanding of the self in American culture at the turn of the century that placed an interest in self-realization over a prior emphasis on self-sacrifice. Susman tied the change in emphasis from 'character" to "personality" to changes in the social structure of the United States.[49] T.J. Jackson Lears, who coined the term "therapeutic ethos," like Susman dates its rise to the late nineteenth century. He defines this as an "ethos stressing self-realization in this world." Lears argues that this therapeutic ethos

[47] Philip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith after Freud* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 43.
[48] Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism* (New York: Norton, 1979); and *Haven in a Heatless World: The Family Besieged* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).
[49] Warren Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York; Pantheon Books, 1984), 271-285.

created a basis for capitalist cultural hegemony and consumer culture.[50] More recently, Eva Moskowitz's *In Therapy We Trust*, the most comprehensive work to date on the therapeutic ethos, documents the rise in psychological understandings of society from 1850 to the present.[51] Her work is groundbreaking in its attention to "therapeutic" ideas and their ability both to uphold and challenge the status quo.

Other historical literature deals with specific psychological ideas or terms and their popularity in American culture. Historian Peter N. Stearns is the author of many such works. Stearns endeavors to show the historical character of emotions, and argues in numerous books and articles that Americans in the twentieth century have come to insist on (and punish the lack of) emotional control.[52] "Nervous Breakdown in Twentieth Century American Culture," for instance, co-authored by Stearns, Megan Barke, and Rebecca Fribush, traces the term "nervous breakdown" through popular culture from the turn of the century through the 1960s. The authors look at how this term, which had ambiguous medical meaning and was eventually dropped entirely by the psychiatric profession in the 1960s, took on a life of its own in American popular culture, where the term's meaning reflected important tensions over personal responsibility for mental illness. Stearns and his colleagues argue that the mass employment of this concept reflected ambivalence in American culture over drug use,

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[50] T.J. Jackson Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930," in Richard Wightman Fox and T.J. Jackson Lears, ed. *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 4.
[51] Eva Moskowitz, *In Therapy We Trust: America's Obsession With Self-Fulfillment* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).
[52] See, for example, his *Jealousy: The Evolution of an Emotion in American History* (New York: New York University Press, 1986); or *American Cool: Constructing a 20th Century Emotional Style* (New York: New York University Press, 1994).

professional psychiatric help-seeking, and changing work roles. [53]

Others have attempted to examine the history of professional psychology and psychiatry to understand the content of the therapeutic turn. Since psychologists did not control the mass conceptions of psychological concepts, studying psychological ideas at the professional level can tell us little about the importance of these ideas to the American public at large. Histories of psychology and popular culture often look at the trickle-down of psychological ideas from the profession to the public.[54] Such histories are inadequate, however, in the face of this evidence that professional psychological concepts differed from mass psychological concepts. They do, however, show how influential some psychologists and psychiatrists were as public intellectuals.

Historians of World War II and the postwar period have also dealt heavily with the role of psychology in American culture, and especially with the role of "expert" advice which delivered psychological ideas through books and magazines. The "experts" were people who had some sort of recognized mark of authority (such as a degree from an institution of higher learning), and often an allegiance to a professional field. These "experts" worked through advice columns, medical practice, or various sorts of institutional settings to influence American culture.

Some of these works focus specifically on the influence of psychological experts on government policy. The most psychologically-focused of these works on the postwar world is Ellen Herman's *The Romance of American Psychology.*[55] In it, Herman looks at

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[53] Barke, Megan, Rebecca Fribush and Peter Stearns, "Nervous Breakdown in 20th Century American Culture," *Journal of Social History* 33, no 3 (Spring 2000), 565-584.
[54] See, for examples, Hale, *The Rise and Crisis of Psychoanalysis in the United States: Freud and the Americans, 1917-1985* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); and John Burnham, *Paths into American Culture: Psychology, Medicine, and Morals* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988).
[55] Ellen Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

the influence of psychological experts on the federal government and public policy during and after World War II. Herman's interest is mainly in attempts at social engineering and the rise in the public power of psychological experts. Alan Bérubé likewise shows the influence of psychology on the government, and he also shows how such influence was mediated by non-experts in the government. He demonstrates how the military bureaucracy took psychiatric ideas and translated them into homophobia. While the psychiatrists who worked with and for the military wanted only some homosexuals excluded from service, the military worked to exclude all homosexuals, using a psychological explanation for their actions.[56]

Many of the historians who talk about experts see them as agents of social control.[57] In addition, the examination of the "experts" looks only at the information given in the form of direct advice or expert opinions. Such a view ignores the important lessons learned from other cultural products, such as fiction and film, which did not generally come from the so-called experts themselves. This emphasis on experts as agents of social control is especially true of histories that discuss the meaning of femininity and motherhood in this period. Most of these works deal with popular literature like Philip Wylie's *A Generation of Vipers* and Ferdinand Lundberg's and Marynia Farnham's *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex*, and focus mostly on white middle-

[56] Alan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: A History of Gay Men and Women in World War II* (New York: Plume Books, 1991), 140.

[57] This emphasis on psychiatric ideas as social control seems to stem both from the literature on therapeutic culture and from Michel Foucault's *Madness and Civilization: A history of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. Translated by Richard Howard. (New York: Vintage Books, 1965, 1988). For an interesting historiography of the concept of madness, see Andrew Scull, *Social Order, Mental Disorder: Anglo-American Psychiatry in Historical Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), Chapter 2. Scull does, not, however, deal with the historiography of the relationship between madness and gender. For this, see for example Carol Warren, *Madwives: Schizophrenic Women in the 1950s* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994) and Lunbeck. There has been little historical work on the relationship between madness and race. The one comprehensive work in this field is Sander Gilman's *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1985).

class culture. They show how, during and after World War II, women were increasingly blamed for all of the problems of the family, or even the problems of the entire society. Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English began the discussion of the meaning of motherhood in this time period. Their book, *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of The Experts' Advice to Women,* includes a chapter on "Motherhood as Pathology," which examines America from the 1920s through the early 1970s.[58] Ehrenreich and English argue that psychoanalytic theory in the postwar period "insisted on the need for female self-denial" in an attempt to reinforce the idealized gender roles of American society.[59] While they briefly discuss popular arguments that housewives were not fulfilled, the focus of their work is on literature that emphasized the satisfying results of domesticity.[60] Their view is not unusual. Many other historians who discuss the roles of "experts" argue that these experts were exercising a conservative form of social control over women. Mary Jo Buhle, in her *Feminism and Its Discontents*, argues that psychology became overtly anti-feminist in the 1940s, and coerced many Americans into believing that the domestic role was the only appropriate role for women.[61] She places the feminist movement entirely in opposition to psychology in this time period, and sees the works of Mary Beard and Betty Friedan as direct critiques of Freud.[62] By setting up this opposition, she misses some of the ways in which women employed psychology to argue for their liberation from the domestic role. For example, Friedan herself, in *The Feminine Mystique,* blamed the increasing numbers of homosexual men in America on

[58] (New York: Doubleday, 1978), Chapter 7.
[59] Ehrenreich and English, 270.
[60] Ibid., 282.
[61] Mary Jo Buhle, *Feminism and its Discontents: A Century of Struggle with Psychoanalysis.* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 171.
[62] Ibid., 206-208.

mothers who focused their sexual energy on their sons.[63] Other historians have offered a corrective for these works, showing that this literature recognized the discontent of many housewives, but still emphasized the domestic role for women.[64]

All of these historical works have laid a strong groundwork for my own study. The scope of the interest in therapeutic ideas in the postwar world, most importantly, showed me that psychological ideas might prove to be an effective way to pull together discussions about gender, race, and democracy. This literature has also shaped many of the questions I ask in my own work. Did the psychological turn really spell the end of the liberal focus on economic and social issues in favor of a narrow focus on individuals? What was the content of psychological concepts disseminated through mass culture, and did the same concepts come up in different political and social debates? How did these concepts differ when used to discuss different issues? Did psychological concepts play a particular role in understandings of race and gender in the mid-century United States, and if so, what was that role?

Periodization

While the trends I discuss were, in many cases, rooted in the half century before World War II (if not earlier), my focus is primarily on the forms these discussions took in the postwar world. Indeed, though I begin my study during World War II, most of my conclusions are about the years between 1954 and 1965. This period saw the greatest

[63] Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1963), 274, for example.
[64] Moskowitz, "'It's Good to Blow Your Top,'" 66-98; Joanne Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique," 1455-1482.

successes of the civil rights movement and the rise of the "New Right," both historical developments that the study of psychological concepts can help us understand.[65]

Much of my story is one of continuity rather than change. Psychological issues raised in 1942 were still being discussed and debated in 1965. There are, however, a few things I would like to point out about changes during the mid-century period. First, the psychological literature on the issues I engage was a trickle during the war itself, and was largely in book form. Most magazine articles published during the war dealt either with the severest cases of mental illness (and generally with institutionalized people), or with the mental health of soldiers. The literature on discipline and women's sexuality became strong fairly early (in the 1940s), but much of the mass-culture discussion of conformity, juvenile delinquency, and racism began strengthening only in the mid-1950s. In sheer volume, the psychological literature seems to have peaked in 1957 and 1958 and declined slowly thereafter. This decline coincided with the onset of effective criticisms of the use of psychology to understand social and political issues.

Psychological ideas gained popularity during and after World War II for many reasons.[66] Several trends connected to the war itself were probably the most important catalysts for this rising interest. As in World War I, public concern about the number of men who were turned down by the military for psychological reasons or who became casualties of "battle fatigue" or "shell shock" during the war created anxiety about the

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[65] On the rise of the New Right in the late 1950s, see McGirr, chapters 1 and 2, passim.

[66] Historical works which have looked in some way at the rising popularity of psychiatric ideas in this period include: Philip Cushman, *Constructing the Self, Constructing America: A Cultural History of Psychotherapy* (Reading, M.A.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1995); Burnham, *Paths into American Culture*; Hale, *The Rise and Crisis of Psychoanalysis*; and Donald Meyer, *The Positive Thinkers: A Study of the American Quest for Health, Wealth, and Personal Power from Mary Baker Eddy to Norman Vincent Peale* (New York: Doubleday, 1965). Though there is also work on popularization that points to the 1920s as the critical period in the rise of Freudian ideas, this popularization seems to be a forerunner of a virtual flood of psychiatric ideas during World War II and the postwar period (see further discussion below).

mental health of American men. As many as one third of combat casualties in North Africa during the war were psychiatric cases.[67] The large number of military discharges for psychological problems helped create the public curiosity that supported the explorations of psychological ideas in books, films, newspapers, and magazines.[68]

The war also prompted a reaction against genetic theories of behavior, for, as journalist Edward Dolnick put it, "who would study such topics as the similarities between twins knowing that his predecessor in the field was Dr. Mengele?"[69] The developmental ideas on which I focus became the dominant strain in psychology, especially in mass culture. While the increase in the popularity of developmental theories after the First World War was accompanied by an increase in other psychological theories of behavior, the large circulation of psychological theories after World War II belonged mainly to developmental views.[70]

In addition, the war brought a number of psychologists and psychiatrists to the United States as refugees. Though most Americans still had no direct experience with psychology or psychiatry, this influx increased the number of Americans who did. The majority of these refugees, who began arriving in the mid-1930s, required the assistance of American institutions to make their way through the bureaucracy controlling immigration, and so were more likely to seek employment with universities and training

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[67] Edward Dolnick, *Madness on the Couch: Blaming the Victim in the Heyday of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998), 59.
[68] Burnham, 101.
[69] Dolnick, 59.
[70] For some views of the post-World War I boom, see Hale, *The Rise and Crisis,* 13-24. By "developmental," I mean those views which emphasized childhood experiences (the development of the psyche) over genetic theories of psychology. Developmental theories did, however, often include some element of genetic views, defining certain behaviors as "natural" and others as "unnatural."

clinics than to go into private practices that they otherwise might have preferred.[71] These immigrants, many of them Jewish refugees fleeing Nazism, also brought with them their concern with prejudice and fascism.

The rise in popularity of psychological ideas also stemmed from causes that were, at most, indirectly related to the war. More Americans were exposed to psychology and psychiatry in high school and college introductory courses in this era. For example, a survey of Illinois high schools in the early 1960s showed that 14% of these schools offered courses called "psychology," and another 54% offered psychological material in other courses.[72] Almost all of these high schools introduced this material during or after World War II, with the majority of courses introduced in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Most schools also reported that their students showed an increasing interest in psychology courses.[73] A national study from the mid-1950s suggested that, while only a small percentage of American high school students took psychology courses, such courses were becoming increasingly common as time wore on, and that demand for such courses often outstripped their availability.[74]

The federal government's involvement in psychology also increased after the war in ways that spurred public interest in psychology. During the war itself the military had used psychology to try to weed out those unfit for service. After the war, in 1946,

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[71] J.E. Carney, "'Is it Really so Terribly Here?': Karl Menninger's Pursuit of Erik Erikson," *Psychohistory Review* 22, no. 1 (1993), 119- 153, 127.

[72] J. Robert Williams et al., "Results of Survey on the History, Present Status, and Outlook For the Teaching of Psychology in Illinois High Schools," Circa 1962, Papers of the American Psychological Association, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., 1. Of fifty-two schools that offered psychology courses, only two had offered such courses before World War II, and only seven offered such courses by 1945.

[73] Ibid., 2. Forty-one of fifty-two schools believed that interest in classes in psychology was increasing among their students. Five said it was constant, six had no opinion, and none believed that such interest was decreasing.

[74] Marion E. Bunch et al., "Committee on the Teaching of Psychology in High Schools Report to Education and Training board, April 23 and 24, 1955." Papers of the American Psychological Association, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., 1, 3.

Congress passed the Mental Health Act, which financed psychological research and set up the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH). NIMH's funding grew from approximately eighteen million dollars in the 1940s to about three hundred and fifteen million by 1967.[75] In the early 1960s, the federal government again increased its support for mental health programs, this time through a program to fund local mental health clinics.[76] John F. Kennedy became the first American president ever to deliver a speech specifically on mental health issues.[77]

The federal government not only showed interest in financing mental health care, but also employed psychological concepts in political decision-making. The Supreme Court's reliance on psychological evidence in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision increased public interest in psychological ideas, and pushed both sides of the debate over segregation to engage psychological evidence. Use of psychology in government reports on children and on African-American families likewise encouraged the use of psychology by those wishing to engage political debates on these issues.[78]

The connections between psychology and society came under increased scrutiny in this era as well. In the period between World War I and World War II, Americans had become interested in mental health through the mental hygiene and child guidance movements, which tied mental health to good citizenship.[79] The growing field of social psychology, and the mass-culture popularity of its advocates, also led to a greater emphasis on the links between the individual psyche and the culture as a whole. The

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[75] Hale, *Rise and Crisis*, 209.
[76] Herman, 253-255.
[77] Ibid., 253.
[78] See below PAGES?????
[79] On the child guidance movement, see Margo Horn, *Before It's Too Late: The Child Guidance Movement in the United States, 1922-1945* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989).

work of anthropologist Margaret Mead and psychologist Eric Fromm were pivotal to this trend.[80] Both published best-selling books and became public figures through studies that combined psychology with anthropology. Mead even wrote a regular column for *Redbook*.[81] The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, founded during World War II, also helped promote the spread of psychological discussion of social issues both in professional and mass-culture sources.[82]

I end my study in 1965 for a number of reasons. My primary interest is in the employment of psychology in the postwar period, as Americans sought both to understand the rise of totalitarianism in Europe, and to explore whether it could happen in America as well. The United States fought to protect democracy, but was left with a need both to define it and live up to it after the war. While this search did not end in 1965, it seems to have changed course in many ways around the middle of the 1960s. It was around this time that the war in Vietnam began to become a major political issue, one that affected Americans' debates and understandings about the meaning of democracy and the proper roles of government. In addition, both professional psychologists and mass-culture authors were reconsidering biological causes of some mental illnesses, such as autism, around this time.[83] This reconsideration changed many of the psychological conversations I discuss here.

[80] Jay, 92; Jane Howard, *Margaret Mead: A Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 278, 329-333.
[81] Howard, 392. The column began in 1961.
[82] David Hothersall, *History of Psychology* 3rd edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995), 249-250.
[83] Dolnick, 218-227.

Chapters

This dissertation is by no means a comprehensive study of all of the ways in which psychological discussions played out in American culture. Instead, I chose to look specifically at subjects that rose time and again in my initial surveys of popular magazines. Each chapter deals with a subject whose many authors defined it as a major crisis facing America, and one which could decide the very future of the United States. Neither does this dissertation discuss the behind-the-scenes stories of magazines, advertisers, politicians, or the like. Instead, I focus on the content of mass culture sources and public political and intellectual debates. I do not, for example, discuss advertisers, whose heavy reliance on psychology in this period has been well documented, and whose understandings of their target audiences were at least occasionally informed by the same images of America that I engage in this dissertation.[84]

In addition, the foci of these chapters would likely have been greatly changed if I had begun my research in African-American or working-class literature. For example, I chose to write a chapter on child discipline based on the popularity of this subject in women's magazines and parenting literature written largely by white authors and meant mainly for a white audience. In African-American magazines, discipline remained marginal, and articles on children usually dealt with either the effects of racism or teen behavior. Indeed, African Americans were unlikely to be concerned with discipline for the same reason as white authors, since the concern in white magazines, especially in the

[84] See Horowitz, Daniel, The Anxieties of Affluence: Critiques of American Consumer Culture, 1939-1979, (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004), 48-78.

1940s and early 1950s, was with children developing authoritarian personality traits—a mark of an oppressor, not of the oppressed.

My dissertation begins with a discussion of the literature on early-childhood discipline and its relations to fears of the "authoritarian personality." I argue that progressive parenting techniques were assumed to provide the psychological security that children needed to develop into democratic citizens. Progressive parenting advocates almost always assumed a white middle-class home environment. In the mid-to-late 1950s, however, progressive parenting techniques came under increasing attack from political conservatives, who criticized the "egalitarianism" in progressive techniques, argued that progressive parenting created children who were *too* secure, and called for harsher disciplinary techniques. These conservatives often blamed progressive parenting techniques not only for the supposed weakening of white middle-class Americans, but also for ostensible problems among African Americans and among the poor.

In the following chapter, I look at discussions of autonomy, which focused largely on men. I argue that many authors feared that men were looking for the wrong kinds of security; that American (and often Western) men were trying to escape from the freedom obtainable in the modern world. Liberal authors argued that America needed to provide certain kinds of security for men in order for them to exercise autonomy in other areas; that is, men had to be secure in some ways to be healthily insecure in others. These authors were ambiguous about security. They wanted some basic levels of psychological security, but worried about men over-adjusting to society and losing their autonomous identity in the process. While early literature on autonomy assumed a white male subject, autonomy later figured in discussions of the problems of African Americans and women.

In the mid-to-late 1950s, conservatives began to use psychological concepts to oppose an interventionist state, arguing that all kinds of government-provided security damaged men's psyches.

The following chapter analyzes how mass cultural sources employed psychology in response to the woman question. I contend that the psychological effects of modernity on women were often considered quite dire in this era. This literature was trying to find a new role for women in the modern world, one which neither limited them to the decreasingly-fulfilling domestic realm nor pushed them into direct competition with men. Writing on women emphasized the importance of female submission to men, and of non-competition between the genders. This discussion of women began in white-authored books and magazines, and was initially focused on white middle-class women. These views of women's roles made their way into African-American magazines, however, in the late 1950s. Unlike other issues, this one provoked no conservative attack in the 1950s. Instead, it was feminists who critiqued this literature in the late 1950s and early 1960s, often incorporating psychological arguments for individual autonomy into their critiques of earlier psychological views of women.

The next chapter examines the ways in which psychological concepts were employed to understand both prejudiced white individuals and African Americans affected by prejudice. I contend that in the late 1940s and early 1950s, psychological literature on race was focused on the prejudice of whites and the immediate impact of prejudice on African Americans, but this discussion was limited almost entirely to African American and parenting literature. In the mid-to-late 1950s, in the wake of the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education,* the emphasis of racial

liberals shifted to focus more on the long term and even multi-generational psychological effects of prejudice on African Americans, building on an already existing literature on masculinity and femininity. At the same time, racial conservatives were able to use theories about the "damaged" African American psyche to argue against both integration and the expansion of civil rights.

The last chapter deals with the issue of juvenile delinquency in this era. I left this chapter for last because in many ways it incorporates the concerns of all of the proceeding chapters. The problems I discuss in the other chapters were all described as contributing factors to the ostensible rise in delinquency in this era. I show how liberals used literature on "affluent" (white) and "slum" (black) delinquency to criticize the psychological effects of economic insecurity on men and boys, and to argue for jobs programs for men. This discussion took place in both African-American and in white-produced magazines. For these authors, juvenile delinquency was rarely about law enforcement. Conservatives, however, attacked this psychological view, and argued for stricter law enforcement as the solution to delinquency, which they seemed to see almost exclusively as a problem among the poor and among African Americans.

Chapter 2: Discipline and Democratic Citizenry

Literature on child discipline in the mid-century United States was concerned with ensuring the future of democracy. The question seemed to be: how do you raise a population of children who will fight the temptation to fall into Nazism, communism, or fascism?[1] One part of this was to raise children who were free of prejudice, which I will discuss at more length in a later chapter. The other major aspect, which I will discuss here, and which was inextricably linked to the first, was the necessity of raising children free from the symptoms of an "authoritarian personality," a psychological make-up, rooted in early childhood experiences, which predisposed people to prejudice.[2]

Literature on discipline sheds light both on basic assumptions about human psychology and development in this period, and on the links between these assumptions and political philosophies. Authors talked about discipline using two terms, *discipline* and *punishment*. "Discipline," in this literature, generally referred to any parental (or other authority's) means of controlling or directing the behavior of a child, or of instilling values into a child to make them self-disciplined. "Punishment" meant painful repercussions for bad behavior. Punishments usually included spanking, taking away

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[1] This idea of creating a perfect society through proper childrearing techniques was not new. On this view in the early part of the twentieth century, see Theresa R. Richardson, *The Century of the Child: The Mental Hygiene Movement and Social Policy in the United States and Canada* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989), 2.

[2] Theodor W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson, and R. Nevill Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality,* Studies in Prejudice Series, ed. Max Horkheimer and Samuel Flowerman (New York: Harper and Row, 1950). Previous works had made the link between psychology and authoritarian politics, though not in so popularly influential a manner. Lawrence Frank, however, writing in 1941, probably had some influence on Benjamin Spock and other parenting experts (at least on Spock's first edition of Benjamin Spock, *Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946; reprint, New York: Pocket Books, 1946), (all page references in this dissertation are to reprint edition).), since Spock published before Adorno. Frank argued that dictators were "warped and distorted by their nurture and rearing." Adorno's interest was more in the followers of dictators, rather than in the dictators themselves. (On Frank and his influence on Spock, see William Graebner, "The Unstable World of Benjamin Spock: Social Engineering in a Democratic Culture, 1917-1950," *Journal of American History* 67, no. 3 (December 1980), 612-629.

privileges (television, play time, dessert), sending a child to her or his room, or raising one's voice to the child, though some authors included any expression of disapproval in this category. Those writing about discipline believed that disciplinary methods could create a better society by creating better citizens, or a worse society by weakening the psyches of America's future generations. All sides of these debates assumed not only that parenting techniques affected development of mind, body, and personality of the child, but also that character traits such as morality, generosity, and even political and economic beliefs were often traceable to different kinds of childhoods rather than to rational ideological differences. Psychological views of child discipline showed a marked concern with forms of government, and portrayed only democracy as a rational form of government, instead of a symptom of psychological maladjustment. These writers were not only arguing about the proper way to raise a child, but also about the nature of human beings and the type of society that America should aspire to produce.

This chapter examines mass culture advice literature for parents as well as texts that described the ill effects of poor parenting on American society, and how these sources discussed discipline.[3] Since I will be engaging juvenile delinquency in a later chapter, this chapter focuses on early-childhood discipline, mostly of children before adolescence. Especially central to my research is *Parents'* magazine, which talked more about discipline than any other source. In addition to magazines, this chapter also analyzes the widely-disseminated childrearing advice of Dr. Benjamin Spock, the

[3] Discussions of both media and education and their effects on children also involved psychological arguments during this period, but I have chosen to focus exclusively on discipline because of its links to both race and gender issues. For more on the relationship between psychology and media, see James Gilbert, *A Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). For discussion of psychology in education, see Herbert M. Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curiculum, 1893-1958* (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2004); Donald Hugh Parkerson and Jo Ann Parkerson, *Transitions in American Education: A Social History of Teaching* (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2001).

conferences of the White House Conference on Children and Youth, and news stories on disciplinary matters. I also examine the pieces on which many of these other sources relied: the works by sociologist Theodor Adorno, psychoanalyst Erik Erikson, and psychologist Erich Fromm, all of whom linked developmental theories of childhood to psychological understandings of different forms of government.

Those who advocated more "permissive" or "progressive" forms of child care and discipline generally believed humans were born good, and that a parent's job was merely to guide a child in his or her natural development.[4] Those who wrote in praise of progressive parenting argued that generosity, good character, love of others, and a tendency toward democratic governing were all innate in humans, and would blossom unless thwarted by bad parenting or social ills. While progressive parenting techniques were recommended as early as 1910 by the Child Study Association of America, they took on a particularly interesting political tone beginning in the late 1930s and 1940s.[5] Writers saw progressive parenting as a way to avoid raising children who might allow fascism to take over their country. The biggest concern for these authors was the child's sense of security. Only by creating psychologically secure children could America hope to maintain its democratic form of government. If children felt secure enough to enjoy their freedom instead of fearing it, they could become unprejudiced, egalitarian, and

[4] I will be referring throughout this chapter to this general school of thought on discipline as "progressive" rather than permissive, though both terms are problematic. I avoid using "permissive" as a general descriptive term because it was often used as a pejorative term, and therefore I use it only when it was being used in the primary literature. On the pejorative use of "permissive," see Barbara Ehrenreich, *Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), 70-71.

[5] *Focus on Children and Youth: A Report of the White House Council of National Organizations on Children and Youth for the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth* (United States: Golden Anniversary White House Conference on Children and Youth Inc., 1960), 15; Ann Hulbert, *Raising America: Experts, Parents, and a Century of Advice about Children* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 226. Hulbert argues that the publication of Spock's *Infant and Child Care* was the breakthrough point in overturning the strictness of behaviorism.

democratic adults. Authors writing about progressive disciplinary methods focused largely on young children, stressing early developmental stages as vital to the development of democratic personalities. *Parents'* magazine was the stronghold of progressive parenting literature in this era.

Progressive parenting literature was especially concerned with avoiding authoritarianism. The concern in this literature, especially before the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, was with those who might become tyrants, not with marginalized or oppressed groups who might become victims of a racist authoritarian regime. The focus, therefore, was on white children. Racial prejudice among African Americans was depicted, for the most part, as learned ideology, not psychological symptom.[6] Even when it was portrayed as a result of inferiority feelings, it was never described as part of an authoritarian personality. White magazines did not talk about African-American issues as discipline problems until after the *Brown* decision, and then only in racially conservative articles fighting integration.[7] African-American magazines almost never talked about early-childhood discipline, and even when they did they did not contend that discipline affected political beliefs.

The opposition to progressive parenting, which was never silent, became increasingly loud in the late 1950s and early 1960s. This opposition tended to assume that children were naturally bad (or at least self-serving and mischievous). Writers in this genre generally emphasized the naturalness of hierarchy, and held that progressive

[6] See, for example, Ophelia Settle Egypt, "One Little Boy Meets Prejudice," *Parents' Magazine* (February 1956): 50, 90-91. Despite running in *Parents',* a magazine in which the vast majority of articles on prejudice depicted prejudice as both ideology and psychological symptom (if not solely as psychological symptom), this article showed an African-American child learning prejudice from his friends, with no discussion at all of his psychological state.

[7] See below, page 71-72.

parenting and education merely held the best children back at the level of the worst, and destroyed ambition and morality. Such parenting, they said, would rob the next generation of Americans of their leaders and scientists. They described progressive parenting as part of a negative overall trend in American culture. They saw connections between the welfare state, delinquency and crime, communism, progressive parenting, and progressive education (among other things), all of which they argued showed an increasing embrace of mediocrity in American society. In contrast to progressive parents, their critics were not concerned with authoritarianism in general, but only with communism.

Critics of progressive parenting were more focused on school-aged and adolescent children, and talked more about behavior and achievement than developmental stages. Unlike advocates of progressive parenting, these writers were not concerned with the psyche or consciousness, but focused instead on behavior as the indicator of mental health. While no unified voice against progressive parenting emerged in this era (most of the criticisms I cite are from conservative or mainstream sources that did not specifically focus on parenting or child care), more and more critics were calling the premises of progressive disciplinary methods into question by the late 1950s, and even arguing that psychological "adjustment" was bad because it created conformity instead of excellence, an idea I discuss in more detail in the next chapter.[8]

The basic assumption of progressive parenting was that parents should base all child care decisions on the child's own apparent desires. Benjamin Spock, best-selling author of *Infant and Child Care,* and other progressive authors called for a new "self-

[8] See Hulbert, 226 on the dominance of progressive parenting methods in the 1950s, and 256-290 on the backlash against this dominance which, as she argued, cemented in the late 1960s.

demand" form of child rearing.[9] Self-demand for the youngest of children largely meant allowing the children to eat, sleep, and be paid attention to as the child seemed to want (as opposed to Behaviorist methods of strict feeding and sleeping schedules, with little physical contact with the child). In terms of discipline, this meant setting rules for the child only when the child seemed to "demand" them, usually meaning that children who acted out might be calling for limits on their behavior, and parents should intuit this and set those limits.[10] Others defined self-demand more directly, meaning that the child should be involved in setting the rules by which she or he lived, and should understand the necessities behind those rules.[11] Progressive literature based the need for self-demand on the importance of avoiding repression of children's natural feelings and desires. Children who learned that their emotions were bad felt insecure, and therefore repressed their feelings. Those emotions could later resurface as hostility targeted at a minority group or other unsuitable target.

Articles arguing for progressive methods of discipline set themselves in opposition to two different childrearing techniques from earlier eras (though they rarely differentiated between these two techniques). The first form of childrearing criticized by this new parenting literature was behaviorism, which had been championed in child care literature in the early twentieth century. Proponents of the behaviorist methods basically believed that if a child behaved well, the child was growing up well. Parents who followed this method kept their children on a rigid feeding schedule, toilet trained early,

[9] Spock, *Infant and Child Care,* 29-30.
[10] Shirley Southcott, "When and How is a Child Spoiled?" *Parents,'* July 1955, 83.
[11] See, for example, William J. Reilly, "Father Changes Tactics," *Parents,'* September 1946, 32, 117; Rhoda Bacmeister, "Creative Discipline," *Parents,'* June 1951, 69-70.

and rarely cuddled their infants and young children for fear of "spoiling" them.[12] The newer parenting literature, on the other hand, drew a sharp line between behavior and internal character, even chastising parents who raised children who were "too good" (discussed further below).

The second form of childrearing condemned by progressives was that which viewed children as inherently bad, and employed corporal punishment and other harsh external controls. Often described as "Puritan" in the pages of *Parents'* magazine, the imagined parents of the old days of the woodshed viewed their children as inherently bad, and in need of having the devil beaten out of them (literally). Articles on corporal punishment occasionally used illustrations of very Dickensian looking family situations from the nineteenth century.[13] Such writers argued that "puritanical" religion could be harmful to children, and that the belief that "man is born in sin" is often tied to bad methods of child rearing.[14] Likewise, an episode of *11th Hour*, a psychological television drama from the early 1960s, showed a schizophrenic girl whose madness appeared to stem partly from her religiously zealous foster parents, who seemed to see everything about the girl as "bad."[15] These authors did not reject all religion, just zealotry, which they seemed to define by negative perceptions of humanity and reliance on mysticism over science. The 1950s White House Conference on Children and Youth argued that most religion promoted self-acceptance, and worked against denial of sexual impulses, but also warned that psychic injury could rise from an "overemphasis on wrongdoing and

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[12] Hulbert, 118-119.
[13] See, for example, illustrations with the titles for Helen W. Puner, "Should We Go Back to the Woodshed?," *Parents,'* November 1954, 40-41, 90-92; and Constance J. Foster, "You Don't Need to Punish, " *Parents,'* October 1947, 17, 168-169.
[14] Manwell, "Put First Things First," *Parents,'* April 1946, 30.
[15] "My Name Is Judith, I'm Lost, You See," *The Eleventh Hour* (Washington D.C.: Library of Congress), video recording.

underemphasis on faith in the individual's potentialities for goodness."[16] Children not only were basically good, they needed to see themselves as such.

Critiques of punishment and older methods of discipline brought forth the threat of authoritarianism in their warnings against such parenting methods, and clearly connected authoritarianism in parenting to authoritarianism in government. One author for *Parents'*, for example, wrote that calls to "go back to the woodshed" (spanking) were rooted in a "hankering . . . for force and authoritarianism, and against what a pediatric Woodrow Wilson might have called the reasonable self-determination of small children."[17] She continued, "I don't see, as I look about me at the state of people in particular and the world in general, that the generations who were raised by the old authoritarian methods were or are either particularly stable or happy, or particularly capable of leashing the forces of hate in the world. I think that one of the basic reasons why the woodshed is bad, and will always be bad, is precisely because it encourages and indeed foments natural hostility."[18] The whole point of modern parenting, as this author saw it, was to rid the world of hostility, and she saw this hostility as rising from emotions and psychological ills, not from rational disagreement or conflict of material interests.

Progressive literature that talked about changing ideas of authority tied this change not only to fear of authoritarian governments, but also to changes in American life itself. Anthropologist and popular writer Margaret Mead, for example, wrote that, despite the occasional disorganization she believed stemmed from new parenting methods:

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[16] Helen Leland Witmer and Ruth Kotinsky, ed., *Personality in the Making: The Fact-Finding Report of the White House Conference on Children and Youth* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), 161.
[17] Puner. "Should We Go Back to the Woodshed," 41.
[18] Ibid., 41, 90.

> we can still be glad of the rebellion against the old fear-enforced, authoritarian type of discipline when switch and rod, and the fear of damnation, and whippings at school that meant whippings at home, were the lot of the 'Imps of Satan' who needed to have the fear of God put into them. In the new world—where there was plenty for all who work, where medicine was opening up life for millions who would have died, where there was to be education for each according to his capability to learn—threats and harsh punishments, administered by external authorities, were no longer congruent.[19]

Mead suggested that older methods of discipline were especially unnecessary in the modern world, which was less harsh and unforgiving than the world of the past. Her modern world was a world of plenty, and she seemed to feel that Americans needed to concern themselves more with creating democracy than with filling material needs. Like others who talked about modernity, though, she believed that the modern world presented new challenges, especially the threat of authoritarianism.

Progressive child-rearing literature of the late 1940s and early 1950s argued that infants and children were naturally good and had only to be encouraged in their own desires to become adults of good character, and such encouragement would promote democratic government. An article entitled "You Can Change Human Nature" in *Parents'* magazine argued that the assumption that humans were naturally "belligerent" led to the incorrect conclusion that war was inevitable. It argued, instead, that war was an aberration of human character.[20] A similar *Parents'* article on character described this shift in thinking:

> Generations of parents have assumed over the course of the years that babies are born with selfish and destructive instincts. They have believed that children are endowed by nature with a tendency to evil which quickly gains ascendancy over their better nature unless they are curbed. . . . Are children inherently bad? Are they born with tendencies toward evil that have to be persuaded or punished out of them? Modern psychological studies say 'No.' Most psychiatrists agree that all

[19] Margaret Mead, "A New Kind of Discipline," *Parents,'* September 1959, 51.
[20] William G. Carr, "You Can Change Human Nature," *Parents,'* November 1948, 18.

> the basic and natural urges are potentially valuable. . . . Babies are born deeply conditioned toward love and cooperation and self-development.[21]

It was only when parents, or others, stood in the way of development that children developed problems, according to this article. Authors who followed this line of thought argued that any rules set for children that were not directly tied to protecting the health and well being of the child and those around it were arbitrary and even harmful. "Bad," such authors argued, often only meant "inconvenient for the adult." [22]

The main current of progressive parenting literature throughout the postwar era was based largely on the ideas of Erik Erikson, a psychoanalyst who had fled Hitler and Europe for the United States in the 1930s.[23] Erikson, like Freud before him, argued for a developmental model of childhood. He believed that children passed through a series of stages, each of which required that the child solve some crisis before moving to the next stage. Erikson saw these stages as biological imperatives which arose, in some form or another, in all cultures. [24] In the most simple terms, the human faced the problems of developing a sense of trust, a sense of autonomy, a sense of initiative, a sense of duty and accomplishment, a sense of identity, a sense of intimacy, a parental sense (interest in having and raising one's own children), and a sense of integrity. The first four of these stages took place in childhood, the fifth in adolescence, the sixth at the cusp of adulthood, and the final two in adulthood.[25] While Erikson built on Freud's stages of development for his early childhood stages, his emphasis was far more on social aspects of these stages

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[21] Sophia L. Fahs and Constance Foster, "Character: The Key to a Good Life," *Parents,'* April 1953, 82.
[22] Southcott, 39. See also Manwell, 30, 165-69.
[23] Herman, 292.
[24] Witmer and Kotinsky, 6.
[25] Ibid., 8-26; and Erikson, *Childhood and Society,* 219-233. Erikson described the stages as Trust vs. basic mistrust, autonomy vs. shame and doubt, initiative vs. guilt, industry vs. inferiority, identity vs. role diffusion, intimacy vs. isolation, generativity vs. stagnation, and ego integrity vs. despair.

and less on libidinal pleasure.[26] Erikson saw himself and others like him as searching "for the proper place of the libidinal theory in the totality of human life."[27] This totality included especially the effects of societies on their children's psychology, and vice versa. In his studies of American Indian cultures, Erikson argued that child rearing patterns were largely responsible for the political characters of particular cultures, and vice versa.[28] He also contended that Adolf Hitler and Maxim Gorky "both fell mentally ill" as part of their processes of becoming leaders in non-democratic governments.[29] He promoted the idea that children wanted to be good, and were only thwarted from this purpose by their parents.[30]

Authors who followed Erikson were careful to distinguish between discipline and punishment, arguing discipline was necessary, but punishment ill-advised. One writer, for example, worried that most parents suppose that "undesirable behavior should result in some kind of painful experience, in other words, punishment. Is this necessary or advisable? Actually there is confusion here, and where there is a chance for constructive discipline, punishment is being substituted."[31] Discipline, according to parenting literature, was necessary to create a secure environment for the child, both physically and mentally. Despite the "permissive" label, progressive authors emphasized the need to set limits for children, both for their physical safety and to keep them from having too many

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[26] Erikson, pages 49-54. By no means did this mean that Erikson completely abandoned Freud's stages—he just incorporated them into a larger scheme. For example, He defined his "autonomy vs. shame and doubt" stage as having a lot to do with "anal-muscular maturation." Instead of focusing on the libidinal pleasures and pains of the stage, however, Erikson wrote of "holding on and letting go" as the major problem of this stage—expressed, sometimes, through the best means for children's expressions: the body. He described a case study of a young boy, for instance, who started holding in his bowel movements after having lost a nurse of whom he was particularly fond. The anal symptom was a manifestation of a problem with loss.
[27] Erikson, *Childhood and Society* ,60.
[28] Ibid., 121.
[29] Ibid., 316-317.
[30] Ibid., 64-65.
[31] Irma Simonton Black, "But Won't You Spoil Them?," *Parents,'* October 1951, 35.

decisions to make. Rather than seeing this as interference, these authors contended that setting limits actually allowed children greater freedom. One such source said that "it is not complete freedom that [the child] needs. He can't stand it; it is more than he can take. It opens up too many possibilities and becomes the freedom to fail, not the chance to succeed. The child wants limits."[32] Of course, children in a democratic family were supposed to be involved in making their own rules. By setting some limits, and thus creating psychological security, parents would be actually allowing their children greater freedom both during childhood and later in life, when their psychological health would allow them to function as free individuals.

Progressive authors saw punishment as gratuitous at best and devastatingly harmful at worst. Benjamin Spock's view was fairly standard. He thought punishment showed that the parent had reached the end of their tolerance, but did little good for the child. Childhood development came from the child's desire to do good.

> What makes a child learn table manners? Not scolding—that would take a hundred years—but the fact that he wants to handle a fork and knife the way he sees others doing it. What makes him stop grabbing toys from other children as he grows older? Not the slaps that he might get from other children or his parents . . . The thing that changes him is learning to love his regular playmates and discovering the fun of playing *with* them. What makes him considerate and polite with his parents? Not the fear that they will punish him if he's rude, but the loving and respecting feelings that he has for them. What keeps him from lying and stealing? Not the fear of the consequences. There are a few children, and adults, too, who go right on lying and stealing in spite of repeated and severe punishment. The thing that keeps us all from doing 'bad' things to each other is the feelings we have of liking people and wanting them to like us.[33]

Spock did not condemn punishment; he simply believed that it was rarely helpful for the child. Spock contended that direct punishment might be required to keep the parent from being angry at the child all day. "I'm not advocating spanking," he said, "but I think it is

[32] James L. Hymes, Jr., "Personality Gets an Early Start," *Parents,'* June 1947, 108.
[33] Spock, 257.

less poisonous than lengthy disapproval, because it clears the air."[34] Likewise, an article in the *New York Times* said that even permissive parents would spank because, through spanking, "tensions that might otherwise remain bottled up are given a therapeutic release. While it is true that the child is not happy about this, he might be far less happy with a father who restrains his temper at the cost of continued irritability."[35]

This article's focus on the feelings of the parents was not unusual. Advocates of progressive parenting, whether they allowed for punishment or not, saw punishment as more about the psychological condition of the parent than about the child's behavior. A psychiatrist writing for *Parents'*, for example, claimed that when parents believed their children required punishment, "in the great majority of instances it means that the parent, and this applies to fathers as well as to mothers, has not welcomed the responsibilities of being a parent and especially has rejected this particular child."[36] While this article allowed that some children might need, even actively court punishment, others contended that punishment was never necessary.[37] One mother of four wrote a lengthy article for *Parents'* analyzing her reasons for spanking her children in the past, and found them linked more to her own "inner feelings of inadequacy, rather than actual bad behavior" on the part of the children. She further found that her punishments had failed to solve the problems her children were having, and ceasing punishment made her family a more peaceful, happy place (she took up writing in a diary to allow herself a place to vent her frustrations). In the one case where she felt that her child truly had been misbehaving

[34] Ibid., 259.
[35] David Dempsey, "Whether, How and Why to Spank," *New York Times Magazine,* July 6, 1958, 18.
[36] Lawson G. Lowrey, "How About Punishment?" *Parents,'* February 1947, 104.
[37] Ibid., 106. He believed that children with "inner tension related to guilt feelings" might feel some relief when they were punished for their behavior, though like many others, Lowrey emphasized that the child must never feel that he or she has lost the parents' love.

horribly, she still found that her spanking had not helped—her cure for this behavior was to make better attempts to spend time with this child, and to talk to him about his feelings.[38] Likewise, an article on child abuse linked a woman's physical abuse of her son to her own feelings of having been rejected in childhood, and showed how treating the mother solved the problems between mother and son.[39]

Others argued that punishment invariably harmed the child, and did not excuse short parental fuses. Indeed, *Parents'* was teeming with articles in which parents' tendency to punish their children created mental problems for their children. One anonymous mother, for instance, wrote an article in which the very title admitted that "We Made Our Child Stutter."[40] In the tone of one who hoped to warn others against her own horrible mistakes, this author confessed "when the children demanded attention, I often scolded them and sometimes, I admit, I yelled at them."[41]

The majority of progressive authors included parental hostility in their definitions of punishment. If a parent even *felt* that a child had done wrong, the child might pick up on that emotion and begin to feel guilty about her or his perfectly natural actions. Parents had to police their own emotions so that their children could freely express theirs. Many such articles claimed that "nervous" parents robbed their children of a sense of security.[42] Always, however, these articles argued that, one way or the other, children who were unsure of their parents' love for them would face psychological problems, if not

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[38] Pauline Palmer Meek, "I Stopped Spanking," *Parents,'* April 1955, 122.
[39] Lester David, "The Shocking Price of Parental Anger," *Reader's Digest,* September 1964, 181-186.
[40] Anonymous, "We Made our Child Stutter," *Parents,'* April 1949, 38, 131-132.
[41] Ibid., 38.
[42] See, for example, Herbert C. Archibald, "Can You Relax and Take It?" *Parents,'* August 1949, 19, 50. Though I often give only a single example when I say that "many" articles followed a certain line of thought, in all such cases I found numerous articles that fit the criteria described. In most cases, this meant that some articles did not mention this particular reasoning; if any articles actively disagreed with the logic in question, I make that clear in the text.

immediately, then in the future.[43] This did not only happen when parents failed to love their children, but also when children came to feel that their parents' love was conditional.

The most harmful forms of punishment, according to progressive authors, were those which made children feel that their behavior might result in losing their parents' love.[44] This situation was the ultimate source of insecurity in children, and the most commonly cited cause of insecurity later manifested in an authoritarian political personality type. Threatening that "mommy or daddy will not love you anymore if you do that" was, for authors in *Parents'* magazine, about the worst thing that could come out of a parent's mouth.[45] In addition to being naturally good, children needed to know that they were good, and that they were valued by their parents.[46] It was, according to progressive parenting literature, important that children feel their parents' love even when they had misbehaved, because only with this security could they be sure of themselves despite their failures. As one article put it, "we must make people so sure of themselves that they can be fair to the other fellow; people so self-confident that they will welcome differences in color, language, religion, customs, and ways of doing things."[47]

Also dangerous was any discipline (not just, but especially, punishments) that made a child think that her or his emotions were bad. The preponderance of parenting advice, in fact, encouraged parents to let their children talk back, get mad, and even kick

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[43] See, for example, Elizabeth Lee Schweiger, "Do You Put a Price on Love," *Parents,'* June 1948, 34, 72-73; and Southcott, 83.
[44] See also Stearns, *Anxious Parents,* 60. Stearns dates the idea that "guilt" could harm children to the early 1930s.
[45] Dorothy W. Baruch, "Let Them Get it Out of Their Systems," *Parents,'* October 1947, 99; Katherine Wensberg and Mary Myrtle Northop, "Children Need to Understand Their Feelings," *Parents,'* September 1955, 83; Gladys Gardner Jenkins, "Discipline: What Is It?" *Parents,'* May 1948, 81.
[46] Margaret Ribble and Margaret Albrecht, "How Character Develops," *Parents,'* September 1956, 41.
[47] Dorothy Van Ark, "Do You Nag Your Children?" *Parents,'* June 1955, 106.

their parents if they needed to get feelings out of their systems—better to have them express their anger than to have them repress it and have it turn into some form of neurosis. *Parents'* articles with titles such as "Why Bottled-Up Feelings Are Dangerous," "Should a Child Talk Back?," and "Let Them Get it Out of Their Systems," all counseled parents to let their children express their feelings, especially anger and frustration.[48] Similar articles ran in many women's magazines as well.[49]

Such articles were tied to the belief that aggression was the most dangerous impulse felt by children, and therefore the one that needed the most guidance, channeling, and especially acceptance by parents. Authors of these articles believed that this aggression rose from the child's frustration over his or her own inabilities and failures. Repressed aggression was seen as a source of prejudice and other authoritarian characteristics. Condemning children's desires to hit their siblings, or kick their mothers, could all result in "unhappiness and ineffectuality" in these children's adult lives.[50] The child might undercut her or his own accomplishments, become too dependent on her or his parents, or join the Ku Klux Klan.[51] Better that the child learn to accept feelings of aggression and channel them in appropriate ways, such as writing or talking them out, than become an adult full of prejudice and hatred.

Parents' attempts to get their children to behave could, according to this literature, either backfire or work too well. Both the badly-behaved child and the too-good child (who became an anxious or even psychotic adult) were the result of parents who insisted

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[48] Edith G. Neisser, "Why Bottled-Up Feelings Are Dangerous," *Parents,'* September 1951, 42-43, 98; Gladys Gardner Jenkins, "Should a Child Talk Back?" *Parents,'* February 1948, 33, 89-92; Baruch, 21,99-108.
[49] See, for example, Jeanette Eyerly, "Aggressiveness in Children," *Better Homes and Gardens,* April 1958, 206-207, 226, 231, 233, 239; and Dr. Milton J.E. Senn, "I Hate You, Mother!" *McCalls,* May 1957, 66, 82.
[50] Baruch, 99.
[51] Ibid., 102.

on good behavior. As one article put it, "most children in our culture live in an atmosphere charged with injunctions to behave themselves or with scoldings for not conforming to standards set up for them. If this method had worked, humanity would long since have become more perfect than it is."[52] Children who repressed their impulses were dangerous, according to *Parents',* not children who acted on them. The too-good child's perfect behavior hid a bevy of psychological problems that made the child unhappy and led to poor overall development. Such children became the increasingly common focus of cautionary tales in the pages of *Parents'* magazine over the course of the 1950s. The authors who wrote for this magazine saw the perfectly behaved child as a sure victim of repression.[53]

Indeed, progressive authors argued that a little rebellion was a necessary thing, especially in pre-adolescent children. A child resisting piano practice, for example, provoked a mother to remark that "children are different these days. They do not always take authority without question and perhaps, in a world where whole nations are buckling under to domination, this quality is not to be wholly deplored."[54] Ultimately, the goal of progressive parenting was to raise a child who made her or his own decisions based on an internalized self-discipline—a conscience (but not an over-active conscience). As one *Parents'* article put it, "surely the discipline appropriate to a free country is self-discipline."[55] Immediate good behavior was to be postponed in favor of later good character and healthy personality, and internal character was far more important than

[52] Fahs and Foster, 36.
[53] Neisser, passim; Baruch, passim.
[54] Van Ark, 41.
[55] "Freedom, Responsibility: Two Things Our Schools Should Teach," *Parents,'* February 1946, 18.

behavior itself.[56] After all, "so-called badness" showed "a healthy ability to fight back," which was so "much better than submissive conforming."[57] The fear of conformity likewise made the "too good child," who like the adult conformer was unsure of his or her own value, seem like a problem child.[58] Psychological adjustment here was placed in opposition to conformity.

All of this literature on proper discipline also idealized a specific family structure, in which progressive forms of discipline worked best—the "democratic family." A democratic family was usually imagined as a family in which the children participated with both parents in reaching decisions on family matters, from rules governing daily life to activities and vacation plans. Parents in such a family worked as partners, though their partnership did not preclude a gendered division of labor. Parenting literature began talking about the democratic family in the 1930s, arguing that this family structure taught children by example how to live within a democracy.[59] By the early 1950s, however, parenting advice often argued that the democratic family not only taught democracy by example, but it also (and more importantly) created the psychological health that led people to opt for democracy over other forms of government. The increasingly common idea that children could become authoritarian and prejudiced even if their parents were not, as long as these children had the psychological weaknesses that led to such beliefs, presumed that the democratic family was more important for its psychological effects than for the example that it set.[60]

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[56] See, for examples, Fahs and Foster, 90; Gladys Gardner Jenkins, "Character Begins at Home," *Parents,'* February 1949, 36-37, 81-83.
[57] Hermann Vollmer, "Everybody's Jealous," *Parents,'* July 1947, 110.
[58] Edna J. LeShan, "Who Wants To Raise a Yes Man?" *Parents,'* May 1962, 43, 91-93.
[59] See, for example, *Proceedings of the White House Conference*, 3.
[60] Hulbert, 216; Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1941), reprint (New York: Henry Holt and Co., Inc., 1994); Adorno, 10, 372.

Still, parenting literature also advocated democratic family structure as a training-ground for young citizens. The 1940 report of the White House Conference on Children and Youth argued that families which ran, when possible, as democracies, trained children for their greater role in a democratic society. While the depression-era report was largely focused on material needs of children, it also argued that:

> Less conspicuous but more important by far is what the child acquires through the family in regard to his relations with his fellows. Standards of conduct may be formed by fear or by example; they may be enforced by authority or by persuasion. It is in the relations of members of the family to one another that the quality of the American democratic way may find opportunity for its most conspicuous realization. . . . Children are helped to develop these standards and capacities by sharing in family discussion sand duties. Essential foundations are thus laid for participation in a democratic society.[61]

The 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth argued for the importance of the democratic family, which had a role in "preparing even young children for democratic participation in society through experiences in family living."[62] This meant allowing the child to participate in decision-making for the family, with a goal of "togetherness" and a feeling of being a group. *Parents'* magazine likewise supported the ideal of a democratic family. One woman, describing her problems disciplining her children, found her problems solved after her husband reminded her that "no matter what age we are, we Americans just don't like to be told what to do." She realized then that the children had to be brought into the process of creating their own rules and discipline, and created what she described as a far more peaceful family.[63]

While only a few articles on discipline discussed gender, those that did advocated a partnership between the parents, rather than a strict gender hierarchy. One article on fathers' roles in the family talked about changes in terms of authority.

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[61] *Proceedings of the White House Conference*, 11.
[62] *Focus on Children,* 15.
[63] Gladys Toler Burns, "Children Want and Need Rules," *Parents,'* January 1949, 36.

> The 'respect' children showed for father [in the past] was matched by the 'respect' Father in turn showed his employer (never 'boss') and for all those in positions of authority. But the way we look at authority today and the way we want our children to grow up looking at it are completely different. In aim and increasingly in practice, we no longer equate discipline and punishment. Father doesn't see himself, by and large, as the figure of authority he once was; he no longer wants to be that figure of authority.[64]

As American society became more democratic, the family structure was, according to these authors, supposed to follow suit. This included a positive view of gender equality in marriage.

A very few of these authors distinguished between the mother's and father's roles in discipline, arguing that the mother needed to be more loving and the father more strict. For example, in one article that generally promoted permissiveness, the authors also argued that discipline could be the realm of the father. Even here, though, the article was careful to insist that father's role in discipline should come from his innate strength of character as a man, not from disapproval of the child's actions or other forms of punishment. "In many families, the mother assumes the passive and generally the more indulgent role. This has its advantages because children need to feel her generosity, receptivity, and leniency. A father, while basically no less kind, should naturally be more masculine and firm. As the more resolute of the two parents, he leaves mother free to play her protective role properly."[65] This article was vague in its definition of discipline; mostly father's role seems to have been to have high expectations but remain accepting of his children when they did not meet those expectations. He was expected to teach "the

[64] Gunnar Dybwad and Helen Puner, "Be Fair to Father," *Parents,'* June 1958, 94.
[65] O. Spurgeon English and Constance J. Foster, "Father's Changing Role," *Parents,'* October 1951, 153. Constance Foster also wrote a number of articles for other magazines on dominant mothers (see, for example, Constance Foster, "Have You Stopped Torturing Your Mate?," *Science Digest*, August 1957, 1-5).

children what he believes to be right."[66] This appeared to be more about teaching the children self-discipline rather than about father punishing the children. Another article suggested that, in addition to natural male authority, fathers could bring an outside perspective (since they did not spend the entire day with the children).[67]

Most authors, however, were less concerned with gender roles and more concerned with the overall environment. While even these authors tended to assume that the mother would be at home (at least during early childhood) and the father would be working away from the home, the lack of concern with differences between roles of parents is often striking for this period. The threat of "momism," so prevalent in discussions of women's roles, was far less an issue in literature on childrearing, especially literature concerning discipline of young children. In fact, sources on discipline which discussed gender most often critiqued the over-emphasis on negative view of mothers.[68] Both mothers and fathers were on trial in this literature. One article concerned with discipline claimed that, while spanking should be extremely rare, if it had to be administered it should be divided equally between the parents, not just performed by the father, to prevent the child from thinking his father was a villain and his mother his protector.[69] The threat of "momism" was more likely to come up in parenting articles about gender adjustment of children—which parenting authors did not tie to discipline. Intellectual discussions of discipline were likewise critical of both mothers and fathers who disciplined their children too harshly.[70] The gender of the child being

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[66] Ibid., 154.
[67] Russell Smart, "What is Father's Part in Discipline?," *Parents,'* November 1952, 44-45, 84-87.
[68] See, for example, Witmer and Kotinsky, 98-101; Erikson, 255.
[69] David Dempsey, "Whether, How, and Why to Spank," *New York Times Magazine*, July 6, 1958, 18.
[70] Erikson, *Childhood and Society,* 247. Adorno, 370-71. Adorno's work is discussed in more detail below. Adorno did bring up the idea of "momism" in discussing his findings. He argued that women who scored high on his authoritarian personality scale were likely to view their mothers as socially successful

disciplined seems to have been almost irrelevant in articles on this subject.[71] This literature argued that there was great uncertainty about the proper roles of men and women in modern families, but rarely related these uncertainties to problems with discipline. A few even worried that parents were too concerned with their gender roles.[72]

The idea of the democratic family came not only from parenting literature, but also from literature concerned with the rise of fascist governments in the 1930s. The ideas of sociologist Theodor Adorno and psychiatrist Erich Fromm were particularly pivotal in this discussion, ad were often cited in mass-culture articles on discipline. Both men immigrated to the United States from Germany in the 1930s, and were affiliated with the Institute for Social Research both before and during their stays in America. Both were concerned with understanding the rise of fascism in their home country, and preventing it in the rest of the world.[73] Fromm's 1941 best-seller *Escape From Freedom* worried that "modern man" was "tempted to surrender his freedom to dictators."[74] Fromm believed that the modern world had given people more freedom than they had had previously, and that many people turned to authoritarian forms of government to escape the insecurity they felt when given this new freedom.[75] He contended that early

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and dominant (and said they admired them, but seemed to have resented them, as well). For high-scoring men, he believed they generally saw their fathers as more dominant.(368-370).

[71] This is not to say that the examples of behavior were ungendered. A female child's problem was the need to put away her toys, which were tea cups and saucers. Still, even here, it was the toys which were gendered, not the behavior. I found no examples of articles on young children that differentiated their basic behavior problems (talking back, hurting others, failing to take responsibilities, etc.) by gender. Behavior differences *did* become an issue in articles on teen-agers, especially regarding juvenile delinquency (see chapter 6).

[72] See, for example, Sidney Blau, "Why Good Parents Raise Bad Children," *Coronet,* November 1958, 108.

[73] Jay, passim.

[74] Fromm, xiii. Fromm was also remarkable for his lack of influence in psychoanalytic circles at the same time that he was becoming extremely influential on mass cultural sources and even sociological works (like Adorno's) (Daniel Burston, "Erich Fromm" in Edward Erwin, ed., *The Freud Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2002),231-32.).

[75] Ibid., 49.

childhood development had a great impact on the ability of people to use freedom productively, rather than turn to authoritarianism.[76]

Adorno's *The Authoritarian Personality* sought to define the facets of personality that made someone open to fascism. Adorno believed he could measure the potential of a person to become a supporter of racial or religious prejudice and authoritarianism by looking at other parts of their personalities. Could you tell if someone was open to fascism by knowing about their childhood? Their views of their parents? Their sex lives? *The Authoritarian Personality* argued that you could, and proceeded to map out the traits that correlated with racial or religious prejudice and authoritarianism (he saw prejudice as an integral part of the authoritarian personality). Adorno was uninterested in whether or not the parents of his test subjects were themselves prejudiced; he saw the authoritarian personality not as an ideology passed between generations, but as a psychic pattern created through emotional experience. He believed that the "political, economic, and social convictions of an individual often form a broad and coherent pattern, as if bound together by a 'mentality' or 'spirit,' and that this pattern is an expression of deep-lying trends in his personality."[77]

Adorno relied heavily on psychological ideas of development in his work.[78] Citing Erich Fromm, Adorno contended that the authoritarian personality was marked by a lack of "human character" in its relationship with other people, and instead adopted a "spirit of manipulation and instrumentality" toward others—for the authoritarian, people were not to be loved, they were to be used and controlled.[79] He traced this feeling (or

[76] Ibid., 241.
[77] Adorno, 1.
[78] Ibid., 337.
[79] Ibid., 416.

lack thereof) back to the relationship between the parents and the child who grew into an authoritarian.

Those who scored high on Adorno's authoritarian scale had, according to Adorno, generally failed to internalize ethical values—they continued to obey rules from fear rather than developing the self-discipline to obey a value system set by their own conscience.[80] Such people, he said, submitted to their parents' rule only out of fear of authority, and this motivation was closely related to their behavior in regards to authority in general.[81] Adorno argued that this fear of authority often came from over-stern parents (or from the perception by the child that his or her parents were stern).[82] Such children basically became dependent on authority.

Low scorers, on the other hand, generally described their parents as demonstrative and warm. Adorno depicted them as having an "objective" assessment of their parents—they both agreed and disagreed with them, depending on the issue, but loved them regardless.[83] Such people developed self-discipline, which he described as a "principled independence" both from parents and from society.[84] Most importantly, he argued, "there is evidence . . . that the unprejudiced subjects received more love and therefore had more security in their relationships to their parents."[85]

After describing these two views of parents and the links between these views and scores on his authoritarian scale, Adorno argued that high scorers and low scorers were raised with two very different forms of discipline. He saw these forms of discipline as

[80] Ibid., 455. Adorno believed this was due to a lack of identification with their parents—they continued to fear their parents because of the threat of punishment, or because of "social anxiety."
[81] Ibid., 350.
[82] Ibid., 360.
[83] Ibid., 357-361.
[84] Ibid., 351.
[85] Ibid., 357.

responsible both for the internalization of values (or lack thereof) and the attitudes of the subject toward authority. The first form, which resulted in high-scorers, he called "rules discipline." Adorno described rules discipline as moralistic, handled as an outside force to which the child had to submit, and based on rules which the child did not necessarily understand. The second form of discipline, which resulted in low-scorers, he called "principles discipline." In this form of discipline, the child cooperated and understood her or his own discipline, and the values upon which it was based. The child then internalized those values. Adorno emphasized the effects of these two kinds of discipline on the child:

> Related to the distinction just described is the differentiation between a *threatening*, traumatic, overwhelming discipline, and an *assimilable*, and thus non-egodestructive, discipline . . . The first type of discipline forces the child into submission and surrender of the ego, thus preventing his development. The second type contributes to the growth of the ego; it is similar to a therapy in which the therapist becomes an ally of the patient's ego, helping him to master his id. The second type of discipline seems an important condition for the establishment of an internalized superego, and this is crucial for the development of an unprejudiced personality.[86]

Thus, for Adorno, discipline was central to the development of children's political possibilities, and overly-harsh discipline could create no less than potential Nazis. It seemed, from Adorno's work, that the only way a child could overcome such an upbringing and become a healthy adult was to rebel against the parents (and even this could fail).[87]

Many of Adorno's "authoritarian" personality traits sounded much like cultural conservativism, especially in regards to sexuality and religion. Adorno seemed to have believed that modern parenting methods were responsible for democracy, while old-fashioned moralism and religion were the foundation for the rise of fascism. Indeed, two

[86] Ibid., 372. Ellipses mine.
[87] Ibid., 762.

of the personality traits that Adorno argued were markers of the authoritarian personality were "conventionalism," or "rigid adherence to conventional, middle-class values" and "superstition and stereotypy" or a "belief in mystical determinants." [88] The part of the test Adorno used to expose conventionalism included questions which implied that Adorno included fundamentalist Christians and those who opposed progressive education in this category.[89] Likewise, those who seemed to want harsh punishment for crimes (especially sex crimes), those who thought women should have less freedom than men, and those who thought of homosexuality as a form of delinquency were all candidates for Adorno's authoritarian personality type.[90] Conservativism became, for Adorno, a psychological syndrome. Economic conservativism also met Adorno's disapproval. High scorers expressed approval for charismatic leaders but wanted fewer "agencies," had the sense that government was controlling too much, and had a "no-pity-for-the-poor" ideology.[91]

The Attack on Progressive Parenting

By the late 1950s, progressive parenting was coming under increasing scrutiny from a variety of sources. The increasing strength in the mid-1950s of the African American civil rights movement, and the settling dust from the most intense years of the mid-century red scare, also provoked right-wing critics of progressive parenting. The

[88] Ibid., 228. Adorno describes "middle class vales" as being more conservative than did most sociologists in this time—including a negative view of the "modern" liberal church, and an adherence to strict discipline.
[89] Ibid., 229.
[90] Ibid., 232-236.
[91] Ibid., 726. Adorno sees two types of high-scorers: the "conventional" and the "psychopath." These observations refer to the conventional type.

launch of the Soviet satellite "Sputnik" in October 1957 seems to have further encouraged these critiques, though they were already in the literature.[92] Writers in conservative magazines often attacked both progressive parenting and progressive education in the same breath, and tied both to the weakening of America. Such authors talked a lot about crime and weakness, but not about authoritarianism. Like right-wing literature on conformity and racism, these articles had a negative view of the effects of "egalitarianism" on American society.

Earlier critiques of progressive parenting were never entirely absent from American culture. In 1952, for example, after writing an article praising permissiveness for *The New York Times*, one author said that she was inundated with letters "commenting in no uncertain terms" that permissiveness was poor parenting.[93] Still, authors like Barclay always reaffirmed the necessity of progressive techniques and the democratic family model, simply reassuring readers that permissiveness was not the same as lack of discipline.

By the late 1950s and early 1960s, however, magazines and newspapers began to publish articles by those who might have written these strongly disciplinarian letters to *The Times* earlier in the 1950s. Even Benjamin Spock revised his *Infant and Child Care* to call for more control of parents over children in 1957.[94] More disciplinarian authors repeated Benjamin Spock's call for "common sense," though in the case of anti-progressive authors this call meant corporal punishment and absolute parental control. A *National Review* article, for example, set up a dichotomy between permissive parenting

[92] *Focus on Children*, 7.
[93] Dorothy Barclay, "How Far 'Permissive' Attitudes?," *New York Times Magazine,* March 16, 1952, 50.
[94] Hulbert, 228.

and the "Freudian ethic" on one side and "common sense" on the other.[95] A story in *Reader's Digest* told the story of a judge in Whiting, Indiana, who used a "common-sense approach" to delinquency. The article described a young, surly delinquent who told his mother to "shut up" in front of the judge. The judge immediately turned to the delinquent's father and asked how long it had been since the boy had been spanked. The judge was shocked when the father replied that he has never spanked his son. The judge responded by turning to the bailiff and telling him to "'Have the officer turn the boy over and hold him, bottom-up. Then spank him—hard—with your bare hand. Give him fifteen whacks. Maybe that will teach him not to sass his mother.'" The article went on to praise the success of this judge's methods for treating delinquency, without a question as to whether this boy was now on the road to authoritarianism.

As with progressive parenting techniques, the critiques of these techniques were grounded in ideas about the nature of human beings and the best forms of government. Critics of permissiveness often linked it to a weakening of America, the welfare state, and a move away from religion. These critiques emphasized the naturalness and benefits of hierarchy over egalitarianism. The emphasis in these articles was on external behavior, especially on law and order, rather than internal belief systems, and these authors never raised the threat of authoritarianism. Egalitarianism especially came under fire in the mid-1950s, as the African American civil rights movement grew stronger and more visible.

When anti-progressive authors discussed gender, they argued that gender hierarchy should be stronger within the American family. Some, like the story of the judge in Whiting, simply assumed that the father was the one to ask about discipline. An

[95] Russell Kirk, "The Split Level Personality," *National Review*, February 25, 1961, 118.

article in *National Review* likewise linked "parental laxity" to "fathers who spare the rod—not to spoil the child, but to save themselves the trouble of being adults."[96] Such lax fathers created children who, in this author's estimation, would do "anything for a thrill."[97]

Other articles actively argued that the breakdown of gender roles within the family was at least partially to blame for the breakdown of discipline and with other problems of modern society. Unlike progressive parenting proponents, these authors did stress the different gender roles of parents in regard to discipline. Such authors picked up on the critique of domineering women. One judge wrote that American children misbehaved or became delinquent because they had not learned a proper respect for authority through discipline. He help up Italy as an example, where he said of families that "the father is respected by the wife and children as its head. He rules with varying degrees of love and tenderness and firmness. His household has rules to live by, and the child who disobeys them is punished." Thus, the judge called for Americans to live by a nine-word principle to raise good children: "put father back at the head of the family."[98] He went on to tie "permissive" parenting methods to "Mother wielding absolute power," and argued that both create delinquent and unhappy children.[99] While not all anti-progressive articles on discipline discussed gender, those that did invariably agreed with this author.

Critics of progressive parenting also worried that it was part of a more general attack on religion, and stressed children's need for external control through religious

[96] Roger Becket, "No Smug Editorials," *National Review,* April 25, 1956, 21.
[97] Ibid., 21.
[98] Samuel S. Leibowitz, "Nine Words that Can Stop Juvenile Delinquency," *Reader's Digest*, March 1958, 106.
[99] Ibid., 107.

regulations. Russell Kirk, one of the founders of the new right and columnist for *The National Review,* contended that conscience was not enough to "do the duty for every source of authoritative knowledge." He listed the Bible and the Church, among other things, as necessary external sources of authority.[100] A different author in *The National Review* described "progressive parents" as "too morally neuter and gutless to cut birch sticks and apply them as often as necessary."[101] Yet another article in that magazine linked progressive parenting to a weakened church:

> Supporters of the 'love-cult' have written so many books about 'a child's need to be loved' that parents are afraid to slam their little monsters about and sting their behinds when caught in some particularly ugly offense. They have so cowed many of our clergy that the poor men no longer dare talk about sin, but only of 'victims of society' and 'lovelessness in the home,' and Freud, of course.[102]

Arguments that progressive parenting was anti-religious also often involved an image of human nature as basically bad. The above author saw children as inherently bad, and in need of reform. Recalling her own punishments as a child, she wrote:

> I remember the many thrashings I received, all of them deserved. . . . We learned, and we respected our teacher and our parents and our clergy. . . . We knew exactly what dark demons smoldered in our most impure little hearts, and how utterly unworthy of any affection we were, and how devoid of affection our atavistic souls. In short, we were healthy children.[103]

Critics of progressive parenting also came up with a psychological specter to fear—the "understood generation." As with the "authoritarian personality," the "understood generation" was defined as a threat to American democracy. This threat was described by one author as "youngsters who have too little competitive drive, settle too easily for the comforts of security, have too little spirit of adventure, show no

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[100] Russell Kirk, "From the Academy," *The National Review*, August 26, 1961, 124.
[101] Becket, 21.
[102] Taylor Caldwell, "The Right Not to Be Loved," *The National Review,* December 3, 1960, 359.
[103] Ibid., 341.

commitment to hard-to-achieve ideals."[104] Such children supposedly were created by progressive parenting. While this article saw such children as the result of parents' unspoken disapproval of children's rebellion (and thus a sign that parents were punishing their children's behavior if only through tacit disapproval), other articles saw it as a result of the most successful progressive parents. A *Parents'* article on discipline quoted an unpublished study that showed that "the democratic family, which for so many years has been held up and aspired to as a model by professionals and enlightened laymen, tends to produce young people who do not take initiative,' 'look to others for direction and decision' and 'cannot be counted on to fulfill obligations.'"[105] The same article worried that raising children to be too dismissive of authority would "make them candidates for the world of the beatnik . . . whose nihilistic 'What's the use?' way of living—independent as it may be—negates the values we live by and the world we live in."[106] Likewise, a military analyst fearing that America no longer raised good soldiers, wrote that children became "vacuous adolescent[s] without motivation" because of America's emphasis on "security."[107] He feared that, even in the military, discipline had been replaced by pampering.[108] Another writer, in a somewhat humorous tone, looked back nostalgically at older child rearing methods. "We did not worry about emotional security in those days," he said, "We never heard words like adjustment, environment, [and] rejection. . . Sure we were unloved. No one paid any attention to us. And we, in turn, didn't pick up our father's shotgun and wipe out the whole family."[109] Clearly, these

[104] LeShan, 92.
[105] Helen Puner, "Discipline," *Parents,'* September 1960, 87.
[106] Ibid., 62.
[107] Hanson Baldwin, "Our Fighting Men have Gone Soft," *Reader's Digest,* November 1959, 97-98.
[108] Ibid., 99.
[109] Art Buckwald, "Don't be a Pal to Your Son," *Readers' Digest*, March 1959, 99.

conservative writers believed that progressive parenting undermined the health of American democracy, and possibly even endangered the very lives of its advocates.

Critics of progressive parenting also linked it to the welfare state, which they deplored. This critique was very much part of the general criticism in right-leaning magazines of programs that sought to foster equality of any kind. Most such articles claimed that the welfare state specifically and egalitarianism generally destroyed achievement, and believed that progressive parenting encouraged both.[110] Unlike earlier authors, who were more concerned with modernity generally, these authors dated the problems of the mid-century not to industrialization, but rather to the New Deal. The military analyst above, for example, who worried about pampering, believed that the welfare state and pampering of children had led to the adoption of the ideal of "security," which he saw as replacing the focus on "opportunity and adventure" that had pervaded and strengthened America in the past.[111] Similarly, an article critiquing lax discipline in schools (and society in general) related the following story about a girl who had a collectable coin stolen from her by another student named "Walter." Both students were sent to the school office after they fought over the dime:

> 'It's my dime,' I said
> '*Your* dime!' [the counselor] exclaimed, cuttingly. I stepped back, more confused than ever. It was my first encounter with the hatred inflicted on those who had, and the utter detestation. To have a dime, it seemed, was a sort of sin in itself. The lady turned back to Walter, who was blinking rapidly. The mourning-dove voice went on.
> 'Does your Mummy love you, darling? Does Daddy love you?'
> 'Yep,' muttered Walter.
> 'But listen, dear. Do you have brothers and sisters who don't like you, and who won't share with you?'
> 'Nope,' said Walter. 'There's just me.'
> These were not the expected answers.[112]

[110] Colm Brogan, "This Happy Breed," *National Review*, January 16, 1960, 41.
[111] Baldwin, 98.
[112] Caldwell, 342.

The same woman who seemed to despise the author for having a dime was part of the "love-cult" that refused to punish "devilish" children like Walter. In addition, the "love-cult" of psychological belief seemed, in this article and many others, to be tied directly to hatred of achievement and hierarchy (in this article, seemingly both hierarchies of merit and of money).

Critiques of progressive parenting had predecessors often in the very works that praised progressive parenting. Adorno's *The Authoritarian Personality,* for example, warned that "low-scorers" on his authoritarian scale sometimes were too "easy-going," and might let things go and avoid decisions. These people were, perhaps, a little too healthy, having almost totally avoided traumatic experience, and therefore remained totally unaggressive.[113] Those progressive mass-culture authors who drew on Adorno, however, almost never brought up these potentially problematic results of progressive parenting, or if they did, they argued that the parenting had not been progressive enough, not that it had been too permissive.[114]

By late 1959, even *Parents'*, the previous bastion of permissiveness, responded to these attacks on progressive parenting by running articles on the "new kind of discipline," which included a revival of "old-fashioned-strict" parenting.[115] It especially moved to embrace flexibility in child discipline methods. Many articles in *Parents'* began to call for a corrective to over-permissive parenting—not an abandonment of the basic principles that they had been preaching for over a decade, but a renewed emphasis on the ultimate authority of the parent and a reinforcement of the limits that progressive

[113] Adorno, 778-779.
[114] Witmer and Kotinsky, 148-149; Blau, 108.
[115] Mead, "A New Kind of Discipline."

literature had always called for.[116] These critical pieces shared a less sunny view of the world from previous *Parents'* articles. Still, the general advice and psychological view remained the same: a democratic family that provided security and love for their children created democratic adults. Often they called for a move away from self-demand, but only as self-demanded by the children. The 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth, in contrast to the earlier conferences, argued that some children functioned better under self-demand feeding schedules, and others functioned better with a set schedule.[117] The child's needs still decided the course of the parents, but there was more room for authority in these sources in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Even when *Parents'* and similar sources began to allow for more flexibility in discipline and punishment, they continued to show punishment as a breakdown of discipline. The 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth report described this change:

> Professional social workers stressed the importance of the example of parents and the child's tendency to ape the adult. They found that children who are loved want to please their parents. Child guidance then becomes less a question of enforcing discipline than setting standards for behavior and winning a child's good will through practiced justice which inspires faith. No longer did psychologists and psychiatrists ban spankings, but they were not in agreement that they were always necessary.[118]

While *Parents'* and the White House Conference did not enthusiastically advocate a return to corporal punishment in the late 1950s and early 1960s, other sources did.

Critics of progressiveness often criticized it not only in the home, but also in the schools. Vice President Richard Nixon, for example, warned against schools focused too much on helping "students to adjust to one another," insisting that:

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[116] See, for example, Mead, 51.
[117] *Focus on Children,* 121.
[118] Ibid., 15.

> It is good to have democracy in our educational system, but it is also necessary to have backbone, standards, and guidance. Young people want and need firm guidance. They may rebel against specific commands, but even the brashest of them knows that he has not the experience and the wisdom to face the world unaided. As most parents have learned through experience, true parental love is firm, not indulgent.[119]

Nixon started by talking about discipline in schools, but quickly slipped into a discussion of parenting methods, and an implicit critique of permissiveness not only in schools, but also in the home. A *Reader's Digest* article likewise linked the problem of progressive education to the larger problem in American life of a general over-emphasis on security.[120] Unlike earlier authors, these more conservative authors almost always saw security as a bad thing. Security did not provide the opportunity for freedom; for these authors it was freedom's antithesis.[121] Such security, they held, was making Americans soft and leaving them vulnerable to communism.

Many conservative critics of progressive education wanted teachers to regain the power to punish students corporally in the classroom. Often this attack was included as part of an attack on the general "permissiveness" exercised by American society toward its children. For example, one editorial in *The National Review* in 1958 argued that "the permissiveness one has come to associate with Progressive Education has deprived the teacher of the authority she needs to maintain order. The result is what one would expect – chaos."[122]

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[119] Richard Nixon quoted in Russell Kirk, "From the Academy," *The National Review*, February 15, 1958, 161.
[120] Clifton Fadiman, "The Mess in Education—Who is Responsible?" *Reader's Digest*, October 1958, 49-52.
[121] See also Baldwin, 98.
[122] "Your Children or Your Ideology," *The National Review*, February 14, 1958, 149; see also "The Spanking Bill," *National Review*, April 11,1959, 640.

Both New York and the District of Columbia had controversies over corporal punishment in schools in this period.[123] In New York, the state legislature approved a bill to permit teachers to use "reasonable force in a moderate degree" to discipline students.[124] The measure was aimed specifically at overturning a New York City school board ban on corporal punishment, not only allowing for corporal punishment in New York schools but also taking away the right of the local school board to ban such punishments.[125] New York Governor Rockefeller vetoed the bill, but only after remarking that he spanked his own children, and arguing that he was opposed not to corporal punishment but rather to taking away power from local school boards.[126] In the District of Columbia, school superintendent Carl Hansen called for lifting the ban on corporal punishment in D.C. schools in 1963. The school board voted down his suggestion.[127] However, the United States House of Representatives overruled the school board, and allowed corporal punishment to return to District schools.[128] The public debate over spanking reached such a level that even President Kennedy felt compelled to speak on the issue, saying that he opposed school spanking, but encouraged "discipline" at home.[129]

Race seems to have been a factor in these debates as well. In D.C., Hansen's recommendation to reinstate corporal punishment came largely as a response to the

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[123] Puner, "Discipline, 60.
[124] Warren Weaver, Jr., "Assembly Votes School Spanking" *New York Times*, March 12, 1959, 18; McCandlish Phillips, "Legislature Votes to Give Teachers the Right to Spank," *New York Times,* March 26, 1959, 1.
[125] Phillips, 1.
[126] "Rockefeller Vetoes Proposal to Permit Spanking in School," *New York Times*, April 23, 1959, 33.
[127] "Spanking Ban Voted in Capital Schools," *New York Times*, April 19, 1963, 87; Gerald Grant, "Punishment in Schools Defined," *Washington Post-Times Herald*, March 14, 1963, sec. B, p. 1; Gerald Grant, "Hansen Plan on Paddling Voted Down," *Washington Post-Times Herald*, April 12, 1963, sec. A, p. 1.
[128] "House Votes to Let the Teacher Whip Washington Pupils," *New York Times,* May 14, 1963, 39.
[129] "Kennedy Opposes School Spanking," *New York Times*, May 23, 1963, 58.

outbreak of violence at a sporting event between a predominantly black school and a predominantly white school.[130] The only congressional representative to speak against the overruling of the D.C. school board, Representative William Fitts Ryan, believed that the move to return to corporal punishment was an attempt to cure social ills that came not from disciplinary problems, but rather from years of segregation and discrimination.[131] This legislation came out of the House Committee on the District of Columbia, which only a few years earlier had reported that integration led to discipline problems, and recommended that D.C. resegregate its schools.[132]

Many articles that were critical of permissiveness were also critical of egalitarianism, which often translated into a critique of racial integration. For example, a military analyst who worried that America was becoming "too soft" and focused on security also critiqued the integration of the military as a "leveling downward, not up."[133] *National Review* columnist Russell Kirk linked integration with a renewed need for corporal punishment in schools.[134] This disdain for egalitarianism, also evident in literature on civil rights and autonomy (especially in regards to education), allowed racial conservatives to critique integration without arguing directly for segregation, which often allowed them to defend themselves against charges of racism.

While this attack on progressive parenting would not find a unified voice until the late 1960s, it was already both undermining the confidence with which progressive

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[130] "Spanking Ban Voted," 87.
[131] "House Votes to Let," 39.
[132] United States Congress, House Committee on the District of Columbia, *Investigation of Public School Conditions: Report of the Subcommittee to Investigate Public School Standards and Conditions and Juvenile Delinquency in the District of Columbia*, 84th Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1957), 46.
[133] Baldwin, 98.
[134] Russell Kirk, "From the Academy," *National Review*, June 16, 1964, 495.

magazines like *Parents*' could talk about self-demand discipline, and shaping local decisions about discipline in the public realm of schools.[135]

[135] Hulbert, 259-260.

Chapter 3: Autonomy, Conformity, and Masculinity

The ostensible failure of adult men to achieve autonomy, like the psychological effects of wrong kinds of discipline, was seen as a potential threat to democracy in the mid-century United States. Like the too-good child in the discipline literature, the worst cases were those men who acted too well-adjusted, behaved too well, and therefore were clearly not expressing all of their true feelings and desires. Being too well-adjusted to modern American society, according to many writers of the time, meant being open to weakness and even to fascism or communism. Analysts of American culture argued over the kind of society that would create good, psychologically mature and autonomous individuals.

In this chapter, I seek to understand the mass-cultural literature on autonomy during the World War II and postwar era. I believe that this literature contained a critique of modernity and of consumer culture, but also became, by the late 1950s, a rallying cry for laissez-faire capitalism and the emerging "New Right" in the Republican party. This discourse took place mostly in popular books, both fiction and non-fiction. Novels like *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* told dramatic tales about their characters' searches for autonomy. Studies of America written by David Riesman, Philip Wylie and H.A. Overstreet set the tone for a discussion of Americans and psychological autonomy.[1]

[1] Philip Wylie, *Generation of Vipers* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1942); David Riesman, Nathan Glazer, and Reuel Denney, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950); H.A. Overstreet, *The Mature Mind* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1949). I focus especially on Riesman and Wylie, who were more often cited in the mass media than was Overstreet, though Overstreet was a bestseller. Despite being originally published in 1950, *The Lonely*

Later authors, such as Martin Gross, Betty Friedan, William Whyte, Vance Packard, E. Franklin Frazier and Barry Goldwater tapped this conversation about middle-class men to make other arguments about America and its problems.[2] In the mid-1950s, this discussion moved into popular magazines, especially men's magazines like *Playboy* and *True*, and the conservative opinion magazine *National Review.* It also appeared occasionally in general reader magazines, but rarely in women's or African American magazines.[3] The concern with middle-class men began and remained strong in the writing of postwar liberals. By the 1960s, however, anti-conformity had also become a rallying cry on the political right, which defined itself as rebellious and resisting the mainstream. In the process, however, more conservative authors redefined what exactly it was Americans were conforming to. Much of this change had to do with a redefinition of what made American men psychologically healthy, especially in terms of psychological "security."

The concept of autonomy, meaning independence of thought in an individual, was in many ways implicit in psychology from the nineteenth century. For Sigmund Freud, healthy progression through the developmental process produced an adult who was independent of his or her parents in thought and action. William James believed that the universal truth was not that "thought exists," but rather that "I think" and "I feel," thus

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Crowd became popular in 1953 after the publication of the abridged addition (James Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 47).

[2] Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*; E. Franklin Frazier, *The Black Bourgeoisie: The Rise of a New Middle Class* (New York: The Free Press, 1957); Barry Goldwater, *The Conscience of a Conservative* (New York: Victor Publishing Co, 1960); reprint, (New York: Manor Books, 1975); Martin Gross, *The Brain Watchers* (New York: Random House, 1962); William Whyte Jr., *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956); Vance Packard published numerous books and articles in this period that dealt in some way with the issues in this chapter. They will be cited as they appear.

[3] Though both did show concern over the dominant woman (see next chapter).

constructing individual consciousness as the basis of psychology.[4] Still, it was only in the late 1930s and 1940s that psychologists began explicitly talking about the necessity of autonomy to mental health. The concept of psychological "autonomy" originated in discussions of the relationship between the id and the ego. "Autonomy" here was not immediately about the liberation of the individual from society, but rather the autonomy of the ego from the id.[5] Since the ego, in Freudian psychoanalysis, was generally responsive to the pressures of parents and of society, this autonomy meant that the social parts of the psyche could be in conflict with the instinctual (the id). It was not much of a leap to argue that the needs of the individual could therefore be in conflict with the needs of society.[6] Psychiatrist Erik Erikson argued that autonomy of the individual from society as represented through parents or "caretakers," was a requirement for mental health. A child had to learn to make decisions without doubt or shame, and independently of his or her parents. The ability to make such decisions came, he argued, from a strong sense of identity.[7] Sociologist David Riesman's book, *The Lonely Crowd,* posited that autonomy from peers as well as parents was a central part of mental health.[8] The conflict between the id and the ego had become the conflict between the true desires of the self and the restraints of society internalized in the psyche of the individual. Most

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[4] Robert Watson and Rand Evans, *The Great Psychologists: A History of Psychological Thought*, 5th Ed. (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991), 371.
[5] David Rapaport, "A Historical Survey of Psychoanalytic Ego Psychology" in *Psychological Issues* 1, no. 1 (1959), 10. Freud had implied that the ego developed separately from the id in some of his later writings. H. Hartman was the first to articulate this separate development (in 1939). Since the "ego" was the social part of the psyche, this also meant that society did not merely serve to fulfill the desires of the id.
[6] As opposed to theories that societies were formed to better meet the needs of the individual psyches. Such "functionalist" theories remained useful to "ego psychologists" (the common name for this school of thought, including Erikson), but these psychologists were more likely to see social functions as separate from psychic functions, and often to argue that institutions that might once have met psychic needs were likely, over time, to become burdensome to the psyche for other reasons. Ideally, institutions could then be changed to meet changed needs.
[7] Erik Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*: *Selected Papers by Erik H. Erikson*, Printed in *Psychological Issues* 1, no 1 (1959), 19-164.
[8] Riesman, 7.

of the authors I discuss in this chapter believed that this conflict had taken on new and hazardous form in the twentieth century.

According to the mass culture of the mid-century United States, conformity to society often meant giving up one's autonomy. [9] Conformity generally included not only behavior, but also coming to see the ideas and feelings of the group as one's own. The external markers of conformity might cause their own problems, but the larger problem was the individual who had adjusted entirely to the group, and failed to develop (or maintain) an autonomous internal identity. Psychologist Erich Fromm posited that the insecurity of modern life, and the new freedoms it offered, often proved unbearable for modern men, who rejected this freedom and fled their individuality in an attempt to find security. Such rejections on a large scale threatened the very democracies in which they occurred, as they had in Germany and Italy.[10] Usually, authors in this discussion inerpreted such conformity as a symptom of feelings of inferiority within the individual, since people sure of their own mind would not feel compelled to conform.[11] Mass-culture authors traced this inferiority to feelings of insecurity stemming from modern life.

Autonomy was most often tied in this literature to masculinity, though sociologist David Riesman and popular writer Betty Friedan would also apply the idea to women. Men were supposed to be active, aggressive, and dominant; they were supposed to take risks, try to gain more power, and to snub the female inclination toward security and

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[9] A number of books written on the post-war period discuss the problems of suburban conformity (See, for example, Paul Allen, *Another Part of the Fifties* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 2000)). Barbara Ehrenreich, for example, looks at men's relationship to the "breadwinner" role. She shows how magazine articles and books used concepts of psychological immaturity to stigmatize men who avoided marriage, children, and white collar work (Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Press, 1983)); see also Gilbert, *Men in the Middle*, especially chapters three and nine.

[10] Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, x, 3.

[11] See, for example, Overstreet, 237.

submission. Mass-culture authors worried that men had become too "secure," especially in the suburbs, and that the security of a steady job and suburban family was evidence that men felt psychologically insecure. They often described the problem of conformity in terms of two kinds of security: positive security, especially economic and psychological security, which allowed men to avoid bad forms of security, such as conformity of thought. Later, politically-conservative authors would contend that all forms of government-provided security were psychologically harmful. Women were supposed to seek security, so their failure to take risks was not usually imagined to be the same kind of threat to democracy that this failure posed when present among men.

Publication of William Whyte's *The Organization Man* in 1956 represented a turning point in this literature on autonomy and on its reception by the media. Books before 1956, while popular and influential, did not create the media frenzy over the subject of psychological autonomy of the middle class male that came into being after *The Organization Man*.[12] Whyte's work spurred a flurry of articles, especially in men's magazines, over questions of how to achieve autonomy. Whyte's book also proved to be a rough dividing line for a change in the content of this discussion. Before 1956, authors writing about the problems of modernity for men were generally very critical of corporate capitalism and consumerism. After Whyte's book came out, many anti-conformity authors argued that competitive, corporate capitalism was the best road to autonomy. After Whyte, conformity was often defined as a stepping stone on the way to communism or socialism in mainstream publications and was placed in opposition to free market capitalism. The ways in which corporate society encouraged conformity were considered bad for corporations themselves, rather than an almost inevitable effect of corporate life.

[12] Whyte., *The Organization Man.*

This shift was not surprising, given that Wylie, Overstreet, and Riesman wrote before the peak of the red scare of the late 1940s and early 1950s.[13] The liberal view of conformity did not evaporate, however. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Vance Packard, Betty Friedan, and publications in *The Nation* continued the critical view of consumption and even capitalism in their works.

Much of the debate over conformity and autonomy hinged upon questions about the kind of psychological make-up that would allow men to retain their autonomy. These questions were tied to the discussion of parenting and discipline in the development of democratic personalities, which I discussed in the last chapter. The early anti-conformity authors linked conformity especially to fascism, and argued that Nazism was the worst possible manifestation of both modernity and conformity. Wylie, writing during World War II, not surprisingly saw Germany and Hitler as suffering the ultimate problems of modernity and the concurrent failures in masculinity.[14] The early anti-conformity authors generally looked for a balance, and believed that certain forms of security, both economic and psychological, would provide the foundation that allowed men to take risks (rather than seeking out the security of suburban and corporate conformity), and therefore avoid the less masculine forms of security-seeking. These writers were especially supportive of social welfare programs and their potential ability to free men from crippling economic anxiety.

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[13] Riesman published in 1950, and therefore probably was writing during the very beginnings of the Red scare. On the rare occasions when he did mention communism Riesman seemed to view it as an enormous threat, but still categorized it with Nazism under "totalitarianism" or "despotism" (see, for example, 293, 295).

[14] Wylie, *Generation,* 128-131. In the 1955 edition, he even added a footnote referring to Joseph McCarthy as a "sensational füher" (Philip Wylie, *A Generation of Vipers,* 20th anniversary edition (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1955), 130. All citations refer to first edition unless otherwise noted).

Later authors, perhaps affected by the red scare of the late 1940s and early 1950s, argued that communism was the worst manifestation of conformity. More conservative authors, writing in the late 1950s and 1960s, generally saw social welfare programs as part of the problem, not part of the solution. These authors disparaged "security" in almost every form as being unmasculine, including, in many cases, psychological security. They often argued that America had become too focused on the needs of women, especially on creating security for women, and thus Americans were undercutting necessary male autonomy.

Ultimately, the authors who wrote about Americans and psychological autonomy had four things in common. First, all believed the problems of the United States were either psychological or at least manifested as psychological problems, and were therefore concerned with the psyches of individual Americans. Second, all of these authors argued that people, or at least men, required psychological autonomy to achieve maturity and mental health. This meant that men needed to avoid total "adjustment" to the norms of American culture, as adjustment was defined as total conformity in this literature. Third, these authors believed that this autonomy was being threatened in a new way in the modern era. Most related these weaknesses to a changing environment—one that pushed more Americans into a white-collar middle class. Most were critical of education and business for fostering conformity, and saw women as a burden for men in the quest for psychological autonomy. Finally, they agreed that the threat to the autonomy of the male individual also constituted a threat to the liberty of the United States as a whole, and that the needs of the nation could be met by satisfying the psychic needs of men.

Liberal Views of Security and Autonomy

What supposedly robbed men of their autonomy, and what was the suggested cure? One of the causes blamed by the early, politically-liberal authors was the insecurity created by modernity, especially as it had manifested during World War II. The earliest of these books sought to understand why America had so many psychiatric casualties during the war. Others sought to understand why seemingly "civilized" nations in Europe had turned to fascism and other forms of totalitarianism (including communism). Philip Wylie, H. A. Overstreet, Vance Packard and David Riesman all wrote books that claimed that American (and often European) men faced a new kind of life in the twentieth century, and that keeping this new lifestyle from destroying the psyches of modern men was one of the great challenges of this century.[15] These authors, a popular novelist, a philosopher, a professional critic, and a sociologist (respectively), generally believed that promoting maturity and autonomy among American men would ensure the continuation of democracy (autonomy seemed to have been a prerequisite in their minds for maturity).

Modernity had a few basic characteristics that seemed to pose a threat to male autonomy in this period: industrialization, the rise of jobs that removed men from the home, the increasing power of corporations, and the loss of valuable work for women and children in the household. Especially central to these authors was the fear that modernity

[15] Wylie, *Generation*, 3; Overstreet, 233-37. Riesman saw a new character type emerging with modernity and seemed to see it in more negative terms than previous character types (Gilbert, *Men*, 48).

created new forms of both economic and psychological insecurity. Sociologist David Riesman's 1950 work, *The Lonely Crowd*, for instance, was concerned with changes in technology, social situations, and knowledge, which he believed called for flexibility of mind rather than the set value systems of the past.[16] Unfortunately, he argued, many modern men had become "other-directed," and instead of developing flexibility of mind merely went along with the mainstream. He depicted this other-direction as flourishing especially under the pressures of corporate society. Other-directed people valued peer approval above all else, and therefore attempted to conform to the group not only in external appearances, but also in internal thought and feeling. Unfortunately, other-directed people never really achieved this goal, but neither did they achieve psychological autonomy and fulfillment, and so they remained "lonely member[s] of the crowd" into which they hoped to dissolve.[17] Vance Packard likewise argued that the economic insecurity of corporate life created a strange modern personality inclined

[16] Riesman defined "character" as the part of personality set in early childhood. Drawing heavily on the psychiatrist Erich Fromm's work on the historical development of character, Riesman argued that dominant character types were historical phenomena (5, 20) (Fromm argued that societies had to train their children to "*want* to act in the way they *have* to act" if that society is to function. (Fromm quoted, page 5). Like Freud, Riesman saw childhood training as vital. Unlike Freud, however, he believed that childhood developmental patterns changed over time. Riesman argued that, while Freud was right that parents were the largest influence on character development in his time, historical character was changing, and peer groups were coming to be more important to development than were parents, even in childhood (Riesman organized history into three epochs with three corresponding character types. The first, tradition-directed, existed in societies with little change and rigid power relations, like Medieval Europe. Here, tradition (often through religious doctrine) dictated morality (11-13, 25). Since there was little change, there was no need for people to learn to react to new situations (113). His second type, inner-directed people, corresponded roughly with the industrial era. Inner-directed people dominated a growing world, where change happened faster—within the span of a lifetime. They learned to apply a rigid set of values, given to them by their parents, to new situations. The third era, the modern era, saw the rise of the other-directed character. He described other-directed people as those who were shaped largely by peer approval. They existed in a world of rapid transformations, and had therefore learned to alter themselves to fit these changes (17-25)).

[17] Riesman, v, passim.

toward status-seeking.[18] For all of the early anti-conformity authors, the ideal man was mentally "autonomous"—able to recognize and respect his own feelings and thoughts, with a strong but flexible identity. He was capable of conforming, but could also choose not to do so.[19]

Pre-modern societies were secure, in this view, but had little freedom. The social and technological changes of modernity presented both a unique opportunity for freedom as well as a novel threat to the psychological health of men. Liberal authors built on the ideas of psychologist Erich Fromm, psychologist, German-Jewish refugee, and member of the Institute for Social Research, who argued that the insecurity of modernity sent many men fleeing the new freedoms offered by modernity for the shelter of security, even if that security came from totalitarian governments. Riesman had, in fact, even undergone psychoanalysis with Fromm, and considered him a mentor.[20] The books written by Riesman, Overstreet, Wylie, and Packard read as warnings and as guides to a potentially better future.

Liberal anti-conformity authors believed that the New Deal and other social welfare programs could be used to promote autonomy by taking away economic fear as a motivation to conform. Like a good parent, the government could provide the basic security that people needed to explore their freedoms, and avoid conformity and other negative forms of "security seeking."[21] Men would not be intimidated into thinking like their corporations wanted them to think if they could afford to loose their jobs without

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[18] Vance Packard, *The Status Seekers: An Exploration of Class Behavior in America and the Hidden Barriers that Affect You, Your Community, Your Future* (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1959), passim.
[19] Riesman, 287;Wylie, *Generation,* 98; Overstreet, 74.
[20] Fromm, 3; Riesman, vi; Riesman even considered Fromm one of his mentors (see Gilbert, *Men,* 42).
[21] Wylie used this term to describe unmasculine men in Philip Wylie, "The Womanization of America" *Playboy*, September 1958, 78.

losing their homes. H.A. Overstreet 's 1950 bestseller *The Mature Mind* argued that economic systems could promote psychological maturity by decreasing fear of poverty.[22] He argued that Adam Smith, along with Nietzsche, contributed to the "madness" of modern American thought.[23] Choice without cost was Riesman's ideal.[24] He believed that economic security could free people from long hours of work, and would allow them to pursue more creative and autonomous leisure activities.[25] In *the Nation*, psychologist Erich Fromm argued that guaranteed incomes could create a psychology of abundance which would make American men psychologically independent.[26] Daniel Patrick Moynihan likewise would, as head of the Department of Labor in the 1960s, argue for economic aid for African American men on the grounds that it could help them attain autonomy and masculinity.[27] Even Phillip Wylie, the most conservative of the early anti-conformity authors, was critical of consumption and capitalism. Wylie saw the New Deal as a move in the right direction, saying that it "compelled us to be basically responsible for each other—which we should always have been."[28] These authors were looking to expand this responsibility to provide security for a greater number of Americans.

In mass-cultural discussions, problems with autonomy were depicted as most problematic for the middle class in mass culture. The white collar class was described as far more important than its numbers—this class represented the future of America and of

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[22] Overstreet, chapter 7.
[23] Ibid., 129. For sales statistics, see Payne Hackett, 184, 186. It was a "Book of the Month Club" selection.
[24] Riesman, 340.
[25] Ibid., 225.
[26] Erich Fromm, "Psychology of a Guaranteed Income," *The Nation*, December 6, 1965, 439.
[27] Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *The Negro Family: The Case for National* Action (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Labor, 1965); reprinted in Lee Rainwater and William L. Yancey, *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of* Controversy (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1967), 20.
[28] Wylie, *Generation,* 313-314.

American masculinity. This fit with the growing idea in this period that most Americans were or would soon be middle class.[29] They implied that, if poverty had not been cured by the New Deal, then it was at least no longer a major problem for America in terms of its psychological effects (that basic economic security had created basic psychological security among those on the financial edge). Even liberal writers were less concerned with the poor and working class than with the middle class. They believed, as Sociologist C. Wright Mills wrote in 1951, that "by examining white-collar life, it is possible to learn something about what is becoming more typically 'American'. . . By understanding these diverse white-collar worlds, one can also understand better the shape and meaning of modern society as a whole, as well as the simple hopes and complex anxieties that grip all the people who are sweating it out in the middle of the twentieth century."[30] The troubles of the working class, or the wealthy, simply did not seem as universal to these authors as did those of the middle strata of society. This focus on the middle class also had to do with these early authors' views of the concept of "security." They seemed to be looking to extend the basic security provided by the welfare state to relieve middle class Americans of their fear of falling into poverty. The issue was no longer basic food and shelter, but rather the ability to maintain a consistent, higher standard of living.

David Riesman, Vance Packard, and H.A. Overstreet all largely limited their discussions to the middle class.[31] While Wylie did not overtly limit his discussion of modern problems to the middle class, his descriptions of the lives of his Americans all

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[29] Alan Brinkley, "The Illusion of Unity in Cold War Culture," in Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert, ed., *Rethinking Cold War Culture* (United States.: Smithsonian Institution, 2001), 63-64. This idea began to fall apart in the early 1960s.

[30] C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), xv.

[31] Whyte, 3; Riesman, v; Vance Packard, *Status Seekers*, 7. Packard became more concerned with the relationship between consumption and poverty in *The Waste Makers* (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1960). For a more thorough description of Whyte, see below, page 22.

had the markers of the middle class, including college educations, wives staying at home with their labor-saving devices, club memberships, and bridge games.[32] All the men he focused on worked, and were businessmen, professors, statesmen, and military men—the first three at least in the realm of the middle or upper class.[33] Like other authors of anti-conformity literature, Wylie believed that the changes that came with modern middle-class status, in this case labor-saving devices and a resulting turn to consumerism, were the spark that ignited the flame of psychological crisis in America. Magazine articles on men likewise assumed a middle-class lifestyle and income. When poverty did raise its head in mass culture before the 1960s, the poor were usually imagined as lazy, drunken, and often criminal, and never as wanting full time work (or having full time work). They were to be pitied, but were not seen as central to understanding America.[34]

When these authors talked about the working class at all, it was usually either to herald the working-class man as a model of masculinity or to villainize the labor movement as an agent of conformity. Riesman, for example, believed that working-class men had a better chance at autonomy since they did not conflate work and social life. The working-class refusal to "accept the proffered glad hand" of management might vex those managers, but it also made managers envy their employees. He thought that workers' refusal to turn other-directed was especially strong in large, highly unionized factories where these men had job security.[35] Popular films, like *The Wild Ones* and *A Streetcar Named Desire,* likewise lionized the working-class man and imagined him as

[32] Wylie, *Generation,* 189-190.
[33] Ibid., chapters XII-XVI.
[34] For such portrayals of poverty, see Metalious, *Peyton Place*, passim; Vance Packard also mentions the "bottom class" as suffering the most psychological problems of any group in America, but still chose to focus on the problems of the middle class (Packard, *Status Seekers*, 261).
[35] Riesman, 314-316.

far more masculine than white-collar men could be.[36] Still, there seemed to be little place for such men in modern America. They were usually portrayed in films as outlaws or as historical figures—the last of a dying breed.

Interestingly, these same liberal authors held a surprisingly negative view of labor unions. Riesman, for instance, criticized the labor movement as a whole as one of the "veto groups" which exercised inordinate power in the political realm, and was therefore a force toward conformity. He argued its demands were too moderate, and made no real change.[37] Packard likewise saw unions as a negative, conformist influence, with too much bureaucracy and too little real power.[38] These views depicted unions as weakened versions of their former selves, and not truly effective organs in the fight for working-class power.

As with the working class, many of the white conformity authors largely ignored the position of African Americans in the United States, despite writing during the most active years of the Civil Rights movement and in the context of anti-authoritarian literature. Those who did talk about them deemphasized the continuing role of discrimination in American lives. Overstreet and Wylie simply failed to mention race. Packard believed that black middle-class men suffered the stresses of inferiority feelings and, therefore, conformed more often than did either white middle-class men or working-class African Americans.[39] Riesman spoke of the problems of "not quite assimilated ethnic groups" (especially African Americans and Jewish Americans) in achieving autonomy. He argued that "cultural pluralism," a practice which he said allowed an

[36]Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men*, 57.
[37] Riesman, 247-248.
[38] Packard, *Status Seekers,* 125, 300; *the Hidden Persuaders* (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1957); reprint (New York: Pocket Books, 1958), 179 (all references are to reprint edition).
[39] Packard, *Status Seekers, 54-55.*

ethnic group to keep much of their own culture instead of assimilating wholly into the American mainstream, also set up barriers between the ethnic American and dominant social groups. The ethnic American was urged "to confine his sociability 'voluntarily' to his 'own' group."[40] Such ethnic group members, Riesman believed, were less able to achieve autonomy due to the additional social restrictions on their leisure practices.

> "One must submit to the packaging of one's sociabilities by a combination of external pressure and small-time cultural dictators among the marginally underprivileged, [which] operate both through censorship and through the exhortations of the media beamed at the particular minority. Play and sociability are then consumed in guilty or anxious efforts to act in accordance with definitions of one's location on the American scene, a location which, like a surviving superstition, the individual cannot fully accept or dare fully to reject."[41]

Thus, intra-group conformity was to blame for the anxieties of minority group members in American society, whom Riesman saw as only "marginally underprivileged." This was similar to Erik Erikson's view of minorities. Erikson believed that, because minority group members were torn between their own group and the mainstream, and because they feared rejection by the mainstream, they had a harder time than whites establishing strong and autonomous identities, especially if they were more assimilated into white culture.[42] Even Riesman, however, was far more interested in white American society than in African Americans or other minorities.

At the same time that Riesman was pointing out problems with the internal dynamics of minority groups, he was also grossly downplaying the presence of racism in white American culture. Other-directed white men were, in Riesman's view, at least "tolerant" of minority groups. In fact, Riesman only mentioned racism once, in arguing that "tolerance" itself was a form of racism when it meant holding blacks and whites to

[40] Riesman, 335.
[41] Ibid., 336.
[42] Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 145.

different codes of conduct (specifically, making more allowances for African Americans' poor behavior than for whites').[43] Discrimination, especially economic discrimination, seems to have played a minor role in Riesman's America.

At least two writers did apply anti-conformity ideas to African-American men in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Sociologist E. Franklin Frazier's studies of African-American culture, and the Moynihan report which relied on Frazier's work, used the same language and psychological concepts to understand African-American men that other liberal authors employed to understand white men. American-born Sociologist E. Franklin Frazier, who spent his entire career studying African American society, saw the black middle-class as suffering the same problems as the white middle-class. He argued that they were more psychologically damaged by racism than were the "negro folk."[44] This damage took the form of inferiority complexes and insecurity that often resulted in conformity. He believed that the black middle class felt inferiority feelings caused by prejudice more severely than other African Americans both because of their embrace of white values and because of their increased contact with white Americans.[45] The Moynihan report, a document published by the Department of Labor in 1965 and named for then-Assistant Secretary of Labor Daniel Patrick Moynihan, used Frazier's ideas to argue for government programs to alleviate psychological problems which Moynihan believed were epidemic in the African-American population.[46] Interestingly, both Frazier and Moynihan traced these problems not only to modernity, but also to the effects of

[43] Riesman, 304-305. He sees this as something else holding blacks back from autonomy (they have to know if they are doing something because they want to or if they are doing it because it will be tolerated).
[44] Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie,* 146.
[45] Ibid., 131.
[46] Lee Rainwater and William Yancey, *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy* (Cambridge, M.A.: The MIT Press, 1967), 22-23.

slavery and segregation on African American men. The results were similar in kind to the supposed results of modernity on all American men, but often of a worse degree.[47]

Frazier argued that black men were not allowed to be masculine in American society for fear of white reprisals. As a result, he said, "Negro males have tended to cultivate their 'personalities' which enable them to exercise considerable influence among whites and achieve distinction in the Negro world. . . . In this respect they resemble women who use their 'personalities' to compensate for their inferior status in relation to men."[48] This was, he said, especially true of the black middle class. Moynihan also claimed that the black family had been psychologically damaged through long years of discrimination, especially economic discrimination against black men. Because black men could not find good-paying jobs, they had been denied their leadership role in the family. Moynihan said that patriarchy was not inherently better than matriarchy, and claimed that the problem for black families was that they were matriarchal in a patriarchal society (the solution, of course, was not to make all society matriarchal, but to make the black family patriarchal).[49] He contradicted himself on this point, however, since he also believed that women are naturally capable of submission in a way that men are not. "Segregation, and the submissiveness it exacts," he said, "is surely more destructive to the male than to the female personality."[50] Likewise, he believed that the "strong father figure" role was natural to adult men, and an important part of any family.[51] Black women had had to enter the workforce, and as better breadwinners than African American men, they took control of the family. The problem,

[47] See below, chapter five.
[48] Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie,* 220.
[49] Moynihan, 29.
[50] Moynihan, 16.
[51] Ibid., 16.

Moynihan argued, had become self-perpetuating. Women ruled the family, and they favored their daughters' educations over their sons.'

Frazier and Moynihan had much in common with other liberal authors promoting anti-conformity. Both argued that government-provided security could allow men to develop into psychologically healthy citizens, and therefore advocated liberal social welfare policies. Both were concerned especially with feelings of inferiority. Moynihan was more concerned, however, with the autonomy of poorer men, not with the middle class.[52] Both argued that men needed autonomy, but not that women did—in fact, both blamed women for the psychological failings of men, a view of gender that would become increasingly common in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when these men were writing.[53] Like Riesman, both of these men also, surprisingly, deemphasized the importance of ongoing racial prejudice in favor of explanations that accentuated the role of slavery and past prejudice in creating the psychological problems of African-American men, though both agreed that prejudice was an ongoing issue.[54]

This generally sunny view of contemporary race relations in this literature, excepting possibly Frazier and Moynihan, is somewhat surprising, given the emphasis on prejudice in literature on authoritarian personalities. Racism was not, however, defined as a central part of middle-class conformity, perhaps because of the emphasis in this literature on the business environment and economics rather than on home and community. It is also possible that Riesman especially was drawing on Erich Fromm's view of "tolerance," which saw tolerance as a mask protecting the status-quo.[55]

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[52] Moynihan, 19.
[53] See below, 94-95, 101-108.
[54] Moynihan, 29; Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie,* 132-133.
[55] Jay, 97.

This focus on the (mostly white) middle class also involved a critique of the lifestyle of the middle class, especially around issues of consumption. Particularly prominent here was concern with "status seeking." Beginning with David Riesman, these authors talked about the "minor differences" within the middle class that were the real clues to status. "Freud coined the phrase 'narcissism with respect to small differences' for the pride of individuals, groups, and nations manifest about small insignia which distinguish them from other individuals, groups, and nations," but Riesman believed the differences arose from psychological anxiety rather than narcissism.[56] Other liberal authors likewise believed that consumption, rather than being individualized by taste, had become merely an obligatory way of expressing status for those who felt most insecure.[57] Vance Packard, for example, argued that anxieties and inferiority feelings led to the development of people who were "continually striving to surround themselves with visible evidence of the superior rank they are claiming."[58] These views were mirrored by mass culture writers, one of whom looked forward to training her children to rebel against "status worship and fear and girdle commercials and mediocrity.[59]

Vance Packard referred to people who consumed as a means of exhibiting their economic positions as "status seekers." In his book of the same name, Packard claimed that conformity was the result of such status seeking. He cited Frazier to support his claim that status seeking was worse among African Americans in the middle class than it was in the white middle class, as they were more desperate to fit in and therefore suffered

[56] Riesman, 47.
[57] Ibid., 345-346.
[58] Packard, *Status Seekers*, 7.
[59] April Oursler Armstrong, "I Don't Want Well-Adjusted Children," *Saturday Evening Post*, November 11, 1961, 14.

greater inferiority feelings.[60] Frazier himself argued that the African American middle class attempted to assuage its inferiority feelings through status striving and consumption.[61] Riesman was likewise critical of thoughtless consumption—for keeping up with the Joneses. He did not, however, tie it to race. He saw such consumption as a result of status-seeking, and thus as just another expression of conformity to middle-class norms.[62] Riesman, however, believed that consumption could be a positive force, as long as it is exercised autonomously by autonomous people.[63]

Liberal authors were also generally critical of mass culture, both for promoting consumption through advertising and for generally reinforcing the pressure toward middle-class conformity. Vance Packard , for instance, used the "synthetic hilarity" of "canned laughter" on television as a striking example of the ways in which mass culture taught Americans to conform, even in their senses of humor, by cueing them to laugh.[64] Riesman was especially negative about mass culture. He saw mass media as providing examples to people of how they should live, act, and even discipline their children.[65] He worried that television, through its effects on other-directed children, was socializing the entire family to particular tastes.[66] Generally, these authors were not as concerned with the existence of mass media itself so much as they were worried about the uniformity and poor quality of the content currently coming out of these media.[67]

These authors were also worried about the role of business in the lives of American men. The early anti-conformity authors expressed many concerns about the

[60] Packard, *Status Seekers*, 54-55.
[61] Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie,* 213, 148.
[62] Ibid., 7.
[63] Riesman, 339-341.
[64] Packard, *Hidden Persuaders,* 176-77.
[65] Riesman, 51, 86.
[66] Ibid., 99-100.
[67] See also Overstreet, 223.

role of business in American life, and often seem to have believed that there was something un-American about businessmen. As with consumption, the question seemed to be, as Packard put it, "the larger moral problem of working out a spiritually tolerable relationship between a free people and an economy capable of greater and greater productivity."[68] These writers saw corporations as a corrupting influence on American workers and their psyches. For example, Phillip Wylie contended that business had become corrupt because it catered to women's materialistic desires.[69] He argued that the American idea of liberty had been spoiled by the equation of capitalistic market freedom with American freedom. Real freedom, he said, required that people take responsibility for their choices. Market capitalism discouraged such responsibility, and thus encouraged the creation of psychologically immature individuals.[70] This transition to reckless capitalism, he argued, had been spurred by women's materialism.

Anti-conformity authors also saw the autonomy of the corporate employee as being in danger. Vance Packard claimed that those who moved up the corporate ladder "had shed their rough edge of individualism."[71] David Riesman blamed business for creating other-directed conformity of thought among middle-class employees. He did not argue that modern corporations would be better served by autonomy, and was little concerned with continuing economic growth. Corporations, he believed, had become too focused on creating a certain way of life both for their own employees and for Americans at large. Business would have to learn to focus on utility in the products they produced,

[68] Vance Packard, *Hidden Persuaders*, 247.
[69] Wylie, *Generation*. 231.
[70] Ibid., 228-229.
[71] Packard, *Status Seekers,* 123.

rather than fashion, before they would benefit from autonomous employees.[72] Riesman lamented that businessmen were more concerned with maintaining the status quo and profit than with achieving change for the better, and by being so they were endangering the psychological health of American men.[73]

Sloan Wilson's popular novel, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit,* likewise showed apprehension over the role of business in American life. The novel told the story of Tom, a man dealing with the difference between what he was supposed to desire and what he actually desired, often unsure of the difference himself. Tom had to choose between spending time with his family and moving up the corporate and financial ladder. Tom came to realize that he did not *want* to move up the corporate ladder, but it took him the entire length of the novel to come to this conclusion. The novel also showed the miserable life of Tom's boss, whose dysfunctional relationship with his wife and daughter showed the destructive power of a man's absence from the home.[74] Autonomy for Tom meant turning away from ambition in business. He kept a corporate job, but began to see it only as a source of money, not as the center of his life. He stopped status-seeking through work and looked instead to his family for happiness.

Some of this literature blamed the problems of consumption on women. Wylie was the most vehemently anti-female of these authors, though Riesman also worried that women pushed men toward conformity.[75] With the exception of Wylie, however, this was not a large part of this early literature, though it became one of the major themes of

[72] Riesman, 139.
[73] Ibid..
[74] Sloan Wilson, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (New York: Pocket Books, 1955).
[75] Riesman, 80, 132.

the anti-conformity discussion of the late 1950s and early 1960s.[76] Wylie believed that men were naturally functionalist in both their producing and purchasing habits. Without the influence of women and their obsession with "fashion," he said, men would buy a car or clothes or any other object and use it as long as it worked, not needlessly replace their car or clothing each year with slightly different styles. Likewise, he argued that men designing such items as cars could, if men controlled consumption, focus on making better cars instead of trying to change the style every single year.[77] He also argued, however, that men were becoming too interested in consumption as well, as they became more feminine. Wylie castigated American men for having become too interested in material goods and not interested enough in the liberty of Americans or in their own characters.[78] Oft-quoted statistics usually showed that women made a majority of the nation's purchases, and that wives managed the funds in more than 70% of American households.[79]

Changes in the Late 1950s, and the Pro-Business Use of Autonomy

After the mid-1950s, however, many anti-conformity tracts were totally uncritical of consumption and laissez-faire capitalism, or even saw them as the solution to the problems of modernity. The more liberal literature continued, but was increasingly challenged by a more economically conservative use of this discourse, especially in mainstream men's and general reader magazines. This literature was more critical of the

[76] See below, page 101-108.
[77] Wylie, "The Career Woman" *Playboy,* January 1963, 155.
[78] Wylie, *Generation,* passim.
[79] Robert Moskin, "The American Male: Why Do Women Dominate Him?" *Look,* February 4, 1958, 80; See also "The Playboy Panel: The Womanization of America." *Playboy*, June 1962, 48-49.

New Deal and the "security" it provided for Americans. William Whyte, an editor and writer for *Fortune,* released his book, *The Organization Man*, about six years after Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd.* Whyte's "organization man" was much like an "other-directed" man, in that he had forsaken individuality for fealty to the group. Unlike earlier authors, however, Whyte was much less critical of consumerism and of corporate dominance. He worried instead that a "social ethic" had replaced the Protestant work ethic and individualism in American life, and that Americans increasingly believed that competitiveness and self-interest did not serve Americans well.[80] For Whyte, adjustment was bad, and fulfillment, through business success, was good.[81] His autonomy was not only psychological, but also economically laissez-faire. Whyte was not concerned, as earlier authors had been, with America slipping into fascism. The only form of government he defined as a threat was communism. Like Riesman and other early authors, however, Whyte saw the organization of modern society as a threat to the autonomy of the individual, and wanted Americans to find their way to autonomous living.

Whyte's book was at least partially a study of the suburb of Park Forest, Illinois, and Whyte found much to critique in the suburban life of businessmen. Whyte argued that the American middle class had largely forsaken the Protestant work ethic in favor of organization life, meaning they were more focused on fitting in and being liked than on achieving new heights and being good at their jobs. He claimed that there were three major "credos" of organization life, from which modern middle-class men needed to escape. The three were "scientism," which he defined as the belief that we could use the

[80] Whyte, 1-6.
[81] Ibid., passim.

scientific method to exactly measure the human psyche; "belongingness," which he described as the "deep emotional security that comes from total integration with the group;" and "togetherness," which was the reverence for the group over the individual.[82]

This book was, overall, a call for a return to the Protestant work ethic. Let people work on their own, reward genius, and realize that the individual was sometimes more than the group, and America would be back on the right track, he claimed. Unlike Riesman, who believed that the other-directed man was economically beneficial for corporate society, Whyte believed that the organization man was created by corporations, but ultimately prevented the economic success of those same corporations. The social ethic was self-perpetuating, and ultimately held back corporations. Whyte contended that Americans could achieve individuality within corporations.[83] Unlike Riesman, he was concerned with the economic success of the corporation (he did, after all, work for *Fortune* magazine). A return to the Protestant work ethic would, in Whyte's mind, benefit capitalism. [84]

Corporations and corporate life were, for Whyte, the creators of this new way of life. Middle-class men learned there that standing out too much from the crowd, or failing to get along with their co-workers, were far more important than whether or not they were productive workers. The greatest prizes went not to the genius (as Whyte argued they did in the past), but rather to the middling, congenial man, who placed the good of the organization above his own individual good. Whyte's organization man was much like Riesman's other-directed man in his search for approval and his resulting mediocrity. Whyte saw psychological conformity as the worst kind of conformity. As

[82] Ibid., 23, 32, 46-47 (respectively).
[83] Ibid., 11.
[84] Ibid., passim.

long as the individual held to his own beliefs, he could act like everyone else and not be an organization man. Whyte differed from Riesman, however, in that he believed this was a perversion of what corporate culture should do to men, not an inevitable result of corporate life.

The irony, for Whyte, was that society was still truly competitive. Men worked hard at getting along and being good corporation men, but at the same time, they had to have a strong work ethic, and maybe a little genius, to succeed. Those who made it to the top of the corporate ladder, the executives, were those who still valued the Protestant work ethic over the social ethic, though they probably hid behind the guise of the organization man. They were not, psychologically speaking, conformists; though they pretended to be.[85] Whyte defined the Protestant ethic as the "thought that pursuit of individual salvation through hard work, thrift, and competitive struggle is the heart of the American achievement."[86] Unlike Riesman, Whyte wanted to re-embrace the Protestant work ethic. He was also less critical of consumption than Riesman or Wylie, and worried more about Americans trying to "keep down with the Joneses" than he did about keeping up with the Joneses.[87]

The domination of the organization lifestyle in America was, for Whyte, not just making America more communistic, it was ridding America of the individual geniuses that might keep America more powerful than the USSR. Especially important for Whyte was the effect of the organization on the advance of science. Since the organization

[85] Whyte did not talk in psychological terms as often as did Riesman, Wylie, or others. He spoke exclusively in terms of conformity and non-conformity, and did not talk about identity or autonomy. He did worry most about those who accepted the social ethic, but did not trace this acceptance to a particular personality type. He did, however, see the quest for conformity as a creator of neuroses (397).
[86] Whyte, 4.
[87] Ibid., 10-11, 313, for example.

frowned on standing out and on individual genius, American science was not progressing as it should.[88] Writing in 1956, Whyte was tapping into strong fears that America might fall to communist forces inside the U.S., or that America would loose the technology race with the Soviet Union, thus opening itself to the invasion by communist forces from the outside. Either way, Whyte seemed to imply, the organization ethos would lead to the defeat of democracy. The fear of communism was not as prevalent when Wylie, Riesman, and Overstreet were writing.

In many ways, however, Whyte was very much like the earlier, more liberal authors. He was critical of consumption, focused on the white middle-class, and had a negative view of labor unions. He depicted labor leaders as executives uninterested in serving their members.[89] Despite recognizing that egalitarianism stopped "very sharply at the color line," he was largely unconcerned with African Americans in his worries about suburbia.[90] He discussed African Americans only when they affected the lives of his white suburbanites—as a force driving whites from the city, and as a threat to their sense of their own egalitarianism. Whyte's organization man was unquestionably white (as he was unquestionably a man). Whyte was also was also critical of consumption. He lamented the need to keep both up and down with the Joneses. The white-collar suburbanite had to purchase just enough to maintain status, he claimed, but not enough to stand out from the group.[91] Like Riesman, he talked about the "small differences" between, for example, a Chevrolet and a Dodge, which differentiated middle-class status-seekers (since these differences left out both those who used only public transportation,

[88] Whyte, 209.
[89] Whyte, 145.
[90] Whyte, 311.
[91] Whyte, 313.

and those who owned Cadillacs).[92] Those who consumed the wrong products, those who did not conform in their purchasing decisions, were looked on with suspicion.[93]

Like Whyte, other anti-conformity authors of the late 1950s and early 1960s believed that the problem with modern American society was that it was not individualistic, capitalistic, and risk-taking enough. One author in *Playboy* argued that the non-conformist went further in business, and was willing to take an interesting opportunity over a stable paycheck.[94] This led to a critique of social welfare programs, as well. Senator, 1964 Republican presidential candidate, and hero of the new right Barry Goldwater's 1960 book *The Conscience of a Conservative* argued that psychic autonomy required that a man have the freedom to be economically responsible for "his" family (The welfare recipient was, quite interestingly, always "he" in his book*;* there were no widows or single mothers in Goldwater's rhetoric).[95] Even Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a liberal Democrat, decried the influence of government, through social work, on what he thought should be male-headed households in the African American community.[96] Like Goldwater, Moynihan was concerned especially with the psychic autonomy of the male. Both assumed an ideal family structure of a male-headed household. While Moynihan supported male-focused social programs to rebuild this family structure (thus rebuilding African American masculinity and autonomy), Goldwater wanted such programs ended, since he saw them as inevitably creating dependency, and thus a lack of autonomy.

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[92] Whyte, 311. Vance Packard went much more in depth on the subject of small differences in consumption as status markers in his book *The Status Seekers* (see especially chapter nine).
[93] Whyte, 279, 329, 357, for example.
[94] J. Paul Getty, "Money and Conformity," *Playboy*, February 1961, 52.
[95] Barry Goldwater, *Conscience of a Conservative,* 75.
[96] Moynihan, 19.

This difference between Goldwater and Moynihan showed the difference between two views of "security." Like most liberal anti-conformity authors who were critical of consumerism and corporate wealth, Moynihan claimed that creating basic economic security among men could allow them to develop autonomy (Moynihan was especially concerned with their autonomy from women). Goldwater, like most anti-conformity authors on the economic right, critiqued the idea of security, even (and especially) economic security, as undermining the masculinity and freedom of American men. A *National Review* article, for example, quoted what they described as the "Brilliant" argument that liberalism "prefers psychoanalysis to the dark night of the soul, 'adjustment' to achievement, [and] security to freedom."[97] A similar article in *Playboy*, which argued against "big government," said that the "Orwellian nightmare" taking over American society "will provide complete security for its members, quite literally from womb to tomb."[98] These conservative authors saw economic security through social welfare programs as undermining the autonomy of American men.

Many of the anti-conformity authors who argued that men were not ruthless enough in their pursuit of business success were very critical of the role of women in creating this problem. This critique of women's psychological effects on men arose during World War II in the work of Philip Wylie, but then seems to have ebbed until the late 1950s, when it combined with the pro-business critique of conformity.[99] One such

[97] Frank Meyer, *In Defense of Freedom: A Conservative Credo*, quoted in Richard Weaver, "Anatomy of Freedom," *National Review*, December 4, 1962, 443.
[98] J. Paul Getty, "The Homogenized Man," *Playboy*, August 1964, 128.
[99] Even in the pages of *Playboy,* famed for its negative view of wives, their psychological effects were not regular topic of conversation until the late 1950s, at which time Wylie also began to write (occasionally) for the magazine.

article, telling the story of a man who did not open his own business because his wife feared the financial repercussions, worried that:

> women are constituted to fear things more intensely than is reasonable, and there isn't much a man can do about it. But when female fears prevent a man from doing things *he* wants to do, it's time to blow the whistle, time for a declaration of male independence from womanish worries.
> It's more than a question of a man's personal satisfactions; the very character of the United States as a nation is at issue.[100]

This theme was repeated often in the pages of popular magazines.[101]

Most critics of conformity in this later period placed some of the blame for male conformity on women, and showed little if any concern for women themselves. Women were blamed not only for holding men back from risk, but also for creating men (their sons) who were too weak to establish autonomous identities. Those authors who blamed women for these things almost always believed that women were naturally more passive, and therefore comfortable with conformity. This only became a problem when women pushed this conformity onto men.

This seems largely to stem from the work of Philip Wylie. Phillip Wylie turned the condemnation of women into something of a career. He wrote *Generation of Vipers* in 1942, and then had something of a revival in the late 1950s and early 1960s with articles in *Playboy* on the threat that women posed to male autonomy and therefore to democracy.[102] Wylie fit well into *Playboy*'s pages, since *Playboy* was famous for its view of wives as economic parasites living off of the male half of the population.[103] Wylie argued, both in his book and in later articles, that women were taking greater and greater control of the world, both as wives and mothers at home and as workers in the

[100] Max Gunther, "The Female Fears that Bind a Man," *True*, February 1965, 14.
[101] See, for example, Getty, "Money and Conformity," 52; William Atwood, "The American Male: Why Does He Work So Hard?" *Look,* March 4, 1958, 73.
[102] See, for example, Phillip Wylie, "The Career Woman," passim; Wylie, "Womanization," passim.
[103] Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men,* 46.

office. This control was, he believed, unnatural. He relied on psychoanalyst Carl Jung's theories to argue that Americans were ignoring the "instincts" of men. He suggested that, by looking at the archetypal legends in Jung's studies, one could see that men were meant to be heroes, and that women were by nature at least partially villainous.[104]

Wylie tied this breakdown in gender roles to problems in government structure. As natural heroes, men were born leaders, and as natural villains, women had to be kept in check. As long as men and women kept to their proper place in the natural power structure, freedom and democracy would prevail. Women, however, had used "momism," an irrational love of mothers by all Americans, to gain social and political power they should not have. American men had become too feminine, as had Hitler and other European fascists, due to the disproportionate strength of women in modern, Western societies.

Wylie and others were critical of women for raising men who were, in their eyes, incapable of autonomy and masculinity. Wylie defined "momism" largely as the nationwide epidemic of Oedipal complexes, caused by women using their copious free time to nag their husbands and twist their son's psyches through overprotection.[105] He claimed that boys faced their fathers too early (in their Oedipal conflict), under mom's influence, which resulted in juvenile delinquency rather than true independence. Real maturity and autonomy, he said, could only come from a boy facing his father when he had reached "full manhood."[106] Wylie used Hitler as his example of where such feminization would lead the United States if it were not careful. He described Hitler's scape-goating of Jewish people as a feminine tactic, and Hitler as "more of a Delilah than

[104] Wylie, *Generation,* 33-35.
[105] Ibid., 186.
[106] Ibid., 196-197.

an Antichrist."[107] Wylie likewise described the treachery and mob mentality of the Germans as signs of their loss of masculinity.[108] Other authors followed Wylie in arguing that modern women were warping the psyches of their sons, and thus endangering democracy. One author argued that "a large percentage of this nation's boys, the future leaders of the country, are going to reach manhood scared of their own shadows."[109]

As with Wylie, critics of conformity who attacked women argued that men and women had naturally complementary roles. The problems of the modern era were created by the breakdown of those roles. Women had too much power within the family, these critics argued, both over their children and over their husbands. Women's needs had come to dominate American culture as a whole, weakening America in the process. E. Franklin Frazier argued that African American women had too much control in the black family, and robbed men of their masculinity and freedom.[110] Journalist Max Gunther, in "The Female Fears that Bind a Man," argued that women's need for security tied men into boring jobs, which provided economic security for the family but did not fill the psychological need of men for adventure and daring.[111] In a different article, Gunther even worried that female control over men's lives had gone so far that women could imprison their husbands if they attempted to move out of the breadwinner role. In "Bad Laws Can Make Your Wife Your Warden," Gunther told the story of "Fred W.," who planned to divorce his neurotic wife when she and her psychiatrist combined forces to have him committed to an insane asylum. Once released, Fred had to obey his wife or

[107] Ibid., 131.
[108] Ibid., 129-132.
[109] Gunther, "Female Fears," 16.
[110] Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie,* 221.
[111] Gunther, "Female Fears," 14-20.

face recommitment (he instead drove his wife insane and had her committed, which Gunther portrayed as a heroic victory).[112] *True* magazine, for which Gunther wrote these articles, had become more and more critical of women over the course of the 1950s, as it had become more involved in the discussion of conformity. I did find one anti-wife comment in *True* in the late 1940s, but the magazine generally supported marriage through the mid 1950s. It was only after it began to compete with *Playboy* that it really began to criticize modern marriage, and by the early 1960s this became one of the mainstays of *True* articles.

Numerous authors in men's magazines argued that women had an innate need for security, while men would be better served by remaining bachelors for a longer part of their youth, or even by polygamy. Women had forced early monogamy on society to maintain security, but "the form that this security has taken is completely opposed to the male's recognized biological nature, which impels him to seek the company of a variety of females."[113] Both *Playboy* and *True*, the bestselling men's magazines of the 1950s, ran numerous semi-serious articles advocating polygamy for men's mental well being.[114]

Despite this fear that women would make "this big, masculine country . . . a timid little kid who gets beaten up by all the bullies," some more liberal authors were able to turn the conformity literature into an argument for women's rights.[115] These authors included David Riesman and Betty Friedan, as well as a number of novelists. In Riesman's view, women were as much victims of conformity as were men, though his concern was far more with men. He claimed that, due to stronger social pressure, women

[112] Max Gunther, "Bad Laws Can Make Your Wife Your Warden," *True*, August 1963, 49, 65-69.
[113] Moskin., 77.
[114] See, for example, Jay Smith, "A Vote for Polygamy," *Playboy*, June 1955, 15-16; Joseph D. Wassersug, M.D., "Rx for the Good Life: Polygamy," *True*, August 1962, 44, 93-95.
[115] Gunther, "Female Fears," 18.

had a harder time resisting conformity than did men.[116] He also contended that "women's work" was consistently (and wrongly) devalued in American society, and that this devaluation also worked to prevent women's autonomy.[117] He chastised those who looked back nostalgically at earlier gender roles and the lower divorce rates of the past, believing that the divorce rates reflected higher expectations of both spouses, and the new ability of men and women to offer each other true companionship. Women's growing independence and opportunities for autonomy, he argued, meant that "marriage offers more for millions of people than ever before in its long history."[118] Even Riesman, however, viewed women as pressuring men, if not on purpose, toward conformity.[119]

Women's magazines, however, did not pick up on the problem of women's conformity until after Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique,* the feminist best-seller by a former left-wing political activist, though they did talk about the devaluation of women's work as one of the causes of the problems of modern women.[120] Betty Friedan, whom I discuss in more depth in the next chapter, echoed many of Riesman's sentiments in *The Feminine Mystique* a number of years later. Women, she said, were not suffering from lack of sexual satisfaction, as so many Americans seemed to believe, nor were they suffering from too few children or too little housework. She believed instead that they suffered from a lack of life for their minds and spirits—a lack of autonomy and identity.[121] This was due in large part to women's forced choice between marriage and career. Girls, she said, "must decide between adjustment, conformity, avoidance of

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[116] Riesman, 81-82.
[117] Ibid., 309, 331.
[118] Ibid., 332.
[119] Ibid., 80, 132.
[120] Daniel Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and the Making of The Feminine Mystique: The American Left, The Cold War, and Modern Feminism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 198.
[121] Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 36.

conflict, therapy—or individuality, human identity, [and] education in the truest sense, with all its pains of growth."[122] Like other liberal authors, she was critical of the effects of modern gender roles on the psychological health of men (and women). To regain their mental health and strength, Americans needed to change society to allow women to have both autonomy and families.

Friedan talked in terms of both "autonomy" and "identity." She was especially concerned about the failure of women to go through an "identity crisis," a crisis which allowed people to develop their independent identity and thus launched them into maturity.[123] She took the concept of an identity crisis from Erik Erikson.[124] The ideal of the woman in the home, bolstered by the pseudo-Freudian admonitions against women taking on "masculine" jobs and roles, kept women from growing into mature, autonomous persons. By failing to become autonomous, these women trapped both husbands and children in neuroses as well, so all Americans ended up paying for the feminine mystique with their autonomy.[125] Like other anti-conformity writers, she feared that this loss endangered democracy.

Like Riesman, Friedan did not disagree with the many critics of American society and conformity who blamed women for creating greater conformity among American

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[122] Ibid., 175.
[123] Ibid., 75.
[124] Kay Deaux, "Identity," in Alan E. Kazdin, ed., *Encyclopedia of Psychology* (London: Oxford University Press, 2000), 222.
[125] Friedan, 289. Friedan took her idea of the "identity crisis" from Erik Erikson. She quoted his definition of identity crisis at length:

> "I have called the major crisis of adolescence the identity crisis; it occurs in the period of the life cycle when each youth must forge for himself some central perspective and direction, some working unity, out of the effective remnants of his childhood and the hopes of his adulthood; he must detect some meaningful resemblance between what he has come to see in himself and what his sharpened awareness tells him others judge and expect him to be."(Friedan, 77-78. Erik Erikson quoted from *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History*.)

She also spent a chapter largely tracing the growing psychological consensus on the human need for autonomy and growth. (Friedan, Chapter 13).

men. Modern women did hamper the development of their husbands and children. "There is increasing evidence," she said, "that women's failure to grow to complete identity has hampered rather than enriched her sexual fulfillment, virtually doomed her to be castrative to her husband and sons, and caused [her own] neuroses."[126] The illness so many critics had seen truly did affect America, but this sick America had been misdiagnosed. The cause was not women dominating men, but rather the attack on women's autonomy. The conflict between women's fulfillment and men's autonomy was cultural rather than natural. Misunderstanding and misuse of Freud, in her opinion, had led to this misdiagnosis.[127]

With these few exceptions, however, most authors who were concerned about autonomy and conformity in American life placed the psychological autonomy of men at the center of the good society. When male and female needs conflicted, and these authors seemed to feel that they usually did, fulfilling female needs weakened American society. Women, as I argue in the next chapter, were often imagined as the creators and perpetuators of the psychological problems of both men and of American society as a whole in the mid-century.

Another problem articulated by these anti-conformity authors, regardless of their views on gender, was the problem of modern educational methods. Anti-conformity authors expressed concern over modern schools, and especially with the prevalence of "progressive education" practices. Even earlier, liberal authors had questioned the effectiveness of progressive education. Phillip Wylie, David Riesman, H.A. Overstreet,

[126] Ibid., 77.
[127] On misuse and misunderstanding of Freud, see Friedan, chapter 5.

and William Whyte all saw schools as detrimental to the autonomy of the student.[128] These authors believed that schools did not allow the best students to achieve their potential, but instead frowned on competition in favor of self esteem and adjustment.

It is not surprising that progressive education, originally championed by John Dewey around the turn of the century, would come under attack in this era. Like liberal anti-conformity authors, Dewey had looked for ways to incorporate industrial capitalism into a progressive view of democracy. He argued that the government and social institutions could help eliminate the injustices created by capitalism and "encourage people in their natural tendency to cooperate."[129] Dewey called for child-centered education and more gentle forms of discipline to encourage students to learn to think for themselves rather than blindly accepting the "values associated with the status quo."[130]

Even liberal anti-conformity authors, however, were critical of progressive education. Anti-conformity authors worried that progressive education was too concerned with the psychological adjustment of the student and not concerned enough with what they considered to be real education. David Riesman thought that progressive education had come more and more into vogue because it helped create the "suave" businessmen needed for the other-directed corporation.[131] The aim of progressive education, he said,

> and to a very considerable degree, its achievement, was to develop the individuality of the child; and its method was to focus the teacher's attention on

[128] Wylie was critical of schools in his original book, but apparently saw the attack on progressive education as too much, and added a footnote in his twentieth anniversary edition arguing that he did not mean that progressive education should be replaced with what came before it, but rather that some reforms were needed. Wylie, *Generation,* 20th Anniversary Edition, 48-49; Riesman, 60.
[129] Steven C. Rockefeller, *John Dewey: Religious Faith and Democratic Humanism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 222-224.
[130] Ibid., 249.
[131] Riesman, 143.

> more facets of the child than his intellectual abilities. Today, however, progressive education is often no longer progressive; as people have become more other-directed, educational methods that were once liberating may even tend to thwart individuality.[132]

While Riesman seemed to want revision of progressive methods, but conservatives like Whyte wanted to get rid of these methods entirely. Whyte claimed Dewey's ideas were good for Dewey's time, but were unfit for mid-century education. The Pragmatic emphasis on social development was necessary at the turn of the century when America was changing so rapidly, he conceded, but it was past time for Americans to move back toward economic competition.[133] Universities worried more about turning out well-adjusted graduates, he argued, than they did about turning out well-educated graduates.[134] By doing so, they failed on both counts. He believed that Dewey's educational methods no longer provided the right kind of psychological security. Like other anti-conformity writers, he worried that too much adjustment was a bad thing.

Friedan later villainized the educational system, especially colleges, for perpetuating conformity among women. She argued that colleges increasingly specialized their students, and in the case of women, that specialization taught them to be mothers and wives. It did not, however, teach them to think for themselves. Friedan was especially critical of what she saw as the popular idea that intellectualism should be discouraged in girls because it only served to make them unhappy as housewives, or would doom them to celibacy.[135] Women's education focused too much on life-

[132] Riesman, 60.
[133] Whyte, 20-21.
[134] Ibid., 93.
[135] Friedan, 150.

adjustment, and she believed that "conformity is built into life-adjustment."[136] She was critical of previous critics of conformity only for their failure to "recognize that the colleges' failure to educate women for an identity beyond their sexual role was undoubtedly a crucial factor in perpetuating, if not creating, that conformity which educators now so fashionably rail against."[137]

These authors, regardless of their politics, were most critical of schools which taught students to "adjust" to society, and argued that adjustment was tantamount to mediocrity. Riesman argued that the other-directed man sought adjustment instead of seeking power. He defined adjustment as seeking "to have the character he is supposed to have, and the inner experiences as well as the outer appurtenances that are supposed to go with it."[138] Overstreet argued, for example, that teaching students to adjust had trumped teaching students to reach their potential.[139] One article in *Saturday Evening Post,* titled "I Don't Want Well Adjusted Children," argued that students who were better in reading were seen by schools as poorly adjusted. This author went on to argue that great people were unadjusted people.[140] Senator Barry Goldwater also attacked progressive education. In his book, he criticized John Dewey and his followers as too egalitarian.[141] Progressive education, he said, did not allow the brightest students to rise to the top academically, since it was too concerned with the well-being of the average student. He called for a renewed emphasis on traditional disciplines (English, mathematics, history, literature, foreign languages and natural sciences), and less concern

[136] Ibid., 171.
[137] Ibid., 180. By "sexual role" she meant gender role—their role as wives and mothers.
[138] Riesman, 286.
[139] Overstreet, Chapter 11.
[140] Armstrong, 10.
[141] Goldwater, *Conscience of a Conservative,* 85.

with the "'whole character' of the child."[142] As with much of the conformity literature, Goldwater believed that progressive education was creating a mass of adjusted mediocrity at a time when America needed the development of strong leadership to defend itself against communism. Adjusted citizenry could be too static, too secure.

Goldwater was not alone on the right in critiquing "adjustment." The *National Review* often ran articles arguing against adjustment. The "Deweyites" came under especially sharp criticism for "preaching 'life adjustment.'"[143] The greatest targets for those critical of adjustment in schools, and elsewhere, was any attempt to measure the adjustment of an individual.[144]

In the late 1950s, psychological testing became one of the targets of this anti-conformity literature. This generally referred to the practice of businesses or schools investigating the psychological make-up of their employees or students through "personality tests." Tests might be questionnaires, Rorschach tests, or even brief interviews with a counselor. Beginning with William Whyte, psychological testing came under increasing scrutiny by anti-conformity authors. While these authors used psychological concepts to make their arguments, they villainized psychologists and sometimes even psychiatrists in their writing. Psychologists and their tests came to be seen as agents of social control and enemies of the autonomous man.

Whyte brought questions about psychological testing into public debate through articles he wrote for *Fortune* magazine and through *The Organization Man*.[145] He was especially critical of the role of psychological testing in business personnel practices.

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[142] Ibid., 87.
[143] John Chamberlain, "The New Creed," *National Review*, December 29, 1956, 20.
[144] See, for example, L. Brent Bozell, "Anatomy of a Smear," *National Review,"* April 19, 1958, 369.
[145] Whyte, 176-178 for a description of one of his *Fortune* articles.

Whyte was not bothered by aptitude testing, only personality testing. He claimed that psychological testing, as used for hiring and promoting in business, was geared to pick out the conformist organization men. Since those most likely truly to succeed in business were not truly conformists, this meant, said Whyte, that the tests were picking out the wrong men. Those who scored high picked the most "run-of-the-mill" answers, he said. "If you were this kind of person you wouldn't get very far [in business], but, unfortunately, you won't get very far unless you seem to be this kind."[146] Ultimately, therefore, the tests were counterproductive. Or, at least, they would have been if they had truly worked the way they were supposed to.

However, Whyte also argued that the tests did not work. The personality, he believed, was immeasurable, so the tests were doomed to fail.[147] Even if it were measurable, though, these tests were not the correct yardstick, since they had never been studied to see what, exactly, they measured. No research had ever proved that the tests claiming to measure sociability actually picked out the extroverts, he said. Instead, the man who said he preferred reading to bowling might be very sociable, and just not much of a bowler. [148] In addition, the tests were based on very sketchy ideas about what personalities suited someone for a particular job, but had become, instead, simply self-fulfilling prophecies. The man who scored well on a test did well in his business because his test results led to his being hired and promoted. This did not mean, however, that the men weeded out by the tests and forced to take a job somewhere else might not have done even better.[149]

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[146] Whyte, 197.
[147] Ibid., 184.
[148] Ibid., 188.
[149] Ibid., 194.

Whyte did not stop his criticisms with the tests. He also attacked the test administrators. He described a case in which an executive sent a number of potential employees to a psychological consultant for testing. Having hired a man despite his low scores, and having had that man prove very successful, the executive went to talk to the consultant. "'The poor guy was pathetically jealous,' the executive recalled, 'He was eating his heart out because men his own age that I was sending over had gone way past him.'"[150] The tests often reflected the hostilities and neuroses of the test administrator, argued Whyte, not those of examinee. "The interviewer is sorely tempted to play God," he said, and few test administrators were psychologically stable enough to resist this temptation.[151] Ultimately, he argued, such tests and test administrators were harmful to American society. In this "kind of 1984," he said, "one would be disarmed for not knowing who the enemy was, and when the day of reckoning came the people on the other side of the table wouldn't be Big Brother's bad henchmen; they would be a mild-looking group of therapists."[152] Whyte, therefore, encouraged people to cheat on such personality tests, and even included an appendix giving instructions on how to do so.[153]

Whyte launched what would become a national attack on psychological testing that would lead even to Congressional hearings on the subject.[154] The University of California Medical Center in San Francisco hosted an international symposium on the problem of conformity early in 1962. Among the targets of their criticisms were

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[150] Ibid., 185.
[151] Ibid., 187
[152] Ibid., 31.
[153] Ibid., 405-410.
[154] Michael Armine, "The 1965 Congressional Inquiry into Testing: A Commentary." Papers of the American Psychological Association. Manuscript Collection, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.; *Psychological Tests and Constitutional Rights. Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights of the Committee on the Judiciary.* United States Senate, 89th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1966).

psychological tests, and they advised industries against using such tests in hiring and promoting practices.[155] Magazine articles about conformity increasingly attacked testing. Journalist Martin Gross wrote a series of articles for *True* in 1959 in which he condemned the growing corps of "noodle knockers" who practiced their pseudo-scientific psychology at the cost of jobs and promotions for many Americans. Gross, like Whyte before him, suggested that would-be businessmen learn to cheat on the "brain-picker" tests.[156]

Gross turned his study of psychological testing into a bestselling book in 1962. In *The Brain Watchers*, Gross went into much greater detail about the different types of tests set up to keep individualistic men out of business.[157] As with Whyte, Gross lamented the dying Protestant work ethic and the rise of conformity and mediocrity. He believed that "autonomy," which was "once an expression of independent strength of purpose," had for psychological testers become part of an "odd-ball and nonconformist category in which are lumped together the desire to 'criticize those in positions of authority' and the desire to 'avoid responsibility.'"[158] This meant that corporations were encouraging American citizens to avoid autonomy, which meant that they were weakening America. In addition, Gross moved from criticizing psychological testers for misapplying psychology to actively questioning their motives. In a classic example of using psychology to argue against uses of psychology, he argued that the test administrators themselves were neurotic, and were projecting that neurosis onto their subjects.[159]

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[155] Lawrence E. Davies, "Parley Acclaims Nonconformists." *The New York Times* (January 30, 1962), 31.
[156] Martin Gross, "The Hire Fire Tests" *True,* February 1959, 42-43, 71, 75; Martin Gross, "The Brain Pickers Can Cost You Your Job," *True*, March 1959, 62-65, 72, 82-85.
[157] Martin Gross, *The Brain Watchers,* 231-277.
[158] Ibid., 39.
[159] Ibid., 55.

Gross argued, throughout both his articles and his book, that psychological testers idealized the mediocre man, who was conservative in economics, uninterested in culture (arts and music), and none-too-devout in religious matters. His conclusions were similar to Whyte's, in that both believed that psychological testing was counterproductive in hiring practices, and led to conformity among employees (and therefore among American men). Both also argued that personality tests did test something—just not the true personality of the test subject. A *Look* magazine article about conformity in American men likewise described what the personality tests *really* did. The fictional Gary Gray knows to answer "no" when asked if he daydreamed, because "The Company wanted men who would not *admit* they daydreamed. By *realizing* the right answer was 'No,' Gary had shown his willingness to compromise his inner self to the mold."[160] As Whyte had argued, and as "Gary Gray" realized, that testers expected their subjects to cheat, and in fact were really testing their willingness to pretend to be company men. Whyte argued that the tests might even work to turn their subjects into organization men. Even the exceptional man who learned to give the right answers on tests without becoming a conformist, he argued, lost something in the process, as he had "adjusted" to the tests."[161] This kind of dissembling might be appropriate for communists and yes-men, but it was not the sign of a good, autonomous American man.

Gross and others also criticized testing for its invasiveness. They saw this breakdown of privacy as a part of the fall into conformity. A *Wall Street* journal article on the Congressional investigation of testing, for example, placed the invasiveness of the tests and their lack of scientific validity as the two most important reasons to avoid such

[160] George Leonard Jr, "The American Male: Why is He Afraid to Be Different?" *Look*, February 18, 1958, 97.
[161] Whyte, 195.

testing.[162] The issue of privacy was especially evident in the many attacks on psychological testing in schools. This "rape of . . . privacy and integrity" was, in the views of many, part of a process of breaking Americans down and turning them into automatons, thus making them susceptible to communism.[163] Gross argued that such tests rewarded the conformist even in childhood. He cited a testing book which described high-scorers on a "conformity" scale as "reliable and responsible," while it saw low-scorers as "irresponsible, impulsive, and rebellious."[164] The idea that privacy was central to autonomy existed in the earlier literature, especially Riesman, but earlier authors had not directly attacked psychology.

In the case of children, most critics argued that the future autonomy of the test subject might be endangered by these tests, but the autonomy of the family of the test subject was immediately threatened. "Unknown to the parents, and often to the whole community," warned Martin Gross, "entire classes of children as early as the second grade are gathered in group confessionals where they fill out 'problem checklists.' Scores on a child's worries and fears, on sex, dates, Mom and Dad, fights over the car, family finances, and even teen-age menstruation—once considered the exclusive province of parents—not only become part of the child's school record, but are inevitably bandied about in certain school authorities' knowledge."[165] Asking children about their family might teach them to resent their parents, or at least to question them, some claimed; and this, they said, was bad. A group called "The Committee to Bring Morality to the Mental Health Professions" made this complaint. They also worried that asking

[162] "Peeping on a Grand Scale" *Wall Street Journal* (September 29, 1965), Papers of the American Psychological Association, Manuscript Collection, Library of Congress, Washington D.C..
[163] Leonard, 97.
[164] Gross, *The Brain Watchers.* 158-159.
[165] Ibid., 149-150.

children questions about religion and sex gave these children immoral ideas. This organization blamed psychologists as a whole for these problems, and called for people to encourage their congressional representatives to ban licensure of psychologists (allowing only psychiatrists to provide psychological care).[166] This desire to rid schools of psychology fit not only with the anti-conformity argument, but also with the more general conservative desire to affirm the ultimate authority of parents (especially fathers) over the family.[167]

Like this committee, later anti-conformity authors praised psychological knowledge but worried about its misuse. Even Whyte, for all of his anti-testing sentiments, praised Sigmund Freud and Erich Fromm.[168] He believed that psychologists who used testing in business or education were misusing psychological knowledge. Betty Friedan relied heavily on psychology in her arguments, but criticized its use to keep women in the home. She criticized Freud for what she believed was his one major failing: a lack of cultural relativism.[169] The problems that Freud saw in women were truly there, she argued, but were specific to his historical moment. Freud was right that "Victorian culture did not permit women to accept or gratify their basic sexual needs," she said, but now the largest psychological hurdle for women was that American culture kept women from their "basic need to grow and fulfill their potentialities as human beings."[170] Generally, such critiques saw personal uses of psychology (through therapy)

[166] "The Committee To Bring Morality to the Mental Professions," Papers of the American Psychological Association, Manuscript Collection, Library of Congress, Washington D.C..
[167] See above, chapter two.
[168] Whyte, 22, 362 respectively.
[169] Ibid., 106-107.
[170] Ibid., 77.

as okay, but were suspicious of any use of sociological or other public uses of psychological ideas (other than their own).

This distrust of testing, however, sometimes spread in conservative sources into a general distrust of the power of psychology, and its use to advance conformity and adjustment. Conservative articles argued that psychology was undercutting the autonomy of individuals through its effects on businesses, advertising, and even on other individuals. William F. Buckley, the editor of *the National Review,* lamented the rise of psychology because he believed that it encouraged people to invade others' privacy.[171] Another author was concerned about the business and advertising uses of psychology:

> Science, particularly, psychology, provided frighteningly efficient techniques for increasing the power of The Group over the individual. The Company used some of these techniques on customers as well as employees. Gary knew that several university psychologists had been hired to study hidden weaknesses and prejudices in typical consumers. These studies resulted, not in better products, but in new packages which bore unsuspected messages to the subconscious. Why, he wondered, had the university psychologists surrendered their years of training and their professional integrity to such a purpose?[172]

The fictional "Gary" disliked the psychological tests he had to take, but his distrust seemed to spread to psychologists in general. Even liberal authors picked up this concern in the late 1950s. Vance Packard, who shared the more liberal views of Riesman and Overstreet, was critical of psychological testing in industry in his 1957 book *The Hidden Persuaders.*[173]

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the political right became extremely critical of the effects of psychology and psychiatry on American society. Articles in *National Review* condemned both psychology and the culture it created. "Freudianism" was set in opposition to "common sense," and the magazine invariably sided with "common

[171] William F. Buckley, "What We Need is a Law," *National Review*, June 1, 1965, 455.
[172] Leonard, 97.
[173] Packard, *Hidden Persuaders*, 182.

sense."[174] In "They'll Never Get Me On That Couch," which ran in the first issue of *National Review,* the author claimed that he was a "nonconformist" who, therefore, was unwilling to join the crowds waiting for the psychoanalyst's couch.[175]

A John Dos Passos poem, which ran in *National Review*, described "the twin myths of Marx and Freud" as "opposed yet interlocking" in their destruction of "Western will."[176] Dos Passos also tied Marxism and Freudianism (along with analysis more generally) through what he saw as their mutual attack on religion.[177] Many of the anti-conformity writers if the early 1960s likewise argued that strong religious (generally Christian) faith was both non-conformist and part of the solution to the problems of modern America. Phillip Wylie and some other early anti-conformity authors had talked about religion as a cure for the problems of modernity, but had often been extremely critical of organized religion and especially of fundamentalism.[178] Later authors were not so critical. Despite the record church attendance of the 1950s, a number of conservatives claimed that going to church and believing in God made one a non-conformist.[179] One woman, for example, in an article on her quest to keep her children from becoming "well-adjusted," described her family as non-conformist because of their strong Christian faith (which she also tied to their strong discipline).[180]

The conservative attack on psychology was strong enough to receive serious attention from psychologists. In an article written for a special 1965 *American Psychologist* issue on testing, a writer remarked that "through recent years, the extreme

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[174] Russell Kirk, "The Split Level Personality," *National Review*, February 25, 1961, 118.
[175] Morrie Ryskind, "They'll Never Get Me on That Couch," *National Review*, November 19, 1955, 21.
[176] John Dos Passos, "Analyst," *National Review*, December 17, 1960, 376.
[177] Ibid., 376.
[178] Wylie, *Generation,* 273-304.
[179] James Gilbert, *Another Chance: Postwar America, 1945-1968* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc, 1981), 238.
[180] Armstrong, 4.

right-wing newspapers and pamphlets have often attacked tests and testing . . . as well as upon other things and concepts [that] to those on the right are enemies of freedom and of America."[181] This author also attributed the "periodic outbursts in Congress about [psychological] tests" to "confirmed right-wingers."[182] In a letter to the president of the American Psychological Association, a University professor likewise complained about "the barrage against mental health from the political Right," and their seeming perception that "effective control of these 'mental health' problems means control of people by people."[183]

Senator Barry Goldwater was a part of this attack, and it became an issue in his 1964 presidential campaign. He sparred with the American Psychological Association throughout the early 1960s over federal funds for psychological testing, the testing of government employees, and even over his negative comments about psychologists and social workers. Goldwater's issues with psychological testing and psychology in general were not coincidental—they were a crucial part of his ideas about the psychological autonomy of the individual.

In the early 1960's Goldwater even took a stand on psychological testing in schools. As a member of the Senate committee on Labor and Public Welfare, he attempted to block use of federal funding for personal and psychological testing of students. He believed that such tests constituted an invasion of privacy, and one that could create problems within the family (by teaching children to have "doubts,

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[181] Michael Armine, "The 1965 Congressional Inquiry into Testing: A Commentary." Papers of the American Psychological Association. Manuscript Division, The Library of Congress. Washington D.C., 5-6.
[182] Ibid., 6.
[183] Gwynn Nettler, Letter to Arthur Brayfield (October 31, 1963), Papers of the American Psychological Association. Manuscript Division, The Library of Congress. Washington D.C..

suspicions, antagonism [and] hostility" toward their parents—all things progressive parenting advocates encouraged).[184] In a letter to the editor of Washington D.C.'s *Evening Star* newspaper, Goldwater argued again that schools should be concerned with the education of children, not their character.

Goldwater used the language of conformity literature to argue for conservativism. Instead of "conformity," Goldwater worried about "collectivism," but the characteristics were the same: progressive education, bureaucracy, and the enslavement of the individual psyche to the group. The term "collectivism" also, however, was a synonym for "communism." Goldwater was publicly horrified by the influence of psychology, sociology, and their proponents on American society. He even raised the ire of the American Psychological Association by claiming, in a televised appearance in the month before the 1964 election, that "liberalism sneers at policeman [sic] and fawns on social psychologists."[185] Still, his own conservativism relied in part on his understanding on what made for autonomous, psychologically healthy citizens for America and for capitalism.

Though Goldwater lost the 1964 election to Lyndon Johnson by a large margin, the election demonstrated the power of the Right within the Republican party, and heralded the birth of the "New Right," which would win a presidential election only sixteen years later.[186] Goldwater's concern that social programs harmed the psyches of

[184] Barry Goldwater, "'Big Brother' in the Classroom," *The Evening Star*, October 7, 1963, a-12, In Papers of the American Psychological Association, Manuscript Division, The Library of Congress, Washington D.C..
[185] Brayfield, Arthur, October 13, 1964, Letter from Arthur Brayfield to Dean Church, Papers of the American Psychological Association, Manuscript Collection, Library of Congress, Washington D.C..
[186] E. J.Dionne Jr., *Why Americans Hate Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 170.

their recipients, his distrust of progressive education, and even his dislike of psychologists would all remain strong currents within the Republican Party.

Chapter 3: Modern Women and Femininity

In the 1957 film *The Three Faces of Eve*, Eve White suffered from multiple personality syndrome. Her first two personalities, Eve White and Eve Black, represented two almost stereotypical women. Eve White was docile, submissive, and seemed to live only for her husband and child. Eve Black lived only for herself, drinking, dancing, and hanging out in bars. She considered herself unmarried, and even tried to kill her daughter to free herself from domesticity. Both were presented in the film as undesirable types. Eve's third personality, however, which developed while she was in psychiatric care, was presented more favorably. It was her most independent personality—an intelligent, working woman who loved her child. Neither wild nor domestic, this third personality was able to leave her cruel husband and, unlike the submissive wife or the party girl, become a good mother.[1]

Our current historical image of women in the 1950s admits Eve White and Eve Black but obscures the ideal represented by Eve's emerging third personality. In this chapter, I argue that mass cultural sources both at the beginning of the postwar period and later, generally preferred Eve's third personality. In fact, my reading of such virulent anti-feminists as Philip Wylie, Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia Farnham suggests that in their use of psychological concepts, they were not far at all from later feminist writers like Helen Gurley Brown and Betty Friedan. One of the surprising discoveries of this chapter is that the analytical distance from anti-feminism to feminism in the postwar period was not far at all.

[1] *The Three Faces of Eve*, Nunnally Johnson, 20th Century Fox, 1957.

Existing historical accounts of the postwar period include both evidence that women were expected to embrace domestic roles after World War II, and evidence that women increasingly took jobs outside of the home throughout the postwar era. Historian William Chafe has shown that women workers never entirely retreated from the workforce after World War II, and that the 1950s saw a larger gain in the percentage of women in the workforce than the three previous decades combined. These gains were strongest among married women and in the middle class. In the 1950s, Chafe argues, "work for married women had become an integral element in the lives of many middle-class families." By 1960, 40% of all women over 16 held jobs, including 39% of women who had children aged 6 to 17. Again, the largest increases were among middle-class wives.[2] Other historians, however, while recognizing the growing number of women in the workforce, have argued that women who worked for wages met with disapproval in the postwar world.[3]

Despite apparent contradictions among them, historians agree that mid-century Americans believed that women played a particularly important role in creating a home environment that allowed husbands and children to be good democratic citizens. Because of the pervasive power attributed to the family in mid-century America, the psyches of women was seen as pivotal to the health of United States society as a whole. A woman's lack of psychological fulfillment, according to these authors, could create sick children,

[2] William H. Chafe, *The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920-1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 182-185, 218.
[3] See, for example, Mari Jo Buhle, *Feminism and Its Discontents: A Century of Struggle With Psychoanalysis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 158-159, 194; May, *Homeward Bound,* 55-57; Eugenia Kaledin, *Mothers and More: American Women in the 1950s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984), 182.

weak and unmasculine husbands, and ultimately a weak America. It was important to these authors, therefore, to understand what deprived women of fulfillment.[4]

My evidence shows that the working wife and even the working mother were widely accepted in mid-century American mass culture with the proviso that, paid employment not interfere with the role of wife and mother. The privileging of domesticity was part of an overall postwar belief that home and family produced ultimate satisfactions for both men and women. Many writers believed that both men and women had become alienated from their traditional work roles in the modern world, and domesticity compensated for the loss.[5] Most of the authors discussing women's roles were not trying to turn back the clock to earlier gender roles, but were instead trying to imagine new roles for women and men in the modern world. Women were not expected to stay home all of the time. They were, however, expected to relish domesticity and put their family before their work. Most importantly, women were supposed to seek and find self-fulfillment in their domestic roles and sex lives rather than in their work. In addition to the magazines employed throughout this dissertation, this chapter analyzes popular non-fiction books, especially those by Philip Wylie, Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia Farnham, Betty Friedan, and Helen Gurley Brown. I also examine *The Ladder*, the magazine of the first lesbian organization in the United States. Finally, I discuss fictional depictions of women, both in print and on film.

Mass cultural discussions of womanhood achieved prominence during World War II and remained widespread through the 1950s. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, mass culture began to critique the domestic realm as the sole source of women's fulfillment.

[4] Moskowitz, *In Therapy We Trust,* 166; Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique," passim; May, passim.
[5] On the focus on men's domestic roles in the 1950s, see May, 146-147.

These sources argued that women should seek self-fulfillment not through family, but through work outside of the home. This critique emerged especially, but not solely, in the work of Betty Friedan. Friedan and others like her did not, however, question many of the other basic assumptions about what it meant to be masculine and feminine, at least not at this early date.[6]

In addition to finding self-fulfillment in their domestic roles, early postwar women were expected to remain submissive to men in general and to their husbands in particular. This was, however, a kind of submission that recognized the changed place of women in the mid-century United States. Neither husband nor wife was supposed to be too dominant; the domineering husband was seen as a relic of the past, and the domineering wife as a perversion of modernity. In the age of the "democratic family," women were to be submissive in only a few, symbolic areas. Most important seems to have been sexual submission—allocating sole right to sexual initiative to the husband, and allowing a general sense that the male was ultimately in charge at least in the bedroom. Many authors, almost all women, even advocated that women pretend that their sexual partners were in charge when they were not. Such behavior, they claimed, led to the fulfillment of both women and men within a sexual relationship.[7] Writers throughout the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s saw sexuality as the center of the female personality, and argued that women's sexual nature was the surest indicator of who women were and

[6] Unlike most of the other subjects I explore, there was no backlash or re-imagining of the psychological discourse around women's roles in the conservative news magazines, at least not in the early 1960s. This may have to do with the willingness by people on both sides of the political spectrum to imagine women as more in thrall to their emotions than were men. There were also, interestingly, a number of articles in *The National Review* that hinted at the development of a kind of feminism among conservative women writers in this period (see, for example, Aloise B. Heath, "Merry Christmas to Everyone in the World Except Men," *National Review*, December 31, 1962, 507-509.

[7] See, for example, Lee Graham, "10 Secrets of Sex Appeal," *Coronet*, March 1954, 29; Helen Gurley Brown, *Sex and the Single Girl* (United States: Bernard Geis Associates, 1962), 86.

what their roles in society should be. Such literature generally argued that fulfillment in the female (usually imagined as a wife and mother) came from a specific hierarchical structure within the family, or that conversely such a structure grew inherently from women's satisfaction.

Women becoming domineering seems to have been directly proportional, in much of this literature, to the rate at which men were losing their masculinity. Many authors argued that, if only men became more masculine, women would literally be forced back into their femininity, and furthermore, women would love it. In fact, according to one physician, what he had learned "from years of listening to women recount their husband's defects," he said, was that "their greatest gripe is having a Namby-pamby spouse." He continued: "I don't know how many times I've hear an anguished female say, 'Oh, if he would only beat me when I get bitchy, but, damn him, all he says is "Yes dear."'"[8] Fortunately, the lines drawn between a dominating wife and a good, submissive wife show that the small gestures of submission were, with the exception of this author, more important than was actual physical violence. A number of authors actually advocated, for example, that men help out with chores around the house as often as possible so long as such work was done on the husband's own initiative. One man, for example, said he felt he was helping his wife be more feminine by helping around the house "as long as she doesn't get up and *hand* me the apron."[9]

The call for female submission was tied to an emphasis on the "natural" roles of men and women. Most authors, especially in the late 1940s and early 1950s, argued that women were essentially passive or submissive. Women's psychology as depicted in

[8] Joseph H. Peck, "All About Men: Straight Talk From a Man-to-Man Doc," *True*, August 1958, 109.
[9] Alexander King quoted in "The Playboy Panel," 50. Italics in original.

mass culture was generally more tied to their bodies than was men's psychology, and therefore sex played a larger role in literature on women than it did in literature on men. The preponderance of authors who attempted to justify this view pointed to women's role in sex as the reason for female submission. Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia Farnham's 1947 book, *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex,* claimed that men were active in sex because they had to get an erection, which they described as an act of power. Because women "are not called upon for such a powerful demonstration as are men,' they argued, "they are not normally so concerned with the externals of power as are men."[10] Similarly, they saw sex for men as something they *do* to a woman and sex for women as something *done to* her.[11] Women not only submitted during sex, according to Farnham and Lundberg, but also submitted to menstruation, pregnancy, and breast feeding. The authors argued that all of these forms of natural submission turned women inward, not only in sex but in other parts of life, making them less concerned with the external world of power.[12] Men, in this view, were turned outward toward the world, and were therefore aggressive, exploitive, and constantly attempting to make others submit to their will. Farnham and Lundberg contended that these differences were developed, not inborn, and therefore avoidable. However, they claimed that the developmental stages children passed through were responses to their own bodies, and that deviations from these stages happened only at great psychological cost to the individual.[13]

Farnham and Lundberg also supported the idea, based on the ideas of Sigmund Freud and his followers, that women suffered from penis envy. "Penis envy" was the idea

[10] Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia Farnham, *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), 85.
[11] Ibid., 170.
[12] Ibid., 171.
[13] See, for example, Lundberg, 54, 122, 150.

that girls, upon first seeing a penis, realized that men had an "external decoration" denied to women, thus making girls both envy and resent men.[14] This envy and resentment came into conflict with the submission women were supposed to develop. The psychologically healthy response would be to transform that desire for a penis into a desire for a husband and children, and become feminine through an embrace of the female reproductive role.[15] Many mass-culture authors adopted this theory.

A different theory began to emerge in popular literature in the early 1960s. Authors of the new view claimed that most of the traits defined as "feminine," such as passivity, stemmed not as much from children's reactions to their own bodies as from Americans' penchant for treating boys and girls differently. This theory emerged from the work of psychiatrist Karen Horney, whose work in the interwar period emphasized the role of social and economic dependence on men in reinforcing women's subordinate position in western societies.[16] Girls were often more sheltered as children, and thus did not have the opportunity to learn competitiveness and aggressiveness that boys did.[17] Writers who promoted Horney's theories claimed that any weaknesses among American boys came from the growing tendency to shelter boys as well as girls, rather than from a negative male reaction to changing gender roles. These writers downplayed or denied natural psychological differences between men and women, and used their view of male

[14] This particular description comes from Joseph Peck, "Life With Women and How to Survive It," *True*, May 1961, 104; see also Frederic J. Levine, "Penis Envy," in Edwin Erwin, ed., *The Freud Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 410-411.
[15] Lundberg, 150.
[16] Janet Sayers, *Mothers of Psychoanalysis: Helene Deutsch, Karen Horney, Anna Freud, Melanie Klein* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1991),96, 108-110.
[17] See, for example, Gene Marine, "New Look at The Oldest Difference," *Nation*, March 23, 1963, 247-49; "Women: A New Femininity," *Time*, February 8, 1963, 36-38. These two articles both discussed a symposium held about women at San Francisco's University Medical Center.

and female sameness (at least in terms of critical psychological needs) to make feminist arguments.

Generation of Vipers and *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex*

Almost all of the literature on women's roles in the mid-century United States built on or responded to two germinal books from the 1940s: Philip Wylie's *A Generation of Vipers* and Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia Farnham's *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex*. Both of these works criticized what they saw as the changing role of women in modern American life. Both of these works argued that America was less powerful than it had been in the last century. Wylie, a popular novelist who wrote his book during World War II, worried that America might be defeated by the Nazis because of its psychologically unfit soldiers. Lundberg and Farnham, a popular left-leaning journalist and a psychiatrist, respectively, also feared that American men were incapable of maintaining American power and democracy.[18] These authors believed that America was a sick society, that that illness was psychological, and that it stemmed from confusion over the gender roles of women.[19]

In *A Generation of Vipers*, first published in 1942, Wylie claimed that American men had given up their masculine role and ceded control of the United States largely to women, whom he saw as innately more conformist and materialistic.[20] Wylie thought that labor saving devices and mass production of food and clothing had removed the burden of domestic responsibilities from women in the modern age. Women, left with

[18] Buhle, 174.
[19] See also Buhle, 129.
[20] Wylie, *Generation,* passim.

too much free time on their hands, became interested in the male world, especially in consumption and control of family finances. Wylie believed that this gave women an inordinate amount of control over both the family and over society more generally. At the same time, he contended, men were blind to the changing role of women because they were caught up in "momism," or the unquestioning reverence of mothers encouraged in American society. Despite his focus on economics, Wylie claimed that the crisis brought on by these changes had begun in earnest with the ratification of the 19th amendment, and would end only when women had returned to their naturally submissive roles.[21] He argued that this crisis existed not only in gender roles, but through them had become a crisis for all of American society. He blamed the changing roles of women for the psychological weakening of men, and therefore of the nation, and especially of the military.[22]

Lundberg and Farnham's *Modern Women: The Lost Sex*, first published in 1947, likewise blamed changing gender roles for weakening the United States.[23] Like Wylie, Farnham and Lundberg believed that men and women had naturally different roles, and that these roles were being newly challenged. *Modern Woman* claimed that women's work had been devalued and drained of its creativity in modern America. These changes had pushed women to seek ego-satisfaction elsewhere—through feminism, through over-attention to their husbands and children, through consumption, and through masculine interest in education and careers. They argued that women could not, however, gain ego-satisfaction through these pursuits, and thus became mentally unhealthy. Such women

[21] Ibid., 184-204.
[22] Ibid., passim.
[23] Lundberg, passim.

made their families psychologically unstable, and in doing so, threatened American democracy itself.

It is not in their call for a return to femininity that these authors proved most interesting; it was rather in their definitions of femininity. By critiquing modernity, they were critiquing the position of women as homemaker. Like the alienated worker, she had been reduced to repetitive tasks that represented only a fragment of production; instead of raising food and using it to cook a meal, she purchased prepared foods and merely turned the knobs on her stove to cook them. The housewife in the suburbs was the female equivalent of the conformist male—she was the creation of modern consumer life, had lost her creative work, and was therefore both pathological and creating pathologies in her family. Both Wylie and Lundberg and Farnham imagined modern woman as the result of modernity. Returning to gender roles of previous generations was not, for these authors, a possible cure for the novel problems of modernity. As Lundberg and Farnham argued, "the dictum, often heard, and as often bitterly repudiated by overly-self conscious modern women, that 'woman's place is in the home,' may well be true. But it is an empty dictum for our day."[24]

Farnham, Lundberg, and Wylie shared the view that modernity had brought with it new threats to democracy. However, their particular definitions of modernity and its effects differed. Lundberg and Farnham dated modernity loosely to the Copernican revolution, at which time men learned that they were not the center of the universe and began to suffer ego problems (women seemed unaffected by this discovery in Lundberg and Farnham's account—perhaps women already knew they were not the center of the

[24] Ibid., 117.

universe).[25] Men began trying to prove their worth, largely through the pursuit of knowledge, money, and technology. The damage to the male ego was later compounded by Darwin and Freud, who further eroded men's view of their centrality in the world and even of their control of their own selves. Women's problems were caused, according to *Modern Woman*, by men taking away the educational and economic functions of the home (and therefore of women) which they did largely by developing technology and industry that replaced women's previous work. The authors dated this transformation in women's work especially to the industrial revolution of the late 1800s.[26] Women lost economic and political power in this changed world.[27] Now facing the same insecurity about their place in the world as men, women also began to suffer ego problems, especially stronger feelings of penis envy and an unwillingness to submit to their natural roles. Women's problems in turn amplified the ego problems of their husbands and sons. Wylie, while less clear about the exact causes of modernity, also dated changes in gender roles to the industrial revolution, and especially to the separation of male work from the home and family (men's "abdication of authority").[28]

Both of these pieces also shared a view of women's psyches as inherently different from men's. Women might be capable of taking over masculine social roles, but to do so caused them psychological harm. Farnham and Lundberg relied on psychological theories that related women's physical lives (menstruation, "receptive" role

[25] Ibid., 72.
[26] Ibid., Chapter 5.
[27] Ibid., 163.
[28] Wylie, "The Womanization of America," *Playboy*, September 1958, 62. See also Ashley Montagu's comments in "The Playboy Panel," 47-48. Joseph Pleck argues that literature concerned with feminization of the home began as early as 1892, and often revolved around the issue of men having left the home for work and therefore no longer playing as large a role in the lives of their children (especially sons). Joseph Pleck, "The Theory of Male Sex Role Identity," *In The Shadow of the Past: Psychology Portrays the Sexes*, ed. Miriam Lewin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 206-207.

in sex, pregnancy and breast feeding) to their psychological roles (focused inward, nurturing, self-sacrificing). In their view, women were different from men, but not inferior. In fact, Farnham and Lundberg argued that the psychological problems of the modern woman came in large part from her *decreasing* power; they blamed modernity not only for removing the creativity from women's work but also for pushing women into an inferior legal status, decreasing women's education relative to men's, and for other losses of legitimate female power.[29] Wylie likewise saw women as naturally different from men, though his descriptions were less equitable. He believed women were incapable of wielding power, and saw the changes of mass production and increased technology only as having released women from their historical duties, from early deaths, and from direct male control. He did not feel that women lost political power with these changes, but rather had gained it.[30] He did not view modern women as psychologically ill, but saw their increasing power as a symptom of the illness of society, and especially of men.

Lundberg and Farnham spent more time on one neurotic style than any other—the masculinity complex, which they believed made women too active and aggressive. The masculinity complex was a manifestation of penis-envy. At their most extreme, in the eyes of Farnham and Lundberg, these disorders could lead to lesbianism. At even their mildest, these psychological maladies caused women to be competitive and aggressive, tendencies that were also, in this era, seen as both desirable and sorely lacking in American men.[31] Lundberg and Farnham claimed that, for psychologically healthy

[29] Lundberg, 218.
[30] Wylie, *Generation*, 186-188.
[31] Lundberg, 177.

women, penis-envy resolved when a girl realized she had breasts and could give birth.[32] Modern women, however, with fewer children and less creativity in their lives, were often unsatisfied by the fleeting satisfaction of childbirth, and continued to suffer penis-envy throughout their lives.

Basically, these authors and those who adopted their ideas believed that women were unhappy, and responded to this unhappiness by at least envying men's lives or, at worst, becoming more like men.[33] This unhappiness came from the changes modernity had wrought in women's lives. Such women might feel hostile toward their children, or they might develop a "masculinity complex," an active desire to be as much like a man as possible. Such a woman would be aggressive, competitive with men, and might even become a feminist. Lundberg and Farnham wanted women to regain power, but through feminine, rather than masculine, pursuits.

What Made Modern Woman, and What to Do With Her

Wylie, Lundberg and Farnham remained influential in mass culture views of women through at least the 1960s, though not uncontested. Wylie was most often cited (and published) in men's magazines, such as *Playboy* and *True*¸ especially in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Farnham and Lundberg were more widely influential in general audience magazines and in women's magazines. Feminist writers emerging in the 1960s would enter a discussion about women that grew largely from these two works.

[32] Ibid., 149.
[33] William Niederland, "Masculine Women are Cheating Love," *Coronet*, May 1953, 41.

Like Lundberg and Farnham, most authors who traced the source of gender role changes to the onset of modernity were focused specifically on the devaluation of women's work in the home. This devaluation was, as in Lundberg and Farnham, both a real change in the creativity and value of the work being done by women in the home, and a cultural devaluation of the importance of women's unpaid work. This emphasis on modernity showed up especially in discussions of changes in technology, the economic role of the home, and consumption.

Wylie, Farnham, Lundberg, and those who relied on their ideas, believed that labor saving devices were a specific cause of women's current dissatisfaction. Wylie argued that, due to labor saving devices and to mass production of traditional female craft products (like clothes), women had too much time on their hands and used this time to ruin American men.[34] Farnham and Lundberg likewise worried about labor saving devices, claiming that they had removed the creative functions of the household, leaving women alienated and with little to do.[35] Boredom created by labor saving devices was, in fact, often blamed for women's unhappiness.[36] In addition, labor saving devices supposedly made women's position more precarious by making it obsolete—her husband and family were less reliant on her because they could take over most of her jobs themselves with the help of these devices.[37] Most important, women had lost their sense of accomplishment in their work.[38]

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[34] Wylie, *Generation*, 187.
[35] Lundberg, 106.
[36] For example, Joseph H. Peck, "All About Men," *True*, August 1958, 110; Robert Graves, "Real Women," *Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1964, 153.
[37] Graham, 29.
[38] Hilda Sidney Krech, "The Identity of Modern Woman," *The Nation*, September 20, 1965, 127; Lundberg, 30.

These authors, and those who promoted their views in mass culture, claimed that the decreasing importance of children to the family economy had also been detrimental to women's psychological fulfillment. Like women, children became financial burdens to the family in the modern era, though they had previously been assets.[39] The economic success and status of the family, and thus the ego satisfaction of the competitive male, depended on small family size in the modern world. This hurt women further because, according to Lundberg and Farnham, women's sexual satisfaction depended on their desire for children. Contraception and abortion especially, in their view, took away the natural creativity of women. Bearing children gave women "almost their whole inner feeling of personal well-being and their vast social prestige."[40] With this feeling diminished or gone, and other creative work dwindling, women's ego satisfaction fell so low that they became neurotic.[41]

The problems modernity created for women were described as most prevalent in urban and suburban areas, which were seen as most modern in terms of family structure.[42] Mid-century articles depicted the past as almost invariably rural or small-town, and idealized gender roles in those places. In the pages of *Ladies' Home Journal*, for example, poet Robert Graves lamented the life of the modern, suburban woman. He harkened back to days when women had the "easy companionship" of "quilting bees and husking bees, taking the cousins to do a week's washing down at the creek, lending a hand with the shearing and harvest, making jams and pickles, getting up round dances,

[39] Lundberg, 121.
[40] Ibid., 122.
[41] Ibid., 124.
[42] Ibid., 90-117 shows their overall negative impression of urban and suburban areas, and their positive view of rural areas.

singing and playing practical jokes."[43] The woman of the present, with all of her possible psychological problems, was never described as living in a rural area.[44]

Aggression and competitiveness were depicted as problems both among women who had careers and women who did not. Though many historians have focused on the anti-work aspect of mid-century literature on American women, almost all authors at the time agreed that the problem was just as bad among housewives as it was among working women, if not worse.[45] Housewives, said Wylie, came to dominate their homes, taking power that traditionally (and rightfully) belonged to men. Wylie was hardly alone in his accusations. Psychiatrist Edward Strecher, who had been President of the American Psychiatric Association in 1943-44 and consultant to both the Army and Navy, likewise argued that dominant and over-affectionate mothers had created weak sons (who made bad soldiers and bad citizens).[46]

For Farnham and Lundberg, the sickest women were often those who stayed home full time. They described four different types of neurotic mothers common in modern America, all of whom had devastating psychological effects on their children.[47] These were the rejecting mother, the oversolicitous or overprotective mother, the dominating mother, and the over-affectionate mother.[48] Farnham and Lundberg suggested that housewives would be happier not only if housework became, like

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[43] Robert Graves, "A Noted Poet Examines the Classic Characteristics of Real Women," *Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1964), 153.
[44] See, for example, Constance Foster "Have You Stopped Torturing Your Mate?" *Science Digest*, August 1957, 2; "Heartsickness," *Time,* January 29, 1945, 65; "The Cold Woman," *Time,* June 26, 1950, 80-81.
[45] Ehrenreich and English, 224; Buhle, 158-59, 194; Wylie, *Generation,* 185-187.
[46] Amram Scheinfeld, "Are American Moms a Menace?" *Ladies' Home Journal*, November 1945, 36. On Strecher's credentials, see Bérubé, 169.
[47] Lundberg, 304.
[48] Ibid., 304, 305.

housework of the past, more creative (they suggest that women reclaim cooking, for example), but also that women take part time jobs, or attend classes during the day.[49]

Mid-century writers worried especially about the effects that such housewives would have on their sons. Lundberg and Farnham, for example, believed that over-affectionate mothers made up for their "libidinal disappointments" through their children, which had damaging effects especially of their sons. Such sons became "sissies," which they defined as either effeminate or homosexual men.[50] Overbearing mothers were depicted as the source of homosexuality.[51] The view of gay men in this time period was, as historians have shown, extremely negative, and such men were seen as a growing threat to the ability of America to survive and fight the communist threat.[52] More than a few authors even viewed Hitler as an effeminate "mother's boy."[53]

The 1962 film, *The Manchurian Candidate,* showed how dire the consequences of bad mothering could be. The film told the story of a young man, Sergeant Raymond Shaw, who, having been brainwashed by communists, cam close to assassinating a presidential candidate. Though his mother, "Mrs. Iselin," did not seem to turn her son into a homosexual, she did stymie his ability to find a satisfactory heterosexual relationship, first by dominating him and then by forcing him to kill his young love. She also came close to making him destroy American democracy, as she was one of the

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[49] Ibid., 366-368. Historian Daniel Horowitz has show that psychologist Ernest Dichter, who worked in advertising and became famous after Vance Packard attacked his work in the late 1950s, likewise saw career women as neurotic, "pure housewives" as even more neurotic, and only saw those who balanced domesticity with outside interests as healthy (though he later became more critical of career women) (Daniel Horowitz, *The Anxieties of Affluence: Critiques of American Consumer Culture, 1939-1979* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004), 57.
[50] Lundberg, 304-5.
[51] For more on mothers being blamed for homosexuality in this era, see Terry, 169-182.
[52] David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Terry, passim.
[53] Scheinfeld, 138.

communist plotters attempting to stage a coup.[54] As in this film, bad mothers were blamed for their sons' beliefs and actions, for creating juvenile delinquents and prejudiced children, who were, though not as immediately dangerous as Raymond Shaw, destructive to democracy.[55]

Women's magazines advocated work and even "careers" as a cure for the psychological problems suffered by some modern housewives. One article in *Ladies' Home Journal* contended that, while it was difficult for women to mesh careers with family responsibilities, the "career wife" might have better relationships with her family members than the "wife at home."[56] The same issue of *Ladies' Home Journal* had a list of "myths" about femininity, which told readers that women could have a career and realize their "inner potential" without having a desire to compete with men.[57] No articles in women's magazines said that women should never work outside of the home. Even men's magazines occasionally promoted careers for women. One *Playboy* author believed that both housewives and "career" women suffered from insecurity, be it insecurity about their value in the world or insecurity about their abilities to fulfill their biological functions. He claimed that the new, healthy type of woman both enjoyed her work and fulfilled her biological functions (though he left those functions undefined).[58]

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[54] *The Manchurian Candidate,* Dir. John Frankenheimer, United Artists, 1962; see also Michael Rogin, *Ronald Reagan, The Movie: And Other Episodes in Political Demonology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), Chapter 8.

[55] See chapters two and five. See also Ruth Feldstein, "Antiracism and Maternal Failure in the 1940s and 1950s," in Molly Ladd-Taylor and Lauri Umansky, ed., *"Bad" Mothers: The Politics of Blame in Twentieth Century America* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 145-168. Feldstein analyzes the discussion of racism in the United States in this period, and argues that both the creation of racism in white men and the purported "pathology" of black men were seen as the results of inadequate mothers.

[56] Hoffman, 57.

[57] "How Feminine Are You," *Ladies' Home Journal,* July 1962, 58. The list was supposed to be based on the ideas in Helene Deutsch's *The Psychology of Women*.

[58] Edward Dichter in "The Playboy Panel," 134. This interpretation came after the release of Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*.

As with the literature on male autonomy, authors who critiqued modern women were very critical of consumerism more generally. Women's psychological problems manifested, according to authors in mass culture, through their patterns of consumption. One *Playboy* article that decried the fall of men from head-of-household standing, for example, also claimed that women had become more interested in symbolic sex through consumption than in actual sex with the men they dominated. The author described an ad in *Reader's Digest*:

> In which a short, squat square-as-all-Cleveland suds machine was actually depicted wearing a hubby's gray felt hat, while wifey leaned on him—or it—with two carefree elbows and a smile suggestive of complete coital release. "A good washer is like a good man," the copy purred, leveling its message right at the little woman's sleepyhead libido, "—dependable, powerful, but with a touch as tender as love. *Dependable?* This sturdy Frigidaire Washer is designed to be the most service-free . . . *Powerful?* The 3-Ring Agitator squishes detergents through clothes 330 times a minute! . . .*Tender?* Pump-action, powerful as it is, is truly gentle . . .

This author saw the ads as evidence of what women were feeling, not just of what consumer culture was pushing. He went on to argue that such ads "arouse the psycho-erotic consumer passions of the housewife to the point where she will cross her legs and hope to buy."[59] Farnham and Lundberg called on Americans to rid themselves of the ideals of the marketplace, and learn to value people instead.[60] Critics of consumption were especially critical of the conspicuous consumption of fashion, which they saw as a sign of female dominance (fashion was not considered masculine).[61] Like the advertisement for washing machines, authors believed consumption showed women substituting "fashion for passion."[62] These articles rarely saw men as perpetuating consumption, except in so far as they had capitulated to the rule of women. Women, on

[59] William Iverson, "Love, Death and the Hubby Image," *Playboy*, September 1963, 202. Italics in original.
[60] Lundberg, 377.
[61] Moskin, "The American Male," 80.
[62] Graham, 30.

the other hand, were depicted as either naturally materialistic or as having become so because consumption had become the only work remaining for housewives. Such consumption was depicted as wasting the resources and the creativity of Americans.

Consumption was often tied not only to female dominance (through control of finances), but also to narcissism in women. The narcissistic woman was an especially important target for those who saw women's behavior as central to the downfall of American society. Lundberg and Farnham claimed that one of the responses that women might have to the pressures of modernity and lack of meaningful housework was to become narcissistic. Realizing her new uselessness, and in an insecure attempt to make a man love her, this woman became as close to a courtesan as she could get.[63] Such women were the perfect consumers for American manufacturers—advertisers learned to play on their insecurities.[64] Unlike the feminist or the woman with a masculinity complex, who tried to be a man, the "consumer-courtesan" just wanted to be wanted by a man.[65] All of these women shared, however, insecurity in their status as women and a sense of inferiority to men. Consumer-courtesans were depicted as beautiful, but without the ability to truly feel love. Wylie combined the two types of neurotic women, arguing that careerist women were always chic and focused on consumption, and cared only about themselves.[66]

Other authors picked up on Farnham and Lundberg's idea that a narcissistic woman would make herself into a courtesan. Women did this to make themselves indispensable, they argued, in a world where many of their functions had been taken over

[63] Lundberg, 14. "Courtesan" is the word used both in this book and in Graham, 30.
[64] Ibid., 17.
[65] Ibid., 14.
[66] Wylie, *Generation,* 118, 120.

by machines and factories. One author in *Coronet* argued that a woman sometimes made herself needed by a man through "inflaming his sexual hunger . . . and expertly satisfying it."[67] While arguing that women needed to look attractive to their husbands, this author described a frigid woman as one who was too modest in bed but who wore the latest in fashion.[68] Famed psychoanalyst Theodor Reik argued that women who suffered from penis envy beautified themselves to make up for not having "fancy" genitals like those on men.[69]

Mass-culture writers embraced the image of the narcissistic, unsatisfied woman. Beautiful, frigid women obsessed with their appearance were a mainstay of mass culture in this period. Novelist Grace Metalious created Constance, the frigid mother in the novel *Peyton Place,* as a beautiful woman who always looked like a fashion model, and as a woman too often concerned both with her physical appearance and with how others saw her life.[70] Over the course of the novel, Constance came to submit herself to a man and find happiness, which she clearly did not have in the beginning of the novel. Filmmaker Alfred Hitchcock's *Marnie* was likewise a beautiful, narcissistic, and frigid woman.[71] Non-fiction sources also described narcissistic women as frigid, as "glamor [sic] on the outside but glacier on the inside."[72]

In most of mass culture literature, the psychological problems of modernity were depicted as in no way limited to women who were too competitive in their jobs. In fact, many authors advocated a job for the wife as a possible cure for her dominant role in the

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[67] Graham, 29.
[68] Ibid., 33.
[69] "The Playboy Panel," 134.
[70] Metalious, 15-17.
[71] *Marnie,* Dir, Alfred Hitchcock, United Artists, 1964.
[72] "The Cold Woman," 80; quote from Donald Cooley, "Men! Come Out of the Doghouse," *True*, January 1956, 56.

home.[73] What both career women and dominant stay-at-home wives had in common was their attempt to compete with and dominate men. Femininity was not defined by a particular occupation, but rather by submission to men, or at least seeming submission. "True femininity," said one author," does not *compete* with man, but prefers to *co-operate*, or better yet, to *enlist his co-operation*—charmingly."[74] Competition was seen as a sign of hostility, which in turn was a symptom of penis-envy or a masculinity complex.[75] A true woman could get what she wanted, and make a man think he had made the choice. In the process, she also reaffirmed the masculinity and autonomy of the men around her, thus strengthening American democracy.

Authors who argued that women were naturally passive generally drew a fine line between a "job" and a "career." Women could have jobs; they could even like their jobs, they just were not supposed to have too much ambition. The "career woman," defined not just by a job but by her desire to excel (and dominate over men in her field), was a common specter in mid-century literature on women's roles in society. Farnham and Lundberg, among others, defined certain types of jobs as feminine, and others as masculine. The emphasis here was on the perceived psychological differences between women and men. According to Farnham and Lundberg, women should be encouraged to work in "nurturing" jobs such as psychiatry, nursing, social services, and decorating, but discouraged from jobs that are "about authority," such as work in the law, mathematics, business, industry, and technology.[76] They defined jobs in business as especially masculine. The woman who succeeded in business, they argued, paid with the "sacrifice

[73] See, for example, Hoffman 57.
[74] Louise Paine Benjamin, "Femininity Begins at Home," *Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1947, 65.
[75] Foster, "Have You Stopped," 2.
[76] Lundberg, 367-368.

of her most fundamental instinctual strivings. She is not, in fundamental reality, temperamentally suited to this sort of rough and tumble competition, and it damages her."[77] Another author, writing in *True* magazine, said that for women's wage work to be healthy, not only did the work need to be in a "womanly occupation," but it was also important that the woman's pay be less than the husband's, to preserve the appropriate power relations within the marriage (and for the sake of the husband's ego).[78]

The dividing line between healthy and unhealthy women seems to have revolved around the role of competition with men. "Career woman syndrome" set in when women competed with men in the workplace, or felt the need to compete with their husbands at home.[79] Women were, according to this argument, supposed to be helpmeets, or deputy husbands. This was their *natural* role. Modern women were depicted as desperately trying to "retreat from their position of competition."[80]

Many authors even assumed that *pretending* to be less powerful than men could help women be more feminine. A *Coronet* article told the story of a woman who seemed to have made a career out of making her husband feel superior. Upon marriage,

> She gave up her job, and took one that paid less because she knew how important it was for her husband to feel he was unquestionably supporting her.
> She knows also that he relished being handy about the house, so although she knows she could take care of many of the more complicated chores herself, she refrains. It may take longer this way for things to be fixed, but it's worth it when the glow of conquest suffuses his face after he has finished a tough job.
> It also happens that [she] is a more proficient tennis player than [her husband]. But to this day, he has never discovered it. She always engages him in a challenging set—yet never quite manages to win.[81]

[77] Ibid., 11.
[78] Peck, "All About Men," 111.
[79] Foster, "Have You Stopped," 2.
[80] Peck, "All About Men," 110.
[81] Graham, 34.

Helen Gurley Brown, best-selling author of *Sex and the Single Girl,* held a similar view, telling women that they should go on a "helpless campaign" if they were worried about being feminine.[82] This recommendation that women pretend to be helpless seems to have been more about keeping the husband's ego strong than about the woman needing to submit. Even authors who saw women as suited to careers sometimes argued that women could still develop psychological problems due to the response of men to career women. Margaret Mead, for example, believed that a woman successful in her job created anxiety in the men around her, due to the belief that men were failures if they worked under women. This meant that women with careers were less likely to achieve the "womanly success" of finding and keeping a husband, as most potential mates would be scared off by their feelings of inferiority. Without these "womanly" successes, the career woman would remain unfulfilled.[83]

Others drew the line between healthy and unhealthy wage work at the importance of out-of-home work in the ego-satisfaction of the wife. Even a woman who did not work could suffer "career woman syndrome" if she resented the kind of work she had to do as a housewife, and such women expressed this resentment by being unresponsive to their husbands during sex.[84] A cold wife was often described as consciously or unconsciously hostile toward men, and this hostility often seemed to come from her ambitions. Even worse, such a woman might dominate her son and try to achieve her own ambitions through him.[85]

[82] Gurley Brown, 86.
[83] "Sex in Our Time," 52.
[84] Foster, "Have You Stopped," 2.
[85] Scheinfeld, 36.

In fact, a woman with a career could be perfectly healthy, as long as she remained feminine. Most important was her commitment to and satisfaction in her husband and children. Historian Joanne Meyerowitz has pointed out that mid-century magazines often used femininity and domestic achievements to legitimate women's public achievements.[86] Submission to a husband and satisfaction in the domestic sphere outweighed any potential threats posed by a career to a woman's femininity. The majority of authors rejected the idea that careers were necessarily tied to neuroses in women. Alfred Kinsey's infamous study *Sexuality in the Human Female*, for example, argued that women who graduated from college were no more likely to be frigid than women who went no further than high school, contradicting the supposed link between high education and dissatisfaction posed by Farnham and Lundberg.[87]

The myriad articles about feminine career women show that the vast majority of authors refused to see femininity and career as mutually exclusive. One article quoted actress Arlene Francis, who believed that "if a woman is aware that *first of all* she is a woman—then she can do anything without losing her femininity, even drive a truck."[88] Psychiatrist Helene Deutsch like many others drew the line at competitiveness. The most feminine women, she argued, were "original and productive without entering into competitive struggles."[89] This view of femininity did not, however, exclude achievement. An article in *Sepia* about the problem of female dominance praised the

[86] Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique," 1460.
[87] Staff of the Institute for Sex Research, Indiana University, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Company, 1953), 544. Alfred Kinsey was in charge of the research, and was generally referred to as its author in the mass culture literature. I include college educated women with career women here because the two were often lumped together in the literature. For example, Kinsey's early research (which showed that college women *were* less likely to experience orgasm than were women with lower educations) was used by Farnham and Lundberg to argue against education as part of the build-up of the masculinity complex in women (Lundberg, 268-69).
[88] Betty Hannah Hoffman, "Femininity," *Ladies' Home Journal*, July 1962, 57.
[89] Deutsch quoted in Hoffman, 57.

successful marriage of a female school superintendent to the janitor at her school. The marriage was successful, the article argued, because the husband, though less educated, did not feel inferior or submit to the will of his wife.[90] Regardless of career, these authors defined femininity by marriage, motherhood, and submission, especially in the home; not by wage work or lack thereof.

Unfeminine women were the most common worry in the literature on femininity. The most masculine women, in many of these articles and books, were depicted as feminists or lesbians. Many anti-feminist authors claimed that feminists were not seeking equality, but dominance; they were competing with men and hoped to win the competition. Wylie, for example, believed that such women sought both to gain male privileges and to retain female privileges.[91] Lundberg and Farnham likewise contended that feminists were suffering from a masculinity complex. While Lundberg and Farnham believed that women should have most of the rights demanded by feminists (and had had those rights before modern times), they described the feminists themselves as neurotic, because feminists envied the power of their male contemporaries rather than trying to regain the power of their fore-mothers.[92] They used Mary Wollstonecraft as their prime example, claiming that she hated being a woman and wanted to live as much like a man as possible.[93] They believed she, like other feminists, devalued femininity, which had lost much of its prestige in the years between the Copernican revolution and when she was born. They saw her supposed penis-envy as a misdirected attempt at ego salvation.[94]

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[90] Fred Reynolds, "Are Negro Women Smarter than Their Men?" *Sepia,* December 1959, 72-73.
[91] Wylie, *Generation,* 184-204.
[92] Lundberg, 143-144. They argue that most of the social and political changes called for by feminists were good and necessary.
[93] Ibid., 150-159.
[94] Ibid., 30. Unlike Freud, Lundberg and Farnham argued that penis-envy was not the simple result of a young girl viewing a male penis for the first time. They argued that this was the last straw in a long line of

Lundberg and Farnham claimed that women could regain their power not by becoming more like men, but rather by reclaiming their femininity. Like other authors, they argued that feminist women refused sexual submission to men, and therefore were ultimately frigid.

The ultimate masculinity complexes, according to mass cultural sources, manifested not just as female dominance or feminism, but as lesbianism. This was very much part of a world view that defined femininity by sexual submission to men. Even in the pages of *The Ladder*, the first lesbian magazine in the United States, the femininity of the lesbian often came up for debate. One letter to the editor, for example, remarked that the lesbian had a more masculine personality than did the heterosexual woman, even while arguing that masculine women were not necessarily less passive than other women.[95] *The Ladder* generally posited that some lesbians were masculine, but that not all were.[96] This magazine was not alone in imagining that lesbians were, at least often, unfeminine. In an article in *Ebony*, famed jazz singer Gladys Bentley attributed her own one-time transvestitism and lesbianism to her insecure childhood, and the resulting need she felt to aggressively take control of her life.[97] Aggression here was assumed to be a masculine trait.

In women's magazines, small forms of symbolic submission were emphasized over issues like economic control of the family finances, decision making power, paid work, and the like. Women who submitted on some level remained *real* women, which meant that they remained both attractive to and attracted to men, and capable of love.

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events. Girls first realized that boys had advantages over them. When they then saw their physical difference, they interpreted it as a lack (see pages 175-176).

[95] "Letters to the Editor," *The Ladder*, July 1958, 22-24.

[96] See, for example, "Which One Has the Toni?" *The Ladder*, July 1958, 16-17.

[97] Gladys Bentley, "I am a Woman Again," *Ebony*, August 1952, 95.

Women who were not submissive not only stepped out of their "natural" roles, but in doing so, they relinquished sexual pleasure. As Farnham and Lundberg put it, modern American women, "challenging men on every hand, refusing any longer to play even a relatively submissive role, . . . found their capacity for sexual gratification dwindling as their feelings of love gave way to hostility."[98] In other words, competing with men for power made women frigid.

Competition with men even went as far as the bedroom. Mid-century authors thought that hostility toward or competition with men was the real reason for sexual frigidity. One author argued that feminists were "resentful, jealous, and competitive—even to the point of defeating the man in bed."[99] Another author defined femininity as a desire "to be loved by a man and to surrender to him."[100] Women who became aggressive about sexuality were also seen as having masculinity complexes, and as ultimately frigid. Such women were, in this view "cold [and] predatory."[101] Sometimes it was unclear if sexual problems created dominant women or if dominant women developed sexual problems.[102] Either way, the correlation of the two was largely unquestioned.

The psychological health of lesbians was most often questioned because of their ostensible hostility toward men, rather than their sexual attraction to women. Women who felt hostile toward men were both assumed to be lesbians and to push men (especially their sons) toward homosexuality. One author in *The Ladder*, for example, told his presumably lesbian readers that "the basic problem in evaluating your personal

[98] Lundberg, 120.
[99] Cooley, 55.
[100] Foster, "Have you Stopped," 2.
[101] Mort Sahl quoted in "The Playboy Panel," 136.
[102] See, for example Scheinfeld, 36; Marion Hillard, "The Art of Love: Women's Greatest Challenge," *Reader's Digest,* June 1957, 43-36.

problems . . . is to find out why you are shying away from sexual relations with men. In other words, the problem is not why you like women, but why you don't like men." He claimed that, since a woman's natural function was to have children, lesbians could not reach fulfillment (One wonders what he thought of bisexuals or of lesbians with children).[103] In *Ebony,* Gladys Bentley described her inability to respond to men (and her "coldness" toward them) as part and parcel of her past lesbianism.[104] Lesbianism here was reduced and twisted into a symptom only of hostility toward men.

Dislike of heterosexual sex was depicted as epidemic among unfeminine women, even if they were not lesbian. One author saw frigidity as frighteningly widespread in American society. He argued that at least 50% of U.S. women were frigid, and that the percentage could be as high as 90%![105] Mid-century authors contended that such women viewed sex as degrading. "First," one article said, a masculine woman "resents the man because he made her yield by his wooing. Second, she resents herself because she yielded to his wooing."[106] Women who were not content with their supposed passivity in sex were also, in this literature, dissatisfied with their passivity in other areas of life.

Because women were supposed to be passive and submissive, they were also supposed to idealize aggressive, even violent, men. One journalist wrote about a study from Long Island University that showed that women wanted men to "be masterful, and never himself be dominated," especially by a "girl."[107] Another writer described a study

[103] Basil Vaerlen quoted in "Third Discussion of Fear," *The Ladder*, January 1957, 5.
[104] Bentley, 96.
[105] Cooley, "Men! Come Out of the Doghouse," 55. He critiques Alfred Kinsey's low estimates of frigidity as absolutely unbelievable.
[106] Niederland, 43.
[107] John Gibson, "How Women Feel About Men." *Science Digest*, August 1959, 45.

by Psychology Professor Cleo Dawson, who argued that women wanted security, and liked to be bossed.[108] This desire to be bossed was often described as a desire to have men act as sexual aggressors. In fact, sexual aggression was depicted as one of the major differences between men and women.[109]

The emphasis on male domination in sex and in marriage was most obvious in fictional accounts of rape.[110] In many novels, stories, and films from this period, a dominating woman became feminine and loving only after she was raped—invariably by the man she later came to love and marry (if they were not married already). The men were always portrayed as appropriate mates—middle- or upper-class attractive white men. In this moment of rape the competitive woman was finally able to give up control, and seemed to have forgotten that she felt hostility toward men. Once she had enjoyed sex, it was only a matter of time before she gave up competing in the rest of the relationship. She did not, however, generally give up her job (if she had one) as part of this transformation. This pattern repeated itself in film and fiction as early as the 1930s, in films like *Gone With the Wind,* and continued through the 1960s. In *Peyton Place,* for example, Metalious used a flashback during a romantic moment between Tom and Constance to let us know how they fell in love. The flashback ended with a brutal rape scene.

> He carried her, struggling, up the dark stairway, and when he reached the second floor, he kicked open the door of her room with his foot."
> 'I'll have you arrested,' she stammered. 'I'll have you arrested and put in jail for breaking and entering and rape—'

[108] "What's On Your Mind?" *Science Digest*, May 1957, 25. The end of the article contrasted this study with another that found older women were more likely to be "the boss" in their marriages (according to both husband and wife).
[109] See, for example, L.W. Robinson, "The Real Differences Between Men and Women," *Coronet*, June 1959, 55.
[110] These were not described as "rape" in these accounts, but were clearly both violent and nonconsensual.

> He stood her on the floor beside the bed and slapped her a stunning blow across the mouth with the back of his hand.
> 'Don't open your mouth again,' he said quietly. 'Just keep your mouth shut.'
> He bent over her and ripped the still wet bathing suit from her body, and in the dark, she heard the sound of his zipper opening as he took off his trunks.
> 'Now,' he said. 'Now.'
> It was like a nightmare from which she could not wake until, at last, when the blackness at her window began to thin to pale gray, she felt the first red gush of shamed pleasure that lifted her, lifted her, lifted her and then dropped her down into unconsciousness.[111]

The last few lines showed Constance's literary transformation from rape victim to willing participant. The only dialogue following the rape was Constance asking Tom if he had locked the door. Metalious described Constance's love for Tom as the only result of the rape—as only a positive experience.

A story from *Good Housekeeping* offered another stunning example of this idea of women's sexuality. In "The Wedding Gift," Stephanie and George had just married and received a beautiful tree as a wedding gift. The tree was a gift from Stephanie's South American aunt, who told her that as long as the tree bloomed, she and George would be happy. The tree, however, failed to bloom year after year. Like the tree, Stephanie remained immature, though George tried to get both to "grow up." One day, George drastically cut the roots of the tree in an attempt to force it to bloom. Stephanie caught him and became irate at his cruel treatment of her tree. That same night, George raped Stephanie. Later, when George asked her for a divorce, Stephanie begged him to stay. When he asked her why, she said "'I remembered that night . . . that night when I was so angry I almost forgot myself—and loved you really."[112] Of course, he then took her to their yard and showed her that the tree had also bloomed. As with Constance, Stephanie began to feel love only when she was raped.

[111] Metalious, 150.
[112] Margaret Lee Runbeck, "The Wedding Gift," *Good Housekeeping*, January 1942, 118.

This story was a good example of another theme of these rape stories. The woman was invariably portrayed as immature and childlike, as well as dominating, before a man finally managed to dominate her. Maturity for women came only through sexual submission to a powerful male in this literature. In Alfred Hitchcock's *Marnie*, a young woman (Marnie) was caught by her boss after stealing from his office. Her boss bribed her into marrying him, raped her, and then ultimately cured her of her psychoses. Ironically, she had become sick because, at a young age, she had killed a "john" in an attempt to defend her prostitute mother from a sexual attack. Marnie repressed the memory, but was haunted by nightmares and phobias stemming from that repression. Hitchcock, a man thoroughly acquainted with Freudian thought, depicted Marnie as if she had never grown up. This childhood trauma locked her into an early stage of development. She was still jealous of her mother's attention, and in love with horses instead of men. She hated being touched by men, believing it to be "animal" and "degrading" in the best moralistic fashion. Marnie's husband suggested numerous times that she see a doctor about her lack of desire. He even read a book called "Sexual Aberrations of the Human Female" in his attempts to cure her. She saw the book and remarked: "Your new homework? Frigidity in women, the psychopathic delinquent and criminal? Oh I don't need to read that muck to know that women are stupid and feeble and men are filthy pigs. In case you didn't recognize it, that was a rejection." He then told her to start with "The Undiscovered Self." It was only when she recalled, at her husband's command, what happened to her as a child that she was able to grow up and love her husband and sex. During this recollection, she truly regressed, talking like a child. After recalling her trauma, she decided to take responsibility not only for her

marriage, but also for her past crimes. Her recovery came about only because her husband was willing to dominate and abuse her into her cure.[113]

The idea that women fantasize about being dominated, even raped, may be traceable to Freud but is not in itself a Freudian idea. Early in his career, Freud believed that his patients' neuroses were caused by repressed memories of sexual trauma. These were usually memories of sexual molestation or rape at a young age by either family members or close family friends. For whatever reason, he began to question the veracity of these memories. Freud came to argue that his patients' memories were really expressions of unconscious desires, or fantasies, rather than memories of actual events.[114] "Fantasy," for Freud, meant imagining—not desire. In the 1930s and 1940s, prominent psychoanalyst Helene Deutsch became known for her theory that women were, by their nature, masochistic. Susan Brownmiller, writing in the 1970s, remembered "I became aware of Deutsch's theory that masochism is an essential element of femininity, and a condition of erotic pleasure, when I was in my early teens. Her pronouncements were piously quoted in all the popular books and magazine articles of the day that purported to teach women how to 'accept' their female role."[115] Rape, for Deutsch and her followers, became little differentiated from sex, and was perhaps the most natural form of sexuality.[116] For naturally masochistic women, the rape fantasy was predictable. Popular psychoanalyst Karen Horney, often in conflict with Deutsch's ideas, also believed that women fantasized about rape, though she believed that it was social conditioning that

[113] *Marnie*.
[114] Allen Esterson, "Fantasy," in Erwin, 188-192. This is one of Freud's most criticized beliefs.
[115] Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1975), 316.
[116] Ibid., 317.

made women passive and masochistic.[117] Both women agreed that these rape fantasies were unpleasant. It seems to be a mass misreading of the concept of "fantasy" that made mass culture sources view rape fantasies as pleasant, and therefore rape itself as pleasant under the right circumstances.

African-American Magazines and Women

As with discussions of men, literature in African American magazines differed here, though only slightly. The woman question was especially contentious in African-American magazines, where ideas about female dominance were closely tied to questions of racial inferiority. Articles on domineering women did not appear in African-American magazines, however, until the late 1950s, after the *Brown* decision, when E. Franklin Frazier began to criticize the power of African American women.[118] Prior to this, African-American magazines had always praised working women and powerful women, on the rare occasions when they discussed them at all.[119] Though the later articles shared the fears of white mainstream magazines once they entered this conversation, they were always more positive about women's education and careers, and even power within the family, than were white magazines.

Both *Sepia* and *Ebony* ran articles on domineering women, similar to such articles in mainstream magazines. Usually such articles claimed that black society was even

[117] Ibid., 321.
[118] For example, Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie,* 221. Frazier was more concerned with men abdicating power than with women taking it (since women, in his view, did not take power away from capable men).
[119] See "The Women—god Bless 'Em," *Ebony*, May 1953, 78; "Goodbye Mammy, Hello Mom," *Ebony*, March 1947, 36; both of which were positive about women as historically independent in African American society, and as having power in the family.

more plagued than white culture with domineering women. One article in *Ebony*, for example, argued that the dominating black woman, created largely by racism undercutting black masculinity, now suffered from the same sexual problems described in dominant women in mainstream magazines, especially frigidity and coldness. Because the situation here was magnified, the article contended that "Negro women receive less sexual fulfillment in marriage than white women" (The article ran in both 1960 and again in 1963, showing, perhaps, a continued commitment to this view).[120] However, this article ultimately judged powerful African American women to be more of a benefit to black society than otherwise.

In "Are Negro Women Smarter Than Their Men?," the author lamented changing gender roles. The article cited one doctor who blamed the growing aggressiveness of women for the weakening of America.[121] At the same time, the article praised the intelligence of black career women. While the author cited E. Franklin Frazier in praising the "strong tradition of independence" among black women, he worried that this tradition was responsible for women getting more education than their husbands, and therefore throwing off the natural balance of power in the marriage.[122] The article remained ambiguous about educated women, and concluded that a more democratic marriage, not full subordination of wife to husband, was the best possible marital relationship. Still, male control of the family did not pose the same threat to the community posed by female control. Articles in African American magazines were generally more accepting of all kinds of careers for women, though like mainstream magazines worried most when the

[120] Lerone Bennett, Jr., "The Negro Woman," *Ebony*, September 1963, 94; the article ran twice. The first run was in the August 1960 issue; Reynolds, 70-71. See also Feldstein, passim, for more "expert" views of the problem of dominant women in this period.
[121] Reynolds, 71.
[122] Ibid., 70-71.

balance of power in a marriage shifted too far away from the husband, or women worked *instead* of marrying. Like many other articles in African American magazines, this article saw the problem as one harming the entire population of the United States, but as more critical in African American families because of rapid urbanization and the negative effects of discrimination on the African American psyche.[123]

Overall, most mass-culture authors in both black and white magazines walked a middle road in arguments about the proper role of women, but saw moves toward equality as perhaps too extreme, or as the wrong kind of equality. Like Lundberg and Farnham, they argued that some kinds of gains for women were good, but feminism itself was bad. Most likewise believed that women had lost much of their power with the coming of modernity. Most commonly, authors argued that women should be seeking fulfillment, but that feminist arguments for equality both stemmed from the neuroses of modern women and ignored psychological differences between men and women. Some wanted to roll America back in time and reinstitute pre-industrial gender roles. Wylie saw the passing of women's suffrage as the moment at which things went from bad to worse, and similar critiques of women's voting ran in both African American and mainstream magazines.[124] Most authors, however, were arguing that modernity merely needed some tweaking to change its course, and point it in a more psychological healthy direction. Most were looking for a new place for women in society that would both provide fulfillment for women and strengthen American families, and therefore American democracy.

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[123] See below, chapter 5.
[124] Wylie, "The Career Woman," 155; Reynolds, "Are Negro Women," 70; "It's a Man's World," *True*, April 1964, 12.

There were a very few authors who critiqued *all* women who worked outside the home, regardless of their roles in the household, but these authors were invariably the most misogynistic. These critiques began in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and remained limited to men's magazines. Even in these magazines, however, they were a minority view. Philip Wylie was again a moving force in this critique. Wylie's career as a misogynist had a renaissance in the pages of *Playboy* magazine in the late 1950s, criticizing the "womanization" of America and "career women."[125] Even here, however, his concern was more often with the effects of all women on America than with the psychological effects of working on working women themselves. He talked about "career women" as a drag on American society, but condemned all women elsewhere in his writing. He also omitted the usual disclaimer that many working women were not "careerists," and therefore were not a problem.[126]

The Feminist Critique of Women's Role

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, an attack on the call for submission to men arose in mass culture. This new literature shared a number of traits with the earlier view. First, it relied heavily on psychological understandings of women to make arguments about their proper functions in society. Second, it focused on the role of sexuality in the fulfillment of women, and vice versa. Third, feminist writers focused on the unhealthy personality of the housewife, including the resentment she felt for her husband's presumably more exciting life in the public realm. The anti-feminist views of Wylie,

[125] Wylie, "Womanization", passim; Wylie, "Career Woman," passim.
[126] Wylie, "Career Women," passim.

Farnham, Lundberg, and those who drew on their ideas were central to the emerging feminist discourse on women's roles. Authors Helen Gurley Brown and Betty Friedan, among others, selectively rejected parts of these earlier views of women, but built their arguments on other aspects of this earlier discourse. The feminist critique of women's roles appeared especially in the pages of the lesbian magazine, *The Ladder*, the progressive pages of *The Nation*, and in best selling books by Helen Gurley Brown and Betty Friedan.

Unlike discussions of discipline and male autonomy, there was no right-wing critique of the psychological literature on women in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Perhaps the lack of such a critique was due to the willingness of conservatives to accept the psychologizing of women, who were often seen as less rational than men by both liberals and conservatives in this period. Both liberals and conservatives worried about women's insecurities only when they prevented men from taking the risks necessary to maintain democracy. The critique of psychological understandings of women came from liberals themselves.

Helen Gurley Brown's 1962 Bestseller, *Sex and the Single Girl,* drew on both the negative image of the housewife and the fear of sexual repression and frigidity to argue that unmarried women should have both careers and active sex lives. Gurley Brown, a first-time writer and future editor of *Cosmopolitan*, made this argument without challenging the basic assumption that women should be submissive to men in some areas. For Gurley Brown, this submission seems to have been not only negligible, but also largely about the symbolic performance of submission (letting men open doors and carry heavy objects, for example). Like Lundberg and Farnham, she believed that women who

envied men too much suffered from penis envy, but she seemed to limit the diagnosis of penis envy to women who actively hated heterosexual sex, men, children, and their own femininity. Women did not actually have to be or want to be mothers or wives to be feminine.[127] Competitiveness did not disqualify women from femininity in Gurley Brown's view; she even praised single women for having to "sharpen her personality and mental resources to glitter in order to survive in a competitive world."[128]

Betty Friedan's 1963 book, *The Feminine Mystique,* which I also discussed in the previous chapter, likewise saw women with careers as far more healthy and fulfilled than were housewives.[129] Like Lundberg and Farnham, Friedan believed that there was a psychological epidemic raging in modern American women, which threatened not only these women but also American society as a whole. Friedan argued that housewives were suffering from an epidemic of unhappiness—"the problem with no name."[130] Despite having achieved those things which were supposed to make women feel fulfilled, these women felt empty. Unlike Farnham and Lundberg, however, Friedan did not attribute this unhappiness to a lack of nurturing roles for women in society, or to frigidity (She even argued that such women become too dependent on sex). Instead, she claimed that feminists were right (and healthy): women needed equality with men, especially in the workplace, to reach psychological maturity. While Friedan followed many a magazine article in arguing that women were a problem when they were immature, she contended that lack of autonomous identity development was the cause of immaturity,

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[127] Ibid., 65. Despite seeing lesbians as stuck in an early stage of development, she was fairly sympathetic toward both lesbians and gay men, and argued that they should not be persecuted.
[128] Gurley Brown, 5.
[129] Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*. See also Horowitz, *Betty Friedan*, 197. Horowitz ties Friedan to earlier literature on women, which saw women as alienated from their work in the home, and blamed consumer capitalism for the problems of modern women.
[130] Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique,* 15.

not failure to accept a submissive role.[131] Unlike Gurley Brown, she rejected the idea that envy of men was a psychological symptom (penis envy), and argued instead that it was an understandable result of a culture that forced women into psychologically damaging positions.[132]

Both of these authors, along with other authors who fought for women's rights in the late 1950s and early 1960s, used a negative image of the housewife to argue for changed roles for women. Gurley Brown portrayed housewives largely as a boring bunch, to be pitied by single girls rather than envied. Marriage, in her view, was insurance for the worst years of a woman's life, and could only prevent her from enjoying her best years.[133] Married women were boring not only to themselves, but to their husbands as well. She also hinted that many such women, at least those whose husbands strayed, were also frigid.[134] Married women existed only in the world of "P.T.A., Dr. Spock and the jammed clothes dryer," while their husbands were off romancing the more interesting single women who worked in their offices.[135]

Friedan's image of the housewife was even more severe. In her view, housewives were trapped in a psychologically unhealthy role, repressing their true needs in submission to the needs society told them they should have. Like Wylie, she blamed the emasculation of modern American men, and rising homosexuality, on the psychological problems suffered by women.[136] The housewife's inability to reach psychological maturity, she said, "hampered rather than enriched her sexual fulfillment, virtually

[131] Ibid., see, for example, page 75-76.
[132] Ibid., 114-118 on penis envy.
[133] Gurley Brown, 4.
[134] Ibid., 235-236.
[135] Ibid., 6.
[136] Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique,* 272-274.

doomed her to be castrative to her husbands and sons, and caused neuroses, or problems as yet unnamed as neuroses, equal to those caused by sexual repression."[137] The housewife herself was, of course, also affected. Friedan described a group of twenty eight housewives she interviewed:

> Sixteen out of the twenty-eight were in analysis or analytic psychotherapy. Eighteen were taking tranquilizers; several had tried suicide; and some had been hospitalized for varying periods, for depression or vaguely diagnosed psychotic states. ('You'd be surprised at the number of these happy suburban wives who simply go berserk one night, and run shrieking through the street without any clothes on,' said the local doctor, not a psychiatrist, who had been called in, in such emergencies.) Of the women who had breastfed their babies, one had continued, desperately, until the child was so undernourished that her doctor intervened by force. Twelve were engaged in extramarital affairs in fact or in fantasy.[138]

Other authors expressed a similar view. A 1959 article from *The Nation*, which foreshadowed many of Betty Friedan's later arguments, argued that housewives were "smoking more, drinking more, having more extra-marital affairs, [and] developing ulcers and other ailments previously uncommon to women." This author believed that these same housewives were unnecessary, and had become a drag on American culture. "They need to extend their horizons," she said, ". . . for their own mental health and well being, for their family's, and for the nation's." [139]

Like the anti-feminists, many of these feminist writers dated the crisis in women's psychology to the rise of modernity. Betty Friedan argued that labor saving devices and other technology meant that housework was "no longer a challenge" to women, had ceased to be socially useful or recognized work, and therefore was work that should be

[137] Ibid., 77.
[138] Ibid., 253.
[139] Eve Merriam, "Are Housewives Necessary?" *The Nation*, January 31, 1959, 99.

minimized to allow women to do more socially useful, fulfilling work.[140] A writer in *The Nation* likewise contrasted the modern housewife, trapped in her suburban home and focused on mothering, to "the old-fashioned housewife—one who was part of a large, multi-generational household, who helped her husband on the farm or on a small shop, who played an active role in her community," and found the modern housewife was living a "barren, restricted, undisciplined, and vicarious existence."[141] These writers sounded little different from the descriptions of modern housewives found in the pages of *Modern Woman.*

Such authors, like earlier anti-feminist authors, were extremely critical of consumption as part of the ideology that kept women trapped in the home. Friedan included an entire chapter on "The Sexual Sell," arguing that keeping women in the home made them desperate, and thus easy targets for advertising that promised some sort of fulfillment.[142] An article in *The Nation* likewise claimed that women had been kept in the home, not by men, but by capitalists who needed active and gullible consumers to prey upon.[143] Both Friedan and *The Nation* were politically liberal, and this critique put them firmly in the tradition of David Riesman, Vance Packard, and others in critiquing the effects of capitalism through discussion of its psychological effects.[144]

Gurley Brown was an exception to this critical view of modernity. Indeed, she seemed to revel in the modern. Her single woman was a city-dwelling, heavily consuming, working woman, who took advantage of technology to free her to decorate

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[140] Betty Friedan, "Have American Housewives Traded Brains for Brooms?" *Ladies Home Journal,* January 1963, 26.
[141] Hilda Sidney Krech, "The Identity of Modern Woman," *The Nation*, September 20, 1965, 125.
[142] Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, chapter 9.
[143] Merriam, 97.
[144] On Friedan's view of capitalism, see Horowitz, *Betty Friedan*, 198.

her apartment (as well as herself), have an exciting career ("the better your job the better your standing as a single woman"), and date a lot of men.[145] Her antagonist was not modernity, but repression.

Like the anti-feminists, Gurley Brown, Friedan and others claimed that femininity itself was important to American women, and a lack of femininity among women was cause for concern. Not surprisingly, however, these authors defined femininity somewhat differently from Farnham and Lundberg (and from each other). Friedan argued that women who failed to undergo an identity crisis and thus pass into adulthood were not truly adults. It was only those women who pursued their intellectual development who could have "real" feelings for a man, and who were therefore "more 'feminine' in inner emotional life, and the ability to gratify it."[146] Such women were better mothers, better wives, and were more fulfilled both sexually and emotionally as women, according to Friedan.[147] She relied on the psychology of Erik Erikson for her understanding of identity development.[148]

Gurley Brown's view of femininity was less focused on marriage and children than were either Friedan or earlier authors. Unlike Friedan, she did continue to view women as naturally submissive to men. Without rejecting the image of women as naturally submissive, Gurley Brown contended that careers made women more appealing to men, and did not do psychological harm.[149] She also defined straight men in part by their constant attempts to push women into sex. "If you date an enthusiastic kisser who never even *tries* to proceed south of the border," she said, "look to his maleness." "Never

[145] Gurley Brown, 89.
[146] Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique,* 175-178.
[147] See also Horowitz, *Betty Friedan*, 207.
[148] Friedan, 77-78.
[149] Gurley Brown, 90.

kid yourself that the man who doesn't kiss you goodnight is restraining himself out of respect. He isn't for the girls, that's all."[150] Unlike many other authors of the time, both male and female, Gurley Brown did not talk about women having "rape fantasies" (I suppose a sexually liberated woman wouldn't need to); this tie between masculinity, heterosexuality, and sexual aggression in men was as close as she came. At the same time, she credited some women's attraction to "a man who treats you rough" with a neurotic view of sex as morally bad, rather than a healthy desire to be dominated.[151]

A number of other feminist authors refused to accept the idea that women achieved sexual satisfaction through submission. This critique was raised earliest in *The Ladder*. This magazine often resisted the developmental interpretation of masculinity and transvestism in favor for a more feminist interpretation. Especially in articles about transvestism, the desire to dress and act as a man was presented not always as the illness of penis envy, but rather as the natural response of independent women to a submissive role. One article "On Accepting Femininity" said that women could suffer from a "masculinity complex." The author believed, however, that these complexes came largely from America's limited view of what it meant to be feminine. She claimed that women rejected natural parts of themselves that conflicted with a social ideal of femininity. "We must not reject our femininity," she said, "we should broaden our ideas of what this definition constitutes."[152] Another *Ladder* article, a review of a new edition of Alfred Adler's 1927 book, *Understanding Human Nature,* quoted his criticisms of male domination of women.[153] This author agreed with Adler that American culture saw

[150] Gurley Brown, 30.
[151] Ibid., 74.
[152] Betty Simmons, "On Accepting Femininity," *The Ladder*, November 1957, 12-13.
[153] Patricia Lamson, "A Review," *The Ladder,* November 1957, 18-19.

men as more masculine if they dominated women, but argued that other cultures, based on cooperation, also existed and should not have been left out of his work. She saw the book as "an insight as to how a fiercely competitive and individualistic culture such as ours has shaped the American mind and personality."[154] She was not critical of women who broke gender roles, but of the gender roles themselves.

Another article even claimed that women cross dressed in an attempt to hide their natural beauty and thus reject the "Super-Sex Cult," that is, to be recognized for their brains rather than for their bodies.[155] This article contended that transvestism in adults should not be traced back to "'father identification,' 'sibling rivalry,' or 'she was raised like a boy,'" because such ideas could not explain why the behavior continued later in life.[156] She saw transvestism as a means to avoid the Super-Sex Cult, avoid sexual assault, and as a response to women's feelings of inferiority in the face of a society that devalued women. She suggested that women reject the idea of the submissive woman and build their self-confidence, for "truly self-confident people have no need to express themselves or barricade themselves by costumes or possessions."[157] This author rejected the idea that people were "slaves to habit" and that all problems could be traced to childhood. Also, like other authors in *The Ladder*, she was clear that not all lesbians were transvestites, and not all transvestites were lesbians.

Betty Friedan's 1963 book, *The Feminine Mystique,* shared *The Ladder*'s distrust of those who talked about penis-envy and masculinity in women.[158] Friedan held that

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[154] Ibid., 19.
[155] Barbara Stephens, "Transvestism—A Cross-Cultural Survey," *The Ladder*, June 1957, 13. She cited David Riesman as her source for this.
[156] Ibid., 11.
[157] Ibid., 13.
[158] Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique,* passim.

women who disliked the culturally acceptable female role were not resisting a natural course of development, but were instead resisting a cultural oppression. Freud's patients had been products of their time, not evidence of a natural process in women.[159] She claimed that women who felt unhappy today were not unhappy because of sexual problems, but rather:

> Today, biologists, social scientists, and increasing numbers of psychoanalysts see the need or impulse to human growth as a primary human need, as basic as sex. The 'oral' and 'anal' stages which Freud described in terms of sexual development—the child gets his sexual pleasure first by mouth, from the mother's breast, then from his bowel movements—are now seen as stages of human growth, influenced by cultural circumstances and parental attitudes as well as by sex. . . . The child becomes capable of control, mastery, understanding; and his need to grow and learn at five, twenty-five, or fifty, can be satisfied, denied, repressed, atrophied, evoked or discouraged by his culture as can his sexual needs.[160]

She used psychology, even reinterpretations of Freud by more recent psychologists and psychiatrists, to argue that women needed more than sexual growth. She did not disavow psychology all together, and in fact relied heavily on Erikson's identity theory. She even argued that Freud had been right to see penis-envy in his patients, but that this was a result of women's oppression, not a refusal to accept a natural physical difference.[161] Penis-envy was indeed a problem, but one solved by social change, not psychological treatment. She even opened the book with stories of failed attempts to cure women's problems through analysis alone.[162] As with Wylie, Lundberg, and Farnham, Friedan believed that women who failed to achieve psychological health were dangerous not only to themselves, but to their families and therefore to America as a whole. She remained

[159] Ibid., 105-106.
[160] Ibid.., page 107-108. Ellipses mine.
[161] Ibid., 117.
[162] Ibid., 19-21.

critical of dominant mothers, and of the absence of men in the suburban home, but simply had a novel solution to these problems.[163]

Friedan's critique helped strengthen and renew the fight for women's rights, which would gain steam through the remainder of the 1960s. Both her partial embrace and her partial rejection of psychological understandings of women's role in America would continue in the writings of feminists in the 1960s and 1970s. Friedan also tapped a discourse on the psychology of men that had been raging in the postwar world. Still, in many ways, she was building on ideas already prominent in American culture about the role of modern women, and their part in creating a healthy democracy among men.

[163] "Angry Battler for Her Sex," *Life*, November 1, 1963, 88. For more on this subject, see Moskowitz, "'It's Good to Blow Your Top,'"passim; and Horowitz, *Betty Friedan*, 197.

Chapter 5: Prejudice, Segregation and Discrimination

The 1949 film *Home of the Brave* showed how dire the effects of psychological problems could be for soldiers. The film told the story of Peter Moss, a black soldier who lost his ability to walk while under fire on an island in the Pacific. Most of the story was set in flashbacks during Moss' psychological treatment—his inability to walk was psychosomatic. In one dramatic scene, the psychiatrist told Moss that his physical disability came largely from his sensitivity on questions of race. "That's the disease you've got," said the psychiatrist. "It was there before anything happened on that island. It started way back. It's not your fault; you didn't ask for it. It's a legacy. One hundred and fifty years of slavery, of second class citizenship, of being different. . . . and . . . you turned it into a feeling of guilt." The psychiatrist went on to tell Moss that the people who made racist comments, the ones who made him feel insecure and unhappy, did it because "down deep underneath they feel insecure and unhappy, too." "You've a right to be angry," he told Moss, "but you've no right to be ashamed." Under the psychiatrists' care, Moss was able to regain his ability to walk and stop fearing what his white compatriots thought of his race.[1] Racism, in this film, literally kept a soldier from the battlefield. Once he recovered, he was not only able to rejoin the fight, but was also able to begin making business plans for his future life in the United States.

In the mid-twentieth-century United States, one of the most important domestic issues was African American civil rights, and this period saw the greatest push for these

[1] *Home of the Brave,* Dir. Mark Robinson, United Artists, 1949.

rights since Reconstruction. Mass cultural arguments over racial segregation in this pivotal period of change were often tied to psychology. Initially, racial integrationists used psychology to argue for desegregation, most famously in the Supreme Court case of *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*.[2] As the 1950s wore on, psychological theories about race and segregation in the United States became far more contested, as segregationists both rejected the legitimacy of psychological research (or the legitimacy of its use in deciding Constitutional issues) and, paradoxically, co-opted psychological ideas for their own purposes. Over the course of the post-war era, the discussion about the psychological effects of racial and religious segregation, prejudice, and discrimination on America moved from the pages of parenting literature and African American magazines and into more mainstream magazines, but only in part. Literature on the effects of racism on the white psyche remained marginalized, while literature on the effects of racism on the African American psyche moved into mainstream magazines, and simultaneously became less optimistic about the effect that civil rights would have on the psychological health of African Americans. Only the most blatant and militant of racists bore the "mentally ill" label in mainstream mass culture, while African Americans were increasingly portrayed as suffering from psychological problems indirectly related or unrelated to racism, and "moderates" and racial conservatives were able to use psychology to fight desegregation.

Like advocates of progressive parenting, those who condemned the prejudice of the white community emphasized the natural desire of human beings to be good and loving. They described racial prejudice as an aberration of the human psyche, an illness.

[2] Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 779-785.

It was, after all, one of the components of the authoritarian personality. All of those involved in this conversation were engaging a larger question as well. This was the question of whether or not social structures could cause psychological problems. The preponderance of these authors assumed that the psychology of the individual developed not only under the care of the parents, but also in response to the entire social structure in which the child was raised. This was especially true of literature on African Americans. While much of the literature on discipline, autonomy and femininity traced problems to the effects of modernity on the family, the literature on African Americans looked directly at the effects of social structures themselves, unmediated by the family (though some looked at the effects on the family as well). Those worried about racism were concerned with questions about democracy. What should a democracy look like, and who should participate? What kinds of citizens promoted democracy? What effect did social structure have on the ability of African Americans to become good citizens, and who was responsible for changing that structure?

Society and government, like parents, needed to provide security for citizens. Those writing about prejudice presented family relations as a metaphor for black (or minority) and white relations, with white society and government represented as parent roles. In his book *Childhood and Society*, for example, Erik Erikson argued that many of the problems of American Indian society were caused by the inconsistent treatment American Indians had faced from the United States government, which had left them searching for security and identity and often falling back, therefore, on dependency.[3] His explanation read like a description of the results of inconsistent parenting on children. In Erikson's view the "relative safety of defined restriction in the South" was

[3] Erikson, *Childhood and Society,* 103.

comparable, for African Americans, to the relative safety of parental control.[4] As in the literature on modernity, freedom here was seen as both an opportunity and a new source of psychological stress. Many articles likewise argued that rejection by mainstream society, like rejection by parents, could create feelings of inferiority and hostility.[5]

The mass-culture discussion of the effects of race prejudice, discrimination and segregation on white Americans took place almost exclusively in books, African American magazines, and child-care magazines. Such conversation was absent from women's, men's, general reader, and political magazines. Pro-integration articles that discussed the effects of prejudice on the African-American psyche were more widespread in both African-American magazines and white-authored literature. Segregationists, on the other hand, did not talk about the mind of the prejudiced individual at all. Their discussions, when they involved psychology, focused instead solely upon the mental state of African Americans. Such conversations were especially prevalent in *National Review* and *U.S. News and World Report*, but were also to be found in the pages of more mainstream general reader magazines.

Of course, not all literature on segregation and discrimination dealt with psychology—most of it, in fact, did not. Many racially liberal magazines and books, especially those written for African American audiences, continued to stress economic disparity as the main problem for African Americans. Likewise, many racially conservative sources continued to claim biological factors as evidence in favor of continued segregation and discrimination. Some on both sides of the debate were hostile

[4] Ibid., 215. See also Kenneth Clark, *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965), 19.
[5] See, for example, "The Negro Crime Rate: A Failure in Integration," *Time*, April 21 1958, 16; Clark, *Dark Ghetto,* passim.

to psychology. Psychological arguments about race remained vitally important, however, not only because they were common in mass culture, but also because they were extremely influential within the federal government, helped shape the backlash against the civil rights movement, and were tied to other psychological debates about conformity, child rearing, gender roles, and delinquency. In addition, psychology often took center stage in mainstream discussion of African American civil rights, especially after the red scare and resulting purges of communists from civil rights organizations in the early 1950s led these organizations to deemphasize economic justification of civil rights.[6]

The psychological concept used most often to discuss the effects of segregation and discrimination on both blacks and whites was the inferiority complex. Authors argued that this problem existed both among the racially prejudiced and among the victims of prejudice. In terms of white psychology, those who were prejudiced were assumed to be using prejudice to make themselves feel superior, that is, to overcome inferiority complexes that stemmed from childhood experiences unrelated to race, caused by poor parenting.[7] Inferiority complexes in African Americans were traced to the effects of prejudice, segregation and discrimination themselves, only sometimes conveyed through their indirect effects on children through their parents. In both cases, inferiority complexes were assumed to lead to either excessive aggression or submission. Less often, authors write about "guilt complexes," or deep senses of guilt due to the conditions of segregation. The "guilt complex" is not a psychological term, per se, though Freud and others had talked about the possible problems of guilt feelings,

[6] See Foner, 258 on these purges.
[7] For more on this, see Feldstein, ""Antiracism and Maternal Failure in the 1940s and 1950s," passim. She looks specifically on the ostensible problems, caused by both black and white mothers, leading both to racism among whites and psychological pathology among African Americans.

conscious or unconscious.[8] Guilt complexes were generally seen as existing mostly among the prejudiced themselves, or among particularly light-skinned or economically successful African Americans.

The idea that individual human developmental stages mimicked the history of human civilization took an interesting turn in literature on African Americans. While those speaking about white psychology (or the psychology of people of unnamed races, who were presumed to be white) saw children as going through a generalized development from primitive to civilized (by way of feudalism) in a way that imitated European history, African Americans were described as if they relived the stages of African American history quite specifically. Erikson, for example, argued that African Americans could undergo "regression" due to insecurity, not just back to childhood developmental stages, but also back to an identity like that of adult slaves.[9] Slavery, like feudalism, represented a bad form of security, as it lacked freedom.[10]

Debates about prejudice, racism, and segregation often relied on gendered arguments in this era. As with the literature on male autonomy, this literature blamed social conditions for the decreasing autonomy of men, though in this case, authors generally attributed the problem to slavery and discrimination (and with the end and weakening, respectively, of those things) instead of, or along with, modernity. It is not surprising that, in this period when freedom was being described as psychologically stressful, the group which had gained the most basic forms of freedom the most recently

[8] Eva Bänninger-Huber and Christine Widmer, "Guilt," in Erwin, 249-250.
[9] Erikson, *Childhood and Society,* 103.
[10] Some literature from this period also argued that dissemblance and submission on the part of African Americans could also represent this kind of retreat into security, but this was marginal, and was not a common theme in mass culture (see Stanley Elkins, *Slavery* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1959); see also Daryl Scott, *Contempt and Pity: Social Policy and the Image of the Damaged Black Psyche, 1880-1996* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 87.

became a focus for the concern with psychological problems. Despite the use of psychology to argue against de jure segregation in the South, much of the literature on African American psychology focused on the same location as literature on modernity: the cities of the north and west.

This chapter examines the uses of psychology in debates over racism, segregation and discrimination in mass culture. Magazines for African-American readers and magazines on child-rearing are especially central to this chapter, as are more conservative white magazines late in the period. In addition to the magazines I use throughout the dissertation, this chapter also looks at a few books that were extremely influential on the mass culture psychological understandings of prejudice, especially sociologists Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* and the works of E. Franklin Frazier.[11] I also discuss a number of films that dealt with racial issues. Unlike conformity or women's sexuality, or even child discipline, racial segregation was a legal as well as a social controversy, and many of these mass culture sources dealt with government policy on these questions. Therefore, I also spend some time describing the effects of psychological ideas on legal policies, looking especially at Supreme Court decisions, congressional hearings, and a report on African Americans written by the U.S. Department of Labor, commonly called "The Moynihan Report," all of which were widely discussed in magazines and newspapers at the time.

[11] Myrdal; E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939); reprint (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001); and Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie*.

Prejudice and the White Psyche

Most mid-century authors who talked about prejudice claimed either that it was justified (generally involving a belief in the inferiority of African Americans and the support of segregation and discrimination), or that it was caused by psychological problems in the prejudiced individual. If racism was irrational, they believed, it must be a symptom of psychological illness. Authors who talked about white prejudice as a sickness treated racial prejudice almost as a virus, something that could be caught, but only if there was already a weakness in the psychological system of the individual. Parents or society could "infect their children with the germs of racism," but the children had to have weakened psychological immune systems for these germs to turn in to the disease.[12] While they argued that the ideology of racism did not rise whole-cloth from the psyche of each neurotic individual, they still seemed to feel that curing the neurosis would kill the ideology (and only rarely that educating against the ideology could work on its own, without confronting the neurosis).[13] *Parents' Magazine,* sociological works, and government reports from this era all relied on an idea of prejudice as an opportunistic ideology built on psychological insecurity.[14] Prejudice, according to the report of the 1950 White House conference eon Children and Youth, stemmed from needs for status, expression of hostility, in-group identity, and conformity.[15] The 1947 President's Committee on Civil Rights likewise argued that "no one can become a bigoted fanatic

[12] "And a Child Shall Lead Them," *Ebony,* December 1945, 28.
[13] Witmer and Kotinsky, 152.
[14] See, for example, Mary E. Hoover, "When Prejudice Strikes," *Parents,'* March 1958, 50-51, 89-90; Jack Harrison Pollack, "What Are We Doing About Prejudice And Our Children?" *Parents,'* February 1953, 32-33, 86-90; Witmer and Kotinsky, 152; Myrdal, passim.
[15] Ibid., 132.

unless he has need for prejudice towards others to begin with. This may be a need for feelings of superiority, for a feeling of being strong enough to exclude others from equality."[16]

The most common source for such psychological weakness was generally believed to be feelings of insecurity and inferiority. *Parents'* magazine dealt with racial prejudice as a symptom of insecurity in children, and recommended that parents make children who seemed to be becoming prejudiced feel more comfortable and confident in themselves. One mother writing for *Parents'*, for example, realized that she had allowed her daughter to develop feelings of inferiority because of her siblings' superior grades. Once the mother made sure her daughter no longer felt inferior to her siblings, the girl stopped making prejudiced statements and was able to make friends with children of other races and religions.[17] Actress Tallulah Bankhead, in an interview in *Ebony,* argued that her lack of prejudice came from the "security" she felt as a child, which, she said, meant she did not need to feel either inferior or superior to anyone.[18] Those who treated prejudice as a virus often argued that inferiority feelings took form as prejudice because it was an acceptable outlet for such feelings in American society.

This argument often relied on a view of prejudice as a combination of learned ideology and psychological problem. *Parents' Magazine* treated all prejudice as a sign of psychological damage, but other parenting literature, films, and African American sources treated some prejudice as rational. Kenneth Clark, a psychologist famed for his

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[16] President's Committee on Civil Rights, *To Secure These Rights: The Report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1947), 134. For reliance of committee on Myrdal's work, see David W. Southern, *Gunnar Myrdal and Black-White Relations: The Use and Abuse of* An American Dilemma, *1944-1969* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987),113.
[17] Margaret H. Bacon, "Prejudice Doesn't Come Naturally," *Parents,'* February 1962, 90.
[18] Allan Morrison, "A Southerner Looks at Prejudice," *Ebony*, January 1960, 30.

studies of prejudice and whose work, done in cooperation with his wife Mamie Clark, influenced the Supreme Court decision in *Brown*, believed that the non-violent prejudice normative in American society was not usefully understood as a psychological problem.[19] The 1950 White House Conference on Children and Youth, which also relied on Clark's work, agreed. Both contended that most prejudiced people simply learned prejudice, because their parents or others taught it to them, and because it provided very real economic, sexual, and political advantages to whites in American society.[20] Only what they deemed to be "extreme" forms of prejudice were caused, they claimed, by "authoritarian personality" problems. This included those who acted violently toward minority group members, and those who actively opposed integration and the increase of civil rights for African Americans (all of those with authoritarian personalities were white).[21]

Even normative forms of prejudice were seen, however, as providing psychological security, either through ensuring status or through providing feelings of superiority. Kenneth Clark described prejudice as the flip-side of America's commitment to liberty and democracy. White Americans, he said, all originated from immigrants driven to the United States by "some basic form of personal or group *insecurity*." The pursuit of democracy was one way in which these immigrants pursued security, a positive manifestation of their need, and one which pushed Americans toward self-esteem through their achievements. Racism provided a form of security as well, though one that required no real work on the part of the individual. "An individual in quest of security and status,"

[19] Kenneth Clark, *Prejudice and Your Child* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955); reprint (Middletown, C.T.: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), 72 (all references are to reprint edition).
[20] Ibid., 74.
[21] Ibid., 71-74; Witmer and Kotinsky, 147-149.

said Clark, "may seek to obtain them not only through positive objective methods—work and personal achievement—but through the denial of security and status to another person or group."[22]

This division between extreme and normative prejudice was apparent in films from this era. The 1962 film *Pressure Point*, set mostly in a flashback to 1942, dramatized the struggle between democracy and fascism as a personal struggle both between two men and in each of their psyches. The film dealt with a black psychiatrist, played by Sidney Poitier, treating a white Nazi, played by Bobby Darin. Darin's background seemed to come almost entirely from the pages of *The Authoritarian Personality*. His father was dominating, both over Darin and over Darin's mother. He beat Darin, had unhidden sexual affairs, and was an embarrassment to the family. Darin's mother was too doting on her son, and the film suggested that the relationship was uncomfortable for young Darin. Poitier discovered Darin's Oedipal complex, and the guilt that came from that desire, as well as Darin's feelings of inferiority (based both on his father's public behavior and his own poverty as an adult). Darin, as an adult prisoner, was visibly insane. He had hallucinations, blackouts, and ranted incomprehensibly. His violent prejudice likewise seemed to be entirely a symptom—he said he never knew any African American or Jewish people growing up, his parents were not depicted as racists, and he was shown as having become a Nazi after a Jewish girl's father refused to let her date Darin. Darin had no ideological commitment whatsoever to his own racism, and at times seemed to even understand the fallacy of his own prejudice. The film used Darin to illustrate not only the problem of racism, but the threat of an authoritarian society. In the words of Pointier's character, "although psychopaths are a small minority, it seems

[22] Clark, *Prejudice and Your Child,* 7-8. Italics in original.

significant that whenever militant and organized hate exists, a psychopath is the leader. And if for instance one hundred disgruntled and frustrated individuals fall in line behind one psychopath, then in essence we are concerned with the actions of one hundred and one psychopaths."[23]

Other white characters in the film, however, showed prejudice without showing apparent inferiority feelings or other mental defect. The doctors with whom Poitier worked were concerned both with Poitier's abilities as a psychiatrist and with his commitment to Darin's case because of Poitier's race. In one of Poitier's recollections of a discussion with his boss, he recalled that his boss told him not to let him down. "'Just because you're a Negro,' is what he didn't say," said Poitier's voice-over. While the film made a point of the ambient discrimination faced by Poitier, this racism was presented as cultural ignorance, not as mental illness. Only Darin's extreme form of racism was depicted as having psychological sources.

Other authors claimed that whites (especially men) feared black competition for women, that whites feared the sexual desire they felt toward African Americans, or that general sexual anxiety and fear of competition drove racial prejudice. This argument existed in African American sources, not parenting literature. One article in *Ebony,* for example, contended that "psychiatrists could have a field day exploring the true reactions of whites to blacks. The noted psychiatrist Sigmund Freud has explained the whole business has a sex basis. . . . The white woman who confessed . . . that when a Negro 'looked' at her, she felt 'naked,' was actually confessing a deep unconscious attraction to the 'black male animal.'"[24] Kenneth Clark likewise saw white desire as part of their

[23] *Pressure Point,* Dir. Hubert Cornfield, Metro Goldwyn-Meyer, 1962.
[24] Roi Ottley, "Five Million U.S. White Negroes," *Ebony,* March 1948, 24.

unconscious reasoning for segregation. White liberals, he said, relied on segregation to limit their sexual choices.[25] In an article for *Ebony,* Clark also wrote about white sexual anxiety as a source of prejudice, and specifically equated the Kinsey report's finding that behavior and ideals on issues of sexuality differed in American society and thus caused anxiety to the effects of differences between ideal and reality on racial equality.[26] That parallel, he claimed, was not coincidental, but rather existed because both were caused by sexual status anxiety.

A few authors, in both magazines and government sources, also contended that the prejudice itself, while perhaps stemming from some psychological inadequacy, also caused further psychological problems in the prejudiced person. Martin Luther King Jr., for example, remarked that it is "psychologically harmful to hate anyone."[27] The reasoning behind this position differed among authors. One writer in *Parents' Magazine* blamed the damage on the loss of "inner sources of love" suffered by the prejudiced person.[28] An article that ran in both *Women's Home Companion* and *Negro Digest* argued that prejudice restricted the development of the personality, as the prejudiced person became a "prisoner of his own feelings" and "never can live at ease . . . He must live in fear of [real or imaginary] enemies and under the threat that his own hatred will rebound against him."[29] Even those whites who simply benefited from prejudice, discrimination, and segregation, even if they were not themselves prejudiced, could suffer psychological effects. The report of the 1950 White House Conference likewise claimedthat those who lived in and benefited from systems of segregation and

[25] Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, 230.
[26] Kenneth Clark, "What Motivates American Whites?" *Ebony*, August 1965, 73-74.
[27] Martin Luther King, Jr., "Advice for Living," *Ebony*, September 1957, 74.
[28] Bacon, 55.
[29] Howard Whitman, "Is Prejudice Poisoning Our Kids?" *Negro Digest*, June 1950, 19.

discrimination could develop "inner conflicts and guilt feelings" from that participation, even if they did not actively promote these systems.[30]

African-American writers also claimed that prejudice, segregation, and discrimination caused harm to the white psyche through feelings of guilt. Writer James Baldwin described how this guilt could build up for a sheriff charged with stopping a black protest:

> Some of these people [the black protesters] might have been related to him by blood. They are most assuredly related to the black mammy of his memory and the black playmates of his childhood. And for a moment, he seemed nearly to be pleading with the people facing him not to force him to commit yet another crime and not to make yet deeper that ocean of blood in which his conscience was drenched, in which his manhood was perishing. The people did not go away, of course . . . so the [sheriff's] club rose, the blood came down, and his bitterness and his anguish and his guilt were compounded.[31]

The guiltier he felt, the angrier he became at those he perceived to be causing him that guilt. In this description, the violent protectors of the racial status quo were the most psychologically damaged. Kenneth Clark talked about the effects of segregation and discrimination on the white population in his 1965 book, *Dark Ghetto,* and implied that the psychological problems caused by this guilt would pass once integration was achieved.[32] Even white racial progressives, however, were described as suffering psychological damage from living in a prejudiced society.[33]

The concern with prejudice was part and parcel of the postwar attempt to create a better, more democratic society that could stand up under the strains of modernity. Except in African-American magazines, the point was not mainly to improve the lives of African Americans, but rather to improve the lives of white citizens and thus the health of

[30] Witmer and Kotinsky, 147.
[31] James Baldwin, "The White Man's Guilt," *Ebony*, August 1965, 48.
[32] Clark, *Dark Ghetto,* 223.
[33] See, for example, "The Carrot or the Club," *Ebony*, August 1947, 46.

American democracy. Black writers were, of course, worried both about the health of American society and about the real effects of prejudice, discrimination, and segregation on African Americans. Black or white, almost all of those who addressed this issue believed that prejudice was unhealthy both for the prejudiced individual, and for American society as a whole.

This postwar work on the psychological effects of prejudice, discrimination, and segregation drew from the works of sociologists Gunnar Myrdal and Theodor Adorno. *An American Dilemma* was the work of Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal, who came to the United States in 1938 with a grant from the Carnegie Corporation to study American race relations.[34] Myrdal defined the "American dilemma" as:

> The ever-raging conflict between, on the one hand, the valuations preserved on the general plane which we shall call the 'American Creed,' where the American thinks, talks, and acts under the influence of high national and Christian precepts, and, on the other hand, the valuations on specific planes of individual and group living, where personal and local interests; economic, social, and sexual jealousies; considerations of community prestige and conformity; group prejudice against particular persons or types of people; and all sorts of miscellaneous wants, impulses, and habits dominate his outlook.[35]

Myrdal believed that this was more than a conflict between different groups within American society; it was, most importantly, a conflict within each American. Myrdal seemed to define this as a contest between the rational interests of Americans, especially moral and economic, and the psychological needs that could be filled by racism. Morally, Americans who believed in what he called the "American creed," which Myrdal defined as belief in liberty, equality, justice, and fair opportunity for every one, could not rationally support segregation.[36] Likewise, he claimed that economic interests could not

[34] Myrdal, i.
[35] Ibid., xxi.
[36] Ibid., xxii.

be the only driving force for segregation and discrimination, since these practices hurt the economy overall, and especially crippled the economy of the South. He defined both faith in the American creed and desire for economic growth as rational. Racial prejudice, on the other hand, had much to do with fears about sex and social status, where Americans were most vulnerable to "onslaughts on [their] personal security. These two factors are more likely than anything else to push a life problem deep down in to the subconscious and load it with emotions."[37] "Even when not consciously perceived or expressed," Myrdal continued, anxieties over sex and status "ordinarily determine interracial behavior on the white side."[38] Racism was not, for Myrdal, an ideology so much as it was a psychological symptom of insecurity feelings.

Myrdal was optimistic about the future of race relations in the United States. He believed that Americans were fairly rational, and therefore would be able to overcome their psychological insecurities.[39] Some of Myrdal's critics argued, however, that he emphasized the moral element too much and the psychological not enough. Rationality could not overcome psychological problems on its own. Leo Crespi, a social psychologist at Princeton University, for example, believed that since Myrdal had shown that many of the motivations for prejudice were unconscious, the dilemma could not be moral at all—just psychological.[40] Indeed, psychological readings of Myrdal's work, downplaying the moral element, were extremely common in mass culture as well as among more academic sources.

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[37] Ibid., 59. He sees this as a specifically American problem, related to the history of Puritanism and a history of social mobility (making sex and status both important to Americans (see page 60)).
[38] Ibid., 60.
[39] Ibid., xx on Americans as rational.
[40] Southern, 88.

Theodor Adorno, whom I discussed in more depth in chapter two, was likewise influential in discussions of the effects of racial and religious prejudice on the psyche of the prejudiced individual. Like Myrdal, he equated prejudice with psychological problems. He related racial and religious prejudice and discrimination to a larger, and by definition psychologically damaged, personality structure he called the "authoritarian personality."[41] Psychologist Erich Fromm likewise believed that Nazism and other authoritarian belief systems were symptoms of poor psychological health and involved racial or religious prejudices.[42]

Discussion of the effects of prejudice on the psychology of whites continued in magazines written for black audiences and for parents through the mid-1960s, but never moved into other mainstream mass culture sources, which almost never concerned themselves with the role of racism in the lives of white Americans. A 1965 special issue of *Ebony* on "The White Problem in America" focused almost entirely on the white psyche. *Ebony* was accurate, however, in its claim that America was ignoring the problem of "anxieties lodged deep in the hearts and minds of white Americans" and causing racial problems.[43] While psychological understandings of race relations had moved into the mainstream after *Brown* and the reinvigoration of the civil rights movement in the 1950s, the discussion of white psychology made no such move. Even in African American magazines, such articles had become increasingly rare.

[41] Adorno, 455.
[42] Fromm, *Escape From Freedom,* 206.
[43] Lerone Bennett Jr., "Introduction: The White Problem in America," *Ebony*, August 1965, 30.

Prejudice and African American Psychology before *Brown v. Board of Education*

Mid-century literature on racism in the United States also discussed the effects of prejudice, segregation, and discrimination on the psyches of African Americans. As with the literature on the effects of prejudice on the prejudiced, this conversation existed almost entirely in books, African American magazines, and parenting literature until the mid-1950s. Before the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, such literature generally focused on the immediate psychological impact of living in a racist society, or the conflation of this impact with the greater problem of modernity. Either way, these arguments were used in the service of fighting for African American civil rights, not against them. Unlike the post-*Brown* mass-culture literature, the black family was not portrayed in this early literature as creating particular psychological problems for African American children. This literature generally assumed that the negative psychological factors caused by prejudice, segregation, and discrimination would abate when those social problems abated.

The idea that African Americans were psychologically harmed by prejudice and segregation seems, as in the *Brown* decision, to have risen entirely among those who were calling for black civil rights and integration. Writers like E. Franklin Frazier, Gunnar Myrdal, and Kenneth Clark, among others, used arguments about psychological damage to fight biological ideas of racial inferiority. [44] It was an effective argument, in that it both denied racial difference based on biology and demonstrated that racial

[44] Anthony Platt, "Introduction," in E. Franklin Frazier. *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939); reprint (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), xvii-xviii (all page references are to reprint edition).

segregation caused damage. This latter point was important in the overturning of legal segregation.[45]

In this early literature, those who had the most contact with white society were depicted as the most likely to suffer psychological effects. This had interesting implications, since it later led to arguments that African Americans in integrated settings might suffer more psychological damage than did those in segregated communities. For example, the 1950 White House Conference on Children and Youth, claimed that blacks who frequently interacted with whites were more likely to suffer psychological damage than those who had little or no contact with whites, especially among children. They believed that small children in isolated communities were able to go through their early developmental stages unscathed by prejudice, facing it only when they moved into the larger world as teens. Small children faced with interaction with white prejudiced people, on the other hand, were described as having more basic problems with trust, autonomy, and inferiority feelings.[46] Kenneth Clark, whose work "Prejudice and Your Child" was largely the basis of this report's view of race, often seemed ambiguous in his writings over the question of whether or not segregation was more harmful than integration loaded with prejudice, despite being an ardent supporter of integration and the single most important psychological expert influencing the *Brown* decision. Still, he saw the possible negative effects of desegregation as fleeting, those of segregation as more lasting.[47] Two specific groups came in for special consideration in African American magazines: those who could or did pass as white and those involved in interracial

[45] Numerous other social scientists made similar arguments. I am focusing on those who received attention in the mass culture sources I examined. For more on damage theory in social science literature, see Scott, passim; Feldstein, passim; Moskowitz, *In Therapy,* 178-192; Herman, 174-207.
[46] Witmer and Kotinsky, 136-137.
[47] See Clark, *Prejudice,* 45, Clark, *Dark Ghetto,* 19.

relationships. These groups came to be considered particularly vulnerable to damage because of their seeming closeness to white culture and prejudice.

Prejudice itself was, in all of this literature, the ostensible root cause of the psychological problems suffered by African Americans. Philippa Schuyler, a concert pianist and daughter of a white mother and black father, wrote for *Sepia* magazine about her own experiences. She claimed she only became aware of the "vicious barriers of prejudice" that she would meet as the child of a mixed marriage after she left school. "It was a ruthless shock to me," she said, "that, at first, made the walls of my self confidence crumble. It horrified, humiliated me. But, instead of breaking under the strain, I adjusted to it. I left."[48] Having left the United States behind her, Schuyler believed that she was able to maintain her self confidence and sense of self, but did not dispute that most children of mixed marriages in the United States must face terrible psychological burdens. Light-skinned African Americans, she claimed, were said to be "full of inferiority complexes," with lives "supposed to be spent in wondering whether people really 'know,' or whether they are 'about' to be rejected. They tend, supposedly, to be 'other-directed' rather than 'inner-directed,' grasping at straws of social approval."[49] Schuyler believed that she had escaped this fate by escaping the United States, and that, in some countries, mixed-race children could lead normal lives. The problem was not with her parents' marriage, which she described lovingly, or with herself, but rather with the prejudice in society. The psychological problems described in this literature were the effect of prejudice and discrimination—they were never described as an inevitable biological effect of racial intermixing. Still, the concern with light-skinned African

[48] Philippa Schuyler, "My Black and White World," *Sepia*, June 1962, 13.
[49] Ibid., 10.

Americans was strong enough that at least one reader was moved to write to *Ebony* to argue that not all light-skinned African Americans had what she called a "color complex."[50] . Another article in *Ebony* likewise argued that light-skinned African Americans made "remarkable adjustments" to their position in society, and suffered no psychic penalty for looking neither white nor black.[51]

Those who chose to pass, however, were viewed in both white and African-American sources as more likely to suffer psychological problems. Myrdal could only speculate on the effects that passing as white could have on the psyches of African Americans:

> As a social phenomenon, passing is so deeply connected with the psychological complexes—built around caste and sex—of both groups that it has come to be a central theme of fiction and of popular imagination and story telling. The adventures of the lonesome passer, who extinguishes his entire earlier life, breaks all personal and social anchorings, and starts a new life where he has to fear his own shadow, are alluring to all and have an especially frightening import to whites. There is a general sentimentality for the unhappy mulatto—the 'marginal man' with split allegiances and frustrations in both directions which is especially applied to the mulatto who passes. From all we know about personality problems there is probably, as yet, substantial truth to the picture of the passer which our literary phantasy paints for us. But since there has been little observation of the personality problems of the passers, the picture of their difficulty is hard to define.[52]

Other sources were less reserved. The 1940 film *Pinky,* which told the story of a light-skinned African American girl who had been passing as white, showed that the girl had to learn to respect herself as an African American to end the temptation to pass.[53] In doing so, she was also able to find her calling in life and begin to contribute to the health of American society (literally, by opening a hospital). These sources also occasionally suggested that people of mixed-race ancestry were as much white as they were African

[50] Dorothy Hall, "Letters to the Editor," *Ebony*, September 1948, 4.
[51] Ottley, 27.
[52] Myrdal, 688.
[53] *Pinky*, Dir. Elia Kazan, 20th Century Fox, 1949.

American, though no one suggested that they needed to adjust to being part of white culture, or that they suffered for "passing" as black.[54]

Ebony magazine ran both articles critical of the idea of passers as having psychological problems and articles which employed this idea, but the latter were overwhelmingly more common than the former.[55] One particularly famous story of passing, documented as a book, film, and in numerous articles in both African American and white magazines, was the story of an entire family who passed, with the children initially unaware of their African American ancestry. The eldest son in the family, told of his African American ancestry as a teenager, had a string of psychological problems, resulting in treatment and even hospitalization in his early adulthood. Articles on this family, no matter which magazine published them, attributed his mental problems to his fear of being found out as black, and of others seeing him as inferior.[56]

Racial intermarriage was sometimes also presented as a possible result of or source of psychological problems. While many articles, especially in *Ebony* magazine, presented interracial couples as perfectly normal, other articles talked about the problems such marriages could cause for those who chose that path. An *Ebony* article on "Hollywood's Most Tragic Marriage," for example, told the story of a white woman who was driven to drugs, insanity, and finally suicide by the racism she faced after marrying a

[54] See, for example, Ottley, passim.
[55] The only article I found that was really critical of the idea that passers and light-skinned African Americans were more prone to psychological problems was an article on "White Negroes" from 1948 (Ottley, 22-28). On page 27, the author argued that whites were intent on talking about the unhappy mulatto, but that actually, such people made "remarkable adjustments." Some other articles discussed light-skinned blacks and passing without mentioning psychological damage either way, but most did discuss possible psychological problems. They also, however, saw the fear of the passing black as a sign of white neuroses.
[56] William L. White, "Lost Boundaries," *Reader's Digest*, December 1947, 135-154; "Lost Boundaries," *Ebony*, May 1948, 45-49.

black man.[57] Another article presented "The Case Against Mixed Marriage," arguing that the prejudice faced by such couples could intensify their normal marital problems. Above the title, *Ebony* showed a picture of "a mental case after crackup following marriage to a white girl" running wildly through mud flats after his escape from a mental hospital. The article also showed pictures of happily married mixed couples, but came down against mixed marriages overall.[58] The problems in the marriage were not, however, presented as a natural result of a biological mismatch, but instead as the result of facing the intense prejudice against interracial marriages.

However, such articles also occasionally argued that those who entered into interracial marriages did so because of psychological problems. Nannie Helen Burroughs, writing for *Ebony*, described both interracial marriage and passing as "disappear[ing] into a ready-made race." "If he had any self-respect," she said of African Americans, "he would not under-value his own worth."[59] She, like others in *Ebony*, argued against the idea that racial intermarriage caused problems for biological reasons. In a racist society, however, the psychological motivations for such marriages were treated as suspect.

In addition to those seemingly on the border between black and white society, another group was targeted as potentially pathological: those African Americans who became physically or economically mobile. As in the literature on modernity more generally, the issue here was the increasing isolation of the individual from an extended

[57] Helen Lee Worthing, "Hollywood's Most Tragic Marriage," *Ebony*, February 1952, 26-36.
[58] "The Case Against Mixed Marriage," *Ebony,* November 1950, 50-51. Not surprisingly, given the larger cultural condemnation focused especially on black men marrying white women, it was such relationships that most often led to psychological problems in the articles in *Ebony.*
[59] Nannie Helen Burroughs, "Church Leader Argues Against Mixed Marriage," *Ebony*, November 1950, 51.

family or community structure, and the instability created by that change. As in white culture, modernization through urbanization was seen as removing traditional security (and thus the security of limitations on freedom). Because most migration was to urban areas and to the North, African Americans in these locations were described as most vulnerable to psychological problems.[60] African Americans were generally seen as having modernized more rapidly than other Americans, and thus as suffering more acutely from the psychological effects of modernization. As writer Ralph Ellison wrote, "American Negroes are caught in a vast process of change that has swept them from slavery to the condition of industrial man in a space of time telescoped (a bare 85 years) that it is possible literally for them to step from feudalism into the vortex of industrialism simply by moving across the Mason-Dixon line."[61]

The 1950 White House conference on Children and Youth tied pathology to movement between social classes. The conference report argued that social mobility created a particularly trying psychological situation. The report gave the case of "David" as an example:

> To move up from the lower class position to which he was born to the middle class position to which he aspires [David] has learned the necessary skills and attitudes. He is a hard worker, has good manners, and takes care to maintain a good reputation. Furthermore, he has no strong personal attachments to people, and he will always be able to subordinate friendships and emotional relationships to his desire to get ahead in the world. He is the type of person who may be expected to leave the small city where he grew up and search for success in a larger community.[62]

While David may have sounded like a manifestation of the American Dream to some, the report described his mental health as "dubious." David was too focused on success and

[60] Myrdal, 980;
[61] Ellison, "Harlem is Nowhere," in *Shadow and Act,* New York: Random House, 1964; reprint, Vintage Books, 1995, 296. The article was written in 1948, but not published at the time.
[62] Witmer and Kotinsky, 123.

not enough on people. Social mobility was likewise part of the problem of modernity. While David was not described as African American, this report and other sources noted that African Americans were more likely to suffer the psychological problems caused by poverty and mobility.[63] This was similar to the "status anxiety" described in anti-conformity literature.

Brown v. Topeka Board of Education

A pivotal moment in the centering of psychology in debates over segregation and discrimination was the announcement in 1954 of the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*.[64] This unanimous Supreme Court decision found that racial segregation violated the Fourteenth Amendment, and thus the constitutional rights of African Americans. *Brown* is notable not only for overturning *Plessy v. Ferguson*, and therefore legal sanction for racial segregation, but also for its use of psychology as an extralegal source for its decisions.[65] In *Brown*, the court asked: "does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other 'tangible' factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal education opportunities?" Their answer was "We believe that it does."[66]

The decision cited a number of social and psychological sources to show that the Court's decision was "amply supported by modern authority."[67] It cited the works of

[63] Ibid., 134; see also, for example, Ellison, "Harlem,"296.
[64] Kluger, 779-785.
[65] *Brown* was the first case in which the Supreme Court used psychological evidence. (see Norbert L. Kerr, "Social Science and the U.S. Supreme Court," in Martin Kaplan, ed., *The Impact of Social Psychology on Procedural Justice* (London: Charles C. Thomas Pub. Ltd., 1986), 58-59.
[66] Kluger, 781.
[67] Ibid., 782.

Gunnar Myrdal, Kenneth and Mamie Clark, and E. Franklin Frazier, among others, for its sociological and psychological evidence.[68] The work of Kenneth and Mamie Clark was especially important in the lower court decisions, which led up to the Supreme Court's hearing of *Brown*. The two psychologists studied the reactions of children to black and white dolls, and argued that black children showed "an unmistakable preference for the white doll and rejection of the brown doll" even as three-year-olds.[69] They argued that the self-hatred of these children stemmed from the prejudice they faced.

The decision argued that, even with equal facilities, the implications of separate facilities—the message of inferiority that it sent to and about African Americans, made those kept separate feel inferior. Despite citing Gunnar Myrdal in the footnotes, the Court made no reference to the damage done to the psyches of the white majority group by segregation. The Court argued that "to separate them [minority group members] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone."[70] Certainly, the legal team was trying to prove damage to the litigants, and might have confused their arguments by arguing that everyone was damaged by segregation. Still, the effect was to move the ensuing debate almost entirely to a discussion of black problems stemming from discrimination and prejudice instead of white, whether economic or psychological. This decision also marked a great increase in

[68] Ibid., 785. All of the sociological and psychological sources are cited in the infamous "footnote 11" of the decision. In addition to Myrdal's *An American Dilemma,* Clarks' *Prejudice and Your Child*, and Frazier's *The Negro in the United States*, the footnote cites Witmer and Kotinsky's *Personality in the Making* (the report from the 1950s White House Conference on Children and Youth), and three more sources on the psychological effects of segregation.
[69] Kluger, 318.
[70] Ibid., 782.

the psychological discussion of prejudice, segregation, and discrimination in mainstream mass culture.

African American Civil Rights and Psychology after *Brown*

The psychological effects of prejudice, segregation, and discrimination on the psychology of African Americans came under increased scrutiny in both African American and mainstream magazines in the years after the *Brown* decision. There were two distinct branches within this discourse in the late 1950s and early 1960s—one supporting the civil rights movement, and one opposing it. Both shared a view of African American culture and families as less psychologically healthy than white middle-class families, and both were concerned with the ostensible inferiority feelings suffered by African Americans.

In comparison to the earlier, racially liberal literature on African Americans in African American magazines, the post-*Brown* literature was less focused on the direct effects of prejudice and more focused on African American culture in the discussion of African American psychology. The question of whether or not the psychological problems attributed to African Americans were self-perpetuating rose quickly and became central to this discussion. The idea of self-perpetuation was that African American adults, themselves psychologically damaged by the conditions of slavery or by later segregation and discrimination, passed psychological problems on to their children. That is to say, African Americans who developed psychological problems would then make bad parents, and thus their children would suffer psychological problems regardless

of the presence or absence of prejudice, segregation, and discrimination. Especially important in this discussion was the supposed weakness or even absence of fathers from African American families, and the resulting dominance of women in these families. Pro-segregation authors later able employed the idea of self-perpetuation to argue against integration and civil rights.

Certainly, some literature still argued that the psychological problems of African Americans came from the direct effects of prejudice, but were less likely than earlier writings to focus on those with the most contact with white society. "Passing" dropped almost entirely from the pages of *Ebony* and *Sepia*, except as a rejected possibility by some light-skinned authors who identified as African American. Interracial marriage likewise ceased being seen as a sign of inferiority feelings in African American sources.[71] African American magazines instead concentrated increasingly on psychological problems in the black middle class, and among "insulated" groups (especially in ghettos), as well as on more general arguments about the psychological problems faced by all African Americans, without exception, because of the immediate effects of racism and the long-term impact of a historically-racist society.

A pivotal question in all of this literature was the question of whether prejudice and segregation made culture, not just individuals, pathological. If social structures could cause psychological problems, could psychological problems likewise affect social structures? Certainly, authors who talked about authoritarian personalities and democratic personalities believed that they could. This question arose in literature on

[71] On both "passing" and interracial marriage, see Janice Kingslow, "Trapped Between Two Worlds," *Ebony,* September 1959, 86-94; "Why I Never Want to Pass," *Ebony*, June 1959, 49-54; "Are Interracial Homes Bad For Children," *Ebony*, March 1963, 131-138; Schuyler, passim.

African Americans as well. These authors argued that segregation, discrimination, and prejudice, historical or current, created psychological problems in minority group members that then became self-perpetuating. These unique problems were depicted as an addition to the psychological stresses faced by all Americans. If modernity and prejudice threatened the psyches of enough people in a group, and that group remained isolated from people with healthier psyches, such a group could develop a culture that both reflected and passed on psychological problems. Many authors writing about African American psychology in this period believed that all or part of African American culture had become pathological.[72] Some focused on this ostensible pathology as it was passed down through family life, others extended their analysis to cultural institutions, especially schools and churches. Even without segregation, prejudice, and discrimination, these authors argued, the problems in some families would continue to exist.

The question of cultural pathology had come up before the *Brown* decision, but became far more central to the discourse of the late 1950s and 1960s than it had been before. While Myrdal was careful to say that not all "peculiarities" of black culture were pathological, he had attributed the shape of the black family and other black institutions to the conditions of slavery and black oppression.[73] He believed that the healthy course for African Americans would be total assimilation into white culture (which he saw as ultimately healthy despite his arguments about prejudice).[74] Myrdal relied heavily on E. Franklin Frazier's ideas for his work. Frazier argued that the black family had generally

[72] Generally, these authors talked about a fairly monolithic African American culture. Even when they singled out specific groups as more prone to cultural pathology, as Myrdal did (in his case, the lower class), they often argued that the groups they criticized represented the "average" (see Myrdal, 956-7) or a magnification of more general problems (Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie*, 131). They generally viewed at least the family and urban communities as pathological, and in some cases extended that to schools, churches, and the like.

[73] Myrdal, 929, chapter 43 passim.

[74] Ibid., 929.

remained, throughout American history, less stable than the white family. He focused especially on out-of-wedlock births as a sign of this instability.[75] While Frazier's work from the late 1930s and 1940s was mostly about economics and was not particularly psychological, Myrdal would not be alone in arguing that the social instability which Frazier saw meant that psychological instability must exist as well. Frazier's ideas themselves also became more psychological. In 1950, he wrote an addendum to his 1939 book *The Negro Family*, in which talked about the psychological effects of what he saw as inordinate female power within African American households.[76]

Frazier continued his work on black culture in his 1957 book, *The Black Bourgeoisie: The Rise of a New Middle Class.* This was a far more psychological piece than his earlier book, *The Negro Family*, which had looked at the economic and social causes and effects of what he saw as unstable family structures among African Americans. In many ways, Frazier's book showed how the changed emphasis on self-perpetuation and African American culture by the late 1950s. In this book, Frazier cited not only instability, but what he saw as violations of appropriate gender roles as the cause of psychological problems among African Americans. His earlier work worried about the economic effects of families without wage-earning men at their heads; this later work worried about the psychological effects of such households, especially on sons.[77]

In *The Black Bourgeoisie,* Frazier argued that the black middle class was more susceptible to the personality conflicts caused by segregation and discrimination than the average African American, because of their greater acceptance of white values. He insisted that the black middle class secretly wished to be white, to separate itself from the

[75] Frazier, *Negro Family*, 342-47.
[76] Scott, 74.
[77] Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie,* 223.

black masses, and to earn recognition in the white world.[78] The more ambition for social mobility, the more psychological problems it seemed his black bourgeoisie would have. His view that conservative fiscal beliefs were pathological was similar to that of anti-conformity authors like Riesman, Packard, and Overstreet, whom I discussed in more detail in chapter three. Frazier was most critical of the black middle class because he believed that its pathologies kept its members from supporting those political policies which would most help the greater number of African Americans. He attributed black support of conservative tax policies to inferiority complexes. "The Negro Pullman porter who owned his home and four shares of stock, valued at about eighty dollars," was one of Frazier's examples of this pathology. "He declared he was against the policies of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal because they taxed men of property like himself in order to assist lazy working men."[79] Frazier argued that the black middle class was not a "responsible elite" because of these psychological problems.[80] Like white middle-class men, Frazier argued, African Americans suffering from status-anxiety were not ideal citizens, and tended to move away from the kinds of New Deal programs that could increase democracy in the United States.

As with literature on autonomy, authors depicted rapid modernization of African Americans through migration as a major source of the problems they saw among this group. The focus on the (presumably black) ghetto itself showed an apprehension about urban areas, common in the literature concerned with modernity more generally. This concern with modernization appeared in the works of African-Americans Frazier, Clark,

[78] Ibid., 213.
[79] Ibid., 173.
[80] Ibid., 235.

James Baldwin, and Ralph Ellison.[81] The Moynihan report, a 1964 report by the Department of Labor which argued for increases in programs promoting economic security for African American men, likewise argued that the sudden transition of large portions of the black population of the United States from rural to urban areas was responsible for the conditions of the "Negro slum."[82] The increased freedoms of the North, in this literature, represented a new source of stress for African Americans.

Insularity was also depicted as a problem in urban areas. The report of the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth claimed that minority groups in general were open to problems caused by their insularity, and that these problems could become self perpetuating. It held that all minorities experienced some insularity, but only a few faced psychological problems because of it. These problems came into existence when the culture that developed in the insular community began to pass down pathological tendencies. The report cited adult leadership within the community as a critical element.

> In some minorities in our society, the prevailing attitudes in the group influence their children in ways that are to their advantage. Many Jews have a traditional respect for scholarship and learning. The Japanese culture has taught the individual to meet certain obligations to his family and community . . . But the culture of vast numbers of minority youth through tradition and experience has led to narrow parochialism, limited awareness, and ignorance of resources available in the larger society and ways to use them. That attitudes and aspirations of a group are the result of a slow accumulation of experiences in the particular culture make their redirection especially challenging when such redirection is necessary.[83]

The conference report seemed especially concerned with African Americans and Puerto Ricans. This was very different from the earlier view that insularity might protect African Americans from psychological harm, or at least postpone it.

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[81] See above, chapter 3.
[82] Moynihan, 17.
[83] *Focus on Children*, 238-29.

These arguments presented an overwhelmingly negative view of black culture, however, and spent little time on the opportunities offered by increasing freedom. Such negative views of African American culture were not new. Supporters of segregation had been arguing that African Americans were psychologically damaged by contact with white Americans for some time, though this argument previously had relied on an assumption of innate inferiority of African Americans. The belief had been that contact with whites on an equal basis was psychologically stressful for African Americans because they were ultimately incapable of equality, and experienced their very real inferiority more strongly in such situations.[84] The new discussion of African American culture as pathological denied biological inferiority, and focused on social conditions instead, but with the same result of blaming the victim of a prejudiced society.

While some held, following Frazier, that the black middle class was most at risk for psychological problems, others pointed to the poor as the more vulnerable. Most contended that, while all poor faced increased insecurity, the effects were amplified among African Americans because of discrimination and greater geographic mobility. Moynihan and others who argued that economic discrimination was responsible for feelings of inferiority in black men fell into this category. The focus was rarely on the poor in the rural South, however. It was almost always on the urban slums.[85] While discussions of the urban poor in the 1960s occasionally mentioned "white slums," such

[84] Scott, xii.
[85] Moynihan, 29, for example.

communities were not seen as suffering the same isolation and prejudice that, according to this literature, created such problems in African American slums.[86]

Given that different authors, many of whom influenced both government policy and mass cultural representations of race, saw poor, economically or geographically mobile, or middle class African Americans as particularly susceptible to psychological problems, it seems that no African American was safe from being depicted as extremely vulnerable to psychological damage. Indeed, many authors saw psychological damage as inescapable for *all* African Americans, regardless of skin color, class, aspirations, or experiences. Writer and civil rights activist James Baldwin, for example, wrote in 1962:

> Wherever the Negro face appears a tension is created, the tension of a silence filled with things unutterable. It is a sentimental error, therefore, to believe that the past is dead; it means nothing to say that it is all forgotten, that the Negro himself has forgotten it. It is not a question of memory. Oedipus did not remember the thongs that bound his feet; nevertheless the marks they left testified to the doom toward which his feet were leading him. The man does not remember the hand that struck him, the darkness that frightens him, as a child; nevertheless, the hand and the darkness remain with him, indivisible from himself forever, part of the passion that drives him wherever he thinks to take flight.[87]

If slavery was seen, as it was here, as the psychologically damaging childhood of African Americans as a whole, then it must have left its mark on all African Americans, not just those exposed to contemporary psychological stress. This conclusion presented a problem for racial liberals: if centuries of slavery followed by continuing segregation and discrimination had left only psychopathology in its wake, was desegregation enough to solve the problems of the black psyche, or was black cultural pathology self-perpetuating? The emphasis on the alleged problems of the black psyche instead of the

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[86] On "white slums," see James Bryant Conant, "False Education for Many Slum Children," *Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1962, 6. For description of African American slum as worse than white slum in terms of psychology, see Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, 47.

[87] James Baldwin, "Many Thousands Gone," in *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature.* Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Nellie Y. McKay, ed. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997), 1662.

white in mainstream mass culture made African American culture the problem, rather than American culture. Even though this argument was initially made in the service of civil rights, this discourse came to be used against desegregation and civil rights by their opponents.

As the history of African American culture came to be the focus of much of this literature, the gender relations within African American families became an issue as well. This set of concerns built on the existing mainstream literature on masculinity and femininity, which I have addressed in previous chapters. The problems these authors saw in African American gender roles were the same as those that applied to others: women who were too dominating, and men who were not autonomous enough. Both black and white sources blamed the ostensible social pathology of African Americans on gender. Slavery, segregation, prejudice and discrimination created deviant forms of development, according to this literature, which translated into unconventional gender roles for African American adults. Men were weaker and less autonomous than they should have been, and women more powerful. Those altered roles produced deviant offspring, in this view, regardless of the continued stressors of prejudice, segregation, and discrimination. Even articles in African American magazines in the late 1950s and early 1960s argued that the gender problems were more severe among African Americans.[88]

While the same view of gender existed in reference to white Americans, those who argued that gender roles caused pathology among African Americans claimed that these roles were even more abnormal among blacks. The most famous such argument was in the Moynihan Report, published by the United States Department of Labor in 1964 and popularly named for the head of that department, Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

[88] See, for example, Lerone Bennett Jr., "The Negro Woman," *Ebony,* August 1960, 40.

According to Moynihan, American society was forcing African American men into the unmasculine position of being ruled by women.[89] The psychological health and economic roles of these men put their entire communities at risk by placing women in dominant positions in the family. In addition, he argued, the autonomy of the family was being called into doubt by the current programs to help African Americans, especially Aid to Families with Dependent Children. He quoted a study of families with unemployed men, which argued that female relief workers, combined with female workers in the home, made the male feel "deeply this obvious transfer of planning for the family's well-being to two women, one of them an outsider."[90] He proposed work relief for men as a better use of federal funds—as opposed to programs that directly benefited women.[91] Moynihan was arguing that economic security for men created a psychologically healthy family structure, in the tradition of Riesman. He wanted to masculinize social welfare programs and take control of them from the hands of women (mothers and social workers). By doing so, he believed psychological health would be restored to these families, compensating for both past and present prejudice. Moynihan's views of social welfare needs and programs fit well into the liberal view of economic security as a base for male autonomy. Many other authors, like Moynihan, proposed economic programs to improve the psychological conditions of poor and African American neighborhoods.[92]

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[89] Ibid., 32.
[90] Ibid., 19. Edward Wight Bakke's *Citizens Without Work* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939) quoted.
[91] Moynihan, 20.
[92] See, for example, Conant, 6; Mary Conway Kohler and André Fontaine, "We Waste A Million Kids a Year," *Saturday Evening Post*, March 10 1962, 15-23; Jackson Toby, "A Way Out of the Blackboard Jungle," *Nation*, March 8, 1958, 205-207; David Dressler, "The Case of the Copycat Criminal," *New York Times Magazine*, December 10, 1961, 47; Woody Klein, "Crime in the Streets," *Nation,* January 11, 1965; 30-31.

Of course, many authors continued to insist, most often in the pages of African American magazines, that any psychological damage caused by prejudice, segregation, and discrimination would dissipate with the end of those problems. Especially vocal on this point was Whitney M. Young, Jr., the Executive Director of the National Urban League. Young claimed that a black man was made to feel inferior "not because he lacks love and affection, intelligence or even a gray flannel suit, but because in a society that measures him by the size of his paycheck he just doesn't stand very tall."[93] Young was a fervent critic of theories, like Frazier's, which placed much of the burden of black inferiority feelings on the past's effects on black families and culture.[94] There were also people portraying black culture as a particularly strong source of pride for African Americans, though these portrayals only rarely took psychological form. Martin Luther King Jr., among others, argued for a greater rootedness in and respect for black culture as a way to overcome feelings of inferiority.[95] Kenneth and Mamie Clark's Northside Testing and Consultation Center, which sought to help African Americans in Harlem with psychological problems, taught children about the achievements of African Americans to help these children overcome feelings of inferiority.[96]

Political militancy was sometimes described as a symptom of psychological problems, especially when sources defined militancy as black hatred of whites. *Parents'* magazine pointed to the same roots for black hatred of whites as it did for white hatred of

[93] Whitney M. Young, Jr., "What Price Prejudice—On the Economics of Discrimination," *Freedomways*, Summer 1962, 237.
[94] Whitney M. Young, Jr., "The Role of the Middle-Class Negro," *Ebony*, September 1963, 242.
[95] Martin Luther King, Jr., "Advice for Living," *Ebony*, January 1958, 34.
[96] "Problem Kids," *Ebony*, July 1957, 21; see also Hamilton J. Bims, "Detroit High School Challenges Nation," *Ebony*, August 1964, 28.

blacks—insecurity and feelings of inferiority.[97] Kenneth Clark believed that black prejudice against whites was "more precisely racial anger" than the almost random result of an inferiority complex, but still saw black militancy as a sign of mental illness.[98] However, expressions of anger, sometimes through political action, were also seen as healthy releases for the frustrations of living in a prejudiced society. The 1962 film *Pressure Point* showed such a view of anger. In one scene, Darin (the Nazi patient) insisted that Poitier (the psychoanalyst) would have been at Madison Square Garden (at a meeting with the Nazis) if he were white, because he was smarter than most people but still could not get a good job. "Right then and there," said Poitier, "I knew what I was frightened of." Whether he was frightened of himself, or frightened because Darin sounded so sane and made so much sense to him, was unclear. Either way, the implication was that Poitier too was frustrated. Indeed, his leaving his job at the end of the film, when the other doctors released Darin over Poitier's objections, showed Poitier's growing militance on racial issues and willingness to act on his views (and the fact that the film showed Poitier, many years later, in a leadership position in his profession showed that this anger only helped his career). Other sources likewise saw anger as a potentially healthy emotion for African Americans. "Peter Moss" in *Home of the Brave* was likewise cured by allowing himself to be angry. Malcolm X described non-violent African Americans as either those whose "reflexes don't work" or those in need of "psychiatric care."[99]

[97] Egypt, 91.
[98] Dark Ghetto, 20; "Needed: Antidote to Hatred," *Saturday Review of Books*, May 13, 1961, 23.
[99] Hans J. Massaquoi, "Mystery of Malcolm X," *Ebony*, August 1964, 40.

Racial Conservatives and the Psychological View of African Americans

By the late 1950s, racial conservatives had picked up on the claim that African American's suffered historically-rooted psychological problems to make arguments against desegregation and civil rights. When psychological theories about mental damage caused by racism were originally put forth to combat ideas of biological inferiority, racial conservatives had often attacked the validity of psychology. Critics of psychology were able to present themselves as racial moderates—neither rabidly for or against integration, but simply worried about federal government intervention in the states based on the use of psychological theories. This presentation depended on a view of integrationists and psychological thought as radically leftist and federally mandated integration as unconstitutional. The *National Review* originally criticized the *Brown* decision for its reliance on psychology, and questioned both the reliability of psychology as a science and the use of such evidence in courts regardless of its scientific merit.[100] Late in the 1950s, however, racial conservatives began to use psychological theories for their own purposes, though without ceasing to criticize the use of psychology itself (sometimes in the same breath).

Discussions of African American psychology proved a very effective means for racial conservatives to fight integration. They employed psychology to argue for less radical changes, and even for a turning back of the clock. They argued that racial inferiority, natural (and biologically based) and/or cultural (and psychological) was what barred African Americans from equality. At the same time, they downplayed the privileges of the white community and overemphasized the progress of desegregation.

[100] See, for example, "Voices of Sanity," *National Review*, April 4 1956, 7.

They also largely ignored the roles of ongoing segregation, prejudice, and discrimination in the lives of African Americans. Furthermore, racial conservatives began to argue that integration was psychologically harmful for African Americans, especially when executed at a rapid pace. Through such arguments, they presented themselves as most concerned with the well-being of African Americans themselves.[101] Since those suffering from psychological ills were deemed to be poor citizens for a democracy in the mid, century, racial conservatives were able to use psychological arguments against integration and civil rights for African Americans.

In late 1956, a subcommittee of the House Committee on the District of Columbia convened hearings on the conditions of Washington D.C. public schools, which had begun to integrate in 1954 almost immediately after the *Brown* decision.[102] The "Davis Subcommittee," called after its head, Representative James C. Davis of Georgia, investigated the "problems" caused by integration in D.C. public schools. The committee quickly became very controversial; the NAACP protested the hearings, and called on President Eisenhower to stop them.[103] The committee was roundly critiqued in more racially moderate news sources such as *The Washington Post, The New York Times*, and even *Time* magazine.[104] More conservative news sources, such as *U.S. News and World Report* and *The National Review*, championed the hearings and wrote extensively about their findings.[105] Even within the subcommittee, the hearings were controversial. In their

[101] "Solution for the South?" *National Review*, January 17, 1959, 446-447.
[102] A companion case to *Brown*, *Bolling v. Sharpe*, decided the same day, dealt specifically with Washington D.C. schools, as the court could not use the same reasoning against segregation in D.C. schools as it did in the state cases, since the 14th amendment applied only to the states. (see Kluger, 786-87)
[103] Bess Furman, "Integration: Hearings in Capital," *New York Times*, September 30 1956, E6.
[104] "Take it Easy," *Time*, October 1, 1956, 61; "School Inquiry," *New York Times*, September 22 1956, 10; "Backward, Turn Backward," *Washington Post and Times Herald,* December 29 1956, A18.
[105] "Congress Hears How Mixed Schools are Working in Washington," *U.S. News and World Report,* September 28 1956, 98-107; "Teachers in Mixed Schools Size Up The Results," *U.S. News and World*

final report, four members of the committee (the majority) recommended that D.C. readopt segregation. The two other members, who had not attended the hearings, attached a dissent to the report, decrying the blatantly pro-segregation bent of the hearings and the report. [106]

For the most part, the subcommittee asked questions about differences in academic achievement and discipline problems in integrated and segregated schools. The committee was especially focused on the sexual discipline of students, and extensively discussed "sexual problems," most commonly as any interaction between black male students and white female students, though also including pre-marital pregnancy in both races.[107] The leading questions that the subcommittee put to principals and teachers of the D.C. public school system were obviously meant to show D.C. schools as increasingly violent, sexually charged, and ineffective.[108]

Report, October 5 1956, 68-74; "Integration in Washington Schools: A Look at the Record," *U.S. News and World Report*, October 12 1956, 82- 94; "A Congressional Committee Reports—What Happened in Washington When Schools Were Mixed," *U.S. News and World Report*, January 4 1957, 92- 100; Sam M. Jones, "From Washington Straight," *National Review,* October 6 1956, 10; "Trauma Either Way," *National Review,* October 6 1956, 5; Sam M. Jones, "From Washington Straight," *National Review,* January 12 1957, 32; Sam M. Jones, "From Washington Straight," *National Review*, February 23 1957, 180.

[106] The members who signed the report were Representatives James C. Davis (Georgia), John Bell Williams (Mississippi), Woodrow W. Jones (North Carolina), and Joel T. Broyhill (Virginia, and the only Republican to sign the report). The two Representatives who signed only the "additional views" segment were Republicans DeWitt S. Hyde (Maryland) and A.L. Miller (Nebraska). ("What Happened in Washington," 100).

[107] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on the District of Columbia, *Investigation of Public School Conditions: Report of the Subcommittee to Investigate Public School Standards and Conditions and Juvenile Delinquency in the District of Columbia* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1957), 33-38; though occasionally they also discussed sexual harassment of white female students by black female students (generally verbal), and even attributed one case of homosexual behavior between two black male students to the trauma of integration.

[108] Some of the witnesses before the subcommittee followed happily where these questions led, but others resisted the implications of the questions. Principal James Nelson Saunders, for example, responded to questions about disciplinary problems by insisting that they had neither increased nor decreased. In reporting his testimony, *US News and World Report* devoted less space to his testimony than it had to more friendly witnesses, and was careful to point out (as it did with all African Americans) that he was "Negro" (the race of white witnesses was never remarked upon). See "How Mixed Schools are Working in Washington," *U.S. News and World Report*, September 28, 1956, 98-107.

The subcommittee's final report combined arguments about biological inferiority with theories of psychological damage. First, it concluded that IQ tests proved that black students were simply not as intelligent as white students.[109] The subcommittee's report also revived an older argument about the problems of integration, the idea that competing with inherently superior white students caused psychological damage to black students.[110] "On the average," they concluded, "the Negro students, because of limited achievements, are unable to compete scholastically with the more advanced white students. This condition imposes upon the slower students a psychological barrier denoting inferiority, and manifests itself in social behavior."[111] In other words, all of the disciplinary and "sexual" problems found by the subcommittee could be traced to the psychological harm of *integration* on black students. Despite raising the specter of bad behavior among white students at integrated schools, the report did not address the psychological problems of the white students, allowing the Congressional members to mask their concerns with integration as concern for the well-being of African Americans.

When *The National Review* began discussing the hearings in October 1956, they picked up on this particular conclusion. In an editorial titled "Trauma Either Way," the editors congratulated the Davis Subcommittee for their work, and added:

> The Supreme Court decision outlawing segregated schooling was based on the sociological proposition that under a separated school system the Negro is deprived of his constitutional rights because—and the Supreme Court cited expert sociologists as authority—he is traumatically disturbed and rendered unhappy by that separation. Now here are witnesses, a number of schoolteachers, who maintain that it is their experience that the Negro is

[109] *Investigation of Public School Conditions,* 5. IQ tests were very controversial throughout the post-*Brown* years. They were often used by segregationists to argue for the natural superiority of whites in intellectual realms, and generally viewed by integrationists and other racial liberals as biased.
[110] For earlier examples of similar arguments, see Scott p. xii.
[111] "A Congressional Committee Reports," 99; *Investigation of Public School Conditions*, 33-38.

> infinitely unhappier under integration than ever he was before. If that is a fact, is the Supreme Court's decision invalid?[112]

The view of the Davis Subcommittee was part of a larger emerging view of integration as more psychologically harmful than segregation. One *U.S. News* article on the Moynihan report posited that the psychological ills of Northern African Americans came from the lack of "roots" for African Americans in the North and from a lack of the "disciplines" (presumably the threats of white violence) which controlled the conduct of African Americans in the South.[113] Again, increased freedom created decreased security, and caused psychological problems as well as opportunities. *The National Review* originally argued against the *Brown* decision on the basis of legal history and a desire to keep social and psychological evidence out of the courts. Now, it found it expedient to use that very same evidence against the decision. It continued to do both in the following years.

Attacks on the *Brown* decision were also directly tied to attacks on liberalism more generally, and especially on progressive education and the concern with students' "well-being" which social conservatives were making around this time. A political cartoon in *The National Review*, for example, showed the octopus of the government reaching out to control schools (among other things). The school house, in the clutch of the octopus, was "Closed courtesy of the Brown decision." The arm itself read "Unlimited power to psychoanalyze school children."[114]

Much of this attack on desegregation in schools and progressive education was also an attack on egalitarianism—a scrutinized concept in anti-conformity literature as well. Those arguing against egalitarianism emphasized differences in ability and aptitude

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[112] "Trauma Either Way," *The National Review*, October 6, 1956, 5-6.
[113] "Danger Facing Big Cities," *U.S. News and World Report*, September 6, 1965, 32.
[114] (Signature illegible), *National Review*, July 16, 1964, 594.

among students, and the necessity of encouraging the best students to achieve. This attack predated *Brown v. Board of Education,* but it became especially audible as the South attempted to prevent or stall desegregation. Pupil placement laws, which allowed for placing students in the schools which would best meet their potentials, managed to bolster segregation without using racialized language. Supporters of these laws argued that it was in the best interests on the United States to focus on helping the best students achieve more, rather than creating "egalitarian," which they argued meant mediocre, education.[115]

The November 24, 1958 Supreme Court's decision in *Shuttlesworth et al v. Birmingham* opened the door wide to pupil placement laws, and allowed placement to be based on psychological qualifications as well as academic measures.[116] Unlike earlier "freedom of choice" laws, which supposedly allowed students free choice of schools (insuring that white students could "choose" to remain in segregated schools), the Alabama pupil placement law in question theoretically placed students based on the students' needs and achievements. The "relevant matters" to be considered for pupil placement listed by the court included: "the psychological qualification of the pupil for the type of teaching and associations involved;" "the psychological effect upon the pupil of attendance at a particular school;" "the possibility of threat or friction or disorder among pupils or others;" and "the maintenance or severance of established social and psychological relationships with other pupils and with teachers."[117] As racial conservatives had been increasingly arguing that integration caused psychological harm

[115] See also below, chapter six.
[116] Shuttlesworth v. Birmingham Board of Education of Jefferson County, Alabama, 358 U.S. 101 (Supreme Court, 1958).
[117] "Seventeen Standards for Pupils Under the Alabama Law," *National Review*, January 17, 1959, 448.

to students (along with increases in juvenile delinquency and general disorder in the schools), *Shuttlesworth* virtually condoned the continuation of segregation, or at best no more than token integration.

Lower court decisions followed suit. In some cases, whites challenged the claims of black students that segregation harmed them, and pushed for resegregation. In 1963, a judge in a Savannah, Georgia District Court found that integration "would seriously injure both white and Negro students."[118] He did not uphold race as a reason for segregation of students, but said that segregation by learning ability should be allowed. He then went on to argue that learning ability was tied to race. The judge also added that even token integration could be psychologically harmful to African Americans, since "superior" black students would lose the sense of achievement they earned in black schools and replace it with feelings of rejection in white schools.[119] The loss of such superior students from the African American schools would, he claimed, also make the students who were left behind feel inferior. [120]

The *National Review's* editorial response to the *Shuttlesworth* decision showed how cognizant supporters of segregation were of the effects it would have on desegregation. "Alabama has presumably come up with a number of criteria, none of them racially based, governing the placement of pupils in schools . . . which will . . . continue the practice of social separation of the races." The editorial continued, arguing that "a number of well qualified Negroes" would have to be admitted to white schools for the Court to let the law stand, but that the decision still showed a better grasp than the *Brown* decision of the problems of integration. The author believed the Alabama

[118] "Mixing Schools: Why One Federal Court Refused," *U.S. News and World Report*, May 27, 1963, 88.
[119] Ibid., 89.
[120] Ibid., 90.

"program's premises are that there are marked and observable intellectual, psychic and cultural differences among people, and that these are educationally relevant—a bracing defiance in the face of the maniacal egalitarianism of the day. The egalitarians have discouraged inquiries into the sticky question of group characteristics. Under these laws, such inquiries become directly relevant, and will be held up to the light of day." The editorial further worried, as had the Georgia District Court judge, that such token integration, while better than total integration, would deprive African American schools of the best of their students, further weakening black schools. It concluded: "We persist in believing that the original intrusion of the Warren Court was not merely bad law and bad politics, but bad sociology; and that the Negroes will suffer the most."[121]

Unlike authors writing in favor of integration, such authors rarely distinguished, by the late 1950s, between natural and cultural differences between groups. By avoiding strict biological arguments, these authors sounded more moderate. Conservative authors only occasionally claimed that African Americans were biologically inferior to whites in nationally-distributed magazines, and generally combined this view with psychological arguments even when they employed it. Racial conservatives came to rely instead on psychological damage theories, along with legal arguments about the constitutionality of civil rights laws, to fight federally mandated desegregation, and sometimes even gradual, locally controlled desegregation.

The National Review was also critical of desegregation as egalitarianism for its own sake. Numerous articles and editorials talked about racial segregation of students as a necessity to good learning. This was almost always phrased in terms of general ability, but often translated into racialized examples. Authors also employed psychological

[121] "Solution for the South?" *The National Review*, January 17, 1959, 446-447.

reasons to justify segregation when even biased ability tests could not justify segregation. One editorial, for example, said that "if it appears wise, let us say, to segregate newly arrived Puerto Ricans until individual behavior has been observed, or slow learners until their facilities have sharpened, that should be done."[122] Sociologist and psychoanalyst Ernest van den Haag, writing in *The National Review*, likewise believed that "separation by color. . . is educationally rational." He claimed that at present "color and ability are significantly correlated," so racial segregation was simply segregation by ability. For those students who proved to be "exceptions," he worried that desegregation would cause psychological harm, and therefore said "it would be cruel to sacrifice children to egalitarian ideologies." "In short," he said, "I favor congregation or segregation according to ability, except when it is psychologically detrimental to the children concerned." [123] In short, he supported complete racial segregation. While van den Haag's views were controversial even among *National Review* readers, and elicited many negative responses, they were not unusual. Similar articles which put less emphasis on biological difference did not evoke the small flurry of letters to the editor that this article raised.

A very few segregationist authors even claimed that white Southern whites were particularly mentally healthy, and should be looked to as an example for the rest of the nation. In an article for the *National Review*, one writer argued that Southerners were the least "other-directed" people left in the United States. He was horrified that the South's ways were being forcibly changed, to make it "bland, homogenized, with all but the

[122] "Your Children and Your Ideology," *The National Review*, February 15, 1958, 149.
[123] Ernest van den Haag, "Intelligence or Prejudice? Some Letters and a Reply," *The National Review*, February 9, 1965, 102. This article was a response to an earlier, controversial article by van den Haag.

officially approved prejudices removed . . . [and] jumping when the doctors say jump."[124] In this view, to go along with desegregation was simply a kind of conformity. Instead of defining psychological health by democraticliberalism, this author saw conservativism and even prejudice as psychologically ideal.

Segregationists also argued that those who wanted integration or civil rights might be suffering from a pathology. This went for both blacks and whites. Likewise, such authors believed that intermarriage was a sign of mental weakness. Van den Haag, for example, claimed that "the motive for intermarriage was often neurotic. Usually the white person would marry a Negro as a way of defying authority. The person that I would consider psychologically healthy is not very likely to intermarry."[125]

Interestingly, arguments that integration was harmful to the black psyche were not limited to segregationists. Kenneth Clark's 1965 book *Black Ghetto* claimed that African Americans were experiencing new kinds of psychological stress caused by integration. "The invisible walls of a segregated society," he said, "are not only damaging but protective in a debilitating way. There is considerable psychological safety in the ghetto; there one lives among one's own and does not risk rejection among strangers."[126] Clark, however, believed that this was merely a necessary stage in the process of reaching racial integration and therefore psychological health for Americans. Other integrationists likewise argued that the psychological problems of desegregation were temporary and

[124] Anthony Harrigan, "The South Is Different," *The National Review*, March 8, 1958, 227; see also Richard M. Weaver, "The Regime of the South," *National Review*, March 14, 1959, 587-589.
[125] "Intermarriage and the Race Problem," 87.
[126] Kenneth Clark, *Black Ghetto*, see pages 224, 19.

"superficial," while the psychological problems caused by segregation were long term and deep.[127]

Still, it was easy for those resisting integration and civil rights to ignore the idea that the stress of integration was temporary and the stress of segregation much more serious. They were also able to use the idea of self-perpetuating problems within African American culture to fight integration and civil rights, and to blame African Americans for their own status. By 1965, an article in *U.S. News* was able not only to talk about the problems of urban African Americans as self-perpetuating, but also could suggest that the "despairing Negro" might upset "the entire course of American urban civilization."[128]

[127] Jean Carey Bond, "The New York School Crisis: Integration for What?" *Freedomways*, 2nd Quarter 1964, 198.
[128] "Danger Facing Big Cities," *U.S. News and World Report*, September 6, 1965, 30.

Chapter 6: Juvenile Delinquency

Crime and delinquency were subject to psychological understandings in the United States for most of the twentieth century. In the mid-century, the psychological discussion of crime and delinquency was connected to debates over gender roles, conformity, race, and discipline. Adolescence was seen as the moment at which the individual began to leave the family for the greater social world, and therefore was of great concern to those discussing the impacts of family and society on the individual psyche. The psychological understanding of crime was seemingly everywhere in mass culture, even in such peculiar places as musicals and popular detective novels. A police officer in Raymond Chandler's novel *The Long Goodbye* complained that he would soon be giving Rorschach tests to criminals and teaching them to love their mothers.[1] In the musical *West Side Story*, a gang of teens sang their way from an imaginary arrest by Officer Krupke through dealings with a judge, a psychiatrist, and a social worker.[2]

Some kinds of crime, however, rarely provoked psychological discussion. Psychology was strikingly absent, for example, from the Congressional hearings on and coverage of organized crime.[3] Generally, crimes for financial gain, executed in such a way as to avoid capture, while sometimes described as greedy or lazy, did not seem to merit psychological interpretation. Nor were such crimes described as a threat to the very fabric of democratic America, or as a symptom of its psychological problems, but instead

[1] Raymond Chandler, *The Long Goodbye* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1953); reprint (New York: Vintage Crime,1992), 325 (page reference is to reprint edition).
[2] *West Side Story*, Dir. Jerome Robbins and Robert Wise, United Artists, 1961.
[3] See, for example, U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Government Operations, Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce, *Investigation of Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce,* 81st Cong., 2nd Sess., 1950.

as merely a threat to safety and security of individuals. On the other hand, some crimes almost always provoked discussion in terms of psychology. This was especially true of juvenile delinquency and so-called "sex crimes." Congressional hearings on juvenile delinquency were rife with psychological views of crime.[4] Burglary (by non-professional thieves) and arson, which were, in such cases, described as stemming from repressed sexual drives, were also subject to psychological analyses.[5]

Crimes that drew psychological interpretation also seemed particularly susceptible to interpretations as sociological symptoms: those who wrote about these crimes described them as signs of the greater problems of American society. Again, no one worried that organized crime or white collar crime were indicative of a greater psychological breakdown of American society, despite attempts to crack down on organized crime during this period. Juvenile delinquency peculiarly prompted attention to greater problems with the United States in general and with American families in particular. In popular magazines of the postwar era, juvenile delinquency was always seen as a symptom of a problem beyond the individual. It was not that the child was evil, and only rarely that the child had not been taught the correct values. Generally, delinquency was seen as the result of a lurking problem either within families or within American culture as a whole. Americans were somehow failing their children, and delinquency was the result.[6]

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[4] See, for example, United States Congress, Senate, Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency of the Committee on the Judiciary, *Juvenile Delinquency (Comic Books),* 83th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1954, 63-68, 79-95.

[5] See, for example, description of arson in Eleanor Choate Darton, "When Kids Stumble into Trouble," *Parents,'* July 1962, 68.

[6] There were also some articles from the late 1940s and early 1950s that cited physical predisposition or head injuries as causes of juvenile delinquency. See, for example, Louie Whitsitt, "A Lifer Discusses Juvenile Delinquency," *Parents*,' July 1949, 24, 80.

"Delinquency" in the mid-century United States was usually used to refer to juvenile crimes, but also sometimes more generally to behaviors that adults found unappealing or defined as anti-social, such as hanging out on street corners, engaging in "petting" or other sexual activities, dressing in a certain way, or driving particular makes of cars or motorcycles. Even "apathy" was sometimes considered a symptom of delinquency, since it was depicted as having the same psychological source as delinquent behavior, and also as a failure to develop into a good American citizen. Psychologically oriented sources tended to define delinquency more by its ostensible cause, feelings of insecurity or inferiority, than by the resulting behavior.

The psychological literature on delinquency in this period blamed it on the same modern American psychological problems these authors blamed for gender role problems, conformity, and prejudice. They also, however, blamed changing gender roles, conformity, and prejudice themselves for increased delinquency. There was a perception in much of this literature that the character of crime in America had changed. Professional housebreakers and organized crime were being overtaken by "younger, wilder" criminals who committed crimes for emotional more than financial reasons.[7] The majority of my sources also agreed that crime was on the rise, especially among these younger, wilder juveniles.[8]

Some critics, however, were upset by the prevalence of psychology in discussions about and treatments of crime, and argued instead for a more "law and order" approach to delinquency. Such critics became especially vocal in the late 1950s and early 1960s in conservative and mainstream magazines. These critics called for harsher sentences and

[7] "Crime For Kicks," *Newsweek*, January 21, 1963, 90.
[8] Richard Clendenen and Herbert W. Beaser, "The Shame of America" (First of Five Parts) *Saturday Evening Post*, January 8, 1955, 17.

less "treatment" of delinquents, which they defined narrowly to include only those adolescents who broke the law or behaved immorally. Such critics were bothered by what they saw as the coddling of criminals—psychological and psychiatric treatment for offenders, indefinite sentences, education and training programs in prisons, and especially by what they saw as a lack of responsibility to society on the part of the criminal.[9] These critics were the same writers (or at least wrote in the same magazines) as those who were critiquing permissive parenting methods and integration. Often, they integrated these attacks into a general critique of liberalism.

This chapter discusses the conversation about delinquency in mid-century America. I include both information on juveniles themselves and articles on adult criminals that talked about their youth and juvenile experiences.[10] In addition to the sources consulted for other chapters, this one examines Congressional hearings on juvenile delinquency and Frederick Wertham's influential *Seduction of the Innocent,* both of which were widely discussed in mass-circulated media.[11] I also discuss films that portrayed juvenile delinquency, child-rearing literature that dealt with delinquency, and the work of psychiatrist Erik Erikson, whose views of adolescence shaped mass-culture psychological understandings of delinquency.

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[9] Though there was a stronger trend in the literature toward the idea that there were not enough treatment options for delinquents and other criminals among those who supported psychiatric views of crime. The majority of articles which discussed treatment programs saw them as understaffed and overwhelmed. This was true throughout the postwar years (see, for example, "Juveniles: Troubled Generation," *Newsweek* , May 22, 1961, 26; or Jack Harrison Pollack, "What Are We Really Doing about Boys and Girls Who Go Wrong?," *Parents,'* October 1953, 130-32).

[10] This is especially apparent in one of the conventions of the time. Stories about individual criminals almost always recounted the psychological traumas that supposedly led to the development of the criminal personality of the person being discussed. See, for example, Alfred Hitchcock's films (especially *Psycho* and *Marnie*), and articles such as Ira Henry Freeman, "The Making of a Boy Killer," *New York Times Magazine*, February 18, 1962, 14, 94,96.

[11] Fredric Wertham, *Seduction of the Innocent* (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1954).

There were two general views of juvenile delinquency in this period. One was that delinquents were "adjusted" to their society; the other was that they were not. Either case involved psychological problems, as an ideal society created psychologically ideal citizens. If adjustment to society created delinquency, then that society was pathological. If delinquency meant one was not adjusted, then that person had a psychological problem, and it was possible that there was a problem with the society to which he or she could not adjust. This ambiguity about adjustment, which I also discussed in chapters two and three, was even more apparent in literature about male delinquents than it was about adult men. Those who worried about delinquency were concerned with both the effects of ostensibly inadequate fathers on their children, and with the ability of the current generation of young men to step up to leadership of the democratic nation.

Most sources were focused on mild delinquent offenders, not on children depicted as doomed to become adult criminals. The worst delinquents seem to have been those rejected by both parents and society. These were the delinquents who became criminals in their adult lives. A story in *Life* titled, "The Kid With the Bad Eye," for example, opened the story of an adult spree killer by telling readers both that his parents abandoned him and that his deformed eye made him unwanted by others.[12] Many stories of adult criminals told of lonely children rejected by parents and peers.[13] Most articles on delinquency, however, focused not on those facing total rejection but on those who were accepted by and conformed to their peer group. Authors were less afraid that they would all become pathological adult criminals; and more concerned that they would not make

[12] "The Kid With the Bad Eye," *Life,* January 29, 1951, 17.
[13] See, for example, Freeman, passim.

good citizens, and that this teenage behavior presaged some unhealthy or incomplete process of psychological maturation.

The majority of the mass cultural literature claimed that adolescence was the period in which children threw off their childhood dependencies (especially their dependency on their parents) and developed their own identity. One article defined identity as one's "place in relation to work, to citizenship, to . . . spiritual and moral commitments."[14] Adolescence was, according to Erik Erikson and others, the moment when the child began to leave the family for society, and the effects of both became powerful or even overwhelming. Erikson defined the conflict between developing identity instead of role diffusion as the major challenge of adolescence, and said that this conflict could be exacerbated and marked by delinquency when the adolescent had previous problems around their "ethnic and sexual identity."[15] He also believed that identity problems were the major challenge of his time.[16] If a child entered adolescence without successfully resolving earlier psychological stages, identity development could prove more difficult, and such a child was likely to exhibit delinquent behavior. Mass-culture magazines promoted Erikson's ideas.[17] They depicted delinquents as stuck in an earlier stage of development, and as flying into rages when they faced frustration the same way a toddler might.[18]

Psychologically-oriented authors traced the weaknesses that they blamed for creating problems with identity development to feelings of inferiority or insecurity. The

[14] Peter Blos, "How Much do We Know About Adolescence?," *Look*, June 1955, 91.
[15] Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 219, 266.
[16] Ibid., 242.
[17] And even made its way into letters to the editor. See G. Gerrish Williams, "Letters to the Editor," *Look,* October 8 1963, 20.
[18] Elizabeth Pope, "Haven of Hope For Violent Youngsters," *Parents,'* July 1960, 53.

Illinois state penitentiary even instituted a program to provide plastic surgery for prisoners, believing that the criminal impulses of their prisoners might have stemmed from the "taunts and jeers" that their uglier inmates might have endured as children.[19] The plastic surgeon in charge of the program claimed that plastic surgery helped prisoners regain their confidence (presumably helping them move away from their lives of crime). Kenneth Clark, best known for his studies of prejudice in children, agreed. He believed that it took "a huge loss of self-respect to make a child stoop to crime."[20] Teens who felt insecure in their family life or insecure in their plans for the future were seen as the most likely to become delinquents.

The Early 1950s Delinquency Scare

The first major postwar outbreak of concern about juvenile delinquency came in the mid-1950s, when the fear of rising delinquency led to congressional hearings on the issue. The hearings and the majority of mass-culture authors in this period focused on the effects of mass culture on American children.[21] In this literature, as historian James Gilbert demonstrates in his book, *A Cycle of Outrage,* Americans were concerned that the influence of mass culture might outweigh the good influence of parents.[22] This discussion described the lives of middle-class children, though authors who focused on mass-culture generally argued that their findings applied to children of all classes and all races.

[19] "You," *Coronet*, June 1957, 8, 10.
[20] "Problem Kids," *Ebony*, July 1947, 23.
[21] Gilbert, *A Cycle of Outrage*, passim.
[22] Ibid., 9.

In the early 1950s, those concerned with juvenile delinquency looked at adjustment to American society as the source of delinquency and on the effects of comic books, television, and film on juveniles. Articles written by such people usually discussed the work of Frederic Wertham, director of a psychiatric clinic, star witness in the congressional hearings on comic books and juvenile delinquency, and author of *Seduction of the Innocent,* a book about the effects of comic books on children. Wertham argued that comic books taught children shoddy ethics, and that even psychologically "normal" children could be seduced into destructive or illegal behavior through the teachings of comic books. Wertham was less concerned with the psychological causes that might push a child to turn to comic books (indeed, he argued that healthy children could become unhealthy through exposure to such literature), and more concerned with the effects that such books had on children's behavior and development.[23] Wertham saw comic book reading not as the effect of psychological problems but as their source.

Wertham claimed that comic books could help turn normal impulses and small psychological troubles into serious problems. For example, he believed that children suffering from normal feelings of inferiority (which a child could overcome) might learn from the example of superheroes, and rather than overcoming those feelings become bogged down in a desire to dominate others the way that superheroes did. He compared this dynamic to the "ethical confusion" and tendency toward cruelty "that has characterized a whole generation of central European youth fed on the Nietzsche-Nazi myth of the exceptional man who is beyond good and evil."[24] The problem was not the

[23] Wertham, passim.
[24] Ibid., 97. See also Wertham's testimony in *Juvenile Delinquency (Comic Books)*, 86.

feeling of inferiority itself; it was that comic books pushed children toward negative responses to these feelings, thus preventing positive psychological growth.

The biggest problem for Wertham was that American mass culture was encouraging violence and hostility, and this encouragement was creating delinquency in children. It was not that these children were poorly adjusted, it was that they were adjusted to the wrong thing, and adjusting to the wrong kind of society stymied psychological growth. Unlike most later authors, Wertham was focused on learned behavior rather than deeper psychological motivations for delinquent acts.[25]

Wertham took issue with those psychologists and psychiatrists who argued that children had natural feelings of hostility that needed to be somehow vented. He argued instead that children were learning violence and hostility from adults, and comic books were one of the most often used textbooks for this lesson.[26] Wertham was especially critical of the view that early familial experiences were responsible for all psychological problems and hence for delinquency.[27] Indeed, the conclusion of his book was a story not of a particular delinquent, but of Wertham telling the mother of a delinquent that her child's delinquency was not her fault.[28]

The majority of articles from this period did not, however, strictly follow Wertham's view of comics. Even those critical of comics and other media almost always mentioned the alternative psychological theory that comic books and other violent fare might provide children with an outlet for feelings of hostility and could even help prevent

[25] In some ways, Wertham's views echoed earlier literature on mental hygiene. See Horn, 138-139.
[26] Wertham, 65,394.
[27] Ibid., 245.
[28] Ibid., 396-97.

or cure juvenile delinquency.[29] In the preponderance of articles, comics were assumed to have ill effects only on children with already weak psychological constitutions. Even the Congressional hearings on juvenile delinquency, at which Wertham was a star witness, concluded that the general view of the "experts" was that comics were unlikely to have a negative effect on otherwise well-adjusted children.[30]

Especially in the liberal news magazine *The Nation* (for which Wertham occasionally wrote), writers picked up on Wertham's contention that American society valued the wrong characteristics in its citizens, and that delinquent children were merely learning to be Americans in this respect. This view was often more a judgment of values, especially in the early 1950s, than it was a psychological understanding. For example, one article in *The Nation* argued that American embrace of trickery, toughness, and economic success at any cost had combined with rapid change in American ideas of right and wrong to create the modern outbreak of juvenile delinquency.[31] Wertham and those who promoted his views were especially critical of middle-class acquisitiveness and materialism in the same way as anti-conformity authors like Riesman and Packard.[32]

By the late 1950s, however, when these media were mentioned, it was usually to dismiss them from consideration as the primary cause of delinquency. While not rejecting the idea that criminals might learn crime techniques from films, television, and comics, most authors argued that the root cause of the crime was not exposure to these

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[29] Murray Illson, "Comic Books Help Curb Delinquency," *New York Times*, April 17 1954; reprinted in *Juvenile Delinquency (Comic Books)*, 117-118; Gertrude Samuels, "Too Much Murder—Or Not Enough?" *New York Times Magazine*, November 30 1947, 15.
[30] *Comic Books and Juvenile Delinquency. Interim Report of the [United States Congress, Senate] Committee on the Judiciary* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1955), 12. They mention Wertham as the major exception to this view.
[31] Milton L. Barron, "The Delinquent: Society or Juvenile?" *The Nation*, June 5 1954, 483-4.
[32] See above, chapter three.

crimes through media.[33] While some articles brought up Wertham's ideas, they no longer led stories on delinquency and were rarely granted much credence. Mass culture came to be seen in delinquency literature as, at most, a symptom of greater problems with American culture, not their primary cause.

Psychologized Delinquency in the late 1950s and early 1960s

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, juvenile delinquency literature became much more integrated with other conversations that expressed concerns about modern American culture, especially concerns with gender roles and African American civil rights. The concern in this literature was largely over men, both as fathers and as young delinquents. Writers in American mass culture worried that changed gender roles, urbanization (and suburbanization), and the effects of modern work and class structures were creating problems with identity development in teenaged boys. Unlike the earlier discussion, writers after the mid-1950s who analyzed delinquency focused also on race and class.

This literature reproduced many of the arguments contained in the psychological discussion of discipline for younger children. Authors stressed the need of teens for "limits," without which they would become frustrated by the excesses of freedom they were not old enough to handle.[34] The most common refrain in this literature, as in liberal writing on early childhood discipline, was that children who became juvenile delinquents suffered from a lack of *security*, especially security in their feeling of being loved. Lack

[33] See, for example, "What's on Your Mind?," *Science Digest*, January 1959, 30-31.
[34] See, for example, Grafton, "The Tense Generation," *Look,* August 27 1963, 23.

of parental affection could, according to one article, leave someone with a "deeply-bedded resentment . . . like a hidden explosive in a minefield" which might burst out even as murder later in life.[35] Authors like Benjamin Spock cautioned parents not to make their children feel rejected even when they had to punish them for delinquent behavior.[36]

Because adolescents were separating their identity from that of their parents, psychologically-oriented authors argued, a certain amount of rebellion was normal and necessary for the psychological growth of the teenager.[37] Here, as with discipline, the "too good" teen was seen as both a potential powder-keg or as a future conformist.[38] "Wildness" was a natural part of adolescence, one journalist argued, but had to be balanced by "the combination of inner self, parental values and social influence" that kept the child from becoming a criminal.[39] This author called that combination "conscience," but it was also a good definition of "identity." What was the line between youthful rebellion and delinquency? Most drew the line not at particular actions, but at the supposed psychological causes of the activity. One boy could run away from home and just be rebellious; another might be a delinquent for doing the same thing.[40] Authors who employed psychology even included children who had committed no crime but suffered

[35] Don Peacock, "What Makes a Man Kill?" *Science Digest*, May 1960, 64.
[36] Benjamin Spock, "The Treatment of Delinquency," *Ladies' Home Journal*, March 1961, 34.
[37] Erikson, *Childhood and Society,* 213, see also Benjamin Spock, ""Can We Prevent Delinquency?," *Ladies Home Journal*, April 1961, 38.
[38] See, for example, John Bartlow Martin, "The Strange Boy: The True Personal Story of a Youthful Sex Killer, *Look,* August 5, 1958, 68-77.
[39] Thomas B. Morgan, "How American Teenagers Live," *Look*, July 23, 1957, 30.
[40] Some articles strictly defined delinquency by the legality of the actions, but then quickly dismissed those with relatively "normal" teenage problems, and focused on those delinquents who had serious psychological problems.

the strong feelings of inferiority and insecurity in their definition of "delinquent."[41] Psychological development was more important than actual law-breaking.

Liberal authors argued, as with conformity, women's sexuality, and even civil rights, that "progress" or "modernity" was to blame for the perceived rise in juvenile delinquency. "This is a social disease of progress," said one judge about delinquency.[42] Children, like women, suffered because they no longer served what society seemed to see as an economic function. Children had been separated from their fathers (at least) through the movement of workplaces further from the home, and the home itself had ceased being the center of life that these authors believed it had been in the previous century. Automation had deprived young men of jobs, thus leaving idle those 16 year old boys who did not thrive in their schools. As one author put it, "children are economically and socially useless to the family, and, in turn, the family is no longer a psychological home for its children."[43] One reader, writing to *Look* magazine in response to an article on delinquency, argued that delinquency could be traced to a changed role for the home in American life. "We have built up an institutional culture where homes are not really needed," she wrote. "We can be born in a hospital, educated in a dormitory, do our courting in an automobile, get married in a church and live out of the tidbits of a delicatessen and the contents of tin cans."[44]

The absence of the father from the home and the displacement of the home from the center of youth life by peer culture created children who were too easily influenced

[41] For example, Ruth Carson, "What Has J.D. to Do With You," *Parents*,' March 1956, 40 included "painfully shy children" and "children full of fears" in her list of delinquents.
[42] Grafton, 20.
[43] Homer Page, "Young Rebels with a Cause," *Parents,'* December 1964, 112.
[44] Mrs. Anita L. Cave, Stillwater, Oklahoma. "Letters" *Look*, October 8, 1963, 20.

by one or two "very disturbed but highly persuasive youths."[45] Like women, juveniles developed insecurities because of their undefined roles in modern American society. If they also felt that they had no place as students or as employees, they looked to gangs of their peers to find security.[46] This was true, according to liberal authors in both white and African-American magazines, of both middle-class and working-class adolescents.

These authors believed that, due to family problems, peer groups were taking on some of the traditional roles of the family in the life of adolescents. Peer group influence, as in the literature on conformity, was generally described as preventing the formation of independent identity. The disappearance of the father (either entirely, or just during the work day), the possible disappearance of the mother into the work world, and the "accelerating pace of modern life" for the parents were all identified as leaving children to "develop an adolescent society of their own."[47] Gangs gave children who felt rejected a "feeling of belonging," according to this literature.[48] Unfortunately, the gangs could teach inappropriate behavior to their members.

Concern here was very similar to anxiety over conformity among adults, and a number of anti-conformity authors talked about delinquents as conformist, or dismissed the idea that children were rebelling at all. Both David Riesman and William Whyte viewed juvenile delinquency as a problem of conformity. Riesman feared that children's failure to rebel from the tastes of their parents showed that even teens were conformists.[49] Whyte argued that bad behavior among college students was not a sign of real rebellion.

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[45] Joseph Lelyveld, "The Paradoxical Case of the Affluent Delinquent," *The New York Times Magazine*, October 4 1964, 108.
[46] For examples, see Jackson Toby, "A Way Out of the Blackboard Jungle," *Nation*, March 8, 1958, 206; Ann Landers, "Why Teenagers Get Out of Control," *Reader's Digest*, June 1961, 59; Grafton, 20.
[47] Page, 112.
[48] Carson, "What Has J.D.," 74.
[49] Riesman discussed in Morgan, "The Adult World," 36,39.

"Come Spring," he said, "and students may start whacking each other over the head or roughing up the townies and thereby cause a rush of concern over the wild younger generation. But there is no real revolution in them, and the next day they likely as not will be found with their feet firmly on the ground in the recruiters' cubicles."[50] Juvenile delinquents were not rebellious youth—they were the very conformists he was so worried about. An article on teens in *The Saturday Evening Post* likewise argued that the apathetic, unrebellious children would look to corporations for security in their future.[51] A doctor writing for *Parents'* argued that failure to develop one's own identity led teens to conform to the crowd, even if that crowd was delinquent.[52] None of the anti-conformity authors wrote of delinquents as anything but another sign of American conformity and weakness, or as anything other than middle-class future businessmen.

Occasionally, such conformity (which often took the form of apathy) was described in gendered terms. Phillip Wylie saw some of the signs of juvenile delinquency as signs of weakness, and saw rock music as evidence of female take-over. He thought such music, and its male stars, forecasted a dystopian future full of male strippers and even more sexually aggressive women.[53] Another author worried that American teens were too "passive" (a trait very undesirable in men).[54] Even when literature on juvenile delinquency as conformity did not discuss it in explicitly gendered terms, the discussion here was almost always entirely about male delinquents. Conformity was a triumph of adjustment over identity and autonomy, and here the

[50] Whyte, 65.
[51] George Gallup and Evan Hill, "Youth: The Cool Generation," *Saturday Evening Post*, December 23, 1961, 80.
[52] Graham B. Blaine, Jr., "Teenagers in Search of Themselves*" Parents,'* December 1965, 46.
[53] Wylie, "Womanization" 79.
[54] Morgan, "The Adult World," 36.

adjustment was to a specifically undemocratic (indeed criminal) culture. Since men were seen as most in need of psychological autonomy in this literature, teen conformity was not only a precursor to adult conformity, it was also a block to continued psychological growth and maturity in the teenaged boy. Society needed to change to allow for psychological growth in American boys (and men).

Family as Source of Delinquency

Concern with gender was also reflected in views of the family, which was the most commonly blamed source for juvenile delinquency. As the report of the 1950s White House Conference on Children and Youth put it, delinquents were generally raised in "homes of little understanding, affection, stability, or moral fibre [sic] by parents usually unfit."[55] Unlike the literature on early-childhood discipline, gender played a large role in this literature. Families with strong mothers and weak fathers, "troubled" families, families in which both parents worked, families in which only one parent was present, and even families in which the father merely worked long hours were all depicted as breeding grounds for juvenile delinquency. Even the early literature which focused on comic books, television, and movies often also blamed family problems for the susceptibility of children to the suggestive power of these media.[56]

The overall impact of family was so strong that, according to a few writers, it all but predetermined whether children would be delinquent or not. One study widely discussed in mass culture almost totally discounted the role of free choice in criminal

[55] Witmer and Kotinsky, 409.
[56] See *Comic Books and Juvenile Delinquency: Interim Report*, 12-13.

decisions, finding that a lack of love and security in the home meant that chances of a child leading a non-criminal life were "very slim."[57] One article contended that the differences between children within a family were attributable not to innate differences between the children, or to their own moral decisions, but rather to differences in their parents' treatment of these children.[58] One of the more commonly suggested cures for juvenile delinquency reflected this concern with family and the idea that security and love were most important for healthy development. The majority of stories of "cured" juvenile delinquents told of their exposure to either healthy family (or family-like) situations, or to other caring adults. Surprisingly few articles talked about professional psychological care as the sole source of help for delinquents. Many delinquents seemed to be cured simply by being placed with a good family or having their current home situation corrected.[59]

Articles that argued that delinquency was rooted in the family generally focused on the adolescent's sense of security, claiming that the original cause of delinquency was "always failure to provide a child with enough love and sense of security."[60] Children who did not receive love and affection from their parents, who felt resentment toward them, would not adopt the values of their parents or of society more generally. One article argued that parental love was "one of the most valuable agencies of social control"

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[57] For this study and similar views, see Julius Horwitz, "The Arithmetic of Delinquency," *New York Times Magazine,* January 31, 1965, 12; "What's On Your Mind?" *Science Digest*, February 1964, 76; "Why Do Young People 'Go Bad'," *U.S. News and World Report*, April 26, 1965, 56-62; Quote is from Les Brownlee, "Assistant State's Attorney Lucia T. Thomas," *Sepia*, November 1960, 37.
[58] William McCord, "We Ask the Wrong Questions About Crime," *New York Times Magazine,* November 21 1965, 145-46.
[59] See, for example, "Old Cure for Young Problems," *Ebony*, May 1959, 23-30; Peter M. Horn and Hartzell Spence, "We Don't Call them Criminals," *Saturday Evening Post*, June 24, 1961, 17-18, 79-81.
[60] Rega Kramer McCarty, "Stealing is a Symptom," *Parents,'* January 1952, 62.

for teens.[61] *Sepia* magazine told the story of a boy who ended up in juvenile court because he had been a passenger in a stolen car. While he had not known that the car was stolen, his mother's reaction was to tell the judge to "send him away someplace." The article quoted State's Attorney Lucia Thomas' reaction: "how do you suppose this boy felt going home to a mother who said publicly that she didn't want him? You can almost bet in every such case that we will get that boy back as a delinquent."[62] Such children supposedly sought acceptance and security outside of the family in gangs.[63] Gangs were described as fulfilling not only needs for security, but also needs for discipline, although this discipline caused more problems for society than it solved.[64] Such articles did not claim that adjustment to society itself was bad, but instead saw the family as the best resource for the prevention of delinquency, and fought to strengthen the role of parents in the lives of their children.

As with literature on discipline, much of the delinquency literature presented domination by either parent as a problem. The story of one "boy killer" told of his step father who beat him "with a strap" and punished him for every small infraction.[65] Parental control of behavior through other means was also cited as a source of delinquency. A small number of authors cited parents who pushed their children too hard in academics as a cause of delinquency.[66] The report of the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth claimed that, to prevent delinquency, Americans needed to "accept the idea that self-satisfaction, or contentment, is more important than

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[61] "The Problems of Juvenile Delinquency," *Sepia*, January 1961, 46.
[62] Brownlee, 37.
[63] George F. Brown, "The Perils of Teen-Age Marriage," *Sepia*, March 1961, 68.
[64] See, for example, J. Edgar Hoover, "These Fighters Against Youth Crime Need Your Help," *Readers' Digest,* April 1961, 149.
[65] Freeman, 94.
[66] Carson, "What Has J.D.," 74.

success, that it is actually better emotionally for a man to be a contented economic failure than an unhappy, overworked president of a large corporation."[67] The report argued that the same tendencies that drove one youth up the "ladder of success" might drive another to delinquent behavior. This was very much tied to the general liberal critique of the Protestant work ethic, and of the acquisitiveness of postwar society.[68]

Lax discipline, however, could also be a cause of juvenile delinquency in this literature. This view was similar to that of psychologically-oriented interpretations of early-childhood discipline, which contended that children needed limits to their freedom, both to let them know that their parents loved and cared for them and to keep them from being overwhelmed by the decisions they had to make. One article argued that, when "a father surrenders his own standards, the kids know it, and the image they have of Pop grows dimmer and more confused." Such kids, the author argued, knew that discipline meant that their parents cared about them.[69]

This article's focus on the father as the source of rules was not unusual, though many articles ignored the question of which parent should set rules in the family. One study that received substantial public attention was by Professor Sheldon Glueck and Dr. Eleanor Glueck of Harvard Law School. The Gluecks used childhood conditions to predict juvenile delinquency in boys. Their prediction scale involved five factors: discipline of the boy by the father, supervision of the boy by the mother, affection of the father for the boy, affection of the mother for the boy, and the cohesiveness of the home.[70] The Glueck scale suggested that the best families for prevention of delinquency

[67] *Focus on Children,* 310.
[68] See above, chapter three.
[69] Grafton, "Tense Generation," 23.
[70] Julius Horwitz, "The Arithmetic of Delinquency," *New York Times Magazine,* January 31, 1965, 12.

were those with a mother and a father living at home, with the mother staying home to care for and supervise the child, the father providing the discipline for the children, and the family regularly participating in activities as a group.[71]

Absent or nearly absent fathers were among the most commonly cited sources of juvenile delinquency. Some authors argued that male children needed to rebel against authority, and without their fathers present that authority would either be an extrafamilial one (such as the police), or the child would not mature past this need and thus would fail to grow into a good citizen.[72] Absent fathers were depicted as especially widespread in poorer neighborhoods and among African Americans, especially in the late 1950s and early 1960s in white magazines.[73] Absent fathers seemed to have been an issue for two reasons. First, they made the child feel rejected. Second, they made the mother the sole power in the household.

Articles on delinquency also focused on the problem of the over-affectionate or over-influential mother, who was usually described without reference to job or career. Like Philip Wylie, many of these authors worried about male "abdication of authority" in the home, either by temporary or permanent absence.[74] A piece in *True* on women's roles claimed that women's control of American families created juvenile delinquency. The article cited psychiatrist Dr. Richard Gordon, who argued that boys too influenced by their mothers "often become sissies or suburban-style delinquents. The suburban delinquent is a sissy who covers his fears with a lot of swagger."[75] This idea fit with the

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[71] On the Glueck study, see also "What's On Your Mind?" *Science Digest*, February 1964, 76; "Why Do Young People 'Go Bad'," *U.S. News and World Report*, April 26, 1965, 56-62.
[72] Lerner, 116-118.
[73] See, for example, James Bryant Conant, "False Education for Many Slum Children," *Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1962, 6; Brownlee, 37.
[74] Wylie, "Womanization," 62.
[75] Gordon quoted in Gunther, "The Female Fears that Bind a Man," 16.

belief that delinquents were more likely to be homosexual, as well, since over-identification with and over-affection for mothers was often depicted as a source of homosexuality.[76]

The 1955 film, *Rebel Without a Cause,* illustrated this concern with the white suburban family in creating the delinquent teen. James Dean's character, "Jim," had to struggle to become autonomous without a strong father-figure. His father walked around the house in an apron, serving Jim's mother and live-in-grandmother. Jim's attempts to establish his identity and autonomy were thwarted by his unsupportive father, and his involvement with his peer group ended in the deaths of two teenage boys. He had to reject both his family and the values of his peer group to develop his own identity. Jim's friend, "Plato," however, was less fortunate. His parents were visibly absent, and his psychological problems were palpable. He also turned to his peers, especially Jim, to take the role properly played by his parents. He was dead by the end of the film.[77]

Blackboard Jungle, released in 1955, viewed delinquency as the result of undue peer influence. In this case, fathers absent during World War II and mothers who worked in factories for the duration created sons who looked to their peers instead of their fathers for guidance. In this film, the problems of conformity and delinquency were strictly male problems. The film was set in a public school that had only poor, male students. The smartest of the delinquents, Gregory Miller (played by Sidney Poitier), had to overcome his conformity to the group, become its leader, and lead them out of delinquency. He did so under the influence of a strong father-figure, a teacher played by Glen Ford.[78]

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[76] Louie Robinson, "15 Dates With the Chair," *Ebony*, July 1962, 32; Freeman, 96. On over-attachment to mothers as source of homosexuality, see above, chapter four.
[77] *Rebel Without A Cause,* Dir. Nicholas Ray, Warner Brothers, 1955.
[78] *Blackboard Jungle*, Dir, Richard Brooks, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1955.

In both films, women were largely a destructive influence. In *Rebel*, Jim's mother and grandmother prevented Jim's father (and thus Jim) from being a real man, from standing up for his beliefs. *Blackboard Jungle* featured two women. One was the wife of Glen Ford's father-figure teacher, who in true conformist form, initially counseled her husband to take a safer, less fulfilling job (she changed her mind later in the film). The other, a teacher, was a seductress, who attempted to seduce Glen Ford's character (and when a student tried to rape her, the film placed much of the blame on this teacher's sexual behavior). The only unquestionably positive female character in either film, the delinquent "Judy" in *Rebel,* was not searching for autonomy, but to love and be loved, since she felt rejected by her father. Her role was to help Jim achieve autonomy by supporting and loving him, not to achieve it herself—not strange given that female autonomy as rarely an issue in the mass culture of this period.

Some of the differences between these films also reflected the differences between ideas, in white-authored sources, of what delinquency meant in the suburbs and what it meant in the city. *Blackboard Jungle* was set in an urban vocational school and had an interracial cast of students. *Rebel* was set in a white suburban neighborhood. In the urban neighborhood, the parents were absent. In the suburban neighborhood they were present for the most part, but their relationships with each other and their children were dysfunctional.

Delinquency and Economics

Sometimes the postwar affluence of American society was credited with increasing delinquency in these years. Dr. Benjamin Spock worried that delinquency stemmed in part from the "easy-come abundance of the postwar years" which had decreased "morale" among Americans.[79] One author claimed that teens were apathetic because they had never had to want anything.[80] A small number of these authors saw delinquency as an unhealthy, but adjusted, response to adult culture. This view was similar to arguments earlier in the decade that claimed delinquency was learned, but did not blame mass culture. In these views, children learned from their parents or the larger society that wealth and luxury were more important than obeying the law, and therefore children became morally corrupt.[81]

A larger number of authors argued that the affluent society created status anxiety, which resulted in acquisitiveness so strong that it was often expressed through crime.[82] Many such authors also saw delinquency as an attempt by children to gain the attention of their parents, who were too focused on status to provide their children with the necessary love and security.[83] At least one author proposed increased leisure time for fathers as a cure for affluent delinquents, arguing that modern work was largely unfulfilling anyway, and fathers could better satisfy themselves and their sons by finding useful "work" in their leisure activities.[84] These authors were most often focused on the

[79] Spock, "Can We Prevent Delinquency?," 36.
[80] Thomas B. Morgan, "The Adult World is Treading Water," *Look,* July 23 1957, 36.
[81] Hoover, 146.
[82] Terrence Morris, "The Pathology of Affluence," *The Nation*, December 7 1963, 392.
[83] Lelyveld, 106.
[84] Max Lerner, "The Vanishing American Father," *Reader's Digest*, July 1965, 118.

middle class, but also claimed that status anxiety was a problem among the poor.

Literature on delinquency generally argued that it existed among all racial and ethnic and economic groups. As one article put it, "every income level contributes to the tense generation. (It isn't a race problem either: respectable white neighborhoods are as plagued as respectable Negro areas)."[85] Still, most literature on delinquency saw far more of a problem in slums than in suburban areas, especially in the late 1950s and early 1960s as the civil rights movement and renewed interest in poverty focused attention to the urban poor. Such literature often tied the issue to class instead of race, even though "slum" was usually synonymous with African-American neighborhood (and, occasionally, with Puerto Rican neighborhoods as well) in the white literature of this period.[86] "White slums" were very occasionally mentioned as evidence that the problem of slum delinquency was not solely an African-American problem, but white delinquents were marginal to this discussion.[87] Indeed, the fact that authors felt the need to specify "white" shows that "slum" was, by default, a description of minority neighborhoods. A slum, said one article, "is a neighborhood where people infect one another with the virus of failure, and where children are infected long before the virus is detected."[88] A number of mass-culture authors, in both white- and black-authored magazines, traced the perceived increases in African American crime to white racism, but like other arguments about racism creating pathology among African Americans, the psychological problems which authors credited with creating higher crime rates in urban African American

[85] Grafton, 20.
[86] Some articles included middle class African American neighborhoods in this category, especially when segregation kept those neighborhoods in close proximity to each other, or when mixed-income racially-segregated neighborhoods existed. See "Danger Facing Big Cities," 32.
[87] See, for example, Conant, 6.
[88] Horowitz, 13.

communities came to be seen, especially in white magazines, as self-perpetuating within black culture.[89]

When white sources described delinquency in the suburbs as a social matter, it was generally depicted as something happening to all of America, or even to the entire modern world—a historical trend. Slum delinquency, on the other hand, was treated as a constant. Sometimes, in fact, journalists even argued that the problem with the suburban kids was that they were imitating urban delinquents. An article in *Look* magazine, for example, argued that

> once normal middle-class values are relaxed, descent is rapid. The National Education Association has noted that there is a curious tendency these days for middle-class youths to imitate the slum-dweller, to speak his language, to wear his clothes, to act as they imagine he acts. Perhaps they envy his supposed freedom of choice as to how to live. Whatever the mechanism, something new and rougher than we have even known before has crept into misbehavior among the young.[90]

Others argued that the insecurity caused by the mobility, industrialization, and urbanization of modern life simply took a toll on youth by undermining the stability and security of their lives, and often resulted in delinquency.[91] Others pointed to the lack of accountability in big cities (due to anomnity) as a reason for a rise in delinquency.[92] This was true in discussions of both affluent delinquents and "slum" delinquents.

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[89] I did not myself look at crime statistics from this period, and do not intend to make an argument about whether or not the crime rate actually was higher in urban African American neighborhoods. The literature of the time is united in its view that the crime rate in such areas was on the rise, and even those articles which mentioned differences in arrest rates and police harassment in such neighborhoods said that those differences did not disprove the existence of a higher crime rate in these neighborhoods. This is true in both black and white magazines of the time, though African American magazines were more likely to question the statistics. See, for example, Dan Burley, "Everybody Goes When the Wagon Comes" *Sepia*, June 1960, 76, an article largely about police brutality in Northern and Southern black communities, which still argued that African Americans have higher crime rates.

[90] Grafton, 23.

[91] "Disease of Progress," *Newsweek*, June 11, 1962, 96.

[92] John Paul Scott, "The Anatomy of Violence," *Nation*, June 21, 1965, 664.

The idea of delinquency as the result of inferiority feelings fit well with understandings of the psychological effects of prejudice in the United States, especially as those discussing the psychological results of racism narrowed their focus to the African American psyche in the late 1950s and early 1960s.[93] Psychological problems for black adolescents seemed almost preordained in the psychological literature on minorities, especially in white-authored magazines. Kenneth Clark and others established, and the Supreme Court had affirmed, that African American children suffered feelings of inferiority because of segregation.[94] Erik Erikson, among others, argued that minorities generally had a harder time than white children in establishing their sense of identity, due to both racial prejudice and differences between their culture and mainstream culture.[95] Since most literature on delinquency attributed it to feelings of inferiority and to problems in identity development, many articles made delinquency in African American juveniles seem almost inevitable.

One source of delinquency and crime among African Americans, according to Kenneth Clark (among others), was that African Americans felt rejected by white society, and therefore turned against its values in an attempt to avoid feelings of inferiority. This argument, which appeared in both black and white magazines, was rooted in the idea that prejudice, segregation, and discrimination caused inferiority complexes in African Americans. Regardless of race or economics, many articles claimed that adolescents who felt that "society is their adversary" were particularly open to delinquency and destructive gang activity.[96] Because white society made African Americans feel "alien and inferior"

[93] See above, chapter five.
[94] Kenneth Clark, *Prejudice and Your Child*, passim; Brown v. Board of Education, 781.
[95] Witmer and Kotinsky, 414.
[96] Blos, 95.

through prejudice, discrimination and segregation, these authors argued, African American resentments built up and occasionally surfaced as criminal activity.[97] Kenneth Clark, in his attempt to explain urban riots and the problems of black ghettoes, described delinquency as a result of racism.

> The overt delinquent, the acting-out rebel . . . seeks his salvation in defiant, aggressive, and in the end self-destructive forms. Because the larger society has clearly rejected him, he rejects—or appears to reject—the values, the aspirations, and techniques of that society. His conscious or unconscious argument is that he cannot hope to win meaningful self-esteem through the avenues ordinarily available to more privileged individuals.[98]

Clark believed that African American delinquents could be cured by curing racism. Martin Luther King Jr. contended that discrimination and poverty caused a lack of "inner stability" which resulted in high crime rates among African Americans.[99] The Moynihan report likewise claimed that narcotics addiction among urban blacks was a sign of alienation from American society, though Moynihan did not believe that ending racism could alone end slum delinquency.[100]

The report of the 1950 White House Conference on Children and youth argued that the problems caused by racism were most likely to develop in minorities who faced discrimination when they reached adolescence, especially if their parents and community had managed to protect them from discrimination as children. Facing racism as a teen, the report said, could interfere with a teen's development of a sense of identity, and lead to delinquency:

> Sudden exposure to the fact that they are not considered as good as other people is very disrupting to personality development. It is a shock to the sense of trust, an incitement to feelings of doubt and shame. To determine who one is and what one can do is doubly difficult under such circumstances. Some youngsters will

[97] "The Negro Crime Rate: A Failure in Integration," *Time*, April 21, 1958, 16.
[98] Clark. *Dark Ghetto*, 19.
[99] Martin Luther King, Jr., "Advice for Living," *Ebony*, September 1958, 68.
[100] Moynihan, 44.

> break from their old standards and try to form a synthetic equivalent of the "American" personality pattern. Others will rebel against being stigmatized and find in zoot suits and other symbols the guarantee of their self-worth.[101]

Others saw racism as one factor, but tied African American delinquency also to family structure. The Moynihan report, for example, argued that the presence of a father at home could mediate the effects of racism on black personalities, one of which was a tendency toward criminal behavior.[102]

African American magazines also were more likely to focus on severe family problems rather than on smaller questions of who was dominant, or if there was hidden hostility within the home. Articles in *Sepia* especially talked about divorce, desertion, parental death, and "marital discord" as causes of delinquency. All of these things were categorized together as "family disorganization."[103] Over-dependence on mothers did arise in African-American magazines as well, but only rarely, and black magazines did not tie homosexuality to delinquency.

Even when racism was considered a factor, both black and white magazines sometimes tied racism to family structure. An article in *Ebony*, for example, told the story of a juvenile delinquent turned death-row inmate, who "grew up fast and tough, full of resentment for his father, so much love for his mother that it scared him, and, maybe most of all, the hopelessness of being a poor black boy in a white man's world."[104] Family structure, according to the preponderance of articles on delinquency, might perpetuate psychological problems over multiple generations. For instance, sexual activity among young unmarried women (a kind of delinquency) meant children born to young parents, who were "often too busy living to pay much attention to their children."

[101] Witmer and Kotinsky, 137.
[102] Moynihan, 38-39.
[103] "The Problems of Juvenile Delinquency," *Sepia*, January 1960, 46.
[104] Robinson, 32.

Such children, feeling rejected, sought "happiness in the streets" by joining a gang, which often led them into criminal behavior.[105]

The majority of articles in both black and white magazines, however, depicted these family structures as very directly related to the economic effects of discrimination. Many articles contended that young African American male delinquents were unlikely to marry, since they could not expect to make enough money to become breadwinners for their wives and children. Their children, therefore, were likely to grow up without father-figures in the household, and were therefore likely to suffer the delinquency common to boys over-influenced by their mothers.[106] The totally absent father, from the "broken home," was the most often cited source for family problems and therefore of delinquency. The broken home was often tied in literature about African Americans to the problem of masculinity in black men caused by racism.[107] Such families were depicted as ill-equipped to guide children through their psychological development.[108] Most of these articles claimed that economic programs could play an important role in ending delinquency.

Both black and white women who engaged in pre-marital sex were often portrayed in this literature as searching for affection, rather than sexual fulfillment.[109] Judy, the love-interest of James Dean's character in *Rebel Without a Cause*, was shown being rejected in her attempts to gain affection from her father. This rejection seemed to be the explanation for her desperate desire for the (sexual and romantic) affection of boys

[105] George F. Brown, "The Perils of Teen-Age Marriage," *Sepia*, March 1961, 68.
[106] Conant, 6.
[107] See above, chapter five.
[108] The discussion of the absent father had precursors during World War II, when concern rose over the effects of military service on the children of those spending years overseas.
[109] See, for example, John Laurence, "Does Chastity Make Sense?" *Coronet*, July 1954, 65-70.

her own age.[110] Teenage girls seeking male affection due to rejection by their fathers were a common theme in both black and white mass culture. Those authors who saw an epidemic of illegitimacy among African-American girls in urban neighborhoods, however, blamed the problem both on women without fathers seeking affection through sex at too young an age, and on the poor economic hopes of African American men in a prejudiced society. They saw African American men leaving their families both for the rational reason that their family might fare better on relief than they could on his meager wages, and for the psychological reason that men could not find fulfillment as husbands and father so long as they could not earn enough to be breadwinners.[111]

The tension between the desire to embrace mainstream white American culture and the rejection African Americans experienced from that same culture was often pointed to as yet another source of frustration for those living in slums. The urban race riots, which began in New York and New Jersey in 1964, said one article in *Ebony*, showed the frustration suffered by youth who had televisions to show them the greater world but knew the life they saw there was not available to them.[112] At times, refusal to conform to white culture was described as a healthy outlet for these negative emotions, and therefore a route toward psychological growth. Kenneth Clark, among others, saw activism in civil rights causes as a more positive emotional reaction to the same stress that caused juvenile delinquency and rioting among African Americans. Clark argued that, in places like Montgomery, Alabama, where youth were mobilized for protests, "the incidence of antisocial behavior and delinquency decreased almost to a vanishing point

[110] *Rebel Without A Cause*.
[111] "Brownlee, 38; Conant, 6.
[112] "Violence Sends a Message," *Ebony*, September 1964, 140.

during the period of protest."[113] Working for social change provided an outlet for frustration that would otherwise stymie psychological growth, by allowing youth to feel secure in their contributions to society.[114]

Articles in *Sepia* and *Ebony,* both of which ran numerous pieces on delinquency, often emphasized the role of race and poverty in the inadequacy of available psychiatric care and the missed opportunities for curing juvenile delinquency. African-American magazines criticized cases where teachers, social workers, and others recommended that a child seek psychiatric care, but lack of availability or expense kept the child from receiving such care, and thus the predictable and preventable criminal behavior was allowed to develop.[115] Other writers in these magazines emphasized the lack of psychological care or genuine attempts at rehabilitation in prisons.[116] In all cases, these magazines portrayed race and class as factors contributing to the lack of resources.[117] They also argued that children who could afford psychiatric care were almost never imprisoned.[118]

Overall, African-American and liberal authors in both black and white magazines pointed to economic discrimination, prejudice, and segregation as the major source of delinquency among African Americans. They sometimes claimed, however, that delinquency was caused indirectly through the effects of discrimination on family structure. In African-American magazines, the end of discrimination and segregation, or

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[113] Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, 18. this sentence is italicized in the original.
[114] Page, 112.
[115] See, for example, "Virginia Boy Convict With $65,000," *Ebony*, September 1960, 68-72.
[116] Robinson, 32-33.
[117] For example, "Virginia Boy Convict," page 69 spoke about the lack of resources in the South to help African American children and argued that "few people really care" about this lack. This article likewise talked about the lack of psychiatric care in prison facilities for juveniles (page 70).
[118] "Virginia Boy Convict," passim.

even mobilization to fight these wrongs, were the most often mentioned cures for delinquency.

White-authored magazines, however, usually portrayed affluent delinquents as more easily curable than African American delinquents. While both kinds of delinquents were assumed to have come from dysfunctional families, the black family was, in this literature, almost irreparably broken, while the white family simply required treatment. An article from *Ladies' Home Journal* on a group of affluent teenage burglars quoted an assistant in a district attorney's office comparing these burglars to African American delinquents: "You'll never hear the father of any of the young hoodlums we see every day promising to take his son to a psychiatrist—if you can find the father." This assistant went on to argue that boys from "good homes" generally committed crimes that were "reprehensible but understandable," while those from bad homes (presumed to be poor or minority) had "little chance to live decent lives" and their criminal acts were "almost inevitable."[119] Even when authors argued that psychological treatment might help urban delinquents, they often argued that the families of these delinquents were "too disorganized in their feelings and functioning" to seek help or even keep appointments made for their children.[120]

A few authors in white magazines also tied delinquency to academic failure, arguing that the delinquents were children who had been left behind in the rush to compete with the Soviet Union and Sputnik. This explanation was applied to both city and suburban youth, but was more often given as an explanation for the delinquency of urban youth. Benjamin Spock argued that poor quality schools, in low-to average-

[119] Glenn White, "Why Did They Steal?" *Ladies' Home Journal*, July 1962, 73.
[120] Spock, "Can We Prevent Delinquency?," 38.

income neighborhoods were especially likely to produce students who felt inferior because of their academic failures. He warned that such students would make up for their feelings by becoming hostile, scornful, and delinquent.[121] Students who did poorly in academics could develop inferiority feelings and might turn to delinquency. Often, such articles saw the biggest problem as the quality of the schools, though certainly some racism crept into this emphasis on poor academic achievement in urban schools.

A few articles in white magazines argued that slum delinquents were not psychological cases at all, at least not in an individualized sense. Delinquents in slums were "social delinquents," with "gang loyalty and little sense of guilt."[122] They were criminal because they were not taught to be otherwise—they might be well adjusted to their slum culture, but their culture condoned their behavior. Such delinquents were placed in opposition to the "neurotic delinquents" whose delinquency stemmed from "compelling needs within themselves that psychotherapy can often help."[123] Benjamin Spock likewise differentiated between the "mild delinquency" that required psychiatric treatment and the "serious delinquency" or the "urban slums" that required more serious reform of the community.[124] This division was much like the division described by historian Rickie Solinger between black and white girls who became pregnant outside of marriage. The white girls were assumed to suffer from curable neuroses, while the black girls were assumed to come from a sick or morally corrupt culture and were therefore incurable.[125]

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[121] Benjamin Spock, "Prevention of Delinquency," 27; see also Grafton, "Tense Generation," 20.
[122] Pollack, 128.
[123] Ibid., 128.
[124] Spock, "Can We Prevent Delinquency," 38.
[125] Rickie Solinger, *Wake Up Little Susie: Single Pregnancy and Race Before Roe V. Wade* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

This emphasis on the psychological causes of delinquency and crime allowed conservative authors to reject economic reasons for crime. When economics were mentioned, they were depicted as a cause of feelings of inferiority rather than as the direct impetus to crime. This separation of psychological from economic motives fit, as well, with the lack of psychological discussion of organized and professional crime (where the economic motives were hard to ignore). Possible economic motives for crime among juveniles were not entirely ignored in the late 1940s and early 1950s, though they received less and less space in articles about such crimes.[126] As the 1950s wore on, economic motives became more common, in fact, in white-authored articles about *affluent* teens, who were trying to keep up with the "juvenile Jonses," but not in articles about those suffering serious economic need.[127]

However, liberal authors posited an economic *cure* for slum delinquency, even in white magazines. By providing jobs for African American and other poor men, writers believed that the problems of absent fathers and aimless youth could be cured. More importantly, the psychological frustrations caused by mainstream social rejection could be cured through job and anti-discrimination programs, which could eradicate the most harmful ramifications of prejudice, removing the need to rebel against mainstream culture or create alternative cultures to which to adjust. Jobs programs, affirmative action, and strict institution of anti-discrimination laws in hiring (and housing) were seen as a means to return men to a productive breadwinner role and therefore to improve the psychological conditions these authors deemed characteristic of African American ghettos. This was the view put forth by Moynihan, but it was also a popular view in

[126] Pollack, 36. This author does mention a possible "delinquent" act as a child stealing coal to keep his family warm, but otherwise ignores the economic issue.
[127] McCarty, 62.

white mass culture articles on juvenile delinquency in the slums, especially those by white liberal authors.[128] This relied on a view of African American culture as undesirable—as a bad reaction to a bad situation, which could be cured through integration with and amalgamation into white culture. This view was, not surprisingly, contested by many African American authors, who saw African American culture as valuable.[129]

Law and Order

In the mid and late 1950s, a critique of psychological explanations for and treatment of crime, especially juvenile delinquency, was taken up in earnest in the pages of conservative magazines. Conservative authors focused almost entirely on delinquency in African American slums, and were extremely critical of economic solutions as a cure for delinquency. They blamed liberalism itself, especially welfare, progressive parenting, and integration, for the rising rates of juvenile delinquency.

Many of these critiques blamed psychology itself, or the psychology-obsessed society, for the rising rates of juvenile delinquency. *National Review* columnist Russell Kirk, for example, claimed that the "Freudian ethic" had taken over schools. The resulting children, whom Kirk saw as coddled by schools more concerned with their personalities than their education, were "without knowledge of norms, duties, and the

[128] See, for example, Conant, 6; Mary Conway Kohler and André Fontaine, "We Waste A Million Kids a Year," *Saturday Evening Post*, March 10 1962 , 15-23; Jackson Toby, "A Way Out of the Blackboard Jungle," *Nation*, March 8 1958, 205-207; David Dressler, "The Case of the Copycat Criminal," *New York Times Magazine*, December 10 1961, 47; Woody Klein, "Crime in the Streets," *Nation,* January 11 1965; 30-31.

[129] See, for example, Whitney M. Young, "The Role of the Middle Class Negro," *Ebony*, September 1963, 67, in which Young argues that some aspects of lower-class African American culture were superior to middle-class culture. See also above, chapter five.

fundamentals of human nature and the civil social order."[130] Such children, he concluded, were potentially dangerous and even criminal. One angry letter to the editor of *Look* magazine likewise argued that delinquents were "lazy, fear-conditioned children unable to cope with the normal challenges of human existence. They are provided with excuses by the growing army of well-meaning psychologists, educators, and parents who, by their search for psychological explanations for delinquency, actually harm the generation they seek to assist."[131]

Many of those fighting for a more "law and order" approach tied juvenile delinquency to the failure of "permissive" childrearing as well. Some of those arguing for a return to corporal punishment believed that banning punishments encouraged delinquent behavior.[132] The argument that permissiveness caused delinquency made its way into mainstream magazines in the late 1950s. The delinquent, said one article, was "not taught sufficient discipline and self-control, and so becomes overly sensitive to frustration and criticism.[133] Lack of punishment by both parents and legal authorities was seen as allowing children to act as children act without rules, that is, in ways that broke the law or moral standards of behavior.[134] Such articles seemed to share, along with articles on discipline running in *National Review* and other conservative magazines, the idea that children were inherently evil.[135] Instead of seeing psychological damage as the

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[130] Russell Kirk, "From the Academy," *National Review*, August 29, 1959, 304. This is a review of Richard LaPiere's *The Freudian Ethic: An Analysis of the Subversion of American Character* (Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1959), and much of this argument is a summary of LaPiere's points, but Kirk praises it heavily.
[131] David R. Page, "Letters to the Editor," *Look*, October 8, 1963, 20.
[132] "Unruly Students Trouble Capital," *New York Times*, February 21, 1963, 6.
[133] "What's On Your Mind?" *Science Digest*, April 1959, 22.
[134] "No Smug Editorials," *National Review*, April 25, 1956, 21.
[135] See above, chapter 5.

cause of delinquency, these authors believed it was instead a failure to learn moral behavior. The liberal coddling of children had blocked proper education.

Conservative articles on delinquency also shared a critique of egalitarianism with conservative articles on discipline and on race. Egalitarianism, both in terms of race and in terms of scholastic ability (which conservatives often saw as inseparable), were described in this literature as the source of rising delinquency. Conservatives in Congress and in the media tied racial integration and gains in civil rights to the rising delinquency rates.[136] One article argued that "the doctrine that all children are more or less equally educable is an egalitarian abstraction" that kept badly behaved students in schools, and also led to "mixing Puerto Ricans, Negroes, and Native Whites."[137] Conservative sources often argued that integration and civil rights came only at the expense of law and order.

As historian Lisa Levenstein has shown, an association had developed between urban African Americans (especially in the North) and public assistance programs by the early 1960s.[138] Numerous mass-culture authors, especially in more racially conservative magazines, saw dependence on relief as at least part of the source of the supposedly high delinquency among African Americans. News articles in conservative magazines talking about the Moynihan Report sometimes just listed "heavy dependence on relief" as one of

[136] See, for example, U.S Congress, House of Representatives, Committee of the District of Columbia, *Investigation of Public School Conditions: Report of the Subcommittee to Investigate Public School Standards and Conditions, and Juvenile Delinquency in the District of Columbia* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1957), 24; Russell Kirk, "From the Academy: The Chaos of Urban Schools," *National Review,* June 16, 1964, 495; "Interview With Governor Barnett of Mississippi: The Negro's Future in the South," *U.S. News and World Report*, June 3 1963, 62.
[137] "Your Children or Your Ideology," *National Review*, February 15, 1958, 149.
[138] Lisa Levenstein, "From Innocent Children to Unwanted Migrants and Unwed Moms: Two Chapters in Public Discourse on Welfare in the United States, 1960-1960," *Journal of Women's History* 11, no. 4 (2000), 10-33.

the causes of problems within black urban communities, ignoring Moynihan's critique of female-focused welfare and his advocacy of jobs programs.[139]

By critiquing egalitarianism, permissiveness, social activism, and social welfare programs as causes of delinquency, these conservatives were basically blaming liberalism itself for creating juvenile delinquency. Indeed, conservatives did hold liberalism, which they claimed was inextricably tied to psychology and progressive parenting, responsible for the "neurotic" young Americans they depicted as common in America.[140] One *New York Daily News* article argued that "the left-wing, pseudo-intellectual, do-as-you-like progressive system prevalent in the local schools is breeding lawlessness."[141]

[139] "Danger Facing Big Cities," 30.
[140] Russell Kirk, "From the Academy," *The National Review*, July 3 1962, 485. In this article, Kirk mostly argued against seeing ideology through a psychological lens, but argued that, if any ideology caused illness, it was liberalism (especially progressive parenting and education).
[141] Quoted in Barron, "The Delinquent: Society or the Juvenile?," 482.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

During October of 1964, in the heat of the presidential election, Republican candidate Barry Goldwater went to war against psychology and psychiatry. A year earlier, Goldwater had become an outspoken critic of psychological testing in schools.[1] During the election itself, Goldwater came under attack from psychologists when, during a television appearance, he claimed that liberalism "sneers at policeman [sic] and fawns on social psychologists."[2] In the same month, a small magazine called *Fact* devoted an entire issue to the results of a poll of American psychiatrists, reporting that "1,189 Psychiatrists Say Goldwater is Psychologically Unfit To Be President!."[3] The small magazine might have gone all but unnoticed, but it took out full page ads in a number of newspapers, including the *New York Times, Philadelphia Enquirer,* and *San Francisco Examiner* to advertise the issue, which then became a topic of national debate.[4] Goldwater's two "nervous breakdowns" were also fodder for discussion.[5]

Goldwater's problems with psychology may seem like an odd sidebar to the election of 1964, but they were indicative of a larger historical trend. The New Right gained much of its rhetorical power in the late 1950s and early 1960s by attacking the psychological justifications that liberals advanced for expansion of the welfare state and

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[1] See, for example, Barry Goldwater, "'Big Brother' in the Classroom," *[Washington] Evening Star*, October 7, 1963, A-12, copy from Papers of the American Psychological Association, Library of Congress, Washington D.C..
[2] Arthur Brayfield to Dean Burch, October 13, 1964, Papers of the American Psychological Association, Manuscript Collection, Library of Congress, Washington D.C..
[3] "1,189 Psychiatrists Say Goldwater Is Psychologically Unfit To Be President!," *Fact* 1, no. 5, October 1964, cover.
[4] "The Couch and the Stump," *Time*, October 9, 1964, 73, copy from Papers of the American Psychological Association, Manuscript Collections, Library of Congress, Washington D.C..; "Doctors Deplore Goldwater Poll," *New York* Times (October 2, 1964), page unrecorded, copy from Papers of the American Psychological Association, Manuscript Collections, Library of Congress, Washington D.C..
[5] "Doctors Deplore."

federal intervention in civil rights. At the same time, the Right paradoxically used psychological ideas to shift American political debates from social good to individual rights, and ultimately to argue for laissez-faire capitalism and against civil rights and racial integration.

This conservative attack on and cooptation of psychology arose in response to the postwar liberal reliance on psychology, especially social psychology. Postwar liberals looked to government to ameliorate the problems of the capitalist system.[6] Psychology proved an effective means to argue for the importance of economic security to the improvement and maintenance of a healthy democratic system. Especially during the red scare of the late 1940s and 1950s, psychological arguments for the welfare state helped its supporters duck the kinds of attacks that economically-based arguments increasingly attracted.

The liberal mass culture authors who employed psychology were also grappling with the wider question of how modernity was affecting Americans. While capitalism was part of this equation, these authors focused more broadly on consumption, urbanization, changing gender roles, and changing structures of work. These authors shared a concern that the changed conditions of modern life were psychologically unhealthy, and that the spreading psychological ill-health threatened not only the mental health of many Americans, but the very survival of democracy in the United States. They feared that the very frightening model of Nazi Germany was the probable result of the psychological stress of modernity.

As this dissertation attempts to show, economic and psychological security were central to postwar liberalism. Liberals looked to take advantage of the opportunity for

[6] Brinkley, *End of Reform*, 6-7.

freedom offered by the modern world, but also feared that Americans might not be psychologically ready for the stress that freedom caused. They sought to provide the psychological security necessary for Americans, especially men, to thrive in the freedom of the modern democracy. This security was to come from both equality of opportunity and from a welfare state that protected against poverty and status anxiety. Without such security, liberals feared that Americans would turn to forms of security that would both stymie their psychological growth and turn them away from democratic forms of government.

Goldwater and his ideological brethren attacked not only the psychological arguments used by postwar liberals, but also their concern with the potential problems of modernity. Conservatives were, in many ways, more optimistic about the status-quo, especially as it concerned race and class. They worried mostly about the effects of liberalism, rather than about modernity more broadly. As they downplayed the potential problems of modernity, so too did they ignore the opportunities that liberals believed it offered.

The New Right's attack on and cooptation of psychology did not eliminate the liberal use of psychology to understand individual citizen's relationship with government. The New Left in the 1960s tried to leave behind the pessimism about freedom so apparent in the literature of their predecessors, and to explore their freedom more freely. The Port Huron Statement, the 1962 manifesto of Students for a Democratic Society, was as much a treatise on the psychology of man as it was a political statement (if, indeed, we can see the two as separate in this era). It declared that "men have unrealized potential for self-cultivation, self-direction, self-understanding, and creativity. . . . The goal of

man and society should be human independence: a concern not with the image of popularity but with finding a meaning in life that is personally authentic; a quality of mind not compulsively driven by a sense of powerlessness, nor one which unthinkingly adopts status values, not one which represses all threats to its habits."[7] Feminism in the later part of the decade, while remaining critical of much psychology, also expanded these calls for psychological liberation to include women.[8] Others followed a Harvard psychology professor named Timothy Leary and tried to expand their minds more directly through the use of psychotropic drugs.[9]

As I wrote this conclusion, White House Chief of Staff Karl Rove, close advisor to President George W. Bush, came under attack from both psychological organizations and Democrats for saying "liberals saw the savagery of the 9/11 attacks and wanted to prepare indictments and offer therapy and understanding for our attackers."[10] By echoing Goldwater's claim that liberals sneered at police and fawned on social psychologists, Rove's comments show that the political right continues to be hostile to psychology, which it sees as a part of the liberal way of dealing with the world over forty years after the 1964 election.

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[7] "Port Huron Statement," *The Sixties Project* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia), http://lists.village.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML (ellipses mine). See also Brinkley, *Liberalism*, 229-230.
[8] Herman, 276-303.
[9] Moskowitz, *In Therapy We Trust*, 204-205.
[10] Dan Balz, "Democrats Call for Rove to Apologize," *Washington Post,* June 24, 2005, A1.

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