The Politics of Annihilation:

A Psycho-historical Study.

THE POLITICS OF ANNIHILATION:

A Psycho-historical Study of the Repression

of the Ghost Dance on the Sioux Indian

Reservations as an Event in U.S.

Foreign Policy.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a psychoanalytical inter-
pretation of American history. Its primary focus is
America's experience of the North American wilderness
and its Indian inhabitants. The repression of the
Ghost Dance on the Sioux reservations and massacre
at Wounded Knee Creek in 1890 serves as a case-study
for the broad themes of America's psycho-history.
Subjects considered psychoanalytically are: America's
Puritan inheritance, the "American Revolution," Wes-
tern expansion and Manifest Destiny, America's fron-
tier literature, America and the Indian, and finally,
the Ghost Dance repression and massacre. An inter-
pretation that gives meaning to American territorial
expansion and the conquest and annihilation of
"savagery" will also suggest a meaning for expansion,
conquest and annihilation overseas.

RESUME

Cette dissertation est une Interpretation psychoanalytique de l'histoire d'Amerique. L'essense est principalement l'experience Americaine de la frontière Nord-Americaine et de la population Indienne. La repression du "Ghost Dance" sur les réserves des Sioux et le massacre à Wounded Knee servent d'example pour les motifs génerals de l'histoire-psychoanalytique ("psycho-history") des Etats-Unis. Les sujets sont: l'héritage Puritain d'Amerique, la "Revolution Americaine," le développement de l'Ouest et le "Manifest Destiny," la littérature de la frontière, l'Amerique et l'Indien d'Amerique, et enfin, la repression du "Ghost Dance" et le massacre résultant. Une interpretation qui donne une signification au développement de l'Ouest et l'annihilation de "la sauvagerie" suggère une signification au développement et l'annihilation aux pays d'outre-mer.

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To Ms. Suze Woolf for her thoughtful and image-full criticism and her love-full encouragement over eighteen long months.

To Professor Janice Stein for her intellectual curiosity and assistance, always tempered with human concern -- clearly above and beyond her responsibilities as a thesis supervisor.

What is bettre than wisdom? Womman. And what
is bettre than a good womman? No-thing.

-- Geoffrey Chaucer,
"The Tale of Melibeus,"
Canterbury Tales.

LIST OF MAPS

All maps reproduced from Robert M. Utley, <u>The Last Days of the Sioux Nation</u> (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963).

CONTENTS

Chapter I.

Introduction to a Psycho-historical

Study: Problems in social origins,

social methodology, and psycho-

social theory.

> We are only the actors, we are never wholly the
> authors of our own deeds or works. IT is the
> author, the unknown inside us or outside us.
> The best we can do is to try to hold ourselves
> in unison with the deeps which are inside us.
> And the worst we can do is to try to have
> things our own way, when we run counter to IT,
> and in the long run get our knuckles rapped for
> our presumption.[1]

On February 28, 1973, two hundred to three
hundred militant Indians from the American Indian Move-
ment (AIM) seized the cross-roads hamlet of Wounded
Knee, South Dakota in a symbolic act of protest and
resistance to the "corrupt" and "dictatorial" practices
of the local Oglala tribal chairman Richard Wilson. As
Indians exchanged gun-fire with forces of the United
States Government for over ten weeks at the site of the
1890 massacre of Sioux Indians by the Seventh Cavalry,
it was soon apparent that local grievances had oc-
casioned an "uprising" against the entire course of
American-Indian relations. The symbolic significance

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[1]D.H. Lawrence, _Studies in Classic American Literature_ (New York: Viking Press, 1961), p. 20.

of Wounded Knee -- for whites as well as for Indians --
seems to have been foremost in the minds of the leaders
of AIM. By presenting to the American public an
image of real Indians (braided, on horseback, rifle
across the arm, staring silently toward the horizon),
but ones in opposition to the Government, they reminded
America of its responsibility and guilt for the fate
of the Indian. The efficacy of Wounded Knee-1973 as
a symbol of Indian maltreatment, possible rebellion,
and white guilt was based on the ever-present Indian
in white-American consciousness. The defeat and subju-
gation of the Indian in the West did not eliminate him
as a factor in establishing and maintaining American,
hegemony in the Western Hemisphere. The Indian
is an integral part of what it means to be an
"American." His head and his buffalo adorned the
five-cent piece that jingled in every American
pocket a short while ago. His body and his way of
life may have been destroyed by the twentieth cen-
tury, but his spirit troubles the mind of a nation
still "taming" the Indians and the West in the East
Asian jungles of Vietnam.

The news from Wounded Knee broke when I
had half finished the writing of this essay. Ten
months before I began focusing on the Wounded
Knee massacre of 1890 as an event latent with psycho-

logical and symbolic meaning for America's experience
of "self," identity and purpose. As the symbolic end
of Indian freedom, Wounded Knee-1890 was an event of
Indian existential crisis; as the last of America's
many Indian massacres it was a demonstration of America's
failure to mollify "civilized" existential dread.

My analysis of the Ghost Dance repression
and massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890 is primarily a
study of mass-psychological conflict, of the ambiguities
in America's search for national identity and self-
definition. The events of 1890 serve as a case-study
in which some of the broad themes in the psychology of
American history are manifested. Thus the Ghost Dance
repression does not occupy as significant a position
in this study as the title might suggest.

Indians occupied the territory of North
America long before the whites. Their removal was
critical for securing "America" in the New World.
Their removal was critical for securing American identity
-- Manifest Destiny. But whites also regarded Indians
as "foreigners" in their own homeland because they were
members of a different, hence "inferior," culture and
race. A psycho-historical analysis of the American ex-
perience of the Indian and Western expansion may there-
fore provide a key to understanding American actions
and attitudes in foreign affairs, particularly toward

the Third World.

This study employs psychoanalytic theory to interpret American social behavior. The theory is suggested by the content of the American experience and not the other way about. I have tried as much as possible to avoid "fitting" my material to a rigid, preconceived psychoanalytical framework. As a result, the direction and purpose of this study changed as it was written. It probably suffers from a lack of coherence or clarity at some points, repetition and reiteration at others. It seems to me that in an undertaking as broad as this some fuzziness is virtually unavoidable. For, not only am I trying to shed light on a few of the "darker" forces behind American Western expansion, but I am using a "hyphenated approach," one of whose components is still suspiciously regarded by many social researchers. I can only hope that drawbacks are more than compensated by the "fertilizer" provided for future endeavors.

> So we may have to risk that bit of impurity which is inherent in the hyphen of the psychohistorical as well as of all other hyphenated approaches. They are the compost heap of today's interdisciplinary efforts, which may help to fertilize new fields, and to produce future flowers of new methodological clarity.[2]

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[2]Erik H. Erikson, **Young Man Luther** (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1958), p. 16.

The ultimate goal of this study is to
employ psychoanalysis in a manner that links the mind
of the past to the mind of the present and, in doing
so, make thoughts and events in history comprehensible.

> ... to connect the past with the present, to
> show with discretion how the application of
> a particular discipline, psychoanalysis, developed
> in the twentieth century, makes more intelligible
> to us events that had a different kind of co-
> herence for others who lived long ago.[3]

I have not tried to write an "objective"
essay in psycho-history. This is impossible in an exer-
cise that sometimes explains the evident as the not-so-
evident and the "thing" as really its "opposite." But
subjective interpretation is here compounded by my
choice of subject matter: America, Western expansion,
and the Indian. In effect, this study claims that
"American consciousness" -- the attitudes informing the
nation's actions -- may be understood by a psycho-
historical analysis of America and the Indian on the
frontier. Clearly I expose my bias in favor of a
particular people and their importance for America.
But the bias of this study has a conscious purpose.
It is an attempt, at least in part, to correct the
ethnocentric focus of white historians and social

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[3]Robert Coles, "Shrinking History -- Part II,"
The New York Review of Books, XX, No. 3 (March 8, 1973),
p. 28.

scientists. The massacre at Wounded Knee Creek, and
indeed the entire course of American-Indian relations,
has long been relegated by these thinkers to a
position of secondary importance in their studies of
"what America is all about." They see America as the
"melting pot," as the triumph of democratic theory,
as the struggle among competing economic interests,
as the "affluent society," as a "world power." Few
would recognize America as the physical and cultural
annihilation of other peoples. Yet this was and is
America to the Indian -- and perhaps to some other
people as well. America's white social explainers
have on the whole been unable to extricate themselves
from the self-centered consciousness of their subject.
As a result they _reflect_ America more than reveal it.

> ... we cannot leave history entirely to
> non-clinical observers and to professional
> historians who often too nobly immerse them-
> selves into the very disguises, rationalizations
> and idealizations of the historical process
> from which it should be their business to
> separate themselves.[4]

The bias of my study serves another related
purpose. Though I interpret America, its territorial
expansion, its experience of the Indian, and its repres-
sion of the Ghost Dance, I want to avoid compounding the

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[4]Erikson, pp. 20-1.

ethnocentric arrogance of white history and social
science when it attempts to analyse and therefore im-
plicitly to _explain_ the American Indian. A white man's
explanation of the American Indian is pretention of
the worst kind. It is pretention tantamount to violence.
It is the imposition of white modes of experience,
categorization and comprehension on a non-white, non-
Western culture. This activity is precisely what "civil-
izing" the Indian and the continent was all about. And
that "civilizing" process was defined by physical and
psychic violence. The analytic tools of the white his-
torian and social scientist -- serial, rational,
progressive causality -- are drawn from that violent
tradition and likewise must violate the soul and
the meaning of the Indian experience. As a Ute Indian
farmer once remarked to a friend of mine, "If you
want to know me, then you must come live with me."[5]
The white short-cut around subjective experiential
knowledge is objective rational explanation, and it
must by definition fail to appreciate the Indian in
his own terms. It thereby does violence to the Indian.
So as a white L refuse to speak for the Indian or to
explain the Indian.[6] That is something which they have

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        [5]This remark was related to me by John
Priest during our stay on the Southern Ute reservation,
Ignacio, Colorado, in July, 1969.

        [6]Chapter VII includes a limited amount of
anthropological and descriptive material on Sioux cul-
ture. Whenever possible I have tried to use Sioux sources.

been trying to do for themselves since whites
arrived in North America. Wounded Knee-1973 is the
latest but probably not the last such episode. Whose
fault is it if whites neither hear nor understand?

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A brief discussion of the assumptions and
problems in applying psychoanalysis to society is
called for in an introduction to a study of this type.
The remainder of my remarks in this chapter will hope-
fully suffice in this direction.

Psychoanalysis is a psycho-social theory,
in as much as it allows for the interaction of both
infantile-sexual and later environmental variables in
forming the human personality. The key to understanding
the social dimension of psychoanalysis lies in under-
standing the role which environment plays in relation
to the individual ego. For the ego is that portion of
the human psyche which interprets and integrates
"reality" (the significant environmental factors which
elicit an individual's emotional responses). Ego is
therefore that part of personality which is apparent
when man interacts with his social environment. One's
experience of "identity" (the meaning and purpose of
existence in "real" or fantasy worlds) is an aspect of
the ego. It is for this reason that ego function and
formation are central aspects of my theoretical frame-

work. But the ego is not a fully constituted part of
the human personality at birth. It has its origins in
the lusts, loves and rages of the infant in his primal
environment. It develops beyond this stage as his en-
vironment continually expands. In a sense, we are always
becoming "adult" as environmental horizons continually
expand.

Freud's major contribution to social theory
is his reminder (It was a "discovery" only to those who
failed to remember their childhood.) that each "adult"
"social" being originated in an infantile-sexual world,
and that this origin exercises an influence, to a greater
or lesser extent, on later social behavior. Psycho-
analysis does not deny the importance of "reality
factors;" it simply points to the existence of pre-
social, pre-reality factors as well.

> Psychoanalysis, one used to say, underrates
> reality factors. One might answer that what
> reality means to the individual, what opportunity
> for direct discharge processes it offers, and
> which defenses it encourages, has to be taken
> into account when we refer to environment or reality
> in a context in which psychodynamic hypotheses
> are being used.[7]

Psychoanalysis as a social theory is not simply sexual
determinism. But it does allow for the possibility that
certain later events will have been influenced by the

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[7]Heinz Hartmann, Ernst Kris and Rudolph
Lowenstein, "Some Psychoanalytic Comments on 'Culture
and Personality,'" Psychoanalysis and Culture, ed. G.B.
Wilbur and W. Muensterberger (New York: International
Universities Press, 1951), pp. 28-9.

emotion-laden experiences of childhood.

> Though he /Freud/ surely never intends to
> say that childhood events absolutely determine
> later behavior, the time of childhood does bear
> the greatest emotional weight, and its habits
> do involve the greatest effort of self-overcoming.
> Prefigurative events, embedded in the psychological
> system, can rise up and buckle the surfaces of
> character in later years.[8]

Contrary to the opinions held by many in the
disciplines of history and the social sciences, a psycho-
analytical approach to society is in some ways the
most flexible mode of analysis available; in it
elements of continuity and elements of change exist
simultaneously. The realization that human affairs are
always changing yet remain the same in certain essential
respects, is a recognition of common biological origins.
These origins delineate psychic boundaries beyond which
men cannot alter their subjective experience of
reality, but within which men may and do vary their
objectives, activities and ideals. It is a recognition
that the present is generated in the past and that the
future is contained in the present. Hence, there is a
continuum and a meaning to human history that exists
at a level deeper than the social. The social may be
characterized as an ever-changing dialectic in an Hegelian

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[8]Philip Rieff, Freud: The Mind of the Moralist
(Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1961), pp. 52-3.

or Marxist view of history, but it is ever-changing

for the same basic reasons.

> ... Freud becomes relevant when history
> raises this question: What does man want over
> and beyond "economic welfare" and "mastery over
> nature?" Marx defines the essence of man as labor
> and traces the dialectic of labor in history till
> labor abolishes itself. There is then a vacuum in
> the Marxist utopia. ... Freud suggests that beyond
> labor there is love. And if beyond labor at the
> end of history there is love, love must always
> have been there from the beginning of history, and
> it must have been the hidden force supplying the
> energy devoted to labor and making history.[9]

Strictly speaking, I am not an historian or

even a social scientist. In this paper I use a psycho-

analytical framework to interpret American Western ex-

pansion and inter-cultural activity. I am engaging in

an exercise of mass- (social) psychology. In this study

I accept as valid the predictions of Nietzsche and Freud

that the master science of the future would not be

history or sociology, but psychology.[10] This has

important methodological consequences. Methodologically,

in accepting the validity of a psycho-historical in-

quiry, we must appreciate as axiomatic that social

structure originates from the individual human organism

and has no ontological status apart from the human beings

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[9]Norman O. Brown, Life Against Death: the
Psychoanalytical Meaning of History (Middletown, Conn.:
Wesleyan University Press, 1959), p. 17.

[10]Rieff, p. 230.

who comprise it. As Weston LaBarre puts it, "There

is nobody here but us people."[11] We must therefore

look to the psychic world of the individual to give

meaning to his social activities. This attitude does

not deny the existence or importance of social "facts,"

such as religion, economics and politics, but allows

an investigation of their deeper psychological under-

pinnings (needs, desires, fears, etc.).

> The true locus of culture is in the interactions
> of specific individuals and, on the subjective
> side, in the world of meanings which each one
> of these individuals may unconsciously abstract
> for himself from his participation in these
> interactions.[12]

> Men make history; they develop complex inner
> worlds because (from infant frustrations through
> their experience as historical actors) they do
> not make it in circumstances of their own
> choosing. These inner worlds, projected outside,
> become part of the continuing history men do
> make.[13]

This position breaks sharply with the

eighteenth and nineteenth century tradition from which

contemporary mechanistic views of social history (and

their disciplinary offspring: sociology, anthropology,

economics and political science) are derived. Social

science observes man in a reactive relation with society

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[11]Weston LaBarre, The Ghost Dance: The Origins
of Religion (New York: Delta Book, 1972), p. 47.

[12]Edward Sapir, "Cultural Anthropology and
Psychiatry," Selected Writings of Edward Sapir in Lan-
guage, Culture and Personality, ed. David G. Mandelbaum
(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), p. 515.

[13]Michael Paul Rogin, "Liberal Society and the
Indian Question," Politics and Society, May, 1971, p. 227.

and sees this relationship as continually changing.
Psychoanalysis sees man as the originator of society
and looks for those characteristics of the human ex-
perience which lend a certain uniformity and hence
comprehensibility to the social dialectic.

> For both Hegel and Marx, psychological
> direction can be meaningful only when understood
> as a response elicited by the action-demand im-
> plicit in a given period of historical evolution.
> ... Freud, however, has regular recourse to
> 'nature' as the constant of social analysis.
> Historical processes, according to Marx, are
> characterized by change. But for Freud, the
> more things change the more they remain the
> same.[14]

But why use a psychological mode of
analysis if a sociological explanation seems to work?
If the rise of capitalism can be explained in relation
to the emergence of Protestantism, why seek further
for origins? I would respond that one must recognize
that social forms reflect individual and collectively
shared subjective experiences; both religion and eco-
nomics are derived from the psychological appreciation
of self and significant others (sacred and secular) in
the environment. In no way would I deny the existence
of social phenonenon or the validity of links drawn
among them. I would point out, however, that the reason
these links can be drawn in the first place is because

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[14]Rieff, p. 234.

there exists an underlying constant which mediates a changing social environment. That constant is the human psyche. It is clear, thanks to Max Weber, that Protestantism allowed the individual to experience material accumulation as a possible sign of salvation and thereby made capitalist economics morally·acceptable. But it was the subjective human experience of each factor -- the success of social activity in satisfying the psychological needs of a large number of individuals -- which now allows us to give Protestantism and Capitalism an "objective" social relationship. If we are to understand the nature and meaning of Protestantism and Capitalism we must appreciate the various ways in which they are an expression of individual and mass psychology.

I have already touched on the problem of where to seek social origins. This issue will be considered in greater depth but without the intention of resolving it to the satisfaction of every social researcher.

> Durkheim tells us: "The first and most fundamental
> rule is: Consider social facts as things." And
> Weber observes: "Both for sociology in the
> present sense, and for history, the object of
> cognition is the subjective meaning-complex of
> action." These two statements are not contra-
> dictory. Society does indeed possess objective
> facticity. And society is indeed built up by
> activity that expresses subjective meaning. ...
> It is precisely the dual character of society in
> terms of objective facticity and subjective meaning
> that makes its reality sui generis... .[15]

15Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1967), p. 18.

The problem of social origins is not solved by
simply establishing a dialectical relationship
between man and society, however. In spite of
sociology's recognition of the subjective dimension
of the social dialectic, society still remains in an
objective position vis-a-vis man. How society acquired
this status is not adequately considered by most
traditional sociology. Man as reactor is not man
as the author. The question of social origins remains
problematic for sociological inquiry when it con-
siders society coexistent and not caused by man.
And this precludes any sort of speculative, interpretive
analysis about the meaning of man's social activity.

Berger and Luckmann's work, The Social
Construction of Reality, proposes a sociological
solution in which man is viewed as the author of
society even as he participates in the social dialectic.
As a result, the subjective psychological experience
of society achieves a status which prevents the
complete abstraction of society away from human influence.

> ... despite the objectivity which marks the
> social world in human experience, it does not
> thereby acquire an ontological status apart
> from the human activity that produced it.
> The paradox that man is capable of producing
> a world that he then experiences as something
> other than a human product will concern us
> later on. At the moment, it is important to
> emphasize that the relationship between man,

the producer, and the social world, his pro-
duct, is and remains a dialectical one.[16]

Society is as much a product of man as man is of

society, but <u>originally</u> society is a human product.

This sets traditional sociology on its head; the

search for social meaning must look at men first

and their societies second.

> That culture is a superorganic, impersonal
> whole is a useful enough methodological principle
> to begin with but becomes a serious deterrent in
> the long run to the more dynamic study of the
> genesis and development of cultural patterns
> because these cannot be realistically disconnected
> from those organizations of ideas and feelings
> which constitute the individual.[17]

Any consideration of human social authorship

must take two factors into account: man as an organism

possessing basic instinctual drives; and man as an

organism that learns from others. Another way of

putting this is that man experiences that he both <u>is</u>

a body and <u>has</u> a body susceptible to direction and con-

trol. The link between individual psychology and

social activity and consciousness is understood there-

fore through the influence that "significant others"

have on a child's developing sense of "self" (identity)

in the "socialization process." Society and the in-

dividual are related through the body; the former

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[16]Berger and Luckmann, pp. 60-1.

[17]Sapir, p. 512.

attempts to direct and control what the latter possesses.

> The formation within consciousness of
> the generalized other marks a decisive phase
> in socialization. It implies the internalization
> of society as such and of the objective reality
> established therein, and at the same time, the
> subjective establishment of a coherent and
> continuous identity. Society, identity and
> reality are subjectively crystallized in the
> same process of internalization.[18]

> The child does not internalize the world
> of his significant others as one of many
> possible worlds. He internalizes it as the
> world. ... It is for this reason that the
> world internalized in primary socialization
> is so much more firmly entrenched in consciousness
> than the worlds internalized in secondary
> socializations.[19]

At the most basic level "primary socialization" concerns how the child learns to respond to its body and through that how it eventually responds to others. The human mind, the "learning center," thus becomes the tool employed by society to control individual behavior. In a very real sense the individual's psyche is the most social part of his being. It is in this respect that psychoanalysis speaks to social organization and activity. Different cultures may shape their members' attitudes in different ways, but the individual-psychological basis of that process remains the same. "Society," then, is a dialectic animated by tension be-

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[18]Berger and Luckmann, p. 133.

[19]Ibid., p. 134.

tween man, the animal body, and man, the social being.

> There is an ongoing dialectic, which comes
> into being with the very first phases of
> socialization and continues to unfold through-
> out the individual's existence in society,
> between each human animal and his socio-
> historical situation. Externally, it is a
> dialectic between the individual animal and
> the social world. Internally, it is a dialectic
> between the individual's biological substratum
> and his socially produced entity.[20]

If we adopt a sociological perspective of the

sort that Berger and Luckmann outline, we may meaning-

fully consider society and mass consciousness from a

psychoanalytical viewpoint. Mass or collective con-

sciousness is the basis of "social cohesion;" it arises

when individuals share subjective experiences of

self and others and create a reservoir of common

meanings. Most social scientists would call this

aggregate of subjective experiences and meanings

"objective" society. By so doing they mislead or

distract social inquiry from the causes -- the

origins -- of social behavior. Their analyses often

describe a great deal, but explain nothing. They fail

to appreciate that "society" and "social behavior"

are the result of a process defined by internalization

and institutionalization ("socialization") that begins

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[20] Ibid., p. 180.

with the individual child in an environment containing
significant others. Psychologically, "socialization"
means "growing up;" the individual shares and in-
creasingly partakes in the social dimensions of
consciousness and activity.

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Once the individual-human origins of
society are acknowledged the appropriateness and
potential of psychoanalytic inquiry into social activity
becomes apparent. In surroundings less imposing than
those of the university do we not, as a matter of
course, recognize the mass-psychological character
of society? Sit-ins, boycotts and picket-lines arouse
a "nation's conscience." Canadians assert the desirability
of a "national identity" distinct from the United
States. And "national trauma" easily rolls off the
tongue when we describe the assassination of President
Kennedy or the "FLQ Crisis." Whether or not History,
Sociology or Political Science recognize, appreciate,
and approve from afar, society and history is a
psychological experience to those who live in it.
Thus, if we wish to gauge the meaning of past events,
we must look to the psychological experience of those
who lived them.

To be convincing the psycho-historian must
allow the content of historical materials to dictate
his interpretation. Psychoanalysis is the only psychology
to have followed this rule from the beginning. Whatever
may be its inadequacies, psychoanalytic theory is
derived from clinical experience "and not fabricated
out of thin air or thought up over the writing desk."[21]
Psychoanalysis is the only major inductive psychology;
it is bound to be compatible and complimentary to
inductive historical and social investigation.

Psycho-history, then, is an interdis-
ciplinary investigation in which the content of
history demands enrichment from psychoanalytical inter-
pretation. There are two types of psycho-historical
investigations: analysis of important historical
persons; and analysis of important historical events.
(This is an artificial distinction for the two are
obviously mixed when history is viewed as a human
product. It does, however, reflect two different focal
points in most psycho-historical investigation to date.)
Psychoanalyzing important persons to better understand
their influence on history (an endeavor which I prefer
calling "psycho-biographical history") seems to be
the predominant form of psycho-history. In this

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[21]Sigmund Freud, cited by Paul Roazen, Freud:
Political and Social Thought (New York: Vintage Books,
1970), p. 4.

category are works like Erikson's <u>Young Man Luther</u>,
Freud and Bullitt's <u>Woodrow Wilson</u>, Alexander and
Juliette George's <u>Wilson and Colonel House</u>, Walter
Langer's World War II study of <u>The Mind of Adolph
Hitler</u>, Freud's <u>Leonardo da Vinci</u>, and, most recently,
Nancy Clinch's <u>The Kennedy Neurosis</u> and Bruce Mazlish's
<u>In Search of Nixon</u>. Works that psychanalytically
treat historical events are fewer in number but are
equally suggestive for understanding the meaning of
history and the collective experience of society.
Robert Jay Lifton's studies of post-Hiroshima Japan
(<u>Death In Life</u>) and China under Mao Tse-tung (<u>Revo-
lutionary Immortality</u>), Michael Rogin's work on
Jacksonian America's "Indian Problem" (soon to be
published as a book, I believe), Michael Walzer's
study of the Puritan Revolution in England, <u>The
Revolution of the Saints</u>, and Frantz Fanon's <u>The
Wretched of the Earth</u> are psycho-historical works
of this latter type -- as is this thesis.

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The methodology in all works of psycho-
history poses problems for those who would seek
verification for their conclusions. In contrast to
social-scientific methods, a psycho-historian does
not strictly accumulate data to verify certain pre-
conceived hypotheses. He is writing an explanation or

interpretation of history that is justified by his
material. This distinction is not one of semantics,
but is crucial for the method of my analysis. The
difference is rooted in the epistemological assump-
tions of each approach. Verification, as defined in
the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, is a process
that makes a claim to certainty, accuracy and truthful-
ness through the demonstration and comparison of
evidence or data.[22] Justification, on the other
hand, is a process that is not quite so sure of it-
self or its findings. It is the demonstration that
a conclusion is reasonable, just, proper and adequate.[23]
There is no claim of certainty, nor is there a single
method by which one achieves justification. The concept
of verification is imbued with the belief in objective
knowledge, and it is therefore a process that seeks
universally acceptable truths. Justification, however,
is a process imbued with a belief in the subjective
origins of truth. It relies on the individual or
the collective human experience of its evidence to
indicate its correctness, truthfulness or appropriate-

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[22] "Verify: 1.b. To assert as true or cer-
tain; 2. To show to be true by demonstration or evidence;
3. To be proved true or correct by the result or event,
or by some confirming fact or circumstance; 4. To
ascertain or test the accuracy or correctness of [some-
thing], especially by examination or by comparison with
known data or some standard." The Shorter Oxford English
Dictionary (3rd Rev. ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956),
p. 2347.

[23] "Justify: 3. To show to be just or in the
right... ; 6. To show or maintain the justice or reason-

ness. With such an assumption no claim for universal
acceptability is possible. It need only be acceptable
to the particular "jurymen" who share the assumptions
upon which the investigation is predicated. Where
verification is "scientific," justification is
"humanistic."

> /Psycho-historians/ have a broad view of
> American political life to present and,
> just as important, to document convincingly
> -- in a way that will make the reader under-
> stand what he is reading and feel satisfied
> that a sincere effort has been made to start
> with facts, assemble them to a point of view,
> and present the latter as that and only that,
> not as the answer to a "problem."[24]

There is another important distinction
between these two processes. Verification contains
moral comment and criticism __implicitly__. It recognizes
that scientific inquiry has certain assumptions about
the nature of physical and social phenomena. But these
assumptions do not become an explicit part of every
scientific inquiry. Justification, however, is
__explicitly__ value-laden and "moral," for it is based
on man's subjective notion of what is just, reasonable
and proper. It recognizes man as the originator, or
rather appreciator, of what is correct and true and

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ableness of; to defend as right and proper; 7.a. To
show adequate grounds for... ." __Ibid.__, p. 1076.

[24] Robert Coles, "Shrinking History -- Part
I," __The New York Review of Books__, XX, No. 2 (February 22,
1973), p. 19.

in so doing recognizes him as a moral critic. Its
assumptions about man and nature must be explicit
in order for the method to make sense and seem
justified.

With these distinctions in mind, we may
understand the goal of verification as description
and prediction, that of justification as explanation
and interpretation.

Psycho-historical analysis must be justi-
fied -- not verified -- for three basic reasons. First,
it seeks evidence of covert and symbolic significance.
Social knowledge is not objective knowledge, but is
subjectively perceived. Second, psycho-historical
analysis focuses on the individual as the author of
social truth. It therefore requires individuals to
receive and appreciate its findings. Findings have
no objective or conceptual existence apart from
individual experience, as in chemistry or physics.
And third, psycho-historical analysis is an explicit
moral exercise. It has a standard of "health" and a
standard of "illness." Its vocabulary -- "repression,"
"frustration," "anxiety," "envy," "love," "hate,"
"guilt" -- carries heavy moral overtones. Psychoanalysis
recognizes and studies man as a moral actor. The human
drama needs him as its moral critic.

Justifying a psycho-historical analysis involves establishing "meaning links" between social and psychological events. These links must be reasonable, adequate and proper, but need not be validated to the point of certainty. My responsibility as author, then, is to present material that warrants the use of psycho-analytic categories of interpretation. But the reader also has a responsibility: to appreciate the assumptions, limitations and methodological consequences of this mode of inquiry. Neither responsibility is easy to bear, for between author and audience lies the problem of language.

Language plays an important role in personality development as a <u>socializing tool</u>. As a result there are certain inherent problems in using language as a <u>critical tool</u> for probing the meanings and origins of individual and social conscious-ness. Essentially the problem is one of trying to use the socially functional language which I have learned (been socialized into) to explain and interpret phenomenon originating in individual, pre-social experience.

The language I was trained in is the lan-guage of the rational-economic mind: "modern language." Although words are symbolic forms by which man expresses

his ideas and emotions, modern language generally has narrowed definitions and placed them in a logical, rational sequence. This is partially a reflection of the ever-increasing post-Enlightenment demand for precise, "objective" knowledge. Communication is supposedly facilitated by the unambiguous, rather than by the word or concept with a host of meanings. The logical, rational procession of language -- from words to sentences to paragraphs to chapters to dissertations ad infinitum -- is a line in which separate definitons componentialize units of meaning to foster even further clarification and elaboration. This language is more easily adapted to analyses of form and verification than those of interpretation and justification.

Paradoxically, the more scientific and rational our language becomes the further it removes itself from its experiential and symbolic origins.[25] Thus, visual imagery in language is diminished as it becomes more and more abstract and complex, and this may obscure meaning and ultimately prevent communication. The paradox is that the scientifically motivated desire for precision, definition and comprehension usually promotes greater confusion and misunderstanding instead. An illustration on this point is found in

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25 See Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), Vol. I, in which the origin of language is considered as a symbolism which facilitated communication of concrete experience and the emotions occasioned by it.

George Orwell's essay "Politics and the English
Language" where he offers a passage from Eccle-
siastes and then its scientific-rational counter-
part:

> "I returned and saw under the sun, that
> the race is not to the swift, nor the battle
> to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise,
> nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor
> yet favour to men of skill but time and chance
> happeneth to them all."
> "Objective consideration of contemporary
> phenomena compels the conclusion that success
> or failure in competitive activities exhibits
> no tendency to be comensurate with innate
> capacity, but that a considerable element of
> the unpredictable must invariably be taken
> into account."
>
> It will be seen that I have not made a full
> translation. The beginning and ending of the
> sentence follow the original meaning fairly
> closely, but in the middle the concrete
> illustrations /visual, experiential imagery/
> -- race, battle, bread -- dissolve into the
> vague phrase "success or failure in com-
> petitive activities." This has to be so, be-
> cause no modern writer of the kind I am
> discussing -- no one capable of using phrases
> like "objective consideration of contemporary
> phenomena" -- would ever tabulate his thoughts
> in that precise and detailed way. The whole
> tendency of modern prose is away from con-
> creteness.[26]

Modern language is problematic for a
psycho-historical analysis because psychoanalysis
seeks the meaning of overt activity in covert experience
and fantasy. It seeks the meaning of objectified

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[26]George Orwell, "Politics and the English
Language," The Collected Essays of George Orwell, ed.
Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (New York: Harcourt, Brace
and World, Inc., 1968), IV, p. 133.

social consciousness in the subjective experiences
of individuals. The problem of origins and meaning in
language and society are parallel; each is a part of
the general problem of psychologically interpreting
the social. The importance of visual-experiential
imagery for psychoanalysis is seen in the importance
of dream interpretation and verbalization in the
individual theraputic situation. It is when psycho-
analysis "goes social" that it encounters the problem
of a macroanalysis which must explain the social
through individual-experiential origins. A language
in which abstraction orients us away from those
origins encounters a similar difficulty. Psychoanalytic
inquiry into social origins reasserts the importance
of individual authorship in the social dialectic.
Modern language must also be reoriented and, in so
doing, man must reassert his authorship and power over
the use of words.

> What is above all needed is to let the meaning
> choose the word, and not the other way about.
> In prose, the worst thing one can do with
> words is to surrender to them.[27]

But words do not acquire meaning on their
own. Meaning is a function of past and present social
usage. If man were to arbitrarily assert his power over

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[27]Ibid., p. 138.

meaning without regard to the social we would end up

in the same morass in which Alice found herself

while talking to Humpty Dumpty in Through the

Looking-Glass.

> "When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty
> said, in a rather scornful tone, "it means
> just what I choose it to mean -- neither
> more nor less."
> "The question is," said Alice, "whether
> you can make words mean so many different
> things."
> "The question is," said Humpty Dumpty,
> "which is to be master -- that's all."[28]

Humpty Dumpty's position is perplexing because he

ignores the social function of language, but

accurately points out its individual authorship.

Thus Humpty indirectly raises the broader issue:

the implications of individual authorship of society

for social analysis.

The problem of historical and social

analysis is the problem of historical and social

transcendence: who "is to be master?". How can man

critically use the social tool, language? Can it be

used to analyse, interpret and possibly transcend the

social dimension of reality? I believe a positive

answer to these questions requires careful balancing.

It requires a recognition of the individual and social

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[28]Lewis Carrol, Alice's Adventures in Wonder-
land and Through the Looking-Glass (New York: New
American Library, 1960), p. 186.

dimensions of that tool, a recognition of its dialec-
tical nature. But given the ever-diminishing
position of the individual vis-a-vis language (and
society), what is first needed is a clear reassertion
of the individual as author, as creator. So we must
use without abusing language. We must appreciate its
social role without unquestioning submission to current
objectified forms of social domination over the
individual.

> So one tricks words, because if one
> does not one will be tricked by them. As is
> the case with all institutionalized systems,
> one has to counterplay the system's game;
> firstly, to elude it in personal terms,
> secondly, to transcend it in historical
> terms.[29]

Transcendence here is going beyond or
behind the literal. Transcendence is a recogniton
that words do not always mean what they say; that
they may carry multiple meanings including, perhaps,
the opposite of the literal. In a psycho-historical
analysis multiple meanings are crucial because of the
dualities which psychoanalytic theory posits in the
human psyche: love and hate, envy and gratitude, ag-
gression and submission, ultimately, Eros and Thanatos.

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[29]David Cooper, _The Death of the Family_
(New York: Vintage Books, 1971), p. 30.

Like all true dialectics, the existence of one
implies the existence of the other in some form
somewhere.

I do not intend to abuse language too
severely in this study. However, I cannot allow its
modern, rational-economic character to limit or direct
the inquiry. For all their sharp precision and keen
definition, the words and concepts of modern social
analysis are the dullest tools with which to dissect
society. They are dull because they cannot critically
analyse or communicate beyond the social-literal. They
are a part of the very subject which they hope to
analyse. By rejecting the importance of subjective
individual symbolism and imagery, modern social science
rejects the possibility of determining social origin and
meaning. In this dissertation I consider the visual
and verbal imagery of American culture in an effort
to give meaning to American history and inter-cultural
actions. The myth and folk-tale, therefore, may be more
revealing than the treaty or constitution. Meaning is
found in fiction as well as fact.

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Movement defines the structure of this
investigation. Beyond Chapter II, which is a brief
introduction to the psychoanalytic concepts employed,

we shall travel from East to West, from Puritan settler,
to frontier soldier, from White Skins to Red Skins,
from general observation to specific case, from fact,
to fiction and back again. What I have tried to do
is weave the external (social) movement of America
into the internal fabric of psychic conflict. The
structure reflects my belief that America's historical
"motor" is driven by Furies of persistent, unresolved
psychological ambiguity. Beneath social locomotion
old antagonisms remain at work in America's psychic
boiler.

        Chapter III sets out the general problem of
the study in the first few pages. It then considers
the Puritan experience in America as the first psycho-
logical crisis affecting American identity. Chapter IV
considers America's rebellion from Great Britain as the
second major mass-psychological crisis affecting
American self-definition. Chapter IV then psychoanal-
ytically considers Western expansion and Manifest Des-
tiny. Chapter V is a study of the literature of the
frontier which elaborates the themes of American
identity presented in Chapters III and IV. Chapter
VI considers the psychological significance of the
Indian in America's search for a viable national
identity. Here America's ambivalent experience of the

West and its experience of the Indian are joined,
providing a deeper meaning for each. Chapter VII
is the analysis of America's repression of the Sioux
Ghost Dance in 1890. It is a case study in which
general psycho-historical themes are seen in the
events and statements of an episode in American-
Indian history. By interpreting the Ghost Dance and
Wounded Knee massacre in this fashion it will obtain
a meaning that extends far beyond a simple event at
the end of America's frontier history.

CHAPTER II.

Introduction to Psychoanalytic Concepts:
Psychological Origins and Collective
Consciousness.

This chapter is meant to be a brief in-
troduction to some of the psychoanalytic concepts
(the theory of my interpretive framework) used in the
rest of this study. I wish to reiterate that psycho-
analysis does not claim that infantile sexuality is
the sole determinant of later behavior, but simply
points to its existence as one powerful influence.

The human psyche may be understood from
four psychoanalytic perspectives: topographical,
dynamic, economic and structural.[1] Topographically,
Freud divided the human mind into three regions:
conscious, preconscious and unconscious. Consciousness
is awareness, preconsciousness is that which can come
into awareness without difficulty (resistance), and
unconsciousness is that which is prevented from reaching
awareness by inner resistances (blocks). The dynamics
of the human psyche described by psychoanalytic theory

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[1]This preliminary discussion of the four
psychoanalytic perspectives borrows heavily from Paul
Roazen's discussion of metapsychology in Freud: Political
and Social Thought (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), pp.
66-75.

involve drives (mental forces), conflicts and com-
promises. In this category we have man's biological
(instinctual) drives and his numerous defenses for
avoiding anxiety (which is a sign, not a cause, of
mental conflict). Sexual impulses and their gratification,
repression or sublimation are all encompassed by
this category. The mind may also be described eco-
nomically to give the energy behind dynamic forces
proportional or relative strength. Concepts in this
category, like "cathexis" or "trauma," refer to
the investment of psychological energy in certain
objects or the intensity of a psychological experience.
Finally, there are Freud's well-known structural cate-
gories: id, ego and superego. The id is the repository
of the instincts. It is the oldest part of the psyche
and is unconscious. Its content may be revealed in
dreams that are analyzed on the psychiatric couch.
Libido is the sexual energy contained in the id. The
ego is an organization which tries to mediate between
the instinctual impulses of the id and the restrictions
imposed by external reality. It derives its energy
from sublimated sexual energy and is therefore in an
antagonistic relationship with the id. In addition to
defense mechanisms (dynamic), the ego consists of
memory, perception and motility. The superego is

the last structure to develop in the psyche. It roughly

corresponds to "conscience," or "guilt," but may be

more specifically designated as <u>restrictive</u> <u>conscience</u>

occasioned by the projection of the child's aggression

and the inculcation of parental (social) standards.

Guilt and the superego will be more fully discussed

below in relation to the Oedipus Complex.

What follows is a discussion of the way

these aspects of the human mind influence personality

development and social behavior. Any psychoanalytic

discussion of relations between mother, father and

child must focus necessarily on the formation and

influence of the Oedipus Complex, the rivalry with and

overthrow of problematic fathers by their sons in which

Freud saw the origin of society. The authenticity

of the situation antedates Freud from Sophocles to

Shakespeare; the Oedipus Complex is a meaning-

complex for both individual and society.

Mother.

Your mother's ghost stands
at your shoulder,
        Face like ice -- a little bit colder.
                        -- David Crosby.

        Mama don't go
        Daddy come home.
                -- John Lennon.

The initial familial influence on the develop-

ment of self-consciousness in the child is mother. She

_is_ the world for the foetus and for the infant during

the first few months after birth. Appreciation of

the importance of this early relationship for later

social development was not Freud's discovery exclusively.

DeTocqueville wrote in 1835:

> ... we must watch the infant in his mother's
> arms; we must see the first images which the
> external world casts upon the dark mirror
> of his mind; the first occurrences which he
> witnesses; we must hear the first words which
> awaken the sleeping powers of thought, and
> stand by its earliest efforts if we would
> understand the prejudices, the habits, and
> the passions which will rule his life. The
> entire man is, so to speak, to be seen in
> the cradle of the child.[2]

But Freud and his followers defined this relationship

in clearer terms than anyone before them. The need for

self preservation is a basic human and animal in-

stinct[3] and the infantile dependence on the mother

therefore takes on dramatic dimensions. Providing or

withholding nourishment to the infant from the mother's

breast becomes in infantile fantasy a struggle be-

tween life and death, love and hate; for the infant

is only experiencing life orally at this time. The

child feels that mother is the "source of nourishment

and, therefore, in a deeper sense, of life itself."[4]

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[2]Alexis DeTocqueville, _Democracy in America_
(New York: Schocken Books, 1961), I, p. 12.

[3]Erich Fromm, _Escape From Freedom_ (New York:
Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1941), p.17.

[4]Melanie Klein, _Envy and Gratitude_ (London:
Tavistock Publishers, Ltd., 1957), p. 3.

It is this relationship which provides an initial

conditioning for all later sexual attachments,

attachments which evoke the emotional experience

of unity, security, belonging and succor.

> ... it is the original biological tie of
> the child to the mother and also of the
> mother to the child that forms the barricade
> to sexual reality and leads to an indissoluble
> sexual fixation and to an incapacity to enter
> into other relations.[5]

When nourishment is withheld by the

mother the child experiences his first ambivalence

toward the world beyond himself. He fantasizes the

destruction of the frustrating breast during the

internalization of suckling. This infantile experience

is the basis for an early form of moral judgement.

> If he loses the love of another person upon
> whom he is dependent, he also ceases to be
> protected from a variety of dangers. Above
> all he is exposed to the danger that this
> stronger person will show his superiority
> in the form of punishment. At the beginning,
> therefore, what is bad is whatever causes one
> to be threatened with loss of love.[6]

When the child finally emerges from the world

of the mother "it becomes aware of being alone, of

being an entity separate from all others. This

separation ... creates a feeling of powerlessness

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[5]Wilhelm Reich, _The Mass Psychology of Fascism_ (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1970), pp. 56-7.

[6]Sigmund Freud, _Civilization and its Discontents_ (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1961), p. 71.

and anxiety."[7] It can no longer internalize the love (and fear) of mother but must earn and trust in that love. The ambivalent attitude established during its oral experience of mother must be split and a positive, exclusive love experienced toward her in order to gain some reassurance while dealing with the hostile world. Ultimately, mother becomes an idealized love-object toward whom all good feelings of security, unity and belonging are directed.

These are the first important events in which the establishment of a positive or negative view of self is immanent. If the infant is unable to secure a love relationship with its mother -- is unable to distinguish between the "good breast" and the "bad breast" in Melanie Klein's terminology -- then its experience of the world will be one of fear and insecurity, and its experience of self will be one of powerlessness and anxiety. Here, in a very primitive form, we find the seeds of social-self dialectics: what is perceived in the environment affects how the individual experiences himself, and this, in turn, affects how the individual will perceive existing and future environments. As will be

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[7]Fromm, p. 29.

noted throughout this study, emphatic statements
about the "other" are always statements about one's
"self," in some sense.

Father,

The impossibility of consumating maternal
love beyond the oral stage provides the emotional
catalyst that shapes the Oedipus Complex and the
relationship between child and father. It is the
father or father-representative who next influences
the developing sense of "self" in the child. The
father provides or represents protection from the
threats of the outside world. But there is a price
exacted on sons for this protection. In the patriarchal
family (the type characteristic of Western society) the
price is sexual repression,[8] that is, the sequestering
of the libidinal feelings which the son experiences
toward his mother.[9]

The child's dilemma with father is an
inevitable consequence of his increasing awareness
that there is more in the world than mother. The father
figure is not simply a second, neutral entity, however.

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[8]Reich, p. 29.

[9]In focusing on the Oedipal situation as the
origin of society psychoanalytic theory gives social
aggression a decidedly masculine character. Whether or
not this formulation stands the test of cross-cultural
analysis, it does reflect the experiential fact of mas-
culine domination in Western society and has relevance
for this inquiry.

In the patriarchal family he also has a love re-
lationship with mother and therefore "claims" a portion
of her love and attention. Previously, in his more
limited state of perception, the child was only aware
of his relationship to mother and experienced her love
as total and exclusive. His awareness of the father
as a "claimant" on mother is the first rudimentary
awareness of others in a social context (i.e. a
context -- "reality" -- in which conflicting
claims and interests impose limitations on desires)
and his response is one of rage and a primitive form
of jealousy.

The Oedipal rivalry between son and father
for the love of mother presents the child with his
first social encounter in which self-support -- ego
affirmation -- and self-definition are central. He
is now alone in the world, with his father above him
as a model of all power, protection and masculine
success. His model is his rival, however. .The son
is torn between respect and submission to the father
on the one hand, and the desire to possess (in the
person of mother) that power and respect for himself
on the other. This latter desire may be seen as his
wish to become the **father of himself.** The attempt or
desire to become the father of oneself is ultimately

directed toward a recapturing of the primal experience
of unity and security. The child's ego is initially
naked and without substance. The only support available
by way of masculine "clothing" is possessed by father
who is also loved by mother. An attack on father is
an attack on one who is hated, envied and loved. The
psychoanalytical meaning of patriarchal social for-
mations is understood in light of an ambivalent
fraternal-paternal relationship which centers around
libidinal strivings toward mother.

The repression of the son's maternally
directed libidinal impulses by the father is oc-
casioned by three interrelated imperatives: securing
familial-structural relationships; inculcating proper
role identification; and securing obedience and res-
pect for authority. Each has meaning for society.
In securing the structure of the patriarchal family
the father achieves legitimacy as a "claimant" on
maternal love and attention. But more importantly,
he also establishes himself as the only "claimant"
legitimately able to consumate that love. Thus, in
sexually neutralizing the mother-son relationship
the father at once establishes an appreciation of
the incest taboo, entrenches monogamy, and becomes

the father of himself, thereby fulfilling his own

childhood fantasies to some extent. Each of these

elements contributes to stablizing structure and authority.

Repression of the child's libidinal impulses

provides an early inculcation of an ideology in

which sexuality is equalted with sin and vulgarity.

> .The Dionysian becomes "sinful yearning,"
> which patriarchal culture can conceive of
> only as something chaotic and "dirty." Sur-
> rounded by and imbued with human sexual
> structures that have become distorted and
> lascivious, patriarchal man is shackled for
> the first time in an ideology in which sexual
> and dirty, sexual and vulgar or demonic, be-
> come inseparable associations.[10]

The development of an ideology in which sex, dirt

and vulgarity are equated is further reinforced during

toilet training when the child encounters his second

stern prohibition. The incest taboo and toilet training

are the child's earliest experience of the need to

control his bodily impulses. The close relationship

between phallic and anal control is based on more

than just the bodily proximity of those sphincters.

It is founded on experiences affecting ego development

and self-definition. Control in each case is established

in response to external parental authority and often

occasions the experience of guilt. The outcome is

a primitive value system in which sex and soiling are

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[10]Reich, p. 88.

"bad." Furthermore, since each is an exercise in self-control, self-definition and identity are tied even closer to submission to restrictions imposed by external authority. Obedience to social authority is first inculcated by parents demanding a "clean" body and a "clean" mind.

Submission to patriarchal authority is closely tied to sons' emotional identification <u>with</u> that authority, with the acceptance of its values and its goals. Identification is problematic, however: sons share the values and attitudes of masculine authority but are not that authority themselves. Concretely, they must aspire to possess the power and authority of the father themselves if they identify with the father at all; they must aspire to become the fathers of themselves. Most importantly, the idea of father as the one who consummatesmaternal love animates the sons' fantasy of recapturing exclusive, pre-Oedipal maternal love. It is this complex of masculine imperatives and maternal goals which creates the classic Oedipal "political" event: the overthrow of the father by a fraternal conspiracy to recapture mother.

The Oedipus Complex is a central psychoanalytic concept for establishing the influence of individual personality on social consciousness and activity. The conceptualization of Oedipal conflict

is designed to symbolically give meaning to the
social experience of conflict and submission to
authority. It also gives meaning to particular modes
of environmental aggression. Bound up with Oedipal
masculine identification and self assertion is an
ever-present orientation toward maternal security,
warmth and succor. This is present even as one asserts
an independent stance and identity. The activity of
men in "taking" things from their environment as part
of securing identity is thus understood as an attempt
to achieve primal security via object cathexis. Object
cathexis is the internalization of external objects
invested with libidinal energy. These objects become
crucial for fulfilling identity because they "contain" a
part of the self in the energy invested. Objects must
be internalized -- actually or symbolically consumed --
to make oneself "whole." The original object of cathexis
is the maternal breast. All later cathecting activity
is a throw-back to the primal experience of suckling.
When "becoming the father of oneself" is characterized
by "taking" (object cathexis) it reflects the unconscious
desire for a pre-self-conscious state of maternal bliss,
a state without responsibility or conflict.

> ... identification with the father involves
> a transformation of guilt into aggression.
> ... Identification with the father is a way
> of denying dependence on the mother. (And,
> like all sustained denials, simultaneously
> affirms it; the classic Oedipus complex is

a superstructure based on relations to the
"pre-Oedipal" mother.) "Taking" is a denial
of dependence, and thus transforms the guilt
of indebtedness into aggression; and the
masculinity complex, the obsessive denial of
femininity, is inherently aggressive.[11]

Oedipal activity is generated by the sexual
energy sequestered in response to patriarchal authority.
This energy is then directed toward the father in
an aggressive act of rebellion. But the father is
not an object of pure hatred; he is loved even while
being hated. Thus, the "crime" of usurpation can not
be experienced as pure triumph. Guilt over the crime
is established in a structure of internalized authority:
the superego.

> ... we know of two origins of the sense of
> guilt: one arising from fear of authority,
> and the other, later on, arising from fear
> of the super-ego. The first insists upon a
> renunciation of instinctual satisfactions;
> the second, as well as doing this, presses
> for punishment, since the continuance of the
> forbidden wishes cannot be concealed from
> the super-ego. ... Thus, in spite of the re-
> nunciation that has been made, a sense of guilt
> comes about... . Instinctual renunciation
> now no longer has a liberating effect; vir-
> tuous continence is no longer rewarded with
> the assurance of love. A threatened external
> happiness -- loss of love and punishment on
> the part of external authority -- has been
> exchanged for a permanent internal unhappiness,
> for the tension of the sense of guilt.[12]

The sons got the prize of potency but lost freedom from

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[11]Norman O. Brown, _Life Against Death; the
Psychoanalytical Meaning of History_ (Middletown, Conn.:
Wesleyan University Press, 1959), p. 280.

[12]Freud, _Civilization_, pp. 74-5.

guilt when they experienced remorse and allowed the source of punishment to relocate from external authority (father) to internal authority (superego). Thus, the prize -- masculine identity -- could not be triumphantly experienced. The power and security of the father proved elusive.

One dimension of Oedipal guilt is castration anxiety: the sons' fear of having their genitals harmed as punishment for the forbidden libidinal-maternal goal of usurpation. Castration anxiety is a sign of insecure masculinity and unconsummatedlove with mother or a mother-substitute. As a component of the Oedipal experience it has roots sunk in the primal experience of separation anxiety.

> Object loss as the precondition of anxiety
> now has some further implications. For the
> next transformation of anxiety, the castra-
> tion anxiety which makes its appearance in
> the phallic phase, is a separation anxiety
> also, and is similarly conditioned. The
> danger here is separation from the genital.
> ... The high narcissistic value attaching
> to the penis may be referable to the fact
> that the possession of this organ contains
> a guaranty of reunion with the mother (or
> mother substitute) in the act of coitus.
> Deprivation of this member is tantamount
> to a second separation from the mother, and
> thus has again the significance (as in the
> case of birth) of being delivered over help-
> less to the unpleasurable tension arising from
> the non-gratification of a need.[13]

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[13]Sigmund Freud, The Problem of Anxiety, trans. Henry Alden Bunker, M.D. (New York: The Psycho-analytic Quarterly Press and W.W. Norton and Co., 1963), p. 78.

The superego, as a part of masculine personality structure, causes problems when it requires the repression or sublimation of one aspect of the masculine role (maternal lust) in order to secure another (paternal authority). Guilt in this case is restrictive. It is a prophylactic experience that prevents repetition of the primal crime of usurpation. Guilt preserves the status quo and serves authority.

> /Remorse over the crime/ set up the super-
> ego by identification with the father; it
> gave that agency the father's power, as
> though a punishment for the deed of aggression
> they had carried out against him, and it
> created the restrictions which were intended
> to prevent a repetition of the deed.[14]

The events and attitudes which characterize the Oedipal paradigm -- authority, submission, rebellion, guilt, aggression, etc. -- have experiential parallels in social life. Indeed, the force of Freud's symbolism lies precisely in its interpretive capacity for perplexing social phenomenon.[15] In society as well as in the family one experiences the realities upon which psychoanalytic theory is founded. The more we identify with authority --

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[14]Freud, Civilization, p. 79.

[15] It is ironic that the social implications of Freud's Oedipal formulations are in some ways more directly represented by Aeschylus' concerns (order and authority) than by Sophocles\ (human knowledge and insight). In the Oresteia Aeschylus seeks to disentangle the coils of unnatural disorder, chaos and ambiguity occasioned by infanticide, matricide and regicide. His resolution in "The Eumenides" installs (internalizes) the Furies, a rough Greek approximation of the superego, in the Athenian system of justice. By linking conscience and judgement in the homicide court, the Areiopagus, conflicts of the

whether personified by our fathers or symbolized by
our governments -- the more difficult it is to rebel
without a sense of guilt or remorse. Where hatred and
rejection are mixed with respect and identification
ambivalence makes aggression unfulfilling and guilt
inescabable.

> Whether one has killed one's father or has
> abstained from doing so is not really the
> decisive thing. One is bound to feel guilty
> in either case, for the sense of guilt is
> an expression of the conflict due to am-
> bivalence, of the eternal struggle between
> Eros and the instinct of destruction or
> death. This conflict is set going as soon
> as men are faced with the task of living
> together.[16]

The primal crime therefore has social significance for
what it suggests about our subjective experience of
others in the environment, and for what it implicitly
suggests about our perception and experience of self.

When the individual subjective experience
of self and others is shared by a large number of
persons in society (i.e., if men in groups experience
ambivalence, hostility, aggression, etc. toward the
same significant environmental objects) the psychology

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private world are resolved in a way that serves and
bolsters public authority. Although certain elements
of the Oresteia do not conform to the Oedipal con-
figuration (matricide instead of patricide; remorse
over a murdered mother instead of a father), the essen-
tial thrust of the plays elevates the seriousness of
paternal violations above maternal violations. Apollo
declares: "The mother is no parent of that which is
called her child, but only the nurse of the new-planted
seed that grows. The parent is he who mounts."; and
Athene judges: "There is no mother anywhere who gave me
birth, and, but for marriage, I am always for the male
with all my heart, and strongly on my father's side." The

of the individual has relevance and applicability

to the psychology of the group. If manipulation of

others and the environment persist through time and are

part of a process which secures masculine identity,

then we may expect it to be a reflection of ambivalence

and an unfulfilled experience of self. Here unfulfilled

self or identity is a function of the guilt experienced

in the very activity in which one is engaged. The ac-

tivity -- because it is unfulfilling yet crucial for

establishing identity -- is never-ending, "self-per-

petuating." Social activity of this type is a process

of always becoming a man without ever fully arriving.

Triumphant masculinity is the ever-receding goal.

One may regard individual or social ac-

tivity which possesses these characteristics as "in-

fantile," "pre-adolescent" or "adolescent."[17] I am

not saying that all social activity will exhibit these

characteristics at all times. Certainly, a look at

biologically "mature" individuals will reveal many

Apollonian vision, so decried by Nietzsche in The Birth
of Tragedy, has been inherited by the modern world. It
is the ascendance of patriarchal order and ethics.
/Quotes in this footnote are from Aeschylus, "The
Eumenides," The Complete Greek Tragedies, ed. David
Greene and Richmond Lattimore (New York: Modern Li-
brary, 1942), pp. 177, 180./

[16]Freud, Civilization, p. 79.

[17]There is implicit here a notion of "maturity"
as the individual or collective subjective experience of
a "whole," "achieved," "acceptable," "fulfilled" self.
The problem of defining maturity is important from a
theoretical standpoint, but its treatment here would far
exceed the already broad bounds of this study.

activities which do not reflect anxiety or elicit

regressive ("immature") responses. There will be

some, however, that do.

> Maturation may, indeed perhaps usually does,
> promote or permit psychological development,
> but it need not. Both folk wisdom and
> clinical studies indicate that there are
> physically mature individuals with the psy-
> chology of children, and precocious biological
> children who possess adult developmental
> characteristics. In a phrase: Maturation and
> development are empirically correlated, but
> not necessarily related. The virtual inevita-
> bility of physiological maturation therefore
> does not demonstrate the inevitability of
> psychological development.[18]

Certain activities and attitudes -- especially ones

of ambivalence and restlessness -- may therefore reveal

problems in individual or collective self-definition and

identity. For example, in this study I argue that the

settlement of the Western frontier and the "civilization"

of the Indian are singularly important because they pos-

sessed these characteristics and reflected a basic

identity problem for American society.

Anxiety and Society.

What I have outlined above are the earliest

infantile conflicts which may affect later personality

development. The emotional impact of these conflicts may

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[18]Kenneth Keniston, "Psychological Develop-
ment and Historical Change," The Journal of Interdisci-
plinary History, II, No. 2 (Autumn, 1971), p. 334.

lie dormant for a period of time, only to well up later on in response to environmental stimuli. Since this study primarily considers the psychological significance of certain environmental events for American consciousness, it is necessary to consider briefly what "signs" will be meaningful from a psychoanalytical viewpoint.

The most important "sign" that relates to the problem of self and identity is <u>anxiety</u>. At the outset, anxiety should be distinguished from another unpleasant emotional experience: <u>fear</u>. Fear is generally a response to physical threat, such as when someone holds a knife at one's throat. It may also occur when there is extreme or prolonged denial of basic needs of the body, such as starvation, dehydration or overexposure due to lack of shelter. Fear involves pure physiological threat. Anxiety, on the other hand, is a psychological response to an ambivalent situation, one in which "danger" is not purely physical, and may actually only exist in the mind. For example, anxiety may be occasioned when one is confronted by a surprise examination in school, or by the seductive overtures of a beautiful woman or man. Some psychiatrists have concluded that anxiety is conditioned solely by the important relationships one has had with older authority figures.

> Anxiety is something which I believe is
> acquired by an empathetic linkage with the
> significant older persons, whereas fear is
> that which appears when the satisfaction
> of general needs is deferred to the point
> where these needs become very powerful.[19]

It is because of the psychological origin

of anxiety in relation to significant older others that

it is an important "sign" of the state of one's self.

Indeed, there is general agreement in all psychoanalytic

circles that anxiety has a fundamental relevance for

self integrity. This is based largely on the recognition

that the ego is the integrator of the psychic self.[20]

Thus, by focusing on anxiety and the various ways in

which the ego responds to it we direct attention toward

individual and. social experience and employ psycho-

analytic theory as a frame of reference from which

that experience derives a significance beyond its

simple event.

> This inability to control inner danger is,
> by general acknowledgement, not necessarily
> a "feeling" but an inferred psychic state
> which only at times evokes the specific
> feeling. ... unanimity as to the central
> character of anxiety is indeed striking...
> the existential dimension of psychotherapy
> provides a perspective from which we want
> to talk of the experience of anxiety as cen-
> tral. And the more the writer is concerned
> in fact with this dimension, the more he
> will cast his views in experiential terms
> rather than theoretical.[21]

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[19]Harry Stack Sullivan, M.D., The Inter-
personal Theory of Psychiatry, Vol. I: The Collected
Works of Harry Stack Sullivan, M.D. (New York: W.W.
Norton and Co., 1953), p. 204.

[20]Herbert Fingarette, The Self in Transforma-
tion (New York: Basic Books, 1963), p. 88.

The philosophical problem of whether anxiety is "neurotic" or whether it is man's existential fate need not concern us here. If we cast the inquiry in experiential terms then we may simply recognize the _fact_ of anxiety in words and actions. Then we must consider "the ways we face it and respond to it," and these "may be analyzed in terms of a variety of dimensions of experience and modes of language use."[22]

Ego function is primarily the "organization of experience for avoiding increasing degrees of anxiety which are connected with the educative process."[23] It is dialectical, defined as it is by the experiences of self and others in a changing environment. Perceptions of present activity are always mediated by past experience and immediate foresight.

> ... these degrees of anxiety cannot conceivably, in late infancy (and the situation is similar in most instances at any time in life), mean to the infant what the mothering one, the socializing person, believes she means, or what she actually represents, from the standpoint of the culture being inculcated in the infant. ... between a doubtless real 'external object' and a doubtless real 'my mind' there is a group of processes... highly subject to past experience and increasingly subject to foresight of the neighboring future.[24]

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[21] _Ibid._, pp. 90-1.

[22] _Ibid._, p. 96.

[23] Sullivan, p. 166.

[24] _Ibid._, pp. 166-7.

It is the dialectics of the ego which allow us to
talk concretely about the possibility of collective
experiences of anxiety. Where common past social
experiences exist and where immediate future aspi-
rations are shared, we can gain a psychoanalytic in-
sight into a specific collective experience of anxiety
in the present.

The stereotyping of certain individuals
and groups is one ego activity that is better under-
stood when considered in ego-dialectical terms. Stereo-
typed perceptions give the psychological researcher
more information about the state of the stereotyper's
experience of self than about the nature of the stereo-
typed object.

> One of the feeblest props for an inadequate
> self-system is the attitude of disparaging
> others... . In a good many ways one can read
> the whole state of a person's self-respect
> from his disparagement of others.... /He/
> is usually very sensitive to these particular
> faults because **they** **are** **secret** **vices** **of** **his**
> **own**.[25]

> If you regard yourself as generous, then you
> tend to assume that others will be generous;
> but since you have a good deal of experience
> not in keeping with that, you personify many
> people as ungenerous, **not** generous. Now that
> doesn't give you any particularly good formu-
> lation of what they are; they are just **different**
> **and** **opposite** **from** **you** in one of your better
> aspects.[26]

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[25]**Ibid**., p. 309. /My italics./

[26]**Ibid**., pp. 302-3. /Sullivan's and my italics./

What occurs in stereotyping is the projection of cer-
tain feared or hated aspects of oneself (unconscious)
onto external objects. Stereotyping is a self-referential
activity; it is a sign of internal psychic conflicts, a
sign of anxiety; it provides a key that may unlock the
attic of the subject's mind and reveal the heirlooms
contained therein.

Stereotyping necessarily limits the subject's
awareness of experience since he sees only those qualities
which are reflections (projections) of himself. In a sense,
this proscribed awareness completely defines experience.
Thus "profitting from experience" is negated, for the
same lesson is always taught.

If our ability to cope with anxiety in
the present is dialectically related to past experience
and immediate foresight, then defense mechanisms like
stereotyping preclude the possibility of alleviating
anxiety through action and experience in the world.
A world of stereotypes is an arena filled with ferocious
lions of fantasy. There there are no real lions to be
"tamed;" there is no way to become a real "lion tamer."

Stereotyping and object cathexis are
related as narcissistic exercises. Repeatedly "taking"
from the environment to alleviate anxiety -- acts of
transformation, assimilation, aggression or destruction
-- is better understood with the realization that the

actor is really confronting and acting against himself.
As soon as one has acted against the other, as soon
as it has been "tamed," "transformed," "annihilated,"
"assimilated," it becomes an internalized part of the
self. Projection is the only thing negated. Anxiety
remains and perpetuates the need for new objects
upon whom psychic conflicts can be projected (ex-
ternalized) once again. Thus, the search for new
objects can be comprehended as an attempt to ex-
perience inner unity and peace without an attempt
at internal resolution. It reflects a negative identity
experience.

> Identity formation involves a continuous
> conflict with powerful negative identity
> elements: what we know or fear or are told
> we are but try not to be or not to see; and
> what we consequently see in exaggeration in
> others. In times of aggravated crises all
> this can arouse in man a murderous hate
> of all kinds of "otherness," in strangers
> and in himself.[27]

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[27]Erik Erikson, "Psychoanalysis and On-Going
History," The American Journal of Psychiatry, 122, No.
3 (September, 1965), p. 246. Cited by Roazen, p. 237.

Chapter III.

The Problem: American Pre-adolescence
and the Search for a National
Identity.

The American experience is an unhappy,
care-worn, anxious experience of pre-adolescence. This
is my view of the "problem" posed by American society
to its would-be historian, and is the central concern
of this thesis. The next few chapters will hopefully
justify this interpretation. American unhappiness
and anxiety I present at the outset as a subjective
social fact, perceived and discussed throughout the
history of the republic. An anonymous Bostonian com-
mented to the visiting British geologist Charles
Lyell in the early 1850's that "We ought to be happier
than the English, although we do not look so."[1]
Alexis DeTocqueville, Max Weber and, most recently,
Philip Slater are only a few who also observed the
American malaise.

> In America I saw the freest and most
> enlightened men, placed in the happiest circum-
> stances which the world affords: it seemed to
> me as if a cloud habitually hung upon their
> brow, and I thought them serious and almost
> sad even in their pleasures.[2]

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[1]Charles Lyell (A Second Visit to North
America), cited by Fred Somkin, The Unquiet Eagle
(Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 22.

[2]Alexis DeTocqueville, Democracy in America
(New York: Schocken Books, 1961), II, p. 161.

> The typical German quality often called good
> nature (Gemutlichkeit) or naturalness contrasts
> strongly, even in the facial expressions of
> the people, with the effects of that thorough
> destruction of the spontaneity of the status
> naturalis in the Anglo-American atmosphere.[3]

> Reentering America, one is struck first of
> all by the grim monotony of American facial
> expressions -- hard, surly, and bitter -- and
> by the aura of deprivation that informs them.[4]

The question in need of an answer, then, is why this un-

happiness and anxiety characterize the American experience.

As the anonymous Bostonian observed, the historical and

social dimension of America ought to have made it

happy. However, two hundred years of growth, pros-

perity and "civilization" have not yielded the sub-

jective fruits of individual contentment and peace of

mind. Americans are still "hard, surly, and bitter" as

they go about living the American life. We are thus

confronted with an apparent contradiction between the

facts of American social life and their subjective ex-

perience by Americans. I believe that this contradiction

obligates one to search beneath the social facts for

the subjective, psychological meanings that inform the

American social experience.

I also believe that American social history

exhibits characteristics that may be psychologically

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[3]Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the
Spirit of Capitalism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons,
1958), p. 127.

[4]Philip Slater, The Pursuit of Loneliness:
American Culture at the Breaking Point (Boston: Beacon
Press, 1970), p. xii.

described as <u>pre-adolescent</u>. One might have expected

that adolescence would be the more appropriate

psychological category for a "new nation" in search

of a distinctive identity. After all, the central

feature of adolescence is crisis over identity!

> I have called the major crisis of
> adolescence the <u>identity crisis</u>; it occurs
> in that 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 anticipated
> 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.[5]

> The process is obviously one of initiation,
> of recognition, adjustment, renunciation, ...
> And it is attended throughout by passionate
> ambivalences. Caught as he is between two
> worlds, the adolescent engages in a <u>dialectic</u>
> <u>to reconcile both worlds to his own.</u>[6]

This does not adequately describe the American "iden-

tity crisis," however. As we shall see, the American

search for identity was certainly characterized by

ambivalence. But a careful consideration of adolescent

crisis yields more than simply "passionate ambivalences."

For ambivalence is not unique to that developmental stage

alone. It is present in the earliest infantile attempts

to secure oral nourishment, and it defines the prob-

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[5]Erik H. Erikson, <u>Young Man Luther</u> (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1958), p. 14.

[6]Ihab H. Hassan, "The Idea of Adolescence in American Fiction," <u>The American Experience</u>, ed. Hennig Cohen (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968), p. 136. /My italics./

lem of the Oedipus Complex as well. In fact, am-
bivalence is the central characteristic of most of
the stages of personality development which preceed
adolescence. It is the state of subjective awareness
(consciousness) in adolescence and the conflicts that
occasions which distinguishes it from other levels
of development. Adolescence is a _process of dialectical
awareness_ out of which identity is forged. This type
of "identity crisis" is characterized by awareness and
recognition by the subject of past influence and future
aspiration as elements affecting his sense of self
(self-definition) in the present. In earlier crises
of ambivalence, passions, desires and frustrations are
experienced in the moment of their event, with little
or no causal or sequential consciousness. This is not
to say that past experience has no role in their oc-
currence, but that the subject is not _aware_ of these
origins. Earlier conflicts between the reality and
pleasure principles are crises of immediacy. Adolescent
identity crisis is a _crisis of consciousness_, a re-
flection on and experience of the claims of past and
future on the present. Adolescence, defined as a process
of awareness, presupposes that out of a conscious
dialectic between past and future will emerge a working
unity, a synthesis: "Identity."

Contemplating America's attempt to forge an identity (in the justifications, explanations and definitions of self that have accompanied social and historical activity), one finds a single outstanding theme: rejection and denial of the past. Americans' response to the question "What is America?" has been an affirmation of what America is _not_! Specifically, America is _not Europe_, the old, decadent, rejected colonial parent. In the first eight of his twelve _Letters from an American Farmer_ Hector St. John de Crevecoeur offered an answer to his celebrated question, "What then is the American, this new man?":

> We have no princes, for whom we toil, starve,
> and bleed: we are the most perfect society
> now existing in the world.[7]

This response has persisted into the twentieth century. Its centrality for American self-definition was demonstrated in the first massive return of rebellious American sons to their ancestral homelands: the invasion of Sicily in July, 1943. On that occasion General George S. Patton, Jr. addressed his troops and spoke about the meaning of America in terms of old and new, parent and child, slavery and freedom:

> When we land, we will meet German and
> Italian soldiers whom it is our honor and
> privilege to attack and destroy.

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[7]Cited by A.N. Kaul, _The American Vision:
Actual and Ideal Society in Nineteenth-Century Fiction_
(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 19-20.

> Many of you have in your veins German
> and Italian blood, but remember that these
> ancestors of yours so loved freedom that
> they gave up home and country to cross the
> ocean in search of liberty. The ancestors
> of the people we shall kill lacked the
> courage to make such a sacrifice and con-
> tinued as slaves.[8]

America defined itself even in 1943 by its acts of

rejection. It conceived its identity in opposition

to the past.

The presence of this theme of rejection and

rebellion throughout American history and its signi-

ficance for American self-definition suggests that a

dialectical process of awareness does not characterize

the American search for identity and that "adolescence"

is inappropriate as a descriptive psychological category.

In denying its European origins, America denies the

claims of its past on its present experience. There is

no basis here for dialectical consciousness that might

engender a synthetic, unified identity. America sees

itself springing forth from Zeus' brow, so to speak,

created but not propagated. But the American Athene

was cast into the world as a child, not full-grown

like the Greek goddess. America saw its uniqueness as

god-like, even divinely ordained, but it lacked the

security created by the subjective experience of god-

liness.

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[8]Cited by Geoffrey Gorer, _The American
People_ (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1964), p. 23.

The American search for an identity, then, was not adolescent process, but a pre-adolescent state: a state of proscribed awareness in which America could only look to an idealized future to justify and define its present. By its own definition, America did not instantly achieve a state of maturity since its fulfillment resided in its future. We are obligated, therefore, to look to pre-adolescent conflicts and ambiguities in trying to interpret the unhappy, anxious and unfulfilling subjective American experience.

As the following pages will reveal, images of rejection, rebellion and escape from the old occupy a central position in American social rationalization and mythology. This particular focus of American self-consciousness suggests that perhaps Freud's formulation of Oedipal conflict, along with the earlier childhood experiences that influence it, will provide a deeper meaning and greater understanding of the problem of identity in American history.

In justifying the appropriateness of pre-adolescent psychoanalytic categories for interpreting the American experience -- particularly its Oedipal character -- we must begin with the social and political origins of the nation and its people. The political "birth" of the republic was achieved by the colonial rebellion of 1776. But it, in turn, had origins in the nature of the people who settled the New World.

Of special significance is the influence exercised

by the establishment of Puritanism in North America.

First, I propose to consider psychoanalytically the

history and character of America's Puritan experience,

and then, in Chapter IV, the nature and psychoanalytical

significance of America's political rebellion.

<u>America's Puritan Inheritance:</u>

<u>Antecedent Ambiguities for Self-defini-</u>

<u>tion and Identity on the Frontier.</u>

... methinks I see the destiny of America
embodied in the first Puritan who landed on
those shores, just as the human race was, rep-
resented by the first man. [9]

    Americans have devoted much time and
energy to rationalization of their idea of mis-
sion. ... Nearly every speaker and writer,
whether liberal or conservative, has assigned
the credit for our national superiority to such
qualities as initiative, independence, aggres-
siveness, perseverence, industry, frugality, and
enterprise. That a nation might experience a
call to greatness for its generosity, humanity,
tolerance or justice seems never to have crossed
their minds. Though America is officially pro-
claimed a Christian nation, it is not the virtues
of Christianity that are credited with making her
great. It is the ethics of the Book of Proverbs
and of the Book of Kings and Chronicles that is
exalted above all others. [10]

God is a concept
By which we measure
Our pain. [11]

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    [9]DeTocqueville, I, p. 343.

    [10]Edward McNall Burns, <u>The American Idea of
Mission</u> (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press,
1957), pp. 56-8.

    [11]John Lennon, "God," <u>John Lennon / Plastic
Ono Band</u> (phonograph record), lyrics copyrighted Maclen

Alexis DeTocqueville saw the destiny of
America embodied in the first Puritan who landed on
the rocky shore of New England early in the seven-
teenth century. And the pervasiveness of religious
belief and justification in American economic and
political activity is indeed one of its most striking
characteristics. The basic cosmology of Puritanism
was not limited to the New England colonization alone,
however. It was as much a part of the religious make-
up of the colonists of Jamestown in Virginia who
arrived some fifteen years before the Pilgrim landing
at Plymouth, Massachusetts.

> ... however much Virginia and New England
> differed in ecclesiastical policies, they
> were both recruited from the same type of
> Englishmen, pious, hard-working, middle-
> class, accepting literally and solemnly
> the tenets of Puritanism -- original sin,
> predestination, and election -- who could
> conceive of the society they were erecting
> in America only within a religious frame-
> work.[12]

Historical analyses which emphasize the commercial
and materialistic character of the Virginia settle-
ments in an effort to distinguish them from the New
England experience "sin against history," in Perry
Miller's words, because they "leave out of account
... the teleological world in which the seventeenth
century lived, a world where every action found its
rationale, not in politics or economics, but in re-

(Music) Ltd., 1970.

[12]Perry Miller, "Religion and Society in the

ligion."[13] Though differing in ecclesiastical organi-
zation (Virginia was Anglican while Massachusetts was
Congregationalist), both colonies shared a common
religious base in which social activity was penetrated
with religious conviction. They were the earliest
"American" settlements and became symbolic for what
Americans were later to see as the sources of their
national character. Each produced America's self-
proclaimed "fathers:" the political "Founding Fathers"
of Virginia (Washington, Jefferson and Madison) and the
religious "Pilgrim Fathers" of Massachusetts.

The religious justifications inherited
from these earliest settlements greatly contributed
to America's perception of its "identity." John Adams
saw religion as the true foundation "not only of
republicanism and all free government, but of social
felicity under all governments." James Madison felt
that a belief in God was "essential to the moral
order of the world and to the happiness of man."
Woodrow Wilson thought that "America was born a
Christian nation... to exemplify that devotion to the
elements of righteousness... ." Franklin Roosevelt be-
lieved that "democracy cannot live without that true

Early Literature of Virginia," _Errand into the Wilder-
ness_ (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964),
p. 108.

[13]_Ibid._, p. 114.

religion which gives a nation a sense of justice
and of moral purpose." Harry Truman declared that
"the fundamental basis of this nation's law was
given to Moses on the Mount." General Eisenhower
saw the whole struggle against communism as "a fight
between anti-God and a belief in the Almighty. ...
When God comes in, communism has to go." And even the
urbane Adlai Stevenson professed a belief that the
"Christian faith has been the most significant single
element in our history and our tradition... . The
blight of moral relativism has not fallen destruc-
tively upon us."[14] The American need to see its social
activity imbued with profound spiritual significance
has also been pointed out by historians and social
analyzers. Additional confirmation would be super-
fluous. At this point we may simply note that re-
ligious and social activity have always been wedded
together in the American experience, and that this
union gained its first "American" expression in the
earliest settlements on the continent.

The pervasiveness of religious rationali-
zation in the American social experience suggests that
problems of American identity may be bound up with the
nature of its religious, as well as political, origins.

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[14]Sources for these quotations in Burns,
pp. 215-221.

Religious origins are found primarily in the Puritan
experience, and a psycho-history of America must
consider it to be integrated and convincing. Because
the focus of this study is on American perceptions of
the Western frontier, expansion, and Indians, my con-
sideration of the influence and significance of Puri-
tanism will be limited to the way in which history
and religious ideology combined to create a peculiarly
"American" psychological attitude toward self and others
that is critical for fulfilling identity. The inter-
related concepts of "election," the "covenant," and
the "errand into the wilderness," along with the
simultaneous occurrence of Puritan colonization and
the English Revolution will be the major concerns of
the rest of this chapter. This limited consideration
of Puritanism hopefully will establish the predisposition
in colonial Americans to regard their social activities
as historically unique and divinely sanctioned. Hence
it will reinforce rejection of Europe as the leitmotif
of American identity and explain, in part, why Americans
could not psychologically integrate past experience
with present identity. Puritan origins will provide
a foundation for interpreting America's political re-
bellion from England as Oedipal overthrow. In addition,
this interpretive consideration of Puritanism will reveal
a value-system relevant for a psychological analysis of

American images and actions on the frontier. Ulti-
mately, it will be the basis upon which we can view
the frontier as stage of the American psychodrama.

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> The psyche is an autonomous factor, and religious
> statements are psychic confessions which in the
> last resort are based on unconscious, i.e. trans-
> cendental, processes. These processes are not
> accessible to physical perception but demon-
> strate their existence through the confessions
> of the psyche. The resultant statements are
> filtered through the medium of human conscious-
> ness: that is to say, they are given visible
> forms which in their turn are subject to
> manifold influences from within and without.
> ... Our reason is sure of only one thing: that
> it manipulates images and ideas which are depen-
> dent on human imagination and its temporal and
> local conditions, and which therefore have
> changed innumerable times in the course of
> their long history. There is no doubt that
> there is something behind these images that
> transcends consciousness and operates in such a
> way that the statements do not vary limitlessly
> and chaotically, but clearly all relate to
> a few basic principles or archetypes. ...
> These... are the archetypes of the col-
> lective unconscious, and they precipitate
> complexes of ideas in the form of mythological
> motifs.[15]

Religion is a psychological "product." It

manifests the content in the structure of man's uncon-

scious. This content is derived from the numerous

critical existential crises which the individual ex-

periences from birth onward. The psychoanalytic

explanation of religion elaborated by Freud in _Totem and_

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[15]Carl G. Jung, "Answer to Job," _The Portable
Jung_, ed. Joseph Campbell (New York: Viking Press, 1971),
pp. 522-5.

Taboo and Moses and Monotheism, later elaborated by
Jung and Geza Roheim, is valuable for the definition
given the most influential existential crises: birth
trauma and separation anxiety, Oedipal conflict and
guilt. Religion as a response to existential crisis
allows a psychoanalytic explanation in as much as it
is imbued with the images of the unconscious (Mother,
Father and Child). Religion psychologically is an ego-
structure by means of which men attempt to assuage
anxiety and place themselves, their identity, their
existence, in a context from which meaning and sig-
nificance are derived. It is the paradigmatic solution
for existential anxiety.

> ... in so far as the unconscious is the re-
> sult of countless existential experiences,
> it cannot but resemble the various religious
> universes. For religion is the paradigmatic
> solution for every existential crisis.[16]

A successful resolution of existential crisis charac-
teristically alleviates the anxiety of ambiguous or
undefined identity; it is a successful mediation be-
tween unconscious impulses and external necessity ("reality").
The success or failure of a religion's cosmology and
organization in alleviating anxiety, in providing de-
finition and significance for its believers, is

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[16]Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane
(New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1959), p. 210.

important for a psychological consideration of the social experience of identity.

Puritanism, like any other religion, is characterized by certain basic familial-archetypal images. What is of primary importance for this psycho-historical analysis, however, is the specific content (variations) of the Puritan religious experience within these archetypal bounds: the manner in which historical events were filtered by Puritan consciousness (the subjective, psychological experience of history); and the success or failure of Puritanism in alleviating existential anxiety and providing a sense of identity.

The Ambiguities of the Puritan-American "Errand".

America's children have been told by their parents and teachers that the Puritans left England in search of "religious freedom." Implied in this explanation is the belief that religious toleration was a motive in the Puritan migration. This American belief is an illusion that hides the religious and historical failure of the Puritan Fathers in America. Illusion and ideal mask the history and teleological foundation of of America from Americans, just as they mask contemporary realities. They contribute to the confused and ambiguous character of American attempts at self-definition.

The major Puritan migration occurred in 1630:
the Massachusetts Bay expedition, led to New England
by John Winthrop aboard the good ship <u>Arbella</u>. Winthrop
and his Puritan followers were not fleeing religious
persecution (thousands remained in England to fight
the Cavaliers[17]), but were on a positive sacred mission
to the New England wilderness: to establish the per-
fectly reformed Godly society as a model for those
engaged in the unfinished work of the Reformation
in England. They sought to construct a commonwealth
"wherein the least known evills are not to bee tole-
rated."[18] To be an exemplary model required an
absolute religious purity in the actions and govern-
ment of Massachussetts. To tolerate deviance would
pollute the project and destroy its exemplary nature.
In short, religious <u>intolerance</u> was one of the key
defining characteristics of the American Puritan
experience. By the middle of the seventeenth century,
<u>intolerance</u> was to become the crucible of confusion
which created ambiguity in America's sense of identity
and mission.

In 1630 New England was to be a useful model
for England and Europe; it gained its sense of mission,

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[17]Perry Miller, "Errand into the Wilderness,"
<u>op. cit.</u>, p. 4.

[18]John Winthrop, cited by Edmund S. Morgan,
<u>The Puritan Dilemma; The Story of John Winthrop</u> (Boston:
Little, Brown and Co., 1958), p. 74.

its identity, in relation to the actions and attitudes

of the Old World.

> For wee must Consider that we shall be as a
> City upon a Hill, the eies of all people are
> uppon us.[19]

> If we succeed, Winthrop told his audience,
> men will say of later plantations, 'the
> lord make it like that of New England... .'[20]

"The large unspoken assumption" of the 1630 migration

was that if the Puritan forces prevailed in England

(against Bishop Laud and Wentworth) they would look to

New England for leadership as the ideal Puritan polity.[21]

Thus, as Perry Miller describes it, Winthrop and Co. were

essentially "an organized task force of Christians,

executing a flank attack on the corruptions of Chris-

tendom."

> ... they went in order to work out that
> complete reformation which was not yet accom-
> plished in England and Europe, but which would
> quickly be accomplished if only the saints
> back there had a working model to guide them.[22]

The religious convictions with which the Puritans set-

tled New England explain the intolerant temper of that

enterprise and the nature of the mission. They also

provided the emotional and psychological basis for a

major crisis in Puritan-American identity, one experi-

enced by second and third generation Puritans in the

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[19] John Winthrop, cited by Miller, "Errand,"
op. cit., p. 12.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., p. 11.

[22] Ibid.

second half of the seventeenth century.

The Puritanism of New England was
covenantal or federal Calvinism. God was seen to have
entered into a covenant with his predestined and
"elected" "saints" whose worldly actions then became
a "sign" of election and demonstration of faith and
sainthood. As such, it was an attempt to preserve the
Five Points of Calvinism (adopted by the Synod of Dort
in 1619), "unconditional predestination," "limited
atonement" for the elect, "human inability" to save
oneself, the "irresistability of grace," and the "per-
severence of the saints,"[23] while providing for "the
validity of reason in man, the regularity of secondary
causes in nature, the harmony of knowledge and faith,
the coincidence of the arbitrary with inherent
goodness, the intimate connection between grace and
the incitements that generate grace, the necessity for
moral responsibility and activity."[24] The Puritan
covenant with God was an attempt, in short, to re-
concile church and state, religion and law, sacred and
profane existence. This reconciliation was expressed
in a millenarian or apocalyptic religious vision which
would be realized through political activity and insti-

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[23]Ralph Barton Perry, Puritanism and Demo-
cracy (New York: Harper and Row, 1944), p. 92.

[24]Perry Miller, "The Marrow of Puritan
Divinity," op. cit., p. 93. Also cited by Perry, p. 94.

tutions. In the seventeenth century both the settlements
in New England and efforts to achieve reformation through
the English Parliament were expressions of this religious-
legalistic resolution.

> They imagined themselves physicians of the
> body politic or navagators of the ship of
> state who would guide it to the new earth,
> whether in England or North America. ...
>   The new earth was to be a legal mar-
> riage by covenant with the Lord; man's re-
> lation to God would be determined by law.
> The Puritans had taken an apocalyptic vision
> and joined it with a covenanting-legalistic
> interpretation of the Bible, allowing the
> millenium to be considered by a body such
> as Parliament.[25]

In establishing a holy society through a
covenant with a feared, unknown and unknowable God,
the social activity of individuals and of the society
as a whole became critical for assessing their suc-
cess or failure in the eyes of God, the success or
failure of their mission, the success or failure of
realizing their identity. In the covenant God pro-
mised salvation for _faith_, not for _obedience_ since
obedience was precluded by God's unfathomable nature.
"However, a sincere attempt at obedience would neces-
sarily follow faith."[26] Hence Puritan legalistic logic
saw worldly activity as a _sign_ of saintly election

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[25]Suze Woolf, "The Fast Sermons and The
Millenium, 1640-1642" (unpublished paper, Department
of History, McGill University, 1973), p. 30.

[26]Edmund S. Morgan, _The Puritan Family_
(New York: Harper and Row, 1944), p. 3.

predestined by God, not its <u>cause</u>. Worldly action was
the <u>sine qua non</u> of future salavtion.

> A Noble Demonstration did he give, That
> they who do <u>Good Works</u> BECAUSE they are already
> <u>Justified</u>, will not come short of those who
> do <u>Good Works</u> THAT THEY MAY be <u>Justified</u>; and,
> That they who renounce all Pretense to <u>Merit</u>
> by their <u>Good Works</u>, will more abound in
> <u>Good Works</u> than the greatest <u>Merit-Mongers</u>
> in the World.[27]

If God simply predestined without imposing conditions
in the covenant morality would collapse; He would, in
effect, require nothing of man one way or the other.[28]
One finds in the Puritan covenant with God the legalis-
tically peculiar but religiously necessary paradox of
a contract in which one party, God, performs both of its
parts by providing salvation and the faith through
which salvation is achieved.

> Now then, faith being the condition of the
> Covenant, (as we shall shew afterwards) and
> being knowne by these and other graces ac-
> companying it /"signs"7, here is the way for
> us to try ourselves before God, whether the
> promise of salvation dqe belong unto us,
> even by looking at the condition of faith,
> and such other graces as doe accompany it,
> in them that do believe.
>
> ...
>
> ... but the condition wee put, is both re-
> ceived by grace, is by grace wrought in us,
> and doth also receive all from grace; and
> therefore doth nothing derogate from the grace
> of the Covenant. ... The grace of the Covenant
> is free notwithstanding the condition, because
> we doe not put any condition as antecedent, to
> the Covenant on God's part, whereby to induce

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[27]Cotton Mather (<u>Parentator</u>, 1724), cited
by Morgan, <u>Family</u>, p. 4.

[28]Miller, "Marrow," <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 84.

and move the Lord to enter into covenant
with us... .[29]

God's covenant with the Puritans emigrating
to New England was sealed with the safe passage He pro-
vided for the voyage of the Arbella.

> By staying His wrath so long and allowing
> them to depart in peace, by delivering them
> across the water, He had sealed a covenant
> with them and given them a special respon-
> sibility to carry out the good intentions that
> had brought them into the wilderness. Theirs
> was a special commission. And "when God gives
> a special Commission," Winthrop warned them,
> "He looks to have it stricktly observed in
> every Article."[30]

Because of the critically sacred nature of worldly ac-
tivity in the terms of the covenant, religious and social
deviation was intolerable within its context. Deviants
either had to be reformed, expelled or annihilated to
vindicate the righteousness of the mission and maintain
the purity of its exemplary character. Social hierarchy
in Puritan society was perceived as a reflection of
divine order. "Puritan ministers were fond of saying
that God was a God of order... ."[31] And the Puritan
leaders were hence in a position to interpret and en-
force social and religious conformity with the assurance
that they were fulfilling God's work on earth. The ex-
pulsion of Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson from the

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[29]Peter Bulkeley (The Gospel-Covenant, 1651),
cited by Perry, pp. 94-5.

[30]Morgan, Dilemma, p. 70.

[31]Morgan, Family, p. 12.

Massachusetts colony in 1637 was a purge of deviation.
The affirmation of mission inherent in the Williams-
Hutchinson expulsion was to become the singular event
which, in the following decade, shattered confidence
and destroyed the original definition and identity
of the Puritan mission in America.

The confidence with which the Williams-
Hutchinson "heresey" was removed from Massachusetts
reflected the religious temper of covenantal Calvinism,
but it was also the result of the opportunity afforded
by the North American wilderness to establish the model
society without external political or religious inter-
ference. There were no Anglicans, no Cavaliers in
America. Only "empty" space and "wild" Indians. Con-
flicts which arose in the Massachusetts colony were
almost entirely internal and therefore could be
evaluated within the religious context of the mission.
In short, there were no external threats that necessitated
compromise or toleration and the "City upon a Hill"
could be built in an exemplary fashion.

Such was not the case in England, however.
Within the English Christian polity existed two basic
forms of Protestantism: episcopacy, wherein the church
was governed by prelates through a priestly hierarchy;
and presbyterianism and congregationalism, wherein the
"church" was defined as an aggregation of believers

who, after an open avowal of faith, voluntarily
organized to seek instruction, edification and
worship. The difference between presbyterianism and
congregationalism was that under the former two
or more churches united to form a presbytery and
presbyteries united, to form provincial, national and
general synods. Under the latter, two or more be-
lievers united to form a church and that church
remained the ultimate ecclesiastical unit.[32] Calvinist
Puritanism found a natural structural expression in
England in presbyterian and congregational churches.
The choice for Puritans between these two was largely
dictated by religious and political exigencies: the
organizational structure of presbyterianism was more
useful and appealing in times of threat and social
instability; Calvinist rejection of episcopacy and
emphasis on the individual believer naturally mili-
tated in favor of congregationalism in times of
peace and stability.

In England before the 1630 migration Puri-
tanism comprised a number of relatively weak sects
within the Church of England. Because of weakness
(They were not perceived as a great threat yet by
the "Establishment.") and Calvinist opposition to

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[32]Perry, p. 105.

episcopacy, English Puritans were primarily congre-
gational. Their demand for reformation was not re-
bellion yet; it was for reform _of_ the Church and ex-
pressed a belief _in_ the Church. Since the Church of
England was episcopal, however, it was not regarded
as the "true" Church of England. It was seen as still
containing contaminated vestiges of popish idolatry
and hierarchy: "limbs of the Beast," the "Whore of
Babylon". Congregationalist Puritans saw the Congre-
gational Church as the "true" Church of England and
therefore considered the episcopal C of E as "sepa-
ratist," as well as some of their own more radical
sects (like the Anabaptists).

> There is but one body, the /congregational/
> church, and but one Lord, or head of that
> body, Christ: and whosoever separates from
> the body, the church, separates from the head,
> Christ.[33]

The Puritans who left England in 1630 car-
ried congregational anti-separatism as well as ecclesi-
astical organization to an area in which they could be
realized, unsullied by England's religious divisions.
Winthrop and his followers saw the fight for reformation
as one to be fought from within the Church in the first
instance. Migration was not separation.

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[33]John Robinson ("Justification of Sepa-
ration from the Church of England," 1610), cited by
Perry, p. 109.

> We desire, you would be pleased to
> take notice of the principals, and body of
> our company, as those who esteem it our
> honor, to call the Church of England, from
> whence wee rise, our deare Mother, and can-
> not part from our native Country, where she
> specially resideth, without much sadness of
> heart, and many tears in our eyes, ever
> acknowledging that such hope and part as
> wee have obtained in the common salvation,
> we have received in her bosome, and suckt
> it from her breasts.[34]

It was believed that in New England an all-congregational Puritan society could be established wherein the elect would be distinguishable from the damned in their worldly activities. But once landed in Massachusetts, the practical difficulty and paradox of such an enterprise became apparent. "In order to create and maintain a uniformity of faith and worship [the Puritan leaders] found it necessary to exalt the power of ministers and elders and to develop through 'consociation' a centralized system of control that bore a striking resemblance to presbyterianism."[35] The demands of the covenant and of the mission required uniformity and the elimination of deviants, but they thereby undercut the congregationalist emphasis on the autonomous basis of churches of believers and the Calvinist emphasis on individual revelation and faith. The Puritans were faced squarely with a contradiction

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[34]Statement issued by John Winthrop and Co. aboard the Arbella the day before sailing for New England, April 7, 1630, cited by Morgan, Dilemma, p. 53.

[35]Perry, p. 110.

between the practice and the theory of congregationalism
in America. The American Puritans could afford to choose
uniformity over autonomy, grdly men over the godly man,
and expelled Williams and Hutchinson. But the English
congregationalists, under increasing pressure from
Anglican Bishop Laud, and lacking a strong centralized
organization, could either sail for New England or re-
main and join forces with the more radical congrega-
tionalist sects, having in common a belief in the ef-
ficacy of individual faith and the autonomy of indi-
vidual congregations. The congregationalist sects that
remained in England became known as "Independents" and,
after 1645, under the banner of toleration fought both
Anglicans and Presbyterians for control of England.

In the decade 1630-1640 the situation in
England became increasingly grave. Charles I and
Bishop Laud made tactical errors in dealing with the
Puritans, thereby alienating even those Puritans who
remained anti-separatist (conformist) Puritans. By
the spring of 1641 Puritan organization had so im-
proved under increasing persecution that they were
able to manipulate the election of members to Parliament
and of the Lord Mayor of London. A new Parliament was
summoned in November, 1640 to declare the peace of
Newcastle, ending hostilities with the Covenanting
Army of Scotland. What was to be the Long Parliament

was thus ready to consider the reformation of the
Church of England whether Charles wished it or not.
With these events the locus of reformation shifted
from North America back to England and the mission
of Winthrop and Co. had to be critically tested
as the "true" model for England's reformation. Ac-
cordingly, Massachusetts offered England's congre-
gationalist Puritans advice and assistance in the
persons of Thomas Welde and Hugh Peter, two of its
leading ministers. Both had taken an active role in
the trial and expulsion of Anne Hutchinson.

But the exigencies of the English crisis
required that congregationalist Puritans whose cause
had been joined previously to that of New England
pursue a policy of toleration for sheer survival.
Thus the uniformity and intolerance practiced by
Massachusetts Puritans came under severe attack
from their English allies. Even their emmissary Hugh
Peter was converted to the English cause, addressing
counsels of toleration back to his former New England
associates.[36] The most humiliating experience
occurred in June, 1645 when thirteen leading Inde-
pendents, former allies and associates of the New
England leaders, wrote to the Massachusetts General

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[36]Morgan, Dilemma, p. 183. Hugh Peter became
a leading Independent minister and administered last
rites to Charles before his execution in 1649.

Court that its law banishing Anabaptists was an em-
barrassment to the Independent cause in England.[37] As
a result of these events in England, New England
found that it "model" was no longer serviceable for
reforming the Church of England. It no longer had
an enraptured English audience; the "eies of all
people" looked toward Cromwell and the English Re-
volution, not to Massachusetts. Thus by the middle
of the decade 1640-1650 the exemplary mission which
carried the Puritans to the New World had completely
collapsed.

> By casting out Williams, Anne Hutchinson,
> and the Antinomians... into that cesspool
> then becoming known as Rhode Island, /the
> Puritan leaders/ showed Oliver Cromwell
> how he should go about governing England.
> Instead, he developed the utterly absurd
> theory that so long as a man made a good
> soldier in the New Model Army, it did not
> matter whether he was a Calvinist, an
> Antinomian, an Arminian, an Anabaptist... .
> ...
> Oliver Cromwell was so far gone in this
> idiocy as to become a dictator, in order
> to impose toleration by force! Amid this
> shambles, the errand of New England col-
> lapsed. There was nobody left at headquar-
> ters to whom reports could be sent.[38]

A major crisis of purpose and identity was the con-
sequence of the English Revolution in America, a crisis
that persisted throughout the seventeenth century and

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[37]Miller, "Errand," op. cit., pp. 13-14.

[38]Ibid., pp. 13, 14.

for some time thereafter.

Psychologically, the failure of the Puritans'
initial mission made all further socio-religious activity
inherently unsatisfying. For if they were to be the
model for the reformation in England then every effort
to fulfill the terms of the covenant could only be con-
sidered a measure of failure. "How could a universal
which turned out to be nothing but a provincial parti-
cular be called anything but a blunder or an abortion?"[39]
Rejected by their European source of identity, the Ameri-
can Puritans were left alone with themselves, the wilder-
ness, and a lively sense of sin, failure and guilt. Having
been rejected by their English "Mother Church," they had
no choice but to reject it in turn, while looking for a
"mother-substitute" in what remained. The psychology
of second and third generation Puritans, and perhaps of
America forever after, is understood in light of this
failure and rejection.

In the absence of religious justification
-- and to the Puritans justification meant the predes-
tined salvation of faith[40] -- American Puritans became
increasingly preoccupied with the social sinfulness of
their new American life. The new intensity with which
sin was experienced psychologically reflected an experience

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[39]Ibid., p. 12.

[40]Perry, p. 89.

of guilt over the increasingly secular orientation
(required for survival in the rough environment) which
filled the post-1645 theological-identity vacuum. One
finds manifest in the writings of later Puritans like
Anne Bradstreet and Michael Wigglesworth a social-sinful
preoccupation in marked distinction to their Puritan
fathers.

> Instead of being able to compose abstract
> treatises, .. these later saints must, over
> and over again, dwell upon the specific sins
> of New England, and the more they denounce,
> the more they must narrow their focus to
> the provincial problem. ... Their range is
> sadly constricted, but every effort, no matter
> how brief, is addressed to the persistent
> question: what is the meaning of this society
> in the wilderness? If it does not mean what
> Winthrop said it must mean, what under heaven
> is it? ... -- and sometimes they are on the
> verge of saying, who the Devil are we, anyway?[41]

The more they sought an answer to the question of
identity, the more they looked inward -- at them-
selves, at the environment in which they lived --
and the more they saw sinfulness and failure without
the opportunity to pursue any other course but that
of realizing the sinful-material opportunities af-
forded by the land. "Winthrop's dread was realized:
posterity had not found their salvation amid pure
ordinances but had, despite the ordinances, yielded
to the seductions of the good land."[42] Thus a psycho-

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[41]Miller, "Errand," op. cit., p. 10.

[42]Ibid., p. 7.

logical attitude imbued social activity with guilt.
Each new activity was accompanied by ritualistic
cries of sinfulness and declension which served as
psychic purgations which permitted continued pursuit
of the material and supplemented it with an air of
excitement.

By way of illustration, Perry Miller
suggests the Boston Synod of Puritan clergy and
lay elders which met in 1679 to consider the socio-
religious problems of New England. The statement issued
by the Synod, The Necessity of Reformation, is more
psychologically revealing than its historical content
might at first suggest. It pointed out twelve spe-
cific examples of corruption in the civic life of New
England, examples which almost cover the experience
as a whole: evidence of "godly decay;" manifestations
of pride in religious insubordination, contention
and extravagant attire; heretics (Quakers, Anabap-
tists, etc.); a marked increase in swearing and sleeping
during sermons; sabbath violations abounded; decay
in family government; instead of a well-knit com-
munity, social strife and law-suits were increasing;
the allure of sex, alcohol and frivolous and seductive
entertainments; lying, especially in commercial trans-
actions; low business morality (land speculation and
high prices); no disposition to reform; the community

was utterly destitute of civic spirit.[43]

> ... while the social or economic historian
> may read this literature for its contents...
> the cultural anthropologist /and psycho-
> historian/ will look slightly askance at
> these jeremiads; he will exercise a caution
> about taking them at face value. If you
> read them all through, the total effect,
> curiously enough, is not at all depressing:
> you come to the paradoxical realization
> that they do not bespeak a despairing frame
> of mind. There is something of a ritualistic
> incantation about them; whatever they may
> signify in the realm of theology, in that of
> psychology they are purgations of the soul;
> they do not discourage but actually encourage
> the community to persist in its heinous con-
> duct. The exhortation to a reformation which
> never materializes serves as a token payment
> upon the obligation, and so liberates the
> debtors.[44]

Miller's "paradoxical realization" is the realization

that, psychologically, expressed sentiment contains

within itself its opposite meaning, and that the more

intensely and repetitiously it is expressed, the "more

certain is the potential presence of a feeling which

results from the flounting or thwarting of it."[45]

In the Puritan experience especially (where good works

are not the cause, but the "sign" and _sine qua non_ of

salvation and faith) the purgative quality of a sense

of sin could only act as a spur to "sinful" social

activity and perpetuate an unsatisfying experience

of self.

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[43]_Ibid._, pp. 7-8.

[44]_Ibid._, pp. 8-9

[45]Edward Sapir, "The Meaning of Religion,"
_Selected Writings of Edward Sapir in Language, Culture
and Personality_, ed. David G. Mandelbaum (Berkeley: Uni-

It is, of course, no accident that
religion in its most authentic moments has
always been prepared to cancel a factual short-
coming in conduct if only it could assure it-
self that this shortcoming was accompanied
by a lively sense of sin. Good works are
not the equivalent of the sentiment of ul-
timate value which religion insists upon.
The shadow cast by this sentiment, which
is a sense of sin, may be intuitively felt
as of more reassuring value than a benevolence
which proceeds from a mere social habit or
from personal indifference. Religion has
always been the enemy of self-satisfaction.[46]

What was required as an accompaniment to
this new sense of sin in the last half of the seven-
teenth century was a reinterpretation of the Puritan
"mission" in America. In an election sermon delivered
on May 11, 1670 Samuel Danforth declared that the
Puritans were on an "errand into the wilderness." As
pointed out by Perry Miller in Errand into the Wilder-
ness, errand was a term whose ambiguous meaning was
appreciated by Puritan intellectuals well-grounded in
grammar and rhetoric. It meant both a short journey
undertaken by an inferior to convey a message or per-
form a service for a superior ("errand boy") and the
actual business activity which the individual under-
takes ("running errands"). In the later meaning, the
runner of errands may work for himself, may be his
own boss.[47] Clearly, the Puritan experience up to 1645

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versity of California Press, 1968), p. 356.

[46]Ibid. /My italics./

[47]Miller, "Errand," op. cit., p. 3.

was defined by the first notion of errand. But after the English rejection the second notion was embraced and America's Puritans became the sole agents of God's true work on earth.

In a sense, the Puritans were "reborn" in the middle of the seventeenth century to do God's work in America instead of England. The change in orientation from England and Europe to America (and the West) was the moment that <u>sacred</u> <u>Americanization</u> began.

> ... they encountered the difficulties of this world by being born again, by rejecting master-lessness and finding a new master in themselves and a new system of control in their godly brethren.[48]

In America the Puritans confronted a wild, disorderly, and "empty" territory that was seen as sinful and profane. The task, the errand was, in effect, to sacralize the continent. Anthropologically, such activity -- settling a frontier, clearing ground, and conquering and occupying a territory already occupied by "others" -- may be seen as a ritual which repeats the cosmogeny.[49] The errand, as sacred ritual, sought to establish America as the <u>axis</u> <u>mundi</u>, thereby placing it closest to God and above all other nations.

> ... it in a sense touches heaven and hence marks the highest point in the world; consequently the territory that surrounds it, and that constitutes "our World," is held

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[48]Michael Walzer, <u>The Revolution of the Saints</u> (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), p. 313.

[49]Eliade, pp. 29-32.

> to be the highest among countries. ...
>   ... "our world" is holy ground be-
> cause it is the place nearest to heaven,
> because from here, from our abode, it
> is possible to reach heaven... .[50]

The Puritans' North American focus after 1645 established

social activity there as sacred, though sinful. The

future salvation sought in successfully sacralizing

the continent allowed the Puritan-American to aspire

for immortality and eternity. In American consciousness

it became possible to "reach Heaven" from the American

"abode." In the following two centuries America's attempts

at self-definition were primarily other-oriented com-

parative exercises. (See Chapter IV.) America as the

axis mundi lends a certain anthropological comprehen-

sibility to this negatively affirmed sense of identity.

Likewise, nineteenth and twentieth century expressions

of America's "Manifest Destiny" as the spiritual,

political and economic regenerator of "lower" nations

are more clearly understood from this anthropological

perspective.

    But the "birth" or "rebirth" of the Puritan-

American cosmos has even greater significance from a

psychoanalytical perspective. For the new errand placed

a dualistic or manichean world-view in a new cultural-

experiential context. The frontier was the locus of evil

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[50]Ibid., p. 38.

and sin; chaos, disorder, waste and savagery were its

defining characteristics in Puritan-American con-

sciousness.

> Sin... was disorder, a substitution of God's
> creations for God himself as the end of man.
> As Samuel Willard told the Old South Church
> /of Boston/: "The nature of sin is a changing
> of the objects... .[51]

> To the men of the Reformation, to Protes-
> tants, the Devil was no abstraction; he
> was an ever-present force for evil, and to
> their eyes it seemed obvious that his last
> stronghold was the wilderness of America,
> inhabited by his imps.[52]

In opposition to the frontier and the Devil stood the

divine forces of order, repression and organization.

The need to cope with and subdue disorder, insubor-

dination and chaos is seen even in the uniformity

sought _within_ the colony. For the Puritans, the Com-

mandment which summarized all of God's laws concerning

social organization was the Fifth: "Honor thy father

and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the

land."[53] Anne Hutchinson was convicted of sedition

and expelled from Massachusetts by its governors for

breaking the Fifth Commandment, in that she had tried

to play the part more of "a Husband than a Wife, and a

preacher than a Hearer; and a Magistrate than a Subject."[54]

Thus Hutchinson was guilty of the sin of disordering God's

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[51]Morgan, _Family_, p. 14.

[52]Miller, "Religion and Society," _op. cit._, p. 114.

[53]Morgan, _Family_, pp. 11-12.

[54]_Ibid._, p. 119. /Author's italics omitted./

order. How much more so were the "heathen" aborigines
of the continent, and indeed the continent itself! For
they were wild and disorderly by definition. In short,
one of America's strongest Puritan inheritances was
a fundamentally dualistic view of the entire world,
with the forces of order and righteousness ranged
against the forces of sin and disorder.

> He /God/ made us the master organizers of
> the world to establish system where chaos
> reigns. He has given us the spirit of pro-
> gress to overwhelm the forces of reaction
> throughout the earth.[55]

> /It is the/ transcendent right and duty /of
> the civilized state/ to establish political
> and legal order everywhere.[56]

Psychoanalytically, "birth" or "rebirth"
in a wilderness suggests an experience analogous to
birth trauma and separation anxiety. The loss of
security and identity experienced by the Puritans in
the seventeenth century may be understood as an ex-
pression of lost maternal love, warmth and security:
loss of the dual unity of the womb. A dualistic world-
view in conjunction with this psycho-social trauma
reinforces such an interpretation.

> The whole doctrine, which considers
> duality as the fundamental evil and omni-
> potence as the final goal, is completely
> intelligible from the viewpoint of the fun-
> damental dual unity of mother and child,

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[55](Senator) Albert J. Beveridge, _The Meaning
of the Times and Other Speeches_ (Indianapolis: Bobbs-
Merrill Co., 1936), pp. 84-5; cited by Burns, pp. 15-16.

[56]John W. Burgess (constitutional lawyer),
cited by Burns, p. 263.

with separation being the original frustration.[57]
And, indeed, upon leaving England hadn't Winthrop called
the Church of England the Puritans' "deare Mother"
from whose breasts they "suckt" the milk of "common
salvation?" Those Puritans did not want to separate,
theologically or psychologically, from their "Mother!"
Their salvation -- spiritual nourishment: the experi-
ence of immortality -- flowed through the umbilical
cord of the "Mother Church," just as surely as the
foetus' "immortal" experience of the womb depends
on the viability of its biological link to its mother.
Losing an audience for that "City upon a Hill" meant
separation from more than just a Church or a Refor-
mation, it meant separation from Mother as well. It
destroyed the basis for present immortal existence
in both the theological and psychological dimensions,
precipitating profound existential crisis. What was
required psychologically was a mother-substitute with
whom maternal longings could be realized. The frontier
of North America was the only maternal substitute
available. The formulation of a new errand after
1645, the object of which was America in place of
England, reflected this psychological fact. Henceforward,
the land would be America's maternal analogue; it would

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[57]Geza Roheim, Magic and Schizophrenia
(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), p. 53.

be an object for maternal consummation, an object for

consumption. With repeated migrations of settlers into

the North American interior we psychoanalytically find

separation and attempted reunion with mother reenacted,

making the land "stage" of The American Psychodrama.

> ... the crossing of a river, a frontier, or
> the like, tends to repeat the drama of sepa-
> ration from the mother and of reunion with
> a mother-substitute. It is in other words,
> akin to growing up.[58]

The problem for Americans -- the problem

of "growing up" and out of infantile ambivalence --

was that they carried within them a dualistic world-

view instilled by religious ideology which unfortunately

gave the mother substitute a sinful, dirty, demonic

character. In this form she certainly could not pro-

vide "nourishment" either biologically, psychologically

of theologically; she could not provide the subjective

experience of security and unity. The new nature of

the errand compounded this problem by emphasizing the

activity of changing a polluted mother-substitute into

an ordered, "nourishing" maternal breast as a sign of

salvation and future immortality. Transformation was

justification after 1645. Hence no realization of

security or fulfilled possession was allowed in the

present without guilt over being totally defined by

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[58]Ibid., p. 49.

its sin. No matter where the Puritan-American
turned, whether to his land or his God, he con-
fronted only the possibility of sin and corruption
in this world. His hope for future salvation and im-
mortality resided solely in doing the divine work
of imposing order over chaos, transforming a dirty,
frustrating, "bad" maternal breast into an ordered,
pure, nourishing, "good" maternal breast, changing
wilderness into farmland, producing aliment from
excrement.

Work-activity in the present was for the
future; divine sanction was only provided for the
<u>work</u> of transformation and not its results. Hence
"possession" of Mother as a result of activity, whether
through courtship, seduction or rape (each was jus-
tified theologically), had to remain anxious and
unfulfilling in this world. If maternal love was to
be consummated, it would have to be by <u>immaculate
conception</u>. And what kind of gratification or ful-
fillment could mortals obtain from such an exercise?

> A society dispatched upon an errand that is
> its own reward would want no other rewards:
> it could go forth and possess a land without
> ever becoming possessed by it... .[59]

Thus, from the middle of the seventeenth century on-

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[59]Miller, "Errand," <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 6.

ward we find Americans rationalizing their sinful

and unfulfilling present existence by explaining,

justifying and identifying themselves with futurity

and eternity.

> By the latter half of the seventeenth century
> it had become an accepted tradition that the
> founders of New England had left the old
> world for the sake of their children. Samuel
> Willard told the New Englanders of 1682 that
> "the main errand which brought your fathers
> into this Wilderness, was not only that they
> might themselves enjoy, but that they might
> settle for their Children, and leave them
> in full possession of the free, pure uncor-
> rupted libertyes of the Covenant of Grace."[60]

> There is a moral sense -- a soul in the state,
> which longs for something more than tariffs,
> the bank, and the bankrupt bills of a tempori-
> zing present; which looks for some celestial
> beacon to direct the course of popular move-
> ment through the eternal future![61]

The primary reason that "growing up" and

securing an identity became problematic for America

was that, given its religious ideology and dualistic

world-view, there was no way in which the "good" and

the "bad" breasts of the land could be split and inte-

grated, and an exclusive love relationship with Mother

established. The nature of the new errand bound the

two breasts together as the definition of God's work

in America. There had to be an ever-present "bad" breast

in order to engage in the work of changing and trans-

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[60]Morgan, _Family_, p. 168.

[61]J. Sullivan Cox, "Imaginary Commonweaths,"
U.S. Magazine and Democratic Review, 1846, cited by
Ernest Lee Tuveson, _Redeemer Nation_ (Chicago: Univer-
sity of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 125.

forming it into a "good" breast. And there could never
be a completely transformed "good" breast in the
present world since, by definition, the present was
sinful and work was for futurity. Thus, ambivalence
was perpetuated in American social activity, giving
rise to infantile fantasies of destruction.

The actual transformation (settlement) of
the continent in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twen-
tieth centuries was characterized by rapidity, rapa-
ciousness and destructiveness to the point of genocide
(Indians) and ecological catastrophe (land); it is
understood from a psychoanalytical viewpoint as
the realization of infantile fantasies of destroying
the "bad" breast while securing nourishment. As
America physically matured it acquired increasingly
the capacity by which its infantile fantasies
could be realized. America became fixated on
the mother-substitute in a process of transfor-
mation ("progress") for its own sake. Like General
Electric, America's "most important product" was
progress. But ambivalence, anxiety and frustra-
tion were the psychological price exacted by God
for future salvation. America might grow physically;
psychologically it remained infantile in its attitude
toward the continent. In as much as transformation defines

America's "errand," infantile conflicts pervade its sense of self, its sense of "identity" as well.

***

The "birth" of the American people and their quest for identity and meaning originated in the Puritan experience. This experience established an attitude toward the continent of North America which may be understood psychoahalytically as ambivalence toward a maternal object. The mother-substitute continent was experienced as both the frustrating "bad" breast (In its wild condition it had no agriculture and could provide little or no nourishment to the "infants of America.") and the nourishing "good" breast (in its importance as the object of sacred activity designed to secure the spiritual milk of salvation and immortality). As noted in Chapter II, this ambivalence defines the infant's earliest oral relationship with the mother after birth, and as long as this ambivalence persists the infant fantasizes destruction of the "bad" breast while suckling, for it threatens not only nourishment, but life itself. The threat posed in Puritan-American consciousness was indeed perceived as a threat to Life: no agriculture, just wild, "savage" Indians threatened physical survival in addition to "civilization," order and Immortality.

To prevent sexual fixation on the maternal object it is necessary that the infant split the "good"

from the "bad" breast and establish an exclusive,
"ideal" love relationship with the mother. Without
this splitting, ambivalence and the absence of security
persist, making later experiences of self and others
fearful, anxious and unfulfilling. Experience in
the world will be imbued with feelings of powerlessness
and impotence which are expressed in murderous resent-
ment and destructive rage. External "threats" (for
example, the Indians and the wilderness for America)
become objects upon which one projects the destructive
and sadistic impulses occasioned by frustrated maternal
love.

America was placed in existential limbo
after 1645. It needed signs of salvation theologically,
but theology and history made these signs suspect. And
an "empty" continent offered only material resources
for securing identity; it had to be settled by people,
places and things, not by divine inspiration alone.
Theologically, expansion might be divinely justified,
but it (and identity) could only be realized in sin-
ful activity. American social experience was unfulfilling
because it was inherently ambiguous; anxiety and guilt
were perpetuated with every attempt to secure identity
via the continent.

> His greatest difficulty would not be
> the stones, storms, and Indians, but the
> problem of his identity. ...
> They looked in vain to history for an

explanation of themselves; more and more it
appeared that the meaning was not to be found
in theology, even with the help of the covenan-
tal dialectic. Thereupon, these citizens found
that they had no other place to search but
within themselves -- even though, at first
sight, that repository appeared to be nothing
but a sink of iniquity. ... Having failed
to rivet the eyes of the world upon their
city on the hill, they were left alone with
America.[62]

Puritan Origins: A Psychological
Link to Future American History.

As a result of historical events and re-

ligious ideology, one finds established in America

the sort of infantile psychological conflict which,

as animator of the Oedipus Complex, makes securing

masculinity problematic. Odeipal conflict is directed

toward securing maternal love, security, warmth and

the experience of immortality. The continent, as a

mother-substitute with whom love could not be consum-

mated in the present, obviously posed profound psycho-

logical obstacles for the project of becoming the

"father of itself" -- of securing masculine identity

through present social activity. Thus the second

"identity crisis" which America was to experience

as a result of its political rebellion from England

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[62]Miller, "Errand," op. cit., p. 15.

in 1776 cannot be considered "adolescent," but was, rather, a _pre-adolescent_ crisis: an Oedipal crisis imbued with the unresolved infantile ambiguities, frustrations and anxieties of Puritan birth trauma.

Negative self-affirmation, seen in rejecting past origins, defining America in opposition to the Old World, and asserting American "uniqueness" and "immortality," became the dominant themes in post-independence attempts to define American identity and secure American masculinity. Maternal rejection in 1645 prefigured these later American rejections of England and Europe. England "possessed" the mother-continent and was an obstacle to American possession and its attendant goals (security, warmth, immortality). Masculinity remained unfulfilled after 1776 however; because of the interrelated psychological factors of Oedipal guilt and the (Puritan) guilt necessitating transformation of the land before it could be possessed. Hence fulfillment and a resolution to Oedipal conflict remained relegated to futurity. In conclusion, the ambiguity stemming from America's Puritan origins reinforced and complicated the ambiguity of Oedpial rebellion in 1776 and made the American dream of masculinity as other-worldly as salvation.

Chapter IV.

The American Revolution of 1776:

America's Oedipal Rebellion.

The American Revolution was a political

event imbued with the ambivalence of Oedipal rebel-

lion. While during their colonial experience the

American colonists may have seen themselves as child-

ren of "Mother England,"[1] in 1776 they rebelled

against English authority and power personified by

the tyrannical father-figures of George III and

Lord North, his chief minister.

> As a long and violent abuse of power is
> generally the means of calling the right of it
> into question (and in matters too which might
> never have been thought of, had not the sufferers
> been aggravated into the inquiry), and as the
> king of England hath undertaken in his own
> right to support the parliament in what he
> calls theirs, and as the good people of this
> country are grievously oppressed by the com-
> bination, they have undoubted privilege to
> inquire into the pretentions of both, and
> equally to reject the usurpation of either.[2]

> O ye that love mankind! Ye that dare to
> oppose not only the tyranny but the tyrant,
> stand forth![3]

> But when a long train of abuses and usurpations,
> pursuing invariably the same Object evinces
> a design to render them under absolute Des-
> potism, it is their right, it is their duty,
> to throw off such Government... . The his-

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[1] "Therefore Britain should not too much re-
strain Manufactures in her Colonies. A wise and good
Mother will not do it. To distress, is to weaken, and
weakening the Children, weakens the whole Family." Ben-
jamin Franklin, "Observations Concerning the Increase

tory of the present King of Great Britain
is a history of repeated injuries and usur-
pations, all having in direct object the es-
tablishment of an absolute Tyranny over these
states. ... He has refused... --He has forbid-
den... --He has dissolved... --He has endeavored
... --He has obstructed... --He has made... --
He has erected... --He has kept among us...
--He has combined with others... --He has
abdicated Government here, by... Waging War
against us... /and finally/ --He is at this
time transporting large Armies of foreign
Mercenaries to compleat the works of death,
desolation and tyranny, already begun with
circumstances of Cruelty & perfidity scarcely
paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and
totally unworthy the Head of a civilized na-
tion. ... A Prince whose character is thus
marked by every act which may define a Tyrant,
is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.[4]

Thus, as Geoffrey Gorer suggested in his celebrated

work on the American character, The American People:

In some significant ways the birth of
the American republic can be compared with the
mythological scene which Freud imagined for
the origin of totemic observances. ... England,
the England of George III and Lord North, takes
the place of the despotic and tyrannical father,
the American colonists that of the conspiring
sons... .[5]

The familial imagery utilized by the rebel

colonists is revealing. The colonies dependent status

suggested a maternal relationship of nourishment and

succor. This image had to be challenged and destroyed.

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of Mankind" (1751), The Papers of Benjamin Franklin,
ed. L.W. LaBaree (New Haven: Yale University Press,
1961), IV, p. 229.

[2]Thomas Paine, "Common Sense," Paine: Key
Writings, ed. Harry Hayden Clark (Rev. ed.; New York:
Hill and Wang, 1961), p. 3.

[3]Ibid., p. 34.

[4]"Declaration of Independence," Great Issues
in American History, ed. Richard Hofstadter (New York:

The illusion of "Mother England" had to be revealed

as the fact of a monster Father in disguise.

> But Britain is the parent country, say
> some. Then the more shame upon her conduct. Even
> brutes do not devour their young, nor savages
> make war upon their families; ... the phrase
> parent or mother country hath been jesuitically
> adopted by the king and his parasites, with
> a low papistical design of gaining an unfair
> bias on the credulous weakness of our minds.
> ... Hither have they fled /European immigrants7,
> not from the tender embraces of the mother,
> but from the cruelty of the monster; and it
> is so far true of England, that the same tyranny
> which drove these first immigrants from home
> pursues their descendants still.[6]

> ... the moment the event of that day was made
> known /the battles at Lexington and Concord,
> Massachusetts April 19, 17757, I rejected
> the hardened, sullen-tempered Pharaeh of Eng-
> land forever; and disdain the wretch, that
> with the pretended title of FATHER OF HIS
> PEOPLE can unfeelingly hear of their slaughter,
> and composedly sleep with their blood upon
> his soil.[7]

The power of Paine's imagery resided in its capacity

to capture the colonials' real subjective experience

of British rule and European ancestry. The success of

"Common Sense" as a catalyst in the rebellion[8] is

proof of the familial-emotional dimension of that

conflict.

Vintage Books, 1958), I, pp. 71-3. /My italics.7

[5]Geoffrey Gorer, The American People (New
York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1964), p. 29.

[6]Paine, p. 21.

[7]Ibid., p. 27.

[8] According to Richard Hofstadter, "no appeal
for independence had an influence remotely comparable to
that of this document, which quickly sold about 150,000
copies." Hofstadter (ed.), Great Issues, I, p. 53.

But simply to reveal the father was not justification enough for rebellion. He had to be shown as a monstrous paternal figure who monopolized all the power and privileges of his role, thereby denying his sons the right to become the "fathers of themselves." The father's most hated and envied privileges were possession and love of mother and the power and protection by which it was secured. The imagery of the rebellion pictured the British in possession of a continent with maternal characteristics: nourishment and sustenance. The commercial relationship between Britain and North America was defined by Britain's exploitation of the land's raw materials and produce. Colonialism therefore posed a threat to the colonists' maternal-oral gratification, and the rebellion became an attempt to recapture a love relationship focused on the maternal breast of the continent.

> I have heard it asserted by some, that
> As America has flourished under her former
> connection with Great Britain, the same con-
> nection is necessary toward her future happi-
> ness... . We may as well assert that because
> a child has thrived upon milk, that it is
> never to have meat... . America would have
> flourished as much, and probably more, had no
> European power taken any notice of her. The
> commerce by which she hath enriched herself
> are the necessaries of life, and will always
> have a market while eating is the custom of
> Europe.[9]

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[9] Paine, p. 20. [My italics.]

Continued British possession of that love-object there-
fore suggested to the American colonials a relation-
ship in which she (the land and her natural resources)
was subjected to the crudest violation. The American
maternal relationship was the more "natural," so,
under British rule, the "natural rights" of the sons
were violated even as their Mother was violated.
Paine's sexual imagery is explicit.

> Ye that tell us of harmony and recon-
> ciliation, can ye restore to us the time that
> is past? Can ye give to prostitution its former
> innocence? Neither can ye reconcile Britain
> and America. ... There are injuries which nature
> cannot forgive; she would cease to be nature.
> if she did. As well can the lover forgive the
> ravisher of his mistress, as the continent
> forgive the murders of Britain.[10]

As for the protection afforded by Britain,
motives were as suspect as actions were perverse. The
nourishment that the continent yielded would continue
with or without British protection. America would
"always have a market while eating is the custom of
Europe!" The issue was thus reduced to whether the
sons would endure the repression, taxation, and exploi-
tation imposed by the father for the protection of
themselves and mother, or whether they would seize
and secure the land (mother), assuming responsibility
for protection themselves. The latter was the more

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[10]_Ibid._, p. 34.

"natural" alternative, an expression of the desire to
realize maternal love; while the former would per-
petuate an unnatural relationship based solely on
exploitation and repression.

> That she hath engrossed us is true, and
> defended the continent at our expense as well
> as her own is admitted; and she would have
> defended Turkey from the same motive, viz.
> for the sake of trade and domination.[11]

In short, the father's motives were non-erotic, and his
attitude suggested promiscuity. When considered in these
terms, the issue of defending and protecting mother
and children became clear:

> Common sense will tell us that the power which
> hath endeavored to subdue us is, of all others,
> the most improper to defend us. ... Wherefore
> if we must hereafter protect ourselves, why
> not do it for ourselves?[12]

In 1776 American colonials decided to rebel to become
"the fathers of themselves."

The "Declaration of Independence" and the
"Constitution of the United States" thus have psycho-
analytical significance as "the compact by which all
Americans are guaranteed freedom and equality on the
basis of the common renunciation of all authority over
people, which had been the father's most hated and most
envied privilege."[13]

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[11]Ibid., p. 20.

[12]Ibid., pp. 37-8. [My italics.]

[13]Gorer, pp. 29-30.

As in the Oedipal paradigm, however, the
American experience of Father England was not one of
pure hatred; it contained positive dimensions as well.
England was a <u>constitutional monarchy</u>; a republican com-
mons and a royalist monarch found themselves as strange
bedfellows beneath the covers of the English constitu-
tion. In the years preceeding the rebellion the repub-
lican dimension of English monarchy created confusion
and ambiguity about the nature and qualities of the
Father. At one point, even future-rebel John Adams
defined Britain as a <u>republic</u> more than a monarchy!

> The British government is... a limited monar-
> chy. If Aristotle, Livy, and Harrington knew
> what a republic was, the British constitution
> is much more like a republic than an empire.
> They define a republic to be a <u>government of</u>
> <u>laws, and not of men</u>. If this definition is
> just, the British constitution is nothing more
> or less than a republic, in which the king is
> first magistrate.[14]

Finally, the practical impossibility of
such a union prevailed and agitated the republican
colonials. They saw English royalty dominating and
destroying English republicanism in the government
of George III and Lord North.

> The nearer any government approaches
> a republic, the less business there is for
> a king. It is somewhat difficult to find a
> proper name for the government of England.
> Sir William Meredith calls it a republic; but
> in its present state it is unworthy of the name,
> because the corrupt influence of the crown,

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[14]John Adams, "Novanglus" (February 6, 1775),
<u>Great Issues</u>, I, p. 37.

> by having all the places in its disposal,
> hath so effectively swallowed up the power
> and eaten out the virtue of the House of
> Commons (the republican part in the con-
> stitution) that the government of England
> is nearly as monarchical as that of France
> or Spain.[15]

The contradiction between these opposed elements of British government fostered an ambivalent attitude in the Americans respecting the vices and virtues of its colonial father. For while Americans hated the authority and power exercised over them, England also had to be respected and loved as the only seat of republicanism in Europe, as the sire of James Harrington, John Locke and David Hume. In a less specific but equally significant relationship, even Europe had to be respected as the sire of Montesquieu and Rousseau. The ambiguity thus occasioned was manifested in the problem of whether to appeal to "natural law" or to English law and the "Rights of Englishmen" in seeking redress for grievances. And until the events at Lexington and Concord the solution was uncertain.

> The framers of the Declaration and Resolves
> /of the First Continental Congress, October,
> 1774/ were uncertain, according to Adams, as
> whether they should "recur to the law of na-
> ture, as well as to the British constitution,
> and our American charters and grants." The
> radicals, including Adams, wanted to appeal
> to natural law; the conservatives held that
> the constitution offered guarantees enough.
> Adams chose to appeal to both.[16]

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[15]Paine, pp. 17-18.

[16]Hofstadter (ed.), Great Issues, I, p. 26.

But even the notions of natural law, in-
alienable rights, and government by the consent of the
governed by which rebellion was finally justified
were derived from European and English sources. Re-
bellion incorporated -- **embodied** -- Europe as well
as rejected it. The divisiveness that rebellion
created within the colonies is in part a reflection
of the ambivalent experience of Fathers.

The political rebellion of Europe's Ameri-
can sons was accomplished by 1782. America then had to
face the task of establishing a national identity:
truly becoming the "father of itself." Aside from
an ambivalent attitude toward the continent as a mater-
nal analogue (America's Puritan inheritance), the Oedi-
pal nature of rebellion made securing identity problematic;
it precluded a dialectical process which would achieve
a synthetic view of self. The complicating Oedipal fac-
tor was the guilt occasioned by the "crime" of usur-
pation. As noted in Chapter II, Oedipal guilt is a func-
tion of identification with the overthrown father. Guilt
is then internalized as the superego, the moral regula-
tor within the sons' psyche. In effect, the experience
of the Oedipal father in the __past__ becomes an integral
part of the psyche of the sons in the __present__; it loses
it's experiential-temporal location in the mind. It is
this loss of temporal consciousness which precludes a

dialectical experience and distinguishes Oedipal from
adolescent identity crises. In attempting to become
the father of themselves the sons must disclaim an
identity with their father lest they fall victim them-
selves to overthrow and usurpation.[17] But such denial
must, at the same time, occasion guilt and remorse
because the father was an ambivalent object for the
sons. The denial therefore affirms his influence within
the fraternal psyche. It is this impossible double-
bind which prevents the sons from ever successfully
becoming the father of themselves and results in an
unfulfilling and anxious experience of masculinity.
In an Oedipal context, then, acts designed to secure
identity are in fact acts to secure the penis (mascu-
linity) -- a more limited goal, certainly, but one
impossible of complete realization without recognizing
and accepting an identification with the father.[18]

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[17] In America, justifying obedience to authority
in the name of Revolution is one way in which guilt has
been socially manifested. The familial imagery is striking
in this quote from a young Illinois legislator, Abraham
Lincoln: "Let every American, every lover of liberty,
every well-wisher to his posterity swear by the blood
of the Revolution never to violate in the least parti-
cular the laws of the country, and never to tolerate their
violation by others... . ...let every man remember that
to violate the law is to trample on the blood of his
father, and to tear the charter of his own and his
children's liberty." Cited by Edward McNall Burns, The
American Idea of Mission (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers
University Press, 1957), pp. 116-6.

[18] Martha Wolfenstein and Nathan Leites, in
their psychological study of the thematic content of
American films, found America's collective fantasy life
still rich in the twentieth century with latent Oedipal
antagonism: "The tendency in American life to relegate

As a consequence of the Puritan rejection
of 1645, the resulting ambivalent experience of the
maternal land, and the Oedipal nature of America's
political rebellion, it is not unexpected that we
find later persistent repudiations of past origins
resulting in an unfulfilling experience of social
activity perceived as crucial for identity (national
or individual). Nor is it unexpected that we find this
activity characterized by repeated acts of aggression
and destruction toward the land as maternal analogue
and those associated with her: a consequence of frus-
trated masculinity.

The Ever-Present Past:

The Ambiguity of Newness.

Still, tell me not of old,
    Of ancient heart and clime;
Ours is the land and age of gold,
    And ours is the hallow'd time![19]

At the beginning of Chapter III we saw the
American nation trying to establish its identity through

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parents to the background facilitates the displacement
to other persons of unresolved feelings towards mother
and father. In the films we trace the more intense feelings
of sons toward their fathers in the melodramas where the
hero is involved in violent conflict with a dangerous
older man, often his boss. The mild, ineffectual manifest
father of the films represents the father as sons are
encouraged to think of him. But this effort to obviate
father-son rivalry and conflict does not succeed com-
pletely in eliminating the child's image of the father
as a big and dangerous man. This image, not manifestly
appearing as father, persists in the night-time dream
world of the film melodramas where the hero is involved

affirmation of what it was <u>not</u>: Europe. The remarks of
Crevecoeur and Patton, separated by over one hundred
years of historical time, reveal a striking thematic
similarity. This American response is as historically
curious as it is psychologically significant. One
would have thought that one hundred and sixty years
of highly animated social activity -- revolution, set-
tlement of a "virgin" continent, overseas imperialist
adventures, economic depression, civil war, and two
world wars -- might have produced a more substantial
answer, or at least one that suggested a positive ex-
periential definition. However, the Oedipal nature
of the American rebellion in 1776 suggests that the
apparent need to reiterate distinctiveness from Europe
is a reflection of guilt stemming from that event.

      While historically the American rebellion
can be regarded as a discreet event, psychologically
it was to be repeated and perpetuated throughout Ameri-
can history. "The first separation from Europe was not
the end but only the beginning of a process which was
to repeat itself endlessly in America."[20] Thus rebellion

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in a conflict of crime and punishment with the older
man, his boss, often a lord of the underworld."
    "One of the major devices in achieving the hero's
triumph over the emotional resides of familial involve-
ment is the projection of these emotions onto others.
It is the hero's boss who attacks him and who commits
numerous crimes for which he tries to inculpate the hero.
The violent impulses of sons towards their fathers, ack-
nowledged in much of western tragedy, find a reverse
expression here." Wolfenstein and Leites, <u>Movies: A
Psychological Study</u> (New York: Atheneum, 1970), pp. 106, 107.

against and rejection of the old became the leitmotif
of the American Experience. It is seen in the Puritan
rejection of 1645 and again in 1776. Participation in
such rejection became the means through which the
individual immigrant became an American, and America,
as a "nation of immigrants," acquired an identity.
Each defined identity for the other, having only the
act of rebellion and rejection in common. The indi-
vidual's successful realization of the "American Dream,"
defining and defined by the nation's sense of identity,
has meant doing better than one's father.[21] Success
or failure in and for America has been being bigger,
better, stronger, more important, more socially recog-

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[19]Grenville Mellen ("The True Glory of
America," in The Poets and Poetry of America, 1850),
cited by Fred Somkin, The Unquiet Eagle (Ithaca, N.Y.:
Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 80.

[20]A.N. Kaul, The American Vision: Actual and
Ideal Society in Nineteenth-Century Fiction (New Haven:
Yale University Press, 1963), p. 16.

[21] "The more successful the immigrant father
was in turning his children into Americans, so that they
had no other allegiances or values, the more his foreign-
ness became a source of shame and opprobrium, the less
important did he become as a model and guide and exem-
plar. ... to grow up to be like the father, to do no
better than he had done, to be the same sort of person
as he was, would be failure indeed and would be so re-
garded by the father as much as by the son." Gorer, p. 26.

nized than the paternal forebear. Crevecoeur's America, as the "most perfect society now existing in the world," is an America defining itself above and away from, yet still based on, the Old World.[22]

All voluntary settlers arrived in America as Europeans, albeit Europeans who have rejected the authority and life-style of the Old World, but Europeans nevertheless -- "recreant Europeans," in D.H. Lawrence's terms.[23] A rejecting European is still a European product, for the philosophy, values and goals upon which his rejection was conceived were European in origin. America has not produced an original (indigenous) philosophical, economic or political system, as opposed to structure, in its brief two hundred year history. American social thought is by and large an elaboration on European philosophy: particularly the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham, the liberalism of John Stuart Mill, and the economics of John Locke. The pragmatism and individualism (of the "rugged" variety) often seen as distinctively _American_ were inherited from these strains of European thought.

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[22]Again, Wolfenstein and Leites' film study found the Oedipal content in American movies suggestive for psychologically interpreting the immigrant and American Dream: "The Oedipal formula as transcribed in this film fantasy reads: father attacks me and mother seeks my love. The hero is the innocent object of these bad impulses proceeding from the parent-figures. The assumption in American life that children will surpass their parents may contribute to making the parents eligible to be the bearers in fantasy of the condemned impulses of the children. Perhaps the impact of the immigrant tradition is also relevant here, as it contributed the image

America simply isolated them and elevated them to a
pervasive social position. As we shall see, this
elevation was related to the problematic nature of
America's experience of self, reinforced by geographic
good-fortune.

> From Benjamin Franklin to Woodrow Wilson /or
> Richard Nixon/ may be a long stride, but it
> is a stride along the same road. There is
> no new road. The same old road, become dreary
> and futile. Theoretic and materialistic.[24]

The American emphasis on rejecting the old
European father as a central characteristic of its
self-definition and identity is psychologically under-
stood as guilt over rejecting the fathers of American
social origins. Escape from Europe was impossible be-
cause America carried European genes in its very life-
blood. And this gene-pool was replenished with every
new immigrant who arrived in the New World in search
of a reality for ideas of "freedom" and "opportunity"
conceived in the Old. By failing to accept its Euro-
pean ancestry, by seeking identity in opposition to it
instead, America refused to recognize a vital part of
its historical self. Psychologically, the guilt over

---

of parents as representing an old and bad culture which
they tried to leave behind and from which the children
succeeded in emancipating themselves." Wolfenstein and
Leites, pp. 187-8.

[23]D.H. Lawrence, _Studies in Classic American
Literature_ (New York: Viking Press, 1961), p. 20.

[24]_Ibid._

a rejected European father in the **past** relocated in the

present self-consciousness of his American son, thus

necessitating the ever-present need for his denial.

> ... the concept of the tyrannical father has
> never disappeared from American culture. Whereas
> in everyday life the despotic patriarch is (and
> probably always has been, though each generation
> of Americans imagines the past to have been dif-
> ferent) a rare curiosity, it is an **idea** with
> which every American is on terms of intimate
> familiarity.[25]

> But there sits the old master, over in
> Europe. Like a parent. Somewhere deep in every
> American heart lies a rebellion against the old
> parenthood of Europe. Yet no American feels he
> has completely escaped its mastery. Hence the
> slow, smouldering patience of American opposition.
> The slow, smouldering corrosive obedience to the
> old master Europe, the unwilling subject, the
> unremitting opposition.[26]

The loss of temporal consciousness resulting from the

internalization (relocation) of the father left Ameri-

ca with a **European superego**, but without a subjective,

ego-experience (conscious) of history as dialectics; it

thereby precluded the possibility of realizing a unified,

stable, synthetic experience of identity.

> Amongst democratic nations... the woof of time
> is every instant broken, and the track of genera-
> tions effaced. Those who went before are soon
> forgotten; of those who will come after no one
> has any idea... .
> Thus not only does democracy make every
> man forget his ancestors, but it hides his descen-
> dants, and separates his contemporaries, from him;
> it throws him back forever upon himself alone, and

---

[25]Philip Slater, _The Pursuit of Loneliness:
American Culture at the Breaking Point_ (Boston: Beacon
Press, 1970), pp. 46-7.

[26]Lawrence, p. 4.

threatens in the end to confine him entirely
within the solitude of his own heart.[27]

"America without a history becomes, as in the Faulkner

legend, a country laboring to expiate the sins of its

forebears -- no more... the 'clear conscience unsullied

by the past' which an 1839 editorial of the Democratic

Review claimed for its age... ."[28] The Puritan loss of

theological and historical justification, followed by

the experience of sin and failure, is again seen as

the antecedent of the psychological-social consequences

of Oedipal rejection and guilt.

It is at this point, over the question of

the American nation's search for identity, that the

truths in the dialectics of Freud and Hegel meet.

For the American search for identity in opposition to

its historical antecedents flies in the face of Hegelian

historical logic as much as psychoanalytic theory. In

the Hegelian view of history, thesis germinates anti-

thesis and a new synthesis is the dialectical offspring.

Thus history is characterized by progression from one

stage to another, each dialectically related to con-

flicting elements in its predecessor. America-as-antithesis

makes an historically synthetic identity for the "new"

nation (a new historical stage?) impossible. This is not

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[27]Alexis DeTocqueville, Democracy in America
(New York: Schocken Books, 1961), II, pp. 119-120.

[28]Ihab H. Hassan, "The Idea of Adolescence in
American Fiction," The American Experience, ed. Hennig
Cohen (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968), p. 139.

to say that America is a unique nation, beyond the
forces of history, impervious to an external dialectical
analysis, and lacking an objectively discernable identity;
just that America (and some of its historians and social
analysers) sees itself this way. The problem posed here
is one of self-awareness, self-definition and self-reali-
zation. As long as America perceives itself antitheically,
its search for identity in the real (non-idealized) world
will be ceaseless, fruitless and unfulfilling; the Ameri-
can Dream will remain void of experiential content.

> "Henceforth be masterless."
> Which is all very well, but isn't freedom.
> Rather the reverse. A hopeless sort of constraint.
> It is never freedom till you find something you
> really positively want to be. And people in Ameri-
> ca have always been shouting about the things
> they are not.[29]

The rejection of past origins in American
self-definition left the nation without a history. The
origin of this rejection in Puritan and Oedipal experience
resulted in guilt; it required perpetual expiation and
gave the American experience of self not simply a non-
historical but an anti-historical character.

> I am the highest, and therefore the only
> authentic, fact, that can legitimate the
> facts of all the Past. ... I become a con-
> temporary of truth, not of men. I am beyond
> the range of history. I antedate its records.[30]

---

[29]Lawrence, p. 3.

[30]Bronson Alcott (Journals, 1838), cited by
Somkin, p. 81.

> There was never any more inception than there
>   is now.
> Nor any more youth and age than there is now;
>   ...
> Endless unfolding words of ages!
> And mine a word of the modern....a word
>   en masse.
> A word of the faith that never balks,
> One time as good as another time....here
>   or henceforward it is all the
>   same to me.[31]

The American-European ideals which justified rebellion

reinforced this anti-historical attitude by allowing

America to identify with a universalism ("Natural

Law" and the "Rights of Man") having no previous

historical-experiential existence.

> Such a point of view argued an American
> alienation from the grasp of an organic,
> efficacious past, as though America were
> itself a kind of rebuke to time. An appeal
> to the nature of man, rather than to his
> history, evinced a faith in something that
> had emerged unscathed from the gauntlet of
> historical time. As record, as deposit, the
> past undoubtedly existed, but Americans
> contested the extent of its jurisdiction.[32]

(I would also suggest, as an aside, that identification

with a political-universal partially filled the identity

vacuum created when the Puritan errand was relegated from

universal to provincial significance in the middle of

the seventeenth century.)

In rejecting its past and denying the relevance

of history for its identity, America was left with only

the future for explanation, justification and definition.

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[31]Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself," _Leaves of Grass_, ed. Malcolm Cowley (The First, 1855, Edition; New York: Viking Press, 1959), pp. 26, 47.

[32]Somkin, p. 57.

America lived for the future; America existed for the future; in a sense, "America" existed in the future (i.e., the experiential identity of America was to be realized always in the future).

> We must be content with little literature, less art, and only nature in perfection. We are to be busy, not happy. For we live for futurity, and we are doing the work of two generations yet unborn.[33]

From DeTocqueville to Reisman and Slater, this future-orientation has caught the attention of social analysts who have chosen America as their subject. But few have had the insight of Herman Melville who linked future-orientation to America's denial of the efficacy of history. The problem inherent in this attitude disturbed him.

> In these boisterous days, the lessons of history are almost discarded, as superceded by present experiences. And that while all Mardi's present has grown out of its past, it is fast becoming obsolete to refer to what has been. Yet, peradventure, the past is an apostle.[34]

America without history, with only futurity for present justification -- America as the future --, subjectively experienced an even further collapse of temporal consciousness; in fact, its collapse was complete. For the denial of the past and the all-justifying role of the future left America with only an

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[33]John Milton Mackie, cited by Somkin, p. 76.

[34]Herman Melville (Mardi, and a Voyage Thither), cited by Somkin, p. 56.

unconnected and experientially void present identity.
As Woodrow Wilson put it in his 1912 presidential
campaign: think of the future "as the more glorious
time in comparison to which the present is nothing."[35]
And indeed for America the present _was_ nothing definable.
Sequential and causal time ceased to exist subjectively,
for each was _contained_ in the present in some form: the
past as present guilt, and the future as present iden-
tity. Hence American identity-securing social activity
was experienced as unfulfilling; it was static, de-
fined by an inescapable past and an ever-receding future.
It _was_ a long stride from Benjamin Franklin to Woodrow
Wilson, and still along the same road, still dreary
and futile.

The "ambiguity of newness" (the problematic
nature of identity) experienced by America was re-
flected in a belief in its perpetual youth and
eternal character. "Ambiguity about newness lay at
the heart of the American attitude towards time."[36]
America sought to remain young while passing through
historical time. And the Western frontier was to achieve
central importance for American self- definition be-
cause by both its uncivilized ("new") and its maternal
character it appealed to American consciousness as an

35Cited by Burns, p. 23.

36Somkin, p. 58.

area in which youth might be perpetually renewed
through the activity of transformation. The land,
the religious attitudes, and the "universal principles"
which justified rebellion combined to translate
absence of temporal consciousness into an aspira-
tion for immortality (eternal youth).

> He is Liberty's chosen apostle: he is
> a master workman, and universal space
> is his workshop, and universal perfec-
> tibility his hallowed aim. He has present
> and eternal reward for his exertions,
> and limitless expanse for his enterprise,
> his genius, his glory.[37]
>
> soar away... yet higher and higher, until,
> like another new-created star, in her true
> orbit, about the sun of Righteousness, she
> shall wheel her round flight forever, with
> an unspotted disk, in a sky of cloudless
> Immortality.[38]
>
> The genius of America, both land and
> nation, was thus felt as a providential con-
> spiracy against time, as an attempt to out-
> wit time by an evasion of the exigencies
> of temporal causality; by an appeal, finally,
> from time to eternity. ... America as the
> first nation ever founded on the principles
> of natural rights and justice, was manifestly
> a spectacular assault against the efficacy of
> time as history.[39]

Implicit in denying the efficacy of time and
holding eternal aspirations is a rejection and denial
of death. For in recognizing and accepting death, the
mutability wrought by time is recognized. Death denies

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[37]W.E. Arthur ("Fourth of July Address, 1850"),
cited by Somkin, p. 80.

[38]Charles Anderson ("An Address on Anglo-Saxon
Destiny..., 1849"), cited by Somkin, p. 84.

[39]Somkin, p. 61.

eternity and affirms mortality. It represents the final
and inevitable culmination of aging. By conferring upon
their nation eternal youth and immortality, Americans
tried to leave no room for death. Americans did not
want simply to be men, they wanted to be super-men; they
wanted to be gods.

> ... the finest figure of a man... so now stood
> this young American type of a new race, splen-
> did as the Greeks themselves in the immortal
> beauty of life. His white body shining in the
> sun, every rolling muscle plainly visible...
> so comely was he, so like a god in his clean.
> youth.[40]

One way in which America's quest for immor-
tality is socially revealed is in the "peculiar features
in some of /its/ funeral habits." Death has been in-
vested there with the trappings of birth, creation
and rejuvenation in an effort to deny its finality,
evade temporal consciousness, and sustain a youthful
self-image.

> From the necropolis of the Pharaohs, the
> development points down to the vast structure
> of Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Hollywood. On
> the three hundred acres of this commercial
> enterprise, there are no plants that shed their
> leaves; the lawns are watered by eighty miles
> of pipe; the atmosphere is that of a happy
> playground and not of the resting place of the
> dead. Different parts of the park are called
> Eventide, Babyland, Graceland, Inspiration
> Slope, Slumberland, Sweet Memories, Vesperland,
> Dawn of Tomorrow. ... The soul is supposed to
> go straight from the "slumber room" to paradise,
> which seems to be a kind of eternal infancy.[41]

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[40]Emerson Hough (The Magnificent Adventure),
cited by Nicholas J. Karolides, The Pioneer in the Ameri-
can Novel 1900-1950 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press,
1967), p. 14.

The issue raised here does not simply concern the particular funeral habits of a culture. Certainly these are as varied as the religious beliefs of man. But the reason "American death" is so extraordinary is that its experience points to the very heart of the _life experience_ of the nation and thereby to questions of national self-definition and identity.[42] Americans not only denied death at its event but denied it in their individual and social activities as well. Denying death in life subjectively parallels denying the past. Each results in a denial of aspects of the self which preclude experiential fulfillment of identity. And like all sustained denials they simultaneously affirm their influence in the unconscious: in this case, affirming _fear of death_. They foster ideal and illusion rather than living experience. It was to this aspect of American ambiguity that Melville spoke from the whale-boat in _Moby Dick_:

> Again: as the profound calm which only
> apparently precedes and prophesies of the storm,
> is perhaps more awful than the storm itself; for,
> indeed, the calm is but the wrapper and envelope
> of the storm; and contains it in itself, as the
> seemingly harmless rifle holds the fatal powder,
> and the ball, and the explosion; so the graceful
> repose of the line, as it silently serpentines
> about the oarsmen before being brought into actual
> play -- this is a thing which carries more of the

[41]Martin Grotjahn, "About the Representation of Death in the Art of Antiquity and in the Unconscious of Modern Man," _Psychoanalysis and Culture_, ed. G.B. Wilbur and W. Muensterberger (New York: International Universities Press, 1951), p. 421.

true terror than any other aspect of this
dangerous affair. But why say more? All men
live enveloped in whale-lines. All are born
with halters round their necks; but it is
only when caught in the swift, sudden turn of
death, that mortals realize the silent, subtle,
ever-present perils of life. And if you be
a philosopher, though seated in the whale-boat,
you would not at heart feel one more whit of
terror, than though seated before your evening
fire with a poker, and not a harpoon, by
your side.[43]

"Fundamentally, it was a question of sincerity that

Melville was urging, the honesty to admit the efficacy

of time, and thereby to take into the American conscious-

ness its most dreaded features: change, death, and the

bitter knowledge of the irrevocability of the past."[44]

The fear of death for America is a further reflection

of its ambiguous experience of newness and identity.

The desire to remain forever young within or

in spite of historical time reflects a fear of growing

old -- of "growing up." Psychologically, it is both

a reflection of the insecurity of the maternal love

relationship (a result of Puritan dualism) and a re-

flection of the guilt in Oedipal rebellion. Sustained

rejection of the old father is a function of the sons'

fear of falling prey to rebellion and usurpation them-

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[42] A particularly effective cinematographic
exploration of this theme is found in the 1971 American
film "Harold and Maude" (written by Colin Higgins, directed
by Hal Ashby).

[43] Herman Melville, Moby Dick (New York: New
American Library, 1961), p. 276.

[44] Somkin, p. 89.

selves. America denied aging because to age was re-
cognize past rejection and the possibility of its own
future rejection and finite historical existence. It
would be too close an identification with Europe, the
initial rejecting Mother and the later rejected father.
The perpetual youth seen for America was therefore a
prophylactic expression of the ego, but revealed the
guilt internalized from past rejection by and of the
old. It is this guilt which distinguishes son from
father and makes becoming the father of oneself prob-
lematic. Within an Oedipal context, the desire for
eternal youth is an expression of frustration, of the
failure to experience fatherhood.

Eternal aspiration is also understood in
relation to the libidinal forces which animate Oedipal
conflict: the attempt to secure maternal love and support
and recapture the experience of primal unity and security.
Its timeless aspect gives the experience of the maternal
womb symbolic psychological significance with respect
to all eternal longings, sacred and secular. Maternal-
fraternal love is the catalyst of Oedipal rebellion:
it causes paternal repression and is the goal which
fosters restrictive guilt as the superego after rebellion.
Finally, becoming the father of oneself involves the
realization of libidinal maternal fantasies with mother
or a mother-substitute. The initial experience of mother

is oral and therefore later attempts to recapture her
and secure masculine identity are defined by oral needs
and desires. For America, then, paternal rejection
is inextricably tied to the maternally oriented long-
ing for immortality. American Western expansion, as
the fulfillment of American "identity" -- its "Manifest
Destiny" --, was a psychodrama in which America tried
to secure its masculinity by the oral possession
(consumption) of "mother" (the land), after having torn
her away from England (the former "Colonial Mother"
transformed in American consciousness into the
tyrannical "Foreign Father" of 1776).

The Frontier as Stage of
The American Psychodrama[a]

The search for American "identity" had a
unique psychological character because of the super-

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[a]This term is borrowed from modern experi-
mental psychotherapy and is utilized loosely within the
psycho-social context suggested by Parker Tyler for
American films and theatre: "The Psychodrama... is a
distincly minor form of clinical practice. But I think
its moral motivation and express theatrical pattern far
more signifcant in American culture than its psychiatric
limits technically suggest. Actually, it is the private
therapy of the mentally and emotionally handicapped in-
dividual turned into a collective enterprise. In what
may be termed the ritual of the psychodrama, the individ-
ual patient tries to explicate his dilemma in terms of

imposition of a negative affirmation of self on the maternal relationship with the land. The land of North America represented flight from the past in its geographical aspect, potential warmth and security in its maternal aspect, and the source of masculine identity as the object of Oedipal conflict. In this section the frontier will be considered psychoanalytically: the American experience there reveals that the conjunction of these different, but interrelated, maternal-land images precluded the subjective experience of fulfilled "possession" of the "mother" and of a secure masculine identity.

As a consequence of the rebellion from Europe, the interior of North America assumed a geographical aspect thought to fulfill the needs of an America in search of distinctive identity. A seemingly

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pantomime, possibly words too, before a small audience of others like himself: those with similar difficulties. The psychiatrist functions as a stage manager-director without script, more like the moderator of a discussion panel than like a stage director....

"I suggest that the Psychodrama, as an American theatre motif, is a precise sign of the search for a new, operative identity by no means confined to individuals, but of which the individual (in the theatre and elsewhere) becomes a conspicuous medium....

"The value of the Psychodrama is to show us a theatrical motif that is a direct key to the social. Perhaps we may take an ambivalent pride in the fact that this motif is pecularly American. It is in our plays,

unlimited expanse of unsettled territory in the West

meant America might continuously move away from Europe.

The West was a stage upon which rebellion and rejection

of the old could be perpetually acted out. In American

perception the land seemed to define the nature of its

ideals and identity.

> The scene which that country presents to the
> eye of the spectator has something in it which
> generates and enlarges great ideas. Nature appears
> to him in magnitute. The mighty objects he beholds
> act upon his mind by enlarging it[45]and he partakes
> of the greatness he contemplates.

> As successive terminal moraines result from
> successive glaciations, so each frontier leaves
> its traces behind it, and when it becomes a
> settled area the region still partakes of the
> frontier characteristics. Thus, the advance of
> the frontier has meant a steady movement away from
> the influence of Europe, a steady growth of
> independence on American lines.... to study this
> advance, the men who grew up under these conditions,
> and the political, economic, and social results of
> it is to study the really American part of our
> history.[46]

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novels, and movies, where what I may risk calling the
Method Hero bluntly exposes himself. I think no one
represents this hero better, in the theatrical medium
today, than Marlon Brando. He (this "hero") is mainly
concerned with establishing, as a moral and prevailing
quantity, an original innocence -- and he does not care
how much violence this aim entails. The 'conquering
hero' is already an anachronism. No matter how many fist-
fights or gun-battles he wins, he typically remains a
fugitive; he lives on the loose, unraveled end of life.
What he infallibly needs is a New Start." Parker Tyler,
Sex, Psyche Etcetera in the Film (New York: Horizon Press,
1969), pp. 67, 80-1.

[45]Thomas Paine, p. 173.

[46]Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance
of the Frontier in American History," The Turner Thesis,
concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History,
ed. George R. Taylor (Rev. ed.; Boston: D.C. Heath and
Co., 1956), pp. 2-3.

The magnitude of the land suggested an American identity defined by scale and quantity, rather than experiential quality.

> Western democracy is contrasted with the demo-
> cracy of all other times in the largeness of the
> tasks to which it has set its hand, and in the
> vast achievements which it has wrought in the
> control of nature and of politics.... In short,
> democracy has learned in the West of the United
> States how to deal with the problem of magnitude.[47]

But contemplating the magnitude of its tasks (identity?) was still an elaboration of the old theme of rejection. Magnitude is a function of relation and comparison. "Bigger than what?" "Greater than whom?" Than all that had come before. The spectre of European parentage haunted the American experience of its West; maternal insecurity and Oedipal guilt made a synthetic experiential identity impossible. "Strolling casts, they would play over and over again dramas on the single theme, 'something we crave but have not.'"[48] In short, the West was a stage on which Americans played out the psycho-drama of national identity.

The continent also possessed a greater psychological appeal: since the rejection by the "Mother Church" in 1645 it represented the Mother of the American nation. The transformation of its unsettled, virginal, fertile aspect represented the possibility of achieving maternal nourishment and succor: the

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[47]Turner, p. 28.

[48]Somkin, p. 129.

security, warmth and immortality of the womb. North
America was what Father England possessed and what rebel
American sons sought to possess. Representative Cyrus
L. Dunham (Indiana), in arguing for the Homestead Bill
in 1852, revealed   maternal orientation which just-.
ified possession (among other revelations): .

> I have often admired that lofty expression of
> the great Tecumseh -- for he was great, though
> a savage; he was one of Nature's great men, made
> in God's own image, he spoke God's own language
> -- the voice of nature -- : "My father! the Great
> Spirit is _my_ father, the earth is my mother, and
> upon her bosom will I repose. And he stretched
> himself upon _the bosom of our common mother._[49]

Frederick Jackson Turner, in an essay for
Atlantic in 1903, also utilized maternal imagery for
describing the significant contributions. of the
frontier to American society. To him the frontier
was the bosom from which America suckled the strength
needed to establish a domesticated society.

> ...this great American West took them /European
> settlers/ to _her bosom_, taught them a new way
> of looking upon the destiny of the common man...;
> and ever as society on _her_ eastern border grew
> to resemble the Old World in its social forms
> and its industry, ...she opened new provinces,
> and dowered new democracies in _her_ most distant
> domains with _her_ material treasures and with. . .
> the strength that came from hewing out a home,
> making a _school_ and a _church_, and creating a
> higher future for his _family_, furnished to the
> pioneer.[50]

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[49]Cyrus L. Dunham, cited by Henry Nash Smith,
Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth (Cambridge,
Massachusetts: Havard University Press, 1950), p. 172.
/Author's and my italics./

[50]Turner cited by Smith, p. 254. /My italics/

The desire to possess the land as symbolic
mother explains the oral character exhibited in
American Western expansion. The orality in expansion
is seen in America's picture of itself as "'young
and growing,' which expanded through 'swallowing'
territory, 'just as an animal needs to eat to grow.'"[51]
Land hunger is a maternal-oral orientation and reflects
separation anxiety and the trauma of birth. As such
its ultimate goal is a recapturing of the dual-unity,
security, timelessness and immortality of the womb.
Declarations of the perpetual youth, immortality and
eternal quality of the American nation, so evident
in the epithet most often used to justify expansion,
"Manifest Destiny," also justify a psychoanalytical
view which focuses on recapturing primal unity.

> Something of the same spirit now glows in the
> bosom of every member of this western common-
> wealth in America. Call it what you will, des-
> tiny, or what not; it is leading us as a cloud by
> day and a pillar of fire by night. It beckons
> to us from the dim and shadowy distance, and bids
> us, All Hail! It illumines our faces with hope,
> lights our eye with enterprise. Who can define
> it? As well define infinity, space, eternity;
> yet who so heartless as not to feel it. It has
> been called manifest. Its effects are manifest.
> They are seen in the throbbing pulse of America.
> It whelms and controls us, yet who would stem its
> rushing stream.[52]

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[51]Sources for the quotations cited by Micheal
Paul Rogin, "Liberal Society and the Indian Question,"
Politics and Society, May, 1971, fn., p. 275.

[52]J. Sullivan Cox, "Imaginary Commonwealths,"
U.S. Magazine and Democratic Review, 1846, cited by Ernest
Lee Tuveson, Redeemer Nation (Chicago: University of Chicago
Press, 1968), p. 126. /My italics/

> The oceans to be cross'd, the distant
>   brought near,
> The lands to be welded together.
>   ...
> Nature and Man shall be disjoin'd
>   and diffused no more,
> The true Son of God shall absolutely
>   fuse them.[53]

This maternal dimension and the ambiguity

about newness experienced by Americans is reflected

most clearly in what they hoped to achieve through Western

activity: remaining young while passing through historical

time -- the desire for immortality.

> Here /the frontier/ was an opportunity for
> social development continually to begin over
> again, wherever society gave signs of breaking
> into classes. Here was a magic **fountain of**
> **youth** in which America continually bathed and
> was **rejuvenated**.[54]

The idea of the West as a perpetual "fountain of

youth" reveals a fear about "growing up," of becoming

like the old (class-divided) Europe. Often, even

the Eastern seabord was perceived in American con-

sciousness as a threat to the development of a distinctive

American personality, not only because of its geographic

proximity and access to Europe, but because of the

relative stability and safety that characterized the

Eastern lifestyle.[55] The West consequently became the

locus of an identity-drama of escape from the old-East-

Europe; but it only reinforced the ambiguous experience

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[53]Walt Whitman, "Passage to India" cited by
Henry Nash Smith, pp. 46-7.

[54]Turner, 1896 speech, cited by Smith, p. 254.

[55]
Smith, p. 23.

of self in the "new nation."

The American novel, primarily characterized
by themes of escape and flight from the old, is one
reflection of the desire for eternal youth.

> The opening of the frontier gave the phenomenon
> of escape in the modern novel its pecularly
> American stamp.... it is only in American lit-
> ature, particularly in the American novel, that
> the preoccupation with flight begins to loom
> large, begins to represent what is most character-
> istically American -- the urge to be forever wandering
> forward into new territories.[56]

A further reflection of the American theme of escape and
flight from the old is found in the "safety valve" theory
of Western expansion, which, for over a century, had
widespread appeal to Americans as an explanation which
distinguished them from Europe, hiding the facts of
"European-style" poverty and class in the East, and
justifying belief in the possibility of eternal youth.
It was first suggested by Caleb Cushing in a Fourth of
July address in 1839:

> Emigration to the West is the great safety-valve
> of our population, and frees us from all the
> dangers of the poverty, and discontent disorders,
> which always spring up in a community when the
> number of its inhabitants has outrun its capacity
> to afford due recompense to honest industry and
> ambition.[57]

The desire for eternal youth as a form of
death-denial lent a certain urgency to securing possession
of the maternal continent. The rapidity and rapacious-

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[56]Sam Bluefarb, _The Escape Motif in the_
American Novel (?: Ohio State University Press, 1972), p. 7.

[57]Somkin, p. 96.

ness with which America settled (consumed!) the continent
may not be attributed simply to a Puritan inheritance
emphasizing hard work, perseverance, constant activity
and the "value of time" ("Time is Money!"), in opposition
to slothfulness, laziness and idle entertainment. After
all, these Puritan values were derived from a European
Calvinist heritage. The geometrical proliferation of
applied science after the seventeenth century may have
helped settlement on a practical level; but this
provides only a partial explanation for the fact
that Europeans failed to settle more than the Eastern
seabord in the almost two hundred years they claimed the
continent, while it took only slightly over one hundred
years for Americans to "close" the frontier territory
lying between its oceanic borders. The speed which
characterized American settlement and "civilization"
of the continent is better explained by the American
"errand" inherited from second and third generation
Puritans, an "errand" which emphasized the activity
of continental transformation and deeper psychological
interpretation of this sacred activity, focusing on the
attitudes toward time, work, salvation and immortality
which informed it, will further illuminate the character
of American territorial expansion.

Since the time of Homer's Greece sleep and
Death have shared a common symbolism; they twin brothers.[58]

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[58]The Iliad of Homer, trans. Richmond Lattimore
(Chicago: University of Chicago, 1951), xvi. 682, p. 348.

Psychoanalysis has made much of the relationship be-
tween the wish to sleep and the wish to die. For our
purposes here, however, we need only note that the American
life was perceived as immortal and that it was to be
sustained through constant activity. The exertion of
continental expansion was activity on the grandest scale;
it was _the_ American activity, and its magnitude increased
the value of time. Settle the wilderness as quickly as
possible! Keep America Young! "Industry: Lose no time,
be always employed in something useful; but cut off all
unnecessary action."[59] Lost time = passive time = _mortal_
time. A view to futurity animated "useful" activity.
And non-useful activity had to be "cut off" for it
allowed contemplation of the past and present and dis-
tracted from the future. It allowed contemplation of
the consequences of time -- of mortality -- and hence
threatened to destory the American mythology of youth
attached to the West. Ultimately, it threatened the
goal of securing maternal warmth, security and the
experience of immortality through continental trans-
formation.

The anxiety occasioned by the threat to
immortality inherent in Western expansion may be seen
as the social expression of ambiguity in the individual
American's attempt to secure an identity through

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[59]Benjamin Franklin's "Advice," cited by
D.H. Lawrence, pp. 11-12.

possession and accumulation of material objects.

Socially and individually, each had to be unfulfilling,

for the necessities of material existence undercut

longings for eternal existence.   On an individual level,

we find ambiguous the American attempt to simultaneously

cling to and grasp after the material; clinging reveals

the desire for immortality but grasping belies a fear

and thus a recognition of the finiteness of man.   Denial

is simultaneously affirmation: in America it is manifested

in ambiguities on the material and psychological level.

> A native of the United States clings to
> this world's goods as if he were certain never
> to die, and he is so hasty in grasping at all
> within his reach, that one would suppose he was
> constantly afraid of not living long enough to
> enjoy them.[60]

The persistent fear of death in American con-

sciousness has further psychoanalytic significance for

masculine identity-securing activity: castration anxiety.

> The unconscious does not recognize one's
> own death.   Symbols of death in the unconscious
> represent fear of mutilation and castration or
> or concern the annihilation of other persons.
> The integrative function of the ego is only freed
> for final synthesis of the death experience when
> the role which castrastion anxiety plays in death
> fear has been properly analyzed.[61]

Fear of "growing old" may be psychoanalytically under-

stood as fear of actually becoming the "father of oneself,"

of finally securing masculine identity -- securing the

penis. This fear was a result of the guilt engendered by

60DeTocqueville, II, p. 161. /My italics./

61Grotjahn, p. 414.

Oedipal usurpation: fear of falling prey to usurpation
(and death) oneself. It is part of the fantasy of
genital mutilation as punishment for the crime against
father. Rejection of the old (Europe), settlement as
maternal-land-consummation and longing for immortality
created a psychological motif for American consciousness
in which fear of death was joined with anxiety over
masculinity. Threats posed to settlement of the continent
were thus threats to masculinity and occasioned the ex-
perience of national castration anxiety. As we shall see
in Chapters VI and VII, the content of the Indian "threat"
to settlement perceived by Americans does indeed suggest
anxiety over secured masculinity (castration anxiety).

Psychoanalytically, the land-rush of
Americans into the North American continent cannot be
considered as a finite event which culminates in a
successful and fulfilling experience of identity via
simple possession of a body of territory. That body was
a _maternal_ _body_ of ambiguous character and required
the activity of perpetual transformation to make her a
"good" mother. The "closing" of the frontier in 1890
meant simply the unsuccessful end of the continental-
maternal phase of the identity search and the beginning
of a search for new object-territories and peoples over
which America might try to secure its masculinity. An
American identity defined by escape from the old, denial
of death and flight from mortality required "new frontiers"

for continued escape and distinctiveness. Inherent
in the assertions of Manifest Destiny [J. Sullivan Cox's
use of the term in 1846 was only its first recorded
expression and coincided with America's first extra-
territorial conflict: the war with Mexico over the
annexation of Texas.] was a psychological dispostion
which extended object-seeking tendencies beyond
continental borders. Manifest Destiny was America's
political, economic and geographical interpretation of
"the Infinite Progress of mankind," one which established
America as the _axis mundi_ and placed it a head above all
other nations.[62] Indeed, the foremost exponents of
Manifest Destiny throughout the nineteenth and
twentieth centuries saw America as a leader and future
father of a new world family. America had a paternal
destiny in the world as well the continent. But the
existential void left by the failure of the "City upon
a Hill" precluded such possession and maternal consummation.
And the guilt of Oedipal rebellion persisted too; America's
"paternal destiny," its masculine identity, remained
void of experiential content. The international
version of Manifest Destiny was characterized by the
same negative affirmations, the same other-referential
self-definitions, the same opposition to the old. It
remained a quest for the warmth, immortality, unity and

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[62]Through out American history, the leading
role of America in the "infinite progress" of the species
has been expressed as an article of American faith.

security of the womb, a testament to America's failure

in maternal consummationand securing a masculine iden-

tity on its frontier.

> Hail Land of light and joy! thy power
> shall grow
> Far as the seas, which round thy regions flow;
> Through earth's wide realms they glory shall extend,
> And savage nations to thy scepter bend.
>
> ...
> Round thy broad fields more glorious ROMES arise,
> With pomp and splendour bright'ning all the skies;
> EUROPE and ASIA with surprise behold
> Thy temples starr'd with gems and roof'd with gold.[63]
>
> The untransacted destiny of the American people
> is to subdue the continent -- to rush over this
> vast field to the Pacific Ocean -- to animate the
> many hundred millions of its people, and to cheer
> them upward... -- to establish a new order in
> human affairs... --, to regenerate superannuated
> nations -- ... to stir the sleep of a hundred
> centuries -- to teach old nations a new civili-
> zation -- to confirm the destiny of the human
> race -- ... to unite the world in one social family... ¡[64]
>
> God has not been preparing the English-speaking
> and Teutonic peoples for a thousand years for nothing
> but vain and idle self-contemplation... . ...He has
> marked the American people as His Chosen Nation
> finally to lead in the regeneration of the world.[65]
>
> ... debased civilizations and decaying races
> /should disappear/ before the higher civiliza-
> tion of the nobler and more virile types of man.[66]

The international role that America chose for

itself after 1890 is psychologically understood as "natural,"

expected or unsurprising, given the failure of continental

Albert Gallatin (Treasury Secretary to Jefferson and Madison),
Andrew Jackson, George Bancroft (American historian), Andrew
Carnegie and Theodore Roosevelt are cited by Burns, pp. 17-
22, as typifying this attitude.

[63]Timothy Dwight ("America; or a Poem on the
Settlement of the British Colonies... ."), cited by Tu-
veson, p. 105.

[64]William Gilpin (1846), cited by Smith, p. 37.
/My italics./

masculine-identity activity, rather than from any <u>suc-</u>
<u>cesses</u> claimed for that activity in the name of "consoli-
dating our interests." There is no obvious reason why
success at home is naturally followed by exertion abroad.

> /The period following the War of 1812/ began the
> settlement and improvement of the vast interior
> of the country. Here was the field of our coloni-
> zation, here was the field of our political
> activity. This process being completed, it is
> not strange that we find the United States again
> involved in world politics. ... Having completed
> the conquest of the wilderness, and having con-
> solidated our interests, we are beginning to con-
> sider the relations of democracy and empire. [67]

Rather, a psychoanalytic interpretation of the failures
of continental expansion reveals a meaning-link between
continental and imperialist activities, a link perhaps
more subtle but certainly more meaningful for understanding
the subjective experience of America overseas in the
future. [68]

> This move into the West was perhaps the high
> point of escape from the older civilization,
> from an older, perhaps even an effete, way of
> life. But the deep -- one might say chronic --
> urge of Americans to escape did not end with the
> closing of the frontier or the atrophy of the

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[65]Albert J. Beveridge, cited by Burns, pp. 15-16,
/My italics./

[66]Beveridge, cited by Burns, p. 264. /My italics./

[67]Turner, "Contributions," pp. 20-1.

[68]
"One of the most important and constant components
of such /American international/ relations is the insatiable
American demand for the signs of friendship and love...
to be loved is not necessarily to love in return, but
rather to be worthy of love /a problem of self-definition/...

great optimistic strain in American life....
For while frontiers disappeared and hopes died,
the urge to escape -- which created both the
hopes and the frontiers -- continued to exist
as if the frontier were still there and as if
all hope Had not been abandoned.[69]

*   *   *

Throughout their history Americans have
been fleeing from the old, escaping toward an ever-
receding and unrealizable future. They have rejected
death and the mutability wrought by time, while
asserting the immortal and unique quality of their
nation. They have seen America as god-like, as the
moral and spiritual animator of mankind, uplifting
the primitive and regenerating the decadent. In the
process, they have avoided and denied themselves a
viable, experiential, "human," historical identity:
self-contemplation is "vain" and "idle." To confront
death, time and history would destroy the experientially
void but psychologically appealing illusion of godliness.

The problem in realizing the "American
Dream" of subjectively experiencing contentment,
peace and happiness, is the problem of an unresolved
American Oedipus complex. The ambivalences in Oedipal

Coupled with this desire to be loved is a strong
fear of rejection, of being treated as unworthy of love;
and one technique of dealing with this fear is to
anticipate it, by rejecting before one is rejected."
Gorer, pp. 227-8, 230.

[69]Bluefrab, p. 3.

conflict are complicated by an ambiguous experience
of the land as maternal analogue. America remains in
fear of experiential self-contemplation: a fear of con-
fronting the American ideal with American historical and
social reality. As recent history shows, Americans
soon tire of hearing and seeing "what's wrong with
America:" rather, they prefer to fix their gaze on the
illusion of the ideal: "what's right with America." It
is only when Americans begin confronting the
ambiguities of their "newness" seriously that a process
of securing a viable identity will begin. Until then
they will dodge. They will search and act everywhere
except within themselves.

> The world doesn't fear a new idea. It
> can pigeon-hole any idea. But it can't pigeon-
> hole a real new experience. It can only dodge.
> The world is a great dodger, and the Americans
> are the greatest. Because they dodge their own
> very selves. [70]

70
D.H. Lawrence, p. 1.

Chapter V.

Images of the Frontier West: Psycho-
Drama of American Ambiguity.

Introduction.

In the preceding two chapters psychoanalytic
theory was brought to the task of interpreting American
social and historical experience. In focusing on
America's Puritan origins and on the rebellion of
1776 certain pre-adolescent psychological attitudes were
established as integral parts of the collective American
psyche. These attitudes were seen as critical for
understanding the nature of America's search for a
national identity and for the significance of the
frontier in this quest.

To recapitulate briefly, America's psychological
inheritance from its Puritan ancestors was the experience
of social activity on the North American continent
as sinful, guilt-ridden and subjectively unfulfilling.
The Puritans arrived in North America with a positive
sense of mission and identity: to serve as the model
polity for reforming the Church of England. This mission
was destroyed in 1645. Rejected by their former allies
in England over the issue of toleration, the American

Puritans were left alone with an"empty," threatening
wilderness and a lively sense of sin, failure and
corruption. The new "errand" formulated in the second
half of the seventeenth century to justify the Puritan
settlements emphasized the <u>activity</u> of <u>sacralizing</u>
the profane continent as the means of achieving future
salvation. A dualistic cosmology pitted the forces
of Righteousness against the forces of the Devil which
resided in the wild, barbaric, untamed land. Nature had
to be subdued and chaos transformed into order. All
was done for futurity, while present worldly existence
remained sinful and characterized by failure and guilt.

Psychoanalytically, the Puritan existential
crisis of 1645 represented birth trauma and separation
anxiety. The Church of England as a rejecting "mother"
left the American Puritans' in need of a mother-substi-
tute toward whom maternal longings for warmth, security
and immortality might be projected. The land of North
America became their maternal substitute, potentially
capable of fulfilling psychological and theological
needs. The Puritans' dualistic cosmology, however,
made present realization of maternal love (consummation)
and the subjective experience of fulfillment and content-
ment impossible. The land in its wild state represented
a "bad," frustrating maternal breast, incapable of

providing warmth, security and nourishment. She had
to be transformed into a "good," nourishing breast for
consummation to be realized. Future salvation was to be
achieved through the activity of transformation, not
from simple possession or consummation. Hence an ever-
present "bad" breast was necessary for justification and
salvation. Psychologically, Americans became fixated on
the maternal object, unable to separate "good" from
"bad" and establish an exclusive "love relationship" with
the land-mother. The result was an ambivalence toward
the land in which infantile fantasies of destruction (and
as time progressed, the realization of these fantasies)
accompanied attempts to secure nourishment (the
transformation of wilderness into farmland).

      The Puritan rejection of 1645 prefigured
the American Oedipal rejection (rebellion) of 1776.
England was portrayed in 1776 as a tyrannical Father,
possessing, dominating and exploiting the maternal land.
Thus he was seen as an obstacle to maternal consummation.
The Oedipal guilt experienced by the rebel American sons
shaped attempts at self-definition and identification
in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. American
self-definition was other-referential and void of
experiential content. The American "identity" was
obtained by negative affirmation: rejection of the old
(Europe), national distinctiveness and historical

uniqueness. The frontier and the West were perceived
as exercises securing perpetual youth for the American
nation, an attitude related to the association of
maternal aspiration with the land. The frontier was
seen as a "fountain of youth" in which America was
continually reborn, reinvigorated and rejuvenated. The
rapidity, destructiveness and persistence of America's
"civilization" of the continent is psychoanalytically
understood as unsuccessful attempts to become the father
of itself -- to secure its masculine identity. Oedipal
guilt was superimposed on an original ambivalence to-
ward the maternal band. Possession and consumption of
maternal love was impossible, and the subjective
experience of masculinity remained unfulfilled. In
short, the American "realization" of "destiny" or
"identity" on the maternal breast of the frontier was
not a _realization_ at all, but was social activity im-
bued with unresolved pre-adolescent ambiguities and
anxieties. The Western frontier thus has psychoanalytic
significance as the "stage" of a "psychodrama" in which
Americans repeatedly tried and failed to possess and
(orally) consummate love with the mother-land -- psycho-
logically identified and defined by second and third
generation Puritans, and wrested away from Father-
England in the Oedipal rebellion of 1776.

This chapter will focus on the conflicts
and ambiguities contained in the images, myths and
fables which capture the American experience of its
frontier West, the themes elaborated in the preceding
chapters will be reinforced; and a deeper meaning will
be given to the unfulfilling experience of Western
expansion for America. Ultimately, it wll provide
a basis for considering the psychological significance
--- the psychological threat -- of the American Indian
in white American consciousness.

Though it may appear that so far I have
ignored, avoided or forgotten the American Indian, such
is not the case. This and preceding chapters, by focusing
on the overall psychological character of the American
historical and social experience, will provide a context
from which white America's subjective experience of its
native peoples will assume a significance beyond that
specific inter-cultural setting.

Literature is more than an individual
author's creative expression. Certainly one may view
fiction through that lens which shrinks insight to
individual biography, technique and structure. But an
author is a social product as well as an individual.
His basic human needs may shape society (from a
psychoanalytic viewpoint), but society in turn affects
and limits the fulfillment of those needs. The

individual author both reacts against and internalizes social experience. "Individual" values are a product of this interaction and therefore reflect the social milieu experienced by the author. In writing, an author employs symbols with a collective, social meaning. Writing, as a function of language, is also a type of underline collective action;it gives symbolic expression to socially shared images, meanings and desires.

> Edward Sapir's view of language as a collective means of expression points in a more appropriate direction. The instrumental value of language may even have been responsible for the survival of language itself (by helping the language -using animal to survive).... Language is a species of action, symbolic action -- its nature is such that it can be used as a tool.[1]

Just as shared social meanings are present in writing, history cannot "happen" to a group or a society without shared collective images and desires. In both cases the instrumental value of communication is based on collective experience and meaning; the social tool lends significance and cohenrence to individual existence.

> ...history cannot happen -- that is, men cannot engage in purposive group behavior -- without images which simultaneously express collective desires and impose coherence on the infinitely numerous data of experience.[2]

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[1]Kenneth Burke, Language as Symbolic Action (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), p. 15.

[2]Henry Nash Smith, p. ix.

Literature may be viewed, then, as the most
genuine index of the collective subjective experience
of history and social activity. For in literature
one finds that an author's local expression is really
a reflection of his experience of the general individual-
social dialectic. This experience is then expressed
through collective images and symbols. Psychologically,
literature reflects the perceptions, interpretations and
definitions of "reality" of an individual in and of
his society. It thus has deep roots' in the basic con-
flict which permeates individuals' experience of the
social and physical environment: the opposition of
freedom and necessity, desire and scarcity -- psycho-
analytically, the Pleasure and Reality principles.
Literature, as a medium of collective symbols, firstly
represents writers struggling with their tools (the
constraints imposed by the meanings of words, the
grammatical structure required to communicate, in
short, with the limitations imposed by the desire to
speak socially. Secondly, literature represents --
re-presents -- the struggle of man with his social
environment. Fiction contains symbols of of the libidinal
desires and frustrations of Civilization and Culture.

> Literature is notoriously the fantasies and the
> records of men who have struggled to solve the
> moral, the social, and the erotic problems specific
> to man.
>   ... just as tools are man's alloplastic
> extrajected ways of prosthetically owning more
> of reality in object relationship, so too symbols

are man's ways of introjecting selected aspects
of reality, his semantic tools for triangulating
reality. ... Symbolisms are the ways we _want_ to
mimic or to mask the real world, and are rooted
deep in our libidinal nature.[3]

The Western frontier has special significance
for American consciousness as the geographical locus
of those activities which Americans saw as distinctively
or uniquely American. I have tried to show that, psycho-
logically, the land represented America's maternal analogue,
an object toward whom strivings for the warmth, security,
immortality and timelessness of the womb were directed.
The frontier therefore has special _psychological_ signi-
ficance as the locus for those activities which would
secure American masculinity. Physical, spiritual and
psychological nourishment would be cathected from the
Western frontier. However, America remained experientially
void, maternal love was not consummated: male potency
was repeatedly asserted and frustrated, and ambivalence
toward objects and self persisted. For America, "salva-
tion" and "identity" were to be gained from transforming
the wilderness into a supportive environment. But the
ambiguous experience of the land ("bad" but potentially
"good") and anxiety over the nature of "American Civili-
zation" (Oedipal guilt over rejected origins) precluded
satisfaction and fulfillment.

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[3]Weston LaBarre,"Family and Symbol," _Psycho-
analysis and Culture_, ed. G.B. Wilbur and W. Muensterber-
ger (New York: International Universities Press, 1951), pp.
164-5.

Frontier Dualities: Conflicts
in American Identity and Self-Image.

The picture which the wilderness presented
to imaginative American and European settlers was that
of a great geographic _tabula_ _rasa_ on which the hopes and
ideals of "American Civilization" might be boldly carved.
It is significant, therefore, that the American fiction
and philosophy of the nineteenth century which focused
on the frontier experience did not suggest a clear,
unambiguous, positive sense of mission or purpose. On
the frontier _tabula_ _rasa_ were inscribed the contra-
dictions and ambivalence of the American psyche.

> ... the purpose of the /Western/ fable is not the
> realistic explication of a colorful chapter of the
> American past. It is rather a metaphorical parable
> of the inconsistencies and contradictions which
> inhere in the American's paradoxical views about
> himself, his country, and his destiny. At bottom,
> the Western depicts... the argument which has
> been with America from the Puritans to the present
> about what the American experience should be. ...
> The Western deals in paradox, for the American's
> view of himself is paradoxical; its material -- the
> Great West -- is the material which Americans,
> rightly or wrongly, have always felt distinguished
> them from other peoples; and the settlement of the
> Great West is what tells the American most about
> himself. [4]

The theme which captured the essence of America's
subjective frontier experience was the dramatic opposition

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[4] James K. Folsom, _The American Western Novel_
(New Haven: College and University Press, 1966), pp. 29-30.

of Nature and Civilization. Indeed, in American con-
sciousness "the very existence of a frontier implies
a more social, settled, 'civilized' society which stands
in some kind of symbolic opposition to it."[5]

> Perhaps the most repeated theme is the
> conflict between the wilderness ideal and the
> cult of progress as represented by the culture
> of civilized society. ... It includes several
> ideas and conflicts: East meets West...; wilder-
> ness ways in opposition to urban ways, usually
> pitting the frontiersman against the settler;
> a free wandering life versus marriage, respon-
> sibility and settling down.[6]

The social-moral dimension of the conflict between Nature
and Civilization presented the problem of which area
and experience represented the better value-system
for building the new American way of life. On the
one hand, the authenticity, spontaneity, strength and
self-reliance demanded by untamed Nature was valued in
opposition to the artificialities and decadence of urban
Civilization. On the other hand, taming the wilderness
was valued as the "inevitable progress" of Civilization
over Savagery and Barbarism. Untouched, fertile, virgin
land could be made productive and supportive by applying
civilized knowledge and imagination to the frontier. Be-
tween the two America could not make up its collective
mind. It hesitated and fluctuated; this vacillation is
the drama of Western literature.

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[5]*Ibid.*, p. 177.

[6]Nicholas J. Karolides, *The Pioneer in the Ameri-
can Novel 1900-1950* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967),
p. 11.

> The conflict in the Western novel, in
> its broadest terms, is an externalized debate
> which reflects the common American argument
> about the nature of... "the good life." ... The
> American mental hesitation between the values
> of urban and rural life is mirrored in the
> Western novel; whether the coming of civili-
> zation is good or ill is the burden of Western
> fiction.[7]

Taken as a whole, the experiences depicted in Western

literature demonstrate the ambiguity in American sel-

definition and identity by incorporating, recognizing

and accepting both the values of Nature and the values

of Civilization. And the truly American aspiration was

that somehow a reconciliation between the two could be

effected in the West.

> Would a fair model for the realms of earth,
> Call moral nature to a second birth,
> Reach, renovate the world's great social plan,
> And here commence the sober sense of man.[8]

The psychological basis of the contradictions

and oppositions precluded such a resolution in anything

other than theory and fiction. Conflict resolution, as

an ego function which concerns maternal love and Oedipal

guilt, could only remain an aspiration beyond the exper-

iential grasp of America. Continuous expansion into

the frontier regions repeated and reaffirmed rejection

of the old European Father -- the Father of Western

Civilization! But the settlers carried Civilization

in their Souls. Oedipal guilt established the Father

and Civilization in the fraternal psyche. The sons

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[8]Joel Barlow (Columbiad, 1809), cited by
Fred Somkin, The Unquiet Eagle, p. 61.

carried European Civilization to the frontier even as

they rejected European origin. The Puritan's sacred

"errand" reinforced this contradiction by giving the

object of Oedipal strife an evil, unsupportive, "un-

loving" character. What was the activity of transformation

if not the "Civilization" of the North American continent?

Hence, the psychological character of the search for

identity in the West (pre-adolescent) emphasized

opposition, conflict and duality, rather than synthesis

and resolution. Psychologically, reconciliation and

resolution remained "thick coming fancies" keeping an

infant nation from its rest.[9]

---- Daniel Boone -----

Few characters in the history and folklore

of the American West have had the popular appeal and

mythological significance of Daniel Boone. In addition

to published legends, interviews, and numerous

biographies, his symbolic importance as the pioneer

culture-hero was firmly established by one book in

particular: the biography of Daniel Boone written by

Timothy Flint.[10] Flint's work was "perhaps the most

widely read book about a Western character published

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[9]"Thick coming fancies" kept Lady Macbeth
from normal sleep in Act V:3. The doctor in the play
advises such patients must minister to themselves.

[10]Flint's biography of Boone first appeared in
1833 and ultimately ran to 14 editions. Smith, p. 268.

during the first half of the nineteenth century."[11]
The accounts of Boone which preceded and followed
Flint's were contradictory, picturing him as either
the trailblazer of civilization (the dominant image,
seen in Horatio Greenough's sculpture of Boone en-
gaged in hand-to-hand combat with an Indian beside
the trembling body of a pioneer woman, and in George
C. Bingham's painting, "The Emigration of Daniel Boone",
where Boone is leading a party of settlers into the
wilderness), or as the white Indian forever fleeing
before the constraints and artificialities of civ-
ilization. The popularity of Flint's book may be
accounted for by his incorporation -- surely unin-
tentional -- of _both_ images in a single work (in
some instances, within a few pages of each other).
Thus., his _Life and Adventures of Daniel Boone_ pre-
sented a totally contradictory and inconsistent
picture of the American pioneer: Boone as both
"civilizer" _and_ "savage". But this contradiction
had great emotional appeal to the American audience,
and, to the extent that the West and the pioneer
represented what was "unique" about the American

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[11]Smith, p. 55.

experience, its popularity was indicative. The piece
had captured the factual conflicts within the collect-
ive American psyche and fictively resolved them.

One of the earliest accounts of Boone,
written by John Filson in 1784, uses the "civilizer"
image of the pioneer. Boone was presented as the
founder of the Kentucky Commonwealth who sought no
reward beyond the knowledge that one day Kentucky
would become a strong and wealthy state.[12] Following
in Filson's (and Boone's?) footsteps, Boone's nephew
Daniel Bryan presented a biographic account of his
uncle in 1813. Bryan's Boone had been chosen by the
"Spirit of Enterprise" to bring Civilization to the
West.[13] In this account, a reflective, philosophical
Boone lectured to the chief of a band of Indians who
had taken him captive:

> How Philanthropy
> And social love, in sweet profusion pour
> Along Refinement's pleasure-blooming Vales,
> Their streams of richest, life-enobling joy.[14]

John M. Peck interviewed Boone in 1813 for the biography
he was writing for Jared Sparks' <u>Library of American
Biography</u>. Peck claimed that Boone was well-aware of
his unique historical mission: "a creature of Providence,

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[12]John Filson (<u>The Discovery, Settlement and
Present State of Kentucke</u>, 1784), cited by Smith, p. 53.

[13]Daniel Bryan (<u>The Mountain Muse: Comprising
The Adventures of Daniel Boone; and The Power of Virtuousness
and Refined Beauty</u>, 1813), cited by Smith, p. 53.

ordained by Heaven as a pioneer in the wilderness, to
advance the civilization and extension of his country."[15]

In the years immediately following Peck's "inter-
view", however, other "interviews" appeared which con-
veyed a different sense of the pioneer trailblazer. In-
stead of bringing "civilization" to the woods, Boone
repeatedly removed himself to "uncivilized" settlement.
From an 1816 interview with him at Fort Osage in the
Indian Territory it was remarked that:

> This singular man could not live in Kentucky when
> it became settled. ...he might have accumulated
> riches as readily as any man in Kentucky, but he
> prefers the woods, where you see him in the dress
> of the roughest, poorest hunter.[16]

And, on arriving at Fort Osage in 1819 only to find that
Boone had moved once again, Edwin James observed:

> a manifest propensity, particularly in the males,
> to remove westward, for which it is not easy to
> account. ...the artificial wants and the uneasy
> restraints inseparable from a crowded population
> are not known, wherein we feel ourselves dependent
> immediately and solely on the bounty of nature,
> and the strength of our own arm...[17]

Thus, by the time Flint wrote his biography the American
mind had created two contradictory pioneer heroes named
Daniel Boone. Flint's opus did not pretend to provide
a reconciliation between the two.

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[14]Bryan, cited by Smith, p. 54.

[15]John M. Peck (Lives of Daniel Boone and
Benjamin Lincoln, 1847), cited by Smith, pp. 56-7.

Timothy Flint's Boone as "civilizer" and "realist" appreciated that:

> the rich and boundless valleys of the great west --
> the garden of the earth -- and the paradise of
> hunters, had been won from the dominion of the savage
> tribes, and opened as an asylum for the oppressed,
> the enterprising, and the free of every land.
> ...[He] had caught some glimmerings of the future,
> and saw with the prophetic eye of a patriot, that
> this great valley must soon become the abode of
> millions of free men; and his heart swelled with
> joy, and warmed with a transport which was natural
> to a mind so unsophisticated and disinterested as
> his.[18]

> [Boone] saw that it was in vain to contend with
> fate; that go where he would, American enterprise
> seemed doomed to follow him, and to thwart all his
> schemes of backwoods retirement.[19]

Yet this _same_ Daniel Boone, as a "primitive", "natural" man, was driven out of Kentucky by "the restless spirit of immigration, of civil and physical improvement."[20] [What ever became of the Spirit of Enterprise?] He was said to have promised those who cared to migrate with him an old-age surrounded by

> consideration, and care, and tenderness from
> children, whose breasts were not steeled by
> ambition, nor hardened by avarice; in whom the
> beautiful influences of the indulgence of none
> but natural desires and pure affections would
> not be deadened by the selfishness, vanity, and
> fear of ridicule, that are the harvest of what
> is called _civilized_ and _cultivated life._[21]

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[16]Interview in _Niles' Register_, (June 15, 1816), cited by Smith, p. 54.

[17]Edwin James (ed.), _Account of an Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains, Performed in the Years 1819 and '20..._, 2 Vols. and Atlas (Philadelphia, 1923), I, p. 105, cited by Smith, pp. 54-5.

This mythological incorporation and reiteration of two
opposed pioneer images suggests that the author was not
even conscious of incompatibility or inconsistency; its
easy public acceptance suggests that America, collectively,
was also not conscious of contradiction. Society, author
and image merged into an ambiguous _One_.

> ...an old ambiguity chewed at the heart of the
> American problem of space against civilization.
> On one side lay the anarchic and unorganized space
> of the wilderness,... . At the same time America's
> mission was to upbuild the waste places and abolish
> the great solitudes.
> Between the dream and the reality of the Amer-
> ican West two visions of freedom contended for
> supremacy.[22]

Conflict and contradiction existed in American unconscious-
ness, and were directed -- sublimated -- into the culture-
work of creating the mythology, folklore and "history"
of the West.

A brief examination of the images employed
by authors of the Boone legend supports a psychological
interpretation of American Western expansion as un-
fulfilling Oedipal activity directed toward an ambiguous-
ly experienced mother-substitute. From uncorrupted Nature
and the "uncivilized" life one experienced the beauty
of "natural desires," "pure affections," and "tenderness
from children" -- the desire for original, child-like

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[18]Timothy Flint (_The Life and Adventures of
Daniel Boone, the First Settler of Kentucky, Interspersed
with Incidents in the Early Annals of the Country_, 1833),
cited by Smith, p. 56.

[19]Flint, cited by Smith, _loc. cit._

innocence.   What purer or more natural love exists than the _selfless_ love between a mother and her children? The libidinal lines of this maternal longing were clearly silhouetted against the _egoistic_ background of Civilization's "selfishness" and "vanity".   Civilized ego (separation between self and other) "deadened" the unity sought in a "natural" libidinal experience.   "Fear of ridicule": the threat of self-consciousness in Civilization. The conflict between Eros and Thanatos was recapitulated on the frontier.

"Civilization's" march into the wilderness was also maternally-directed activity.   The land's libidinal character had to be altered, controlled, repressed.   The "savage," frustrating maternal breast had to be transformed into a nourishing, secure, warm, immortal, infinite breast -- into a garden, a paradise, an asylum, rich and boundless.   ("Associations of wildness and ferocity -- ignorance and vice, which the mention of this distant land has hitherto excited, must ere long be dissolved."[23])   Nourishment from the maternal asylum-paradise-garden would be "life ennobling" and its securing (suckling) would be an act of "social

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[20]Flint, cited by Smith, _loc._ _cit._

[21]Flint, cited by Smith, _loc._ _cit._

[22]Somkin, p. 125.

Love."

Edwin James called attention to the overall
Oedipal nature of Western expansion by observing the
masculine in migration. Men migrated westward to "feel"
themselves "dependent immediately and solely on the
bounty of nature;" in short, they sought an exclusive
love-relationship with the nourishing maternal breast.
Thus, whether accepting or transforming Nature (express-
ing or repressing libidinal impulses), the pioneer sought
masculinity through maternal consummation on the frontier.
"The strength of our own arm" = "The father of ourselves."

> ...no Man continues long a labourer for others,
> but gets a Plantation of his own, no Man contin-
> ues long a Journeyman to a Trade, but goes among
> those new Settlers, and sets himself up for him-
> self, &c.[24]

> It is quite immaterial whether he ever becomes
> the owner of the soil. He is the occupant for
> the time being, pays no rent, and feels as
> independent as the "lord of the manor." ...he
> ... becomes the founder of a new country, or
> perhaps state.[25]

As in the Oedipus Complex, a "regressive" maternal
impulse animated masculinity-securing social activity.
"Westward, ho!" = Migrate back to the Womb!

> At the heart of ambitious expansionism lay the
> regressive impulse itself. ... The consequence

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[23]Daniel Drake, Cincinnati physician (1815),
cited by Smith, pp. 156-7.

[24]Benjamin Franklin, "Observations Concerning
the Increase of Mankind" (1751), The Papers of Benjamin
Franklin, ed. L.W. LaBaree (New Haven: Yale University
Press, 1961), IV, p. 228.

was forbidden nostalgia, for the nurturing, bliss-
ful, and primitively violent connection to nature
that white Americans had had to leave behind.[26]

Myth and legend, as expressions of man's

collective unconscious, are constructs from which social

man derives existential meaning and significance. The

conflicts and ambiguities in America's Western mythology --

clearly seen in the Boone legends of the early nine-

teenth century -- are projections of America's ambig-

uous experience of national purpose and identity. While

"paying homage to the ancient gods of solitude, ... they

went right on laying out the town lots and bringing in

the railroad."[27] Puritan rejection and Oedipal rebellion

psychologically focused America on the frontier as

"mother," but Puritan dualism and Oedipal guilt re-

quired her transformation. Regret over despoiling

nature, loss of primitive freedom and a simple way

of life was "self-indulgent, self-conscious pathos, what

W. Lloyd Warner calls 'the exaggerated guilt of a mobile

man.'"[28] It was expressed, generally, by a few educated,

literary romantics (Crevecoeur, Emerson, Thoreau, Mel-

ville, Whitman) whose lives can be seen as even more

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[25]From Peck's New Guide to the West (Boston,
1837), cited by Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Sig-
nificance of the Frontier in American History", The
Turner Thesis, concerning the Role of the Frontier
in American History, ed. George R. Taylor (Boston:
D.C. Heath and Co., 1956), p. 9. /My italics/

[26]Michael Paul Rogin, "Liberal Society and
the Indian Question," Politics and Society, May, 1971
P. 270.

civilized than most Americans'. Their "forbidden nostalgia," as Micheal Rogin calls it, was really Oedipal guilt over internalized paternal values (i.e., over European Civilization), and these authors' conscious expression of "regret" and "loss" reflects the sub-conscious frustration of masculinity in American Western expansion.

For the vast majority of Americans, frustrated masculinity and ambivalence remained both unconscious and unexpressed; but it did remain, providing the psychological impetus for continuous, restless and destructive social activity.

> For such people -- and they were the vast majority -- the Western hunter and guide was praiseworthy not because of his intrinsic wildness or half-savage glamor, but because he blazed trails that hard-working farmers could follow.[29]

Their ambivalence toward the land, and its crucial role in fulfilling national identity and masculinity, suggests that territorial expansion was an exertion analogous to prostituted love. The prostitute is "loved" as an object who may be used, manipulated

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[27]Somkin, p. 126.

[28]Ibid., p. 99-100.

[29]Smith, pp. 52-53.

and violated by men to affirm their masculinity. She
is _transformed_ in the male psyche to fit his needs. But
regardless of the man or his needs, she can never be
exclusively _possessed_. Penetration denies consummation
and the prostitute is hated even while being "loved."
(Hence, the high degree of sadism and sado-masochism in
such relationships.) Frustrated, dissatisfied, restless
men use her over and over again. Every affirmation of
masculinity is negated in their acts of "love."

> This American Farmer tells of the joys of
> creating a home in the wilderness, and of cul-
> tivating the virgin soil. Poor virgin, pros-
> tituted from the very start.[30]

--- Leatherstocking ---

If Daniel Boone represented the mythologization
of American ambiguity on the frontier, then the Leather-
stocking tales of James Fenimore Cooper represent its
literary expression. The appearance of an aged hunter,
Leatherstocking (Natty Bumpo), in the first novel of the
series, _The Pioneers_ (1823), was a striking parallel to
the mythological image of Boone-the-octogenarian-hunter
which became popular after 1815.[31] In this novel the

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[30]D. H. Lawrence, _Studies in Classic American Literature_ (New York: Viking Press, 1961) p. 24.

[31]Smith, p. 67.

conflict between Nature and Civilization is personified
by the venerable hunter Leatherstocking, on the one
hand, and by Judge Temple, the wealthy, venerable
patron and Justice of the Peace of a newly-founded up-
state New York town, on the other.[32]   The conflict raised
between these two antagonists is the social conflict
raised by the advance of agriculture into the wilder-
ness. And the inability of Cooper to come up with a
convincing resolution in the last books of the series,
The Pathfinder (1940) and The Deerslayer (1941), or in
The Oak Openings (1848) stands as testimony on America's
ambivalent attitude toward the frontier and its identity.

> ... the character of Leatherstocking is by far
> the most important symbol of the national exper-
> ience of adventure across the continent. The
> similarities that link Leatherstocking to both the
> actual Boone and the various Boones of popular
> legend are not merely fortuitous.[33]

In The Pioneers the conflict is clearly
stated as the natural anarchism and "old forest freedom
versus the new needs of a community that must establish
the power of law over the individual."[34]   Leatherstocking

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[32]The identity of Judge Temple as Cooper's own
father, and of the newly-founded town as Cooperstown, N.Y.,
is generally accepted. (Smith, p. 61.) Smith finds these
parallels suggestive from a psychoanalytical viewpoint.
But my concern here is psycho-social and only psycho-
biographical inasmuch as the latter reflects the former.

[33]Smith, pp. 60-1.

[34]Ibid., p. 62.

presents the case for Nature, freedom and spontaneity:

> I have lived in the woods for forty long years,
> and have spent five years at a time without seeing
> the light of a clearing, bigger than a wind-row in
> the trees; and I should like to know where you'll
> find a man, in his sixty-eighth year, who can get
> an easier living, for all your betterments, and your
> deer-laws; and as for honesty, or doing what's right
> between man and man, I'll not turn my back to the
> longest winded deacon on your Patent.[35]

And in The Prairie (1827) he affirms his position in

opposition to Civilization:

> I have been a solitary man much of my time, if
> he can be called solitary, who has lived for seventy
> years in the very bosom of natur', and where he could
> at any instant open his heart to God without having
> to strip it of the cares and wickedness of the
> settlements....[36]

The case for Civilization is presented by Judge Temple

in justifying his fine and imprisonment of Leatherstocking

for opposing legal procedures not understood by him.

When Temple's daughter, Elizabeth, says that Leather-

stocking is innocent by virtue of his inherent goodness,

the Judge responds:

> Thou hast reason Bess, and much of it too,
> but thy heart lies too near thy head....
> say what thou wilt to the poor old man; give
> some scope to the feelings of thy warm heart;
> but try to remember, Elizabeth, that the laws
> alone remove us from the condition of the savages;
> that he has been criminal, and this his judge
> was thy father.[37]

The dilemma of the plot -- of Cooper, of America -- was

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[35]James Fenimore Cooper (The Pioneers, or The Sources of the Susquehanna; A Descriptive Tale), cited by Smith, p. 63.

[36]Cooper (The Prairie; A Tale), cited by Smith, p. 71.

[37]Cooper (The Pioneers), cited by Smith, p. 63.

captured in Elizabeth Temple's exclamation:

> The very enterprise of Judge Temple is taming the
> very forests! How rapidly is civilization treading
> on the footsteps of nature! [38]

The resolution offered by Judge Temple,
"thou art an exception, Leatherstocking; for thou hast
a temperance unusual in thy class, and a hardihood exceeding
thy years,"[39] is as unconvincing now as it was to Cooper
and his audience over a century ago.[40] For the vitality
and appeal of the Leatherstocking symbol, of spontaneity,
simplicity, freedom and natural virtue, cannot be
vitiated by rationalization. There is no room for com-
promise between the forest and the town; their values
and life-styles are mutually exclusive and antithetical.
Even after the death of Leatherstocking in The Prairie,
Cooper, unsatisfied, had to return him.

The Pathfinder and The Deerslayer portray
Leatherstocking in middle-age and youth. Each places
him in dramatic-romantic social situations which are
not as rigidly stratified as those in The Pioneers.
By making his hardihood commensurate with his years
while lowering the levels of class conflict, Cooper

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[38]Cooper (The Pioneers), cited by Smith, loc. cit.

[39]Ibid., p. 63-4.

[40]"The responses of readers to this symbol of
forest freedom and virtue created a predicament for the
novelist by revealing to him that his most vital character
occupied a technically inferior position both in the social
system and in the form of the sentimental novel as he was
using it. The store of emotion associated with the vast
wilderness in the minds of both Cooper and his audience

hoped to transform Leatherstocking from an antagonist
into a protagonist who could be unambiguously experienced
and accepted by his audience and himself. The nature
of the original antagonism was not rendered mutable by
nineteenth century novelistic devices, however, and the
romances by and of Leatherstocking remained unfulfilled.
In The Pathfinder, "Leatherstocking has the exquisite
masochistic pleasure of giving his blessing to /his lover,
Tabel Dunham's7 union with Jasper Warren, the young
handsome, and worthy Great Lakes sailor."[41] And in The
Deerslayer, the chaste Leatherstocking has to reject the
overtures of a beautiful but, alas, "loose" Judith
Hutter, who ultimately ends up as the mistress of a
British officer. The conflicts and ambiguity persisted
throughout the course of the Leatherstocking saga.

The psycho-social significance of Cooper's
symbol, Leatherstocking, is the antagonism and ambiguity
he occasions in the American psyche. He is a mirror to
the American people. With each new thrust of settlers
into the Western wilderness America had the problem of
identity facing them squarely. And the problem of
identity centered around the double crucible of Oedipal
guilt over a rejected father and maternal ambivalence

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was strikingly inharmonious with the literary framework
he had adopted. (Smith, p. 64.)

[41]Smith, p. 67.

toward the land. If Leatherstocking represents a
longed-for, consummated, and exclusive love-relationship
with Nature, then Judge Temple must surely symbolize the
guilt of paternal rejection. As the father who rules,
but rules fairly, he is the internalization of the justice,
fairness and values of European civilization: "the laws
alone remove us from the condition of the savages."
"His judge was thy father;" and the ever-present European
father is seen sitting in judgement on the American frontier
experience -- America's inescapable European superego.

Henry Nash Smith's psycho-biographical aside
in the "Leatherstocking" chapter of Virgin Land ("When an
author turns to autobiographical material of this sort
and introduces a central character resembling his
father, one does not have to be very much of a Freudian
to conclude that the imagination is working on a deeper
level than usual."[42]) indirectly supports a psycho-social
interpretation as well. If Judge Temple represents
Cooper's father, then Cooper is his rebellious son and
"thus he is able to impart real energy to the statement
of the case for defiance and revolt."[43]. Cooper's real
father, William Cooper, was founder, benefactor and an
influential landed proprietor of Cooperstown, a hamlet

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[42]Ibid., p. 61.

[43]Ibid., p. 62.

on Lake Otsego in the New York wilderness. William Cooper lived in early America what Judge Temple symbolized in *The Pioneers*. Psycho-biograhpical and psycho-social symbolism merge in *The Pioneers*, and the conflicts and ambiguities which persist throughout the Leatherstocking novels are as much a reflection of the author as they are of the American nation. If nothing else, (as with the Boone legend) the popularity of Cooper's series -- the attractiveness of the ambiguity inherent in the conflict -- suggests a significant collective emotional-psychological appeal. Whether consciously or unconsciously, Cooper had tapped America's experience of itself and the frontier in the dramas and romances of Natty Bumppo.

In the chronological appearance of the "Leatherstocking Tales" and their separate portrayals of Natty Bumppo, Cooper also managed to capture the essence of the American national myth: that the nation would remain forever young and immortal on the Western frontier. *The Pioneers* (1823), *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) and *The Prairie* (1827) portray an aged hunter whose death is finally depicted in the last of these novels. But Cooper resurrects Leatherstocking in *The Pathfinder* (1840) as a middle-aged guide and hunter and in *The Deerslayer* (1841) as a youth. Thus in the sequence of the saga we find Leatherstocking going from

old-age and death to middle-age and youth, a pretty
accurate parallel to the mythology of Western expansion
and the frontier.

> ... American development has exhibited not merely
> advance along a single line, but a return to prim-
> itive conditions on a continually advancing frontier
> line, and a new development for that area. ... This
> perennial. rebirth, this fluidity of American life,
> this expansion westward with its new opportunities,
> its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive
> society, furnishes the forces dominating the
> American character.[44]

> The Leatherstocking novels ... go backwards,
> from old age to golden youth. That is the true myth
> of America. She starts old, wrinkled and writhing in
> an old skin. And there is a gradual sloughing of the
> old skin, towards a new youth. It is the myth of
> America.[45]

Resolving Duality and Identity

In America's Enchanted Wood.

America tried to resolve the contradictions
and ambiguities in its perception of self and identity
through a number of rational, mythological and literary
devices associated with the West. One of these, the
myth of eternal national youth, was discussed in Chapter
IV, but a brief reconsideration that focuses on the
relationship between Nature and Civilization is appropriate
in this section. A second device was the creation of

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[44] Turner, "The Signifcance of the Frontier in
American History," op. cit., pp. 1-2.

[45] Lawrence, p. 54.

what I call the <u>Persona Americana</u>, which gained its

ultimate social expression in the nineteenth century

American Dime Novel. This device will also be discussed

in the remainder of this chapter. Both of these constructs

contained an appeal to romantic, idealized Nature in its

role as the nourishing maternal breast, to distinguish

America from its paternal forebears. Each suggests that

settlement and civilization would be achieved in the

West without losing the purity and innocence of youth.

-- Youth, Immortality and Uniqueness --

The Western frontier has psychological

significance in America's search for identity as the

seemingly infinite body of land in which rejection of

past origins (paternal) could be forever reenacted. And

the activity of "civilizing," "settling," and transforming

the land for agricultural purposes (from the "bad" into

the "good" maternal breast) allowed America to subjectively

experience Western expansion as an unending series of

acts which repeated the cosmogeny of "civilization:" the

social compact. This repetition, in turn, fostered a

belief in American Adamic innocence; America would

remain pure through continual contact with the virtues

of uncivilized Nature even while changing its topography.

> ... America can progress indefinitely into an
> expanding future without acquiring sinful de-
> lusions of grandeur simply because it is nestled
> in Nature, is instructed and guided by mountains,
> is chastened by cataracts .... So the -- because
> America, beyond all nations, is in perpetual touch
> with Nature, it need not fear the debauchery of the
> artificial, the urban, the civilized....[46]

> /Nature's/ patient ways shame hasty little man; her
> vastnesses calm and elevate his troubled mind; her
> terrors fill him with awe; her inexplicable and in-
> finite beauties with delight. Her equal care for the
> least things and the greatest corrects his scale of
> values.[47]

America was subjectively engaged in the activity of

founding and constructing, refounding and reconstructing

Civilization. Hence, America would never "grow old"

with civilization. America would remain an eternal

infant.

This theory of identity and "destiny" defies

all logical explanation. Its significance for America

must be viewed in light of the emotional and psycho-

logical needs of the new nation. America's "present"

needs were a function of ambiguity derived from its

subjective experience of the past: Puritan ideology

and historical events. At the heart of the myth of

youth and innocence lay Oedipal guilt over rejected

Europe. America feared that it would fall prey to

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[46]Perry Miller, "Nature and the National Ego,"
Errand into the Wilderness (Cambridge, Massachusetts:
Havard University Press, 1964), p. 211.

[47]Charles William Eliot, "The Happy Life" speech
delivered to the Woman's College of Baltimore, 1895, in
American Contributions to Civilization and other essays
and addresses (New York: Centruy Co., 1907), p. 254.

the same rejection if it aged and became "corrupt,"
"debauched," "artificial" and "urban" -- too civilized
(like Europe). At the same time, the Puritans' new
errand, which emphasized the sacred activity of
civilizing, did not allow them to lead the "uncivilized,"
"savage," "sinful" life. The myth of eternal youth on
the frontier represents America's attempt to reconcile
this contradiction and ameliorate the anxiety it oc-
casioned concerning national identity.

> Here we encounter again the crucial dif-
> ference between the American appeal to romantic
> Nature and the European. In America, it served
> not so much for individual or artistic salvation
> as for assuaging of national anxiety.[48]

The identity which America sought juxtaposed
pristine Nature's innocence and virtue along side the
development of Arts and Empire; America was to be a
permanently _young Europe_, producing a new, unique
breed of man who combined the vigor and vitality of the
(romanticized) savage with the charms and graces of
civilization.

> In happy climes, where from the genial sun,
>   And virgin earth such scenes ensue,
> The force of art by nature seems outdone,
>   And fancied beauties by the true:
> In happy climes, the seat of innocence,
>   Where nature guides and virtue rules,
> Where men shall not impose for truth and sense,
>   The pedantry of courts and schools:
> There shall be sung another golden age,
>   The rise of empire and of arts,
> The good and great inspiring epic rage,

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[48]Miller, _loc. cit._

The wisest heads and noblest hearts.
Not such as Europe breeds in her decay;
        Such as she bred when fresh and young,
When heav'nly flame did animate her clay,
        By future poets shall be sung.[49]

        Then cities rise, and spiry towns increase,
With guilded domes, and every art of peace.
Then Cultivation shall extend his pow'r,
Rear the green blade, and nurse the tender flow'r;
                . . .
A band of heroes and a patriot race:
                . . .
Healthful and strong, they turn'd the virgin soil,
The untam'd forest bow'd beneath their toil:
At early dawn, they sought the mountain chase,
Or rous'd the Indian from his lurking place;
Curb'd the mad fury of those barb'rous men,
Or dragged the wild beast struggling from his den:
To all the vigour of that pristine race,
New charms are added, and superior grace.[50]

-- The _Persona Americana_ --

In the Leatherstocking novels and The Oak

Openings Cooper developed three young heroes who repre-

sented attempts to reconcile the conflict between Nature

and Civilization symbolized by Leatherstocking and Judge

Temple. In The Pioneers Cooper could offer Oliver Effing-

ham as a romantic hero, in spite of his role as hunting

companion to Leatherstocking, because he was really a

gentleman temprarily disguised in the trappings of a

denizen of the backwoods. As the son of Judge Temple's

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[49]George Berkeley ("Verses on the Prospect of
Planting Arts and Learning in America," 1752) cited by
Folsom, p. 11.

[50]Colonel David Humphreys ("The Future State of
the Western Territory") cited by Tuveson, pp. 121-2.
Humphreys was a protege of George Washington.

old friend, Major Effingham, Oliver carred the virtues
of Civilization to the life and pursuits of the wilder-
ness. On a social level Oliver represented the merging
of "high" and "low" status and a reconciliation be-
tween the values of the forest and the town. But the
only way such a resolution could be achieved was by
adopting a "false identity," a persona fashioned in the
image of the old hunter.[51] The issue of real identity
was still unresolved, however. Does Oliver Effingham
affirm the values of Civilization by heredity or the
values of Nature by vocation? The mask worn by
Effingham was contrived to hide the ambiguity and
conflict which troubled the American countenance.

Cooper took another related approach in
The Prairie and The Oak Openings with the young romantic
heroes Paul Hover and Ben Boden. These two characters
followed "the gentler calling of a bee hunter and [are]
thus free from even the justifiable taint of bloodshed
involved in Leatherstocking's vocation.... the young
hero has none of the theoretical hostility to civilization
that is so conspicuous in Leatherstocking."

> These changes make it technically possible
> for a wild Westerner to be a hero of romance,
> but they destroy the subversive overtones that
> had given Leatherstocking so much of his
> emotional depth.[52]

As a romantic subtheme in the broader drama of The Prairie,

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[51] Smith, p. 69.

[52] Ibid., p. 69-70.

the low-born Hover was permitted love and marriage
(to Ellen Wade, a striking counterpart of Mabel Dunham
in the later novel <u>The Pathfinder</u>) because he was a
young, virtuous, good-looking (in Civilization's terms)
<u>and</u> possessed the skills and knowledge of the forest.
Though his social origins are clear, his traits,
qualities and values cloud the picture considerably.
Effingham's persona was explicit in his disguised role.
Hover's persona is not so explicit but exists never-
theless. Like Effingham, Hover is a character whose
identity is contradictory and ambiguous. Hover is in
dramatic limbo between forest origin (and low social
status) and town proprieties.

Ben Boden, however, occupies a central role
as the hero of <u>The Oak Openings</u> and the resolution of
ambiguity and contradiction though his persona made
it one of Cooper's weakest novels. Despite Boden's
"low" origin, he was a teetotaler and spoke unusually
refined English. By the end of the novel, after
surviyng the rigors of frontier life and Indian war-
fare, Boden has evolved into a state senator, wealthy
farmer, and influential citizen, demonstrating
"the power of man when left free to make his own
exertions."[53]

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[53]Cooper (<u>The Oak Openings;-or The Bee Hunter</u>;
1848), cited by Smith, p. 69.

But if Boden's Jacksonian rise in the world
gives retroactive sanction to Cooper's choice of
him as a hero, it dissolves whatever imaginative
connection he may have had with the mysterious
and brooding wilderness.[54]

The emotional and psychological attraction
of Cooper's personae for the American public was sustained
as long as the ambiguities and conflicts were explicit
(i.e., when the dual role contained in the persona was
clearly defined). From Effingham to Hover to Boden
there is a deterioration in the evocative power of the
persona directly related to the degree of dualism
(double-role) perceived in the character and his situation.
Throughout The Pioneers, Effingham represented the ulti-
mate duality of "aristocracy" in the woods. Boden,
however, is transformed from "low" to "high" in the
course of The Oak Openings. By the end of the novel he
looked more like Judge Temple than Effingham or Hover,
his persona vitiated by social success. Horatio Alger
"success stories" certainly had (and still have) appeal
to Americans, but they are distinguished from Western,
"Jacksonian" success stories by their locale. They
are stories of success in the city -- within "civilized"
society. Mark the Matchboy and Ragged Dick, like the
safety-valve theory of Western expansion, were myths
designed primarily to veil the fact of "aging" (social

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[54]Smith, p. 69.

stratification) in American urban civilization. They
did not pose or pretend to resolve the conflict between
Nature and Civilization which was crucial for American
self-definition and national identity.

The appeal that the contradictory, Effingham
style persona held for the American imagination did not
go unnoticed. Erastus Beadle capitalized on it in his
series of dime novels which, between 1860 and 1865, sold
almost five million copies.[55] Beadle's dime novels
were America's first mass-produced fiction, the nineteenth
century equivalent of contemporary movies (of the John
Wayne variety) comic books and television soap operas.
His editor devised formulae for the novels that could
be used by any number of his writers, and they turned
them out as rapidly as possible and in enormous quantity.
The mass appeal and collective psychological significance
of the Beadle dime novels resides in their formulation
and format. The manner in which they were created amounted
to "automatic writng."

> The unabashed and systematic use of the formulas
> strips from the writing every vestige of the
> interest usually sought in works of the imagination;
> it is entirely sobliterary. On the other hand /and
> of particular concern for psycho-social interpre-
> tation/, such work tends to become /or reflect/ an
> objectified mass dream..... The individual writer
> abandons his own personality and identifies himself
> with the reveries of his readers. It is the

[55]"Chronicle and Comment,"(Bookman, XX, 92,
October, 1904) cited by Smith, p. 91.

presumably close fidelity of the Beadle stories
to the dream life of a vast inarticulate public
that renders them valuable to the social historian
and the historian of ideas.[56]

The Beadle method gives legitimacy to a psycho-

social analysis of Beadle content by reflecting America's

"dream-life:" the unconscious desires and conflicts

in the American psyche. The format of the greatest

Beadle novel of them all, Edward S. Ellis' Seth Jones:

or, The Captives of the Frontier[57] reveals America's need

to reconcile its ambivalent and contradictory experience

of self and identity on the frontier. Ellis employs

a persona that links the romantic images of Boone and

Leatherstocking to the civilized pragmatism of Judge

Temple and the "Spirit of Enterprise." It is the

ultimate mask of the Persona Americana.

> Not until the end of the tale does the reader
> learn that the aged and eccentric hunter who
> has dominated the action in the gently bred
> young Eugene Morton in disguise. The pretext
> for Morton's odd persistence in concealing his
> identity is so flimsy (he had heard that his
> sweetheart had ceased to care for him while he
> was away fighting in the Revolution) that one
> feels Ellis must be employing the persona for
> its own sake. . . . the device /is/ a neat
> manoeuver for combining the picturesque appeal
> of the "low" hunter with the official status of
> the "straight" upper-class hero.[58]

The conflict between Nature and Civilization

forest and town, is captured in the double character

of Eugene Morton in Seth Jones. More than the young

Oliver Effingham, Morton reflects the American psyche

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[57]Seth Jones eventually sold over 400,000 copies.
(Smith, p.9) Orville Victor, Beadle's editor, called it "the
perfect Dime Novel." (Quoted by Henry Morton Robinson, "Mr.

by tapping its mythology (romantic nature in the Boone-
Leatherstocking image of an aged, backwoods hunter) while
revealing the "reality" of Civilization (his gentle breeding
and upper-class origin) in the "enchanted wood." Even
in his flimsy pretext one finds recapitulated America's
escape-to-the-woods as a response to "civilized," feminine-
maternal constraints and rejection[59] (originally suggested
by America's Puritan rejection and in later Oedipal con-
flict). The character of Eugene Morton is the ultimate
American persona for, not only does it merge forest and
town, and Natural and Civilized values, but it merges
myth and reality, romanticism and realism, idealism and
pragmatism as well.

The Persona Americana can be observed in the
major figures of American Western mytho-history. Kit
Carson, The Mountain Man, wears the Persona Americana
in the civilized values and purity of character which
he somehow managed to glean from the savage wilderness.

> He contracted no bad habits, but learned the
> usefulness and happiness of resisting temptation,
> and became so well schooled that he was able, by
> the caution and advice of wisdom, founded on ex-
> perience, to prevent many a promising and skillful
> hand from grasping ruin in the same vortex.[60]

Beadle's Books," Bookman, LXIX, 22 (March, 1929); cited
by Smith, p. 93.)

[58]Smith, p. 93.

[59] As Sam Bluefarb notes (see Chapter IV), "the
opening of the frontier gave the phenomenon of escape in
the modern novel its peculiarly American stamp. ... It
represents/ what is most characteristically American... "
(Bluefarb, The Escape Motif in the American Novel, p. 7.)
Both Bluefarb and A.N. Kaul (The American Vision; see Chapter

Buffalo Bill, "the most highly publicized figure in all the history of the Wild West,"[61] is psychologically significant as the otherwise undistinguished plainsman and buffalo hunter whose life was shaped by his myth (the needs and demands -- the "dream life" -- of public imagination). As the Persona Americana, Buffalo Bill merged myth and reality by locating himself in between Civilization and the Wilderness. The "real" Buffalo Bill, looking back on his life-legend from the vantagepoint of old-age, used to say, "I stood between savagery and civilization most all my early days."[62]

Lesser legendary figures like Davy Crockett, Deadwood Dick, Wyatt Earp, The Lone Ranger, and Judge Roy Bean also derived their popular appeal from the Persona Americana. They personified American frontier duality and ambiguity: Crockett as the martyred frontiersman-Congressman; Dick as the refined, romantically eligible, low-born hero; Earp as the quick-drawing, almost indestructible, occasionally refined, gambler-law-enforcement official; The Lone Ranger as the man who donned a mask (a persona) to be faithful friends with an

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IV) view Huck Finn's "escape" from the "sivilized" Widow and Miss Walton into the woods as an instinctive response to the threat posed by "feminine" civilization to securing masculinity. (Bluefarb, pp. 14-16; Kaul, pp. 18-19.)

[60]DeWitt C. Peters (The Life and Adventures of Kit Carson, the Nestor of the Rocky Mountains, from Facts Narrated by Himself, 1858), cited by Smith, p. 85.

[61]Smith, p. 103.

Indian scout (Tonto), permitting the compatibility of logic and intuition, "social law" and "natural law," White Man and Red Man, Civilization and Nature. Judge Roy Bean, "the hanging judge," was often indistinguishable from the convicted except in the virtue of his "legitimate" power to take life.

Figures like Morton, ~~Kit~~ Carson, Buffalo Bill, Crockett, Earp, _et. al._ represent the collective American need for reconciliation and resolution, synthesis and consummation on the maternal breast of the frontier. They represent the ambiguous experience of American self-definition and identity. And finally, they symbolize the subjective, experiential vacuity of American Western expansion -- that masculine identity-securing exertion -- as a "resolving device" whose essential ingredient is an appeal to Myth, Ideal and Fantasy. Using mythology here to resolve real antagonism incorporates it into the nation's consciousness as an ego function, a defence mechanism. As one such defence mechanism, the _Persona Americana_ must fail because it does not mediate or compromise between the _real_ and the _ideal_. It is total fantasy; it is a mask, a facade, a _false_ _identity_ underneath which remain the psychological and social conflicts which have prevented America from securing masculinity and a viable national identity.

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[62]Richard J. Walsh and Milton S. Salisbury (_The Making of Buffalo Bill, A Study in Heroics_, 1928), cited by Smith, p. 107.

Disenchanting "Persona Americana":

False Reconciliation and the Failure of

American Self-Definition.

We approach our human environment through our
infantile anxiety situations or defense mechanisms
erected on the basis of these anxiety situations.
We do not always try to "clutch" our neighbor
(Hermann) thus accepting him as a substitute for
the mother, but we ask him, are you afraid of
the same things that I am? In so doing, however,
we are dominated by the object-seeking tendencies;
we show that we are willing to be neurotic in groups.
        ... culture or sublimation is a series of
defense mechanisms in a favorable phase of stabli-
zation between narcissism and object cathexis. ...
        If we call normality or culture, which is
the normal state of group living for human beings,
a neurosis we must at the same time admit that it
is a neurosis of a special kind. ... In the case
of the neurotic the picture is dominated by a ten-
dency towards isolation, by aggression and narcissism.
The behavior and life of the neurotic adult repre-
sents the anxiety aspect of the infantile situation,
the child deprived of the mother. On the other hand
in the case of the normal adult who lives in a
social group the picture is dominated by love,
successful identification and object-cathexis.
Success in life is a repetition of infantile wish
fulfillment and of the satisfaction gained by the
child in the mother-child situation. ...
        ... The paraphernalia and variations of
our culture have been produced by a balancing sys-
tem between object erotic and narcissistic ten-
dencies superadded to group-neurosis formation.
In the accent laid on the group... we may certainly
recognize a healing tendency in culture and subli-
mations. ...
        ... we must not forget that diseases themselves
are also attempted cures, and the aim of the symp-
tom is to avoid anxiety. ... disease and the cure
of the disease are successive phases or identical.[63]

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[63]Geza Roheim, The Origin and Function of
Culture (Anchor Books ed.; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday
and Co., 1971), pp. 103-9.

The mythology, legends and literature which grew up around America's experience of the Western frontier were its "cultural inventions," its "identity creation." They symbolically define the conflicts and anxieties in the American psyche as they attempt to heal them. Psychologically, the problem of American culture (and of identity) is an inability to achieve "a favorable phase of stablization between narcissism and object-cathexis." In other words, because of the ambiguous experience of the land as a maternal object (Puritan inheritance) Americans could not positively identify with it in its natural condition. Thus, a love relationship was not established as a precondition of maternal object-cathexis ("possessing," "settling," "internalizing," "consuming" the land). The cathecting activity of land transformation fostered disequilibrium rather than stability by focusing on change and movement rather than on possession and consummation.

As long as "bad" lands exist -- and in American consciousness their existence is perpetuated by a dualistic world-view -- America must change them into "good" lands that reflect America (its values, its experience, its system of government, its products). A narcissistic tendency dominates American social activity. America's "futuristic" goal, then, is to achieve a narcissistic world-experience (via object cathexis) that will eliminate anxiety stemming from duality, opposition and contradiction.

Other nations and cultures, like the frontier, must be
<u>transformed</u> -- the current euphemism is "modernized" --
to mirror America's self-image. The American tourist,
Coca Cola and Chase Manhattan must feel "at home" through-
out the world.[64] But this goal is elusive because Ameri-
ca has failed to clearly define itself. Is America the
"refuge," the "land of the free" symbolized in American
iconography by the Goddess of Liberty ("Columbia") who
seeks the "wretched refuse," the "tired" and "poor" of
other lands? Or is America the stern, demanding father-
figure of Uncle Sam who seems to symbolize Americans'
negative experience of their nation (He takes you or
your sons in time of war, and in time of peace is
"taken" by giving your hard-earned money to undeserving
foreign lands.)?[65]

Guilt made the American experience of (Euro-
pean) "civilization" ambivalent. While America might
consciously deny its European origins and seek "unique-
ness" from contact with Nature on the frontier, the pre-
sence of European civilization in the American uncon-
scious is clearly seen in the social stratification
(class consciousness), laws and ethics inherent in its
Western mythology and literature. In this context, Ameri-
ca's appeal to idealized, romantic Nature betrays anxiety,

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[64]As I write the conclusion of this chapter I am
informed by Walter Cronkite on "The C.B.S. Evening News" that
David Rockefeller is in Moscow to preside over the opening
of a Chase Manhattan Bank branch on Karl Marx Square (May 22,
1973).

[65]See Geoffrey Gorer, <u>The American People</u>, pp. 50-

ambiguity and guilt over the sources and character of its civilized values. Both Puritan dualism and Oedipal rejection and guilt therefore fostered and perpetuated disequilibrium in the American psyche, preventing a narcissistic world-experience and fulfilling object-cathexis.

If it is at all meaningful to speak of an "American neurosis" apart from the general nuerosis psychoanalytic theory defines as "culture," it must be seen as the failure of America's defense mechanisms to alleviate collective anxiety and resolve the contra-dictions and ambiguities in the American psycho-social experience. America remains in a state of psychic maternal deprivation, lacking identification with "Mother" or gratifying experiences of object-cathexis. The Persona Americana is one such defense mechanism. It failed because it attempted the impossible reconciliation of two antagonistic and mutually exclusive human experi-ences: Nature (spontaneous, emotional, unconscious, and innocent) and Civilization (calculated, rational, repressive, self-conscious and polluted). Psychoanalytically, it was trying to socially (externally) reconcile the Pleasure Principle (idealizations, desires and wishes) and the Reality Principle (scarcity), the Life instinct and the Death instinct, Eros and Thanatos.

3, for a discussion of these conflicting images Americans hold of America.

The emotive power of Western literature,
then, is almost entirely attributable to the
ironies and ambiguities inherent in the very
presentation of these two related but contrary
symbols. ... the theme of the civilizing of the
Great West and of the passing of the frontier,
metaphorically identified in Western literature
with the passing of youth, becomes a vehicle
for the exploration of the ironies inherent
in human endeavor. Of all these ironies, the
greatest is the cherished human notion of the
possibility of a new start, of another golden
age more closely modeled on the land of heart's
desire. But every beginning implies an end,
and here is the tragic vision of the literature
of the Great West; for a golden age seems pre-
cious only after it has been lost, and the beauty
of youth may only be understood from the perspec-
tive of age.[66]

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[66]Folsom, pp. 205-6.

Chapter VI.

Fear, Loathing and Fascination: The White Experience of Red America.

Introduction.

And when the last Red Man shall have perished, and
the memory of my tribe shall have become a myth among
the White Men, these shores will swarm with the in-
visible dead of my tribe, and when your children's
children think themselves alone in the field, the store,
the shop, upon the highway, or in the silence of the
pathless woods, they will not be alone. In all the
earth there is no place dedicated to solitude. At
night when the streets of your cities and villages
are silent and you think them deserted, they will
throng with the returning hosts that once filled
them and still love this beautiful land. The
White Man will never be alone.
Let him be just and deal kindly with my
people, for the dead are not powerless. Dead, did
I say? There is no death, only a change of worlds.

-- Seattle, Chief of the
Suquamish and Duwamish
tribes (1786-1866)[1]

In the east the sun rises behind him. His

shadow is stretched by a slowly drifting shimmering

orange sliver. Impelled by the light, pulled by the

shadow, the restless American moves West. His face is

as taut as his shadow; his eyes highlighted by brighten-

ing mountains and plains beyond. His feet kick up

small ripples of dust on a worn-out trail.

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[1] Seattle's 1853 speech, in W.C. Vanderwerth,
Indian Oratory: Famous Speeches by Noted Indian Chieftains
(Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), pp. 121-2.

One day this American will sleep later --
Seattle knows. The sun will have reached mid-sky,
blazing white. Squinting through the glare he will
not make out mountains. But looking down around him,
the parched and cracked earth will reveal what his
early-morning shadow had concealed: roadbed peppered
by the bones of buffalo and man. It was their dust
he had disturbed on earlier risings. And he will
know then that he too is dead. For the past is in-
escapable, man mutable, and Death cannot be denied.

*   *   *

To the white man the North American continent
appeared to be a _tabula rasa_. This was only because he
refused to recognize the human and cultural viability
of the continent's aboriginal inhabitants. Mistaken
by the New World's first European explorers for people
of the East Indies, these men were christened "Indians."
They have been mistaken (mis-taken) by whites ever since.
As long as Indians were perceived as "primitive" and
"uncivilized" they were identified with the wilderness
of America by the whites. And like the wilderness,
Indians were perceived as a threat to the white man.
The Indian and the wilderness confronted the white
American with the conflict between Nature and Civili-
zation; both had to be transformed, secured and controled
for America to realize its identity.

> The Settlement of the Western Country
> and making a Peace with theIndians are so analogous
> that there can be no definition of the one without
> involving consideration of the other.[2]

The "transformation" of Indian and wilderness
played related roles in the psychodrama of American
identity. The wilderness, as material, could be used
by the nation. It contained the substance of physical
and psychological nourishment. Further, as an inanimate
object, it did not actively oppose such utilization.
Transforming the wilderness was an index of the white
man's future growth, happiness and salvation. The
Indian, however, was animate. He was "wild," nomadic
and would not submit to "use" by the whites. "Because
the Negro labored, he was considered a draft animal.
Because the Indian occupied large areas of land, he was
considered a wild animal."[3] The Indian was not passive;
he opposed transformation and progress. To Americans
the Indian was past and reminded them of   original
society. Thus, to a nation without a past and only
a future, the Indian served as a standard for self-
evaluation: the primitive past contained in America's
future vision.

> For the American before 1850 -- a new man, as he
> felt, making a new world -- was obsessed to know
> who and what he was and where he was going, to

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[2]Letter from George Washington to James Duane,
September 7, 1783, cited Francis Paul Prucha, American
Indian Policy in the Formative Years (Cambridge, Mass.:
Havard University Press, 1962), p. 28.

[3]Vine Deloria, Jr., Custer Died for Your Sins:
An Indian Manifesto (New York: Avon Books, 1969), p. 15.

evaluate the special society in which he lived and
to know its past and future. One means to this
end was to compare himself with the Indian who,
as a savage, had all past and no future.[4]

America asserted its identity by affirming
what it was <u>not</u>. Europe and the Indian stood at oppo-
site ends of the social spectrum, the former representing
civilized decadence and the latter representing
primitive savagery. America rejected both and tried
to locate itself somewhere in between. The Indian
provided one of the bases of this negatively affirmed
identity by allowing Americans to juxtapose "gross"
savagery to "refined" society.

> Civilization, n. The act of civilizing, or the
> state of being civilized; the state of being
> refined in manners, from the grossness of
> savage life, and improved in arts and learning.[5]

The central importance of the frontier West
for American self-definition gave the Indian special
mass-psychological significance. His active opposition
to civilization and white expansion made him an obstacle
--- perhaps a rival to American possession and consumption
of the maternal land. The Indian was a threat to
securing white masculinity. Comparisons between primi-
tive social life and white civilization were not merely

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[4] Roy Harvey Pearce, <u>The Savages of America;
A Study of the Idea of Civilization</u> (Rev. ed.; Baltimore,
The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), p. 135.

[5] Noah Webster, <u>An American Dictionary of the
English Language</u>, 1828, cited by Pearce, preface to <u>Savages</u>.

idle ethnocentric exercises. In order for whites to

become what they sought to be (the fathers of them-

selves), the Indian could not be who he was or remain

where he was. Power, usurpation, control and manipulation,

as a means for securing identity, justified the white

man to himself and defined his relationship with

the Indian. In white-American consciousness the Indian

was an object for self-service, self-reference and self-

security.

> Already he had God and civilization and rejoiced
> the power they gave him. Looking at the Indian
> in his lack of such power, the Englishman could
> be sure of what he himself was; looking at himself
> he could be sure of what the Indian should be.
> In America, from the very beginning the history
> of the savage is the history of the civilized.[6]

America offered the Indian a choice:

civilization or death -- cultural assimilzation or physical

annihilation. Either option was justified in the

name of progressive social evolution. As American

strength waxed and waned during the nineteenth century,

social theories of Indian "civilization" (transformation)

were revealed as the social fact of annihilation. The

"civilization" of Indians was a conscious cornerstone

in the edifice of American identity, but beneath

consciousness lay forces which required their annihilation.

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[6]Pearce, p. 8.

> The accomplishemnt of this work /civilization of
> the Indian/, if practicable, will relect un-
> decaying lustre on our national character and
> administer the most grateful consolations that
> virtuous minds can know.[7]

> Our conduct toward these people is deeply
> interesting to our national character... /They
> are/ surrounded by the whites with their arts
> of civilization, which by destroying the re-
> sources of the savage doom him to weakness and
> decay.[8]

The social rationalizations employed by

America to explain amd justify its treatment of the

Indian remain as statements of a nation's attempt to

cope with the emotional-psychological experience of the

Indian as a part of the land of North America. Indian

opposition to white usurpation of the land made him an

external symbol which directly threatened America's

national ego and thereby occasioned national anxiety.

As a part of the subjective experience the frontier

Americans projected onto the Indian collective fears

and desires about national identity; America's

ambivalent experience of its native people stands as

testimony to its ambivalent and unfulfilled experience

of self.

In this chapter I shall link America's

experience of the Indian to the psycho-histoical frame-

work of American Oedipal activity and unfulfilled

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[7]George Washington, Annual Message to Congress,
December, 1795. Cited by Reginald Horsman, Expansion
and American Indian Policy 1783-1812 (?: Michigan State
University Press, 1969), pp. 63-4.

masculinity. His personification as "wild," "savage,"
"beast," "child" and "brother" reveals the deeper
meaning of his place in American consciousness and
history.

The first portion of this chapter will elab-
orate briefly some of America's rationalizations and
images of the Indian. This is an exercise which a
number of social theoriests have undertaken in
depth and with a great deal of critical insight and
imagination. Most notable among these is Roy Harvey
Pearce, whose study, The Savages of America, stands as
a seminal work on the significance of Indians in the
American social experience. In the short space of
one chapter I cannot hope to achieve the comprehensive-
ness of his or more recent studies. What I shall do
is "flesh out" certain key attitudes and images which
I believe reinforce and reflect the psychological
dilemma of American identity.

The second portion of this chapter will
analyze America's images and attitudes of the Indian
for their psychological content. Particular attention
will be paid to the over-all Oedipal nature of American
Western expansion within which whites and Indians inter-

8Andrew Jackson, "The Condition and Ulterior
Destiny of the Indian Tribes," from his First Annual
Message to Congress, December 8, 1829, in The Removal
of the Cherokee Nation; Manifest Destiny or National Dishonor?
ed. Louis Filler and Allen Gutman (Boston; D.C. Heath and
Co., 1962), p. 17, /Hereafter cited as "Removal."/

acted, to the role of these images in resolving ambiguity
and anxiety, and finally to the success or failure of
American masculinity-securing activity with the Indian.
Thus, not only will America's "Indian Problem" obtain
a broad psycho-cultural meaning, but specific historical
activity between whites and Indians will be placed in
a general psycho-historical framework permitting critical
analysis of actors and their subjective motivations.

Assimilation or Annihilation(
Images, Ideas and Ideals of the White Man's Indian.

> And as we dread to go to Hell our selves, it should
> be aweful to us to consider their damnation. Love
> and pity calls for it, that we should hep them
> out of their Danger. We should pity the Beasts
> in Misery, much more than men: Tho' they be
> Brutish Persons; yet, they are of Mankind, and
> so objects of Compassion. It is an act of Love
> to our own nature to seek their Salvation....[9]

The dominant theological explanation-justi-
fication of the Indian in America was, above all else,
self-referential. The Puritan-Protestant mind appraised
the world with a dualistic cosmology that identified
sin and the Devil with those who were "different." If
English episcopacy was perceived as a vestige of the
Beast -- the Whore of Babylon -- then surely the primi-

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[9]The Reverend Soloman Stoddard (1723), cited
by Pearce, p. 32.

tive activities and appearance of North America's
natives suggested a soul that much more "beastly" and
sinful. This view of the Indian has permeated American
consciouness since the Puritan and Virginia settlements
of the seventeenth century.

> ...their chiefe God they worship is the Divell.[10]
>
> There is nothing in their books, if they have
> any, nor in their religious rites, elevating,
> purifying and expanding; but on the contrary,
> that which is degrading and polluting.[11]
>
> Their minds are gross darkness. They know
> not the true God nor the only Savior of lost
> sinners; and they are strangers to that blessed
> gospel which "has brought life and immortality
> to light." They are exceedingly depraved, and
> enslaved to sin, Satan and the world.[12]

Theologically, Americans were interested
in Indians to the extent that they personified what
Americans were not. In the seventeenth century ministers
and elders were "interested in the Indians in so far
as they failed to be potential Puritans."[13] Explaining
the Indian meant justifying his existence on earth; and
for Puritans the word "justification" meant "to save
for God."[14] Puritans engaged in the activity of Indian
transformation as a sign of future salvation, no less
for the Indian than for themselves. In the Reverend

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[10]Captain John Smith, from his _Map of Virginia,_
witha Description of the Countrey, the Commodities, People
Government and Religion (1612), cited by Pearce, p. 15.

[11]From the "Influence of Missions on the Temporal
Condition of the Heathen," _Baptist Missionary Magazine,_ XXIX,
April, 1849, pp. 101-5, cited in Robert F, Berkhofer, Jr.,
Salvation and the Savage: An Analysis of Protestant Missions
and American Indian Response, 1787-1862 (New York: Atheneum,
1972), p. 9.

Stoddard's words, it was the "dread to go to Hell _our_
selves" which animated the work of conversion and
"an act of Love to _our_ _own_ _nature_ to seek their sal-
vation." The demonic, sinful Indian thus served as
a sign of the inescapable earthly struggle between
Good and Evil. He defined the mission of America
as he stood in opposition to it.

The subjective experience of the Indian in
Protestant-American consciousness reveals him as an
internalized aspect of the American ego. The English
Puritan rejection of 1645 left American Puritans alone
with the wilderness and the Indian as sources for
self-definition and justification. Puritans' self-
referential perspective on the Indian may be understood
as the result of psychological needs stemming from
this rejection. But the need went beyond passive
comparison. The Indian, like the land, was an object
whose transformation was essential for securing national
salvation and identity in the future. Justification for
transforming ("civilizing," "Christianizing," etc.)
the Indian was found in the scriptures and with the

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[12]From "The Condition of the Heathen," _Foreign_
Missionary Chronicle, V, (March, 1837), p. 45, cited by
Berkhofer, p. 13.

[13]Pearce, p. 26.

[14]Rogin, p. 273.

Puritans' omnipotent, omniscient God of Order. Wilderness America was a land of chaos, uncultivated, unsupportive, virgin and wild. The Indians were persons who did not seek to change this state, were identified with it, and were perceived, therefore, as living chaos and sin themselves. While the Puritan could not hope to achieve salvation in this world, by imitating God and conforming to divine law he might bring order to chaos and achieve future salvation. Hence, the "natural wealth /of the land/ was there for the taking because it was there for the ordering. So were her natural men."[15]

Scriptural justification for subduing the land and making it supportive linked order and agriculture.

> The whole earth is the Lord's Garden and he hath given it to the sonnes of men, with a general Condicion, Gen. 1.28 Increase and multiply, replenish the earth and subdue it.[16]

> That what lands any of the Indians in this jurisdiction have possessed and improved, by subduing the same, they have just right unto, according to that Gen, 1.28, and Chap. 9.-1 and Psal, 115, 16.[17]

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[15]Pearce, p. 3.

[16]Governor John Winthrop of Massachusetts Bay Colony, cited by Prucha, p. 240.

[17]Legislative order of the General Court of Massachusetts, 1633, cited in J.P. Kinney, A Continent Lost -- A Civilization Won (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1937), p. 6.

Genesis 1:28 served as the scriptural foundation for a divine and immutable "law of nature" in which "be fruitful and multiply" was translated into "laws" of land tenure and appropriation based on the purpose to which man committed the land. Nomads without agriculture had "possession" by an historical-natural right anterior to civilized society. But it was a right which had to yield before the higher divinely ordained claims of Christianity. As long as there was room enough for both races, natural law allowed land appropriation by whites without Indian annihilation.[18] But when available land became limited, natural law allowed no room for the Indian or claims based on anterior possession. The Puritan justification for expropriating Indian lands served nineteenth century advocates of Manifest Destiny and Indian removal as well as it served the colonists of Massachusetts and Virginia.

> There can be no doubt... that the Creator intended the earth should be reclaimed from a state of nature and cultivated....[19]

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[18]". And for the Natives of New England they inclose noe land neither have any settled habitation nor any tame cattle to improve the land by, and soe have noe other but a naturall right to those countries Soe as if we leave them sufficient for their use wee may lawfully take the rest, there being more than enough for them and us." Winthrop, cited by Prucha, p. 240.

[19]Lewis Cass (1830), cited by Prucha, pp. 240-1.

...[whites had superior land right because they]
used it according to the intentions of the
CREATOR.[20]

> For my part, I cannot murmur at what
> seems to be the effect of divine law. ... Civi-
> lization, or extinction, has been the fate of
> all people who have found themselves in the
> track of the advancing Whites... .[21]

> Treaties were expedients by which the ignorant,
> intractable, and savage people were induced with-
> out bloodshed to yield up what civilized peoples
> had a right to possess by virtue of that command
> of the Creator delivered to man upon his formation
> -- be fruitful, multiply and replenish the earth
> and subdue it.[22]

The Indian was a sinful and polluted worshipper
of the Devil. But in Puritan logic, for one to experience
sin and guilt, and possibly achieve salvation, <u>awareness</u>
was required: consciousness of the corruption of man
before God -- ultimately the Protestant religious ex-
perience of guilt-ridden self-consciousness. For Puri-
tans to call Indians sinful worshippers of Satan pre-
supposed that the Indians possessed at least a rudimentary
awareness of the divine, or rather, that God had im-
planted in all men a modicum of "original wisdom" by
which their lives were ordered. The Puritan saw proof
for this divine presence in the Indians' primitive
tribal organization, limited knowledge of agriculture,
wood-working, etc. But without an understanding of the
"true" religion, God "leaves in them just enough hunger

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[20]Thomas Hart Benton (1830), cited by
Prucha, <u>loc. cit.</u>

[21]Thomas Hart Benton (1846), cited by
Pearce, p. 240.

for divinity that they expend themselves in an un-
availing worship of Satan."[23] Thus, "original wisdom"
was in actuality "original sin" and the Indians'
primitive desires and life-style suggested to Puritans
the condition of man immediately following the fall from
grace in the Garden of Eden: the immediate basis of
human earthly failure. Since all men were flawed by
original sin, the Indian was an occasion for Puritan
self-reflection on their own sin and failure.

Transforming the Indian and planting within
him the seeds of civilization was "justifying" (saving
for God) both races. It was, at once, an exercise of
demonstration (the Indian must be shown his true
condition: guilt, impotence and misery[24]) and self-
analysis (since the sins of the Indian were the sins
of the white man). Both Red and White men were children
of God, and in demonstrating the corruption of the
former one was revealing the failure of the latter.
In seeking salvation for the savage, the white man
sought salvation for himself. But each new attempt at

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[22]George G. Gilmer, Governor of Georgia (1830),
cited by Prucha, p. 242.

[23]Perry Miller, Errand into the Wilderness
(Cambridge, Mass.:Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 116.

[24]"Our plan of preaching to them was, to con-
vince them of their guilt, misery and helplessness by
reason and experience: not appealing to the Scriptures as
the law by which they were condemned, but to their own
knowledge of right and wrong; and the misery felt from the
consciousness that have done wrong." Methodist missionary to
the Choctaw Indians (1829), cited by Berkhofer, pp. 52-3.

at "civilizing" only reinforced the Puritan experience
of original missionary failure and the sinfulness of
all present-worldly activity. The Indian demon of the
land was the demon in the American psyche. There could
be no sense of "possession" through territorial expansion
and settlement, and the Indians' "civilization" likewise
precluded a positive experience of fulfilled identity
or mission. The Indian had to remain "bad" and sinful
in order to give purpose to Puritan-American activity
and this condition kept the white man in earthly sin
as well. Salvation and success were relegated to the
future; sin and failure defined the "mission" of
America to the Indians in the present world. Theologically
there was no success or fulfillment in either Indian
or land transformation for America.

The sinister, demonic Indian was as indispensible
to American identity-securing activity as the "bad breast"
of the land. Each served as objects whose transformation
gave America purpose and self-definition. Each fostered
restless, continuous activity. Missionary zeal and ter-
ritorial expansion were joined on the frontier to per-
petuate unresolved anxiety over American identity and its
unfulfilling experience of self.

* * *

The inheritance America received from Europe
was not limited to Puritan cosmology. America was heir
to the Enlightenment as well as the Reformation. Strains
of Enlightenment rationalism (particularly the cultural
geneologies of Montesquieu and Rousseau, the liberalism
of Harrington and the economics of Locke) combined with
and reinforced certain aspects of Calvinist dogma to
form the intellectual rationale for American social
activity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The enlightened, rational American mind ac-
cepted the Puritan justification of Christian civili-
zation's transcendent right to usurp lands which the
Indians held only by virtue of historical antecedence,
but it translated this divine-natural law into a "law
of nations" which was justified by reason and the scien-
tific analysis of society. The Law of Nations (U.S.
publication, 1820) written by the Swiss jurist Emmerich
de Vattel was employed by Americans in the nineteenth
century to rationalize repeated treaty violations and
repeated removals of Indians to smaller and smaller
parcels of land farther and farther West.

> It is asked if a nation may lawfully take pos-
> session of a part of a vast country, in which
> there are found none but erratic nations, in-
> capable by the smallness of their numbers, to
> people the whole? We have already observed in
> establishing the obligation to cultivate the
> earth /a link to Christian theology7, that these
> nations cannot exclusively appropriate to them-
> selves more land than they have occasion for,

and which they are unable to settle and cultivate.
Their removing their habitations through these
immense regions, cannot be taken for true and
legal possession; ... the earth belongs to the
human race in general, and was designed to fur-
nish it with subsistence... . People have not
then deviated from the views of nature in con-
fining the Indians within narrow limits.[25]

But even before Vattel's writing the logic of a "law

of nations" was appreciated and used by American poli-

ticians, social thinkers and settlers to ameliorate

the anxiety occasioned by the "Indian problem."

> By the law of nations it is agreed that no
> people shall be entitled to more land than
> they can cultivate. Of course no people will
> sit and starve for want of land to work,
> when a neighbouring nation has much more
> than they can make use of.[26]

> [They] have no better right to this land than
> we ourselves; and they have by estimation nearly
> 100,000 acres of land to each man Of their
> nation and of no more use to government or
> society than to saunter about upon like so many
> wolves or bares, whilst they who would be a
> supporte to government and improve the country
> must be forced even to rent poore stoney ridges...
> whilst there is fine fertile countrys lying
> uncultivated... .[27]

> ... the progress of the arts which give rise to
> his distressing apprehensions, are for the in-
> crease of mankind, and for the promotion of the
> world's glory and happiness; that five hundred
> rational animals may enjoy life in plenty, and
> comfort, where only one Savage drags out a hun-
> gry existence, we shall be pleased with the pros-
> pect into futurity.[28]

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[25]Emmerich de Vattel (The Law of Nations,
1820 ed.), cited by Prucha, p. 241 and by Pearce, pp.
70-1. Note the similarity in the conclusions drawn by
Winthrop (fn. 18, Ch. VI) and Vattel despite different
sources of justification.

[26]John Sevier (Governor of Tennessee), letter
to James Ore, May 12, 1798, cited by Prucha, p. 143.

For rational America the key to the role of
the Indian on the frontier was agriculture. Agricultural
utilization of the land served as the yardstick by which
America measured its progress against Europe as well as
the Indian. The apparent permanence of an agricultural
frontier placed America above Europe at the top of a
scale of historical progress and social perfectibility.
It assured that America, unlike Europe, would not age
or grow decadent with civilization. It would be located on the
"middle way between savagism and decadent civilization."[29]
The Indian, on the other hand, was identified with the
wildness and youth of the land. He represented to the
Enlightenment mind the earliest stages of human society
and therefore a base-mark from which social progress
could be measured. Progress was measured with agri-
culture. Civilization used the land to efficiently sup-
port large numbers of people, while the primitive, no-
madic hunter (inefficiently) required large tracts of
land to support comparatively few people. This was the
key rational distinction between the Indian and the White
Man, and it served as the key rationalization for white
usurpation of Indian lands.

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[27]Petition to the Congress and the President
from white squatters on Chickasaw land (Sept. 5, 1810),
cited by Prucha, p. 162.

[28]James Sullivan (History of the District of
Maine, 1795), cited by Pearce, p. 67.

[29]Pearce, p. 153.

> ... the hunter or the savage state requires
> a greater extent of territory to sustain it,
> than is compatible with the progress and just
> claims of civilized life, and must yield to it.[30]

> And indeed, if it be the design of Providence
> to extirpate these savages in order to make
> room for the cultivators of the earth, it seems
> not improbable that rum may be the appointed
> means.[31]

In Europe, rational-progressive social gene-

ologies were self-evaluative philosophical speculation

and fantasy. That is, they served as tools by which

Europeans analysed European society. In America, how-

ever, theories and fantasies about original "states of

Nature" and "Social Compacts" came face-to-face with the

"raw data" of social origins. For within its borders,

as one travelled from West to East, America recapitulated

the history of social progress -- from primitive savagery

to the highest civilization.

> Let a philosophic observer commence a journey
> from the savages of the Rocky Mountains, east-
> wardly towards our sea-coast. ... This, in fact,
> is equivalent to a survey, in time, of the pro-
> gress of man from the infancy of creation to the
> present day.[32]

> Line by line as we read this continental page from
> West to East we find the record of social evolution.[33]

The Indians forced America to confront the social past

as historical fact and respond to its claims on America's

present and future. America might either accept or deny

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[30]President James Monroe to Andrew Jackson,
October 5, 1817, cited by Prucha, pp. 226-7.

[31]Benjamin Franklin, cited by D.H. Lawrence,
Studies in Classic American Literature, p. 15.

[32]Thomas Jefferson to William Ludlow, September
6, 1824, cited by Pearce, p. 155.

these claims. Acceptance meant a recognition of social
relativity and denied Enlightenment-spawned notions of
human perfectibility and social progress. Further, ac-
ceptance meant denial of infinity and immortality for
the American nation. The price exacted by the Indian
from the American dream was mutability and finitude. By
denying the claims of the past, however, America would
reaffirm progressive history and human perfectibility.
By rejecting the claim of social origin and historical
antecedence America could turn to the future as its
only source of identity and social meaning; it could
dream and search for a fountain of eternal national youth.

With the absolute morality of Puritan ances-
tors and the rational optimism of Enlightenment fore-
bears in their blood, Americans had to deny the past
represented by the Indian. By so doing, however, they
changed a European theory of social evolution into the
American praxis of moral evaluation and social anni-
hilation. Contemporary societies, be they primitive or
civilized would be subjects for ethical ranking. "History
would thus be the key to the moral worth of cultures... ."[34]
Ethical ranking through history established a reflexive
attitude by which the Indian could be known to the white

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[33]Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance
of the Frontier in American History," The Turner Thesis,
p. 5.

[34]Pearce, p. 49.

man only interms of his submission to "superior" civilization. The submission demanded by white America would affirm its belief in the inevitability of that submission in accordance with the laws of social science. The Indian was forced to validate the white man to himself! "History as progress made it possible to fully comprehend the culturally earlier as the morally inferior;"[35] and here America found a theoretical explanation which helped eliminate ambiguity and anxiety occasioned by the historical anomaly of a part of man's social past existing in the present. Ambiguity was eliminated by offering the Indian "civilization or death."[36] Either would demonstrate the inevitable transcendence of civilization over savagery and prove the progressive direction of American History.

Theories of social evolution suggested to whites that their relationship with the Indian was analogous to that between an adult and a child or to that between a guardian and his ward. Francis Parkman's famous comment that "barbarism is to civilization what childhood

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[35]Ibid., p. 104.

[36] "... one of two things must eventually take place, to wit, either civilization or extermination of the Indian. Savage and civilized life cannot live and prosper on the same ground. One of the two must die." Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1881 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1881), p. IV. "The Indians had only the two alternatives of war or civilization; in other words, they must either have destroyed the Europeans or become their equals." DeTocqueville, Democracy in America, I, p. 406.

is to maturity,"[37] was just one typical example of the
way in which Americans interpreted the responsibilities,
burdens and glories which a people at the top-most
rung of the societal ladder owed to those below. Thomas
McKenney, Andrew Jackson's Commissioner of Indian Affairs,
drew the analogy out even further:

> Our Indians stand pretty much in the relation
> to the Government as do our children to us. They
> are equally dependent, and need, not infrequently,
> the exercise of paternal authority to detach them
> from those ways which might involve both their
> peace and their lives. It would not be considered
> just for our children to be let alone to settle
> their quarrels in their own way.[38]

And John C. Calhoun described his government's policy
as one "to wean the Indians from their attachment to
their barbarous customs and pursuits."[39] Paternalism
and familial imagery has characterized white attitudes
toward the Indian throughout American history. I do
not wish to belabor this point. It has been profusely
documented by Pearce and, most recently, by Michael
Rogin. At this juncture I simply wish to point out
that this attitude obtained a social-philosophical
grounding in the theories of progressive history and
human perfectibility inherited from the Enlightenment.

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[37]Francis Parkman (The Conspiracy of Pontiac,
1851), cited by Pearce, p. 166.

[38]McKenney to the House Committee on Indian
Affairs, cited by Rogin, p. 303.

[39]Secretary of War Calhoun to the Government's
agent to the Creek Indians, September 29, 1818. Cited by
Prucha, p. 213.

Ambivalence in the American psyche about the character of the Indian persisted through all attempts at social rationalization; America simultaneously affirmed the savage's natural virtue along with his natural beastliness. This "Indian problem" may be viewed as a focusing of the general American problem of reconciling Civilization and Nature with the Indian as a symbol embodying this conflict. The moral simplicity and purity of the heart of the "noble savage" had an irresistable attraction for Americans who feared and rejected the complexity and decadence of European civilization. The speech of Chief Logan to Lord Dunsmore in 1774, recalled by Jefferson in his Notes on the State of Virginia, crystallized for Americans the values that would accrue from contact with pristine nature on the frontier.

> I appeal to the white man to say, if ever he
> entered Logan's cabin hungry, and he gave him
> not meat; if ever he came cold and naked, and
> he clothed him not... .[40]

Just as the dramatic opposition of Civilization and Nature in Western literature required an attempt at reconciliation by employing various personae for the pioneer, the coexistence in American consciousness of two antagonistic images of the Indian -- one "noble," the other "bloodthirsty" -- required an explanation which both incorporated yet justified the transcendence of civilization. Rational social-evolutionary theory served

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[40]Chief Logan through Jefferson, cited by
Pearce, p. 79.

this purpose by divorcing the individual Indian (pos-
sibly noble) from his race (clearly savage and "inferior"),
thereby justifying Indian destruction as the inevitable
fate of a society outside of contemporary history. Thus,
the individual might be admired for his virtue but as
a member of an historically antecedent and morally in-
ferior society his virtue was evaluated as "inferior" by
civilized standards.

> Placed in the context of the whole life of
> American society, ... it was to be seen as
> the state of one almost entirely out of con-
> tact, for good or bad, with the life of civi-
> lized men. Indian nobility and ignobility,
> Indian virtues and vices, had to be at once
> admitted for what they were, qualities tied
> together and delimited by the special nature
> of Indian society. That society was found as
> a whole to be morally inferior to civilized
> society; and its moral inferiority was found
> to be a product of its historical anteriority.[41]

Savage nobility could not be absolute nobility for it
was characterized "by emotion rather than reason, by
action rather than by thought, by custom rather than
by law. ... It was a kind of nobility which paradoxically,
had to be shown to have contributed to the death of the
very people whom it characterized."[42] By separating
individuals' worth from the worth of their society, America
could destroy the race in its present-historical existence
while paying homage to it as a past-ideal.

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[41] Pearce, pp. 199-200.

[42] Ibid., p. 80.

There has been all the time, in the white
American soul, a dual feeling about the Indian.
First was Franklin's feeling, that a wise Provi-
dence no doubt intended the extirpation of these
savages. Then came Crevecoeur's contradictory
feeling about the noble Red Man and the innocent
life of the wigwam. ...
    The desire to extirpate the Indian. And the
contradictory desire to glorify him. Both are
rampant still, today.[43]

Both Pearce and Lawrence confirm American

ambivalence toward the Indian, an ambivalence -- "double-

mindedness" -- which simultaneously vindicated and con-

demned the savage character. America permitted itself

the indulgence of both pity (over the past-ideal of

savage nobility) and censure (of the present-reality of

a society "past" its time).[44] Melancholy and regret

over the vanishing Indian could only be reconciled

with the optimism of civilized progress by a law of

objective social evolution. The white man avoided res-

possibility for the fate   of the Indian. Ultimately,

"the law of nations" gave responsibility for the fate

of the Indian back to the Indian himself. Destruction,

after all, was a function of the primitive character of

Indian society, an historical anachronism in the modern

world. Primitive society would yield to "higher" forms

of civilization just as one generation replaced another.

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[43]Lawrence, p. 36.

[44]See Pearce, pp. 76-8 for a discussion of
American "double-mindedness" and the Indian.

> To follow to the tomb the last of his race and
> to tread on the graves of extinct nations excite
> melancholy reflections. But true philanthropy
> reconciles the mind to these vicissitudes as it
> does to the extinction of one generation to make
> room for another.[45]

As the _Persona Americana_ masked the fundamental conflict between Civilization and Nature in American Western literature and mythology, rational social theory masked white-Indian antagonism by placing it beyond human control. Thus America absolved itself of responsibility for the consequences of actions predicated on white-authored social theory. Confronting "social origins" in the person of the Indian in an "uninhabited" land, America interpreted its _real_ Western experience with social _myths_ about "states of Nature" and "original innocence." America perceived its Western experience as a-historical. Its dream of a brave, new world covered the activities required for greatness -- territorial expansion, Indian removal and genocide, agricultural settlement -- with a mask of eternal American innocence.

> ... while the origins of European countries
> were shrouded in the mists of obscure history,
> America had clearly begun not with primal
> innocence and consent but with acts of force
> and fraud. Stripping away history did not permit
> beginning without sin; it simply exposed the
> sin at the beginning of it all.[46]

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[45]Andrew Jackson, Second Annual Message to Congress, December 6, 1830, _Removal_, p. 50. Also cited by Pearce, p. 57.

[46]Rogin, pp. 270-1.

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A brief survey of America's literary treatment
of the Indian confirms the persistence of ambivalence
in spite of attempts at reconciliation. Basically,
the problem for the fictional Indian is similar to the
problem of the literary conceptualization of the pioneer:
how to reconcile civilized "decadence" with natural
"goodness," civilized "progress" with natural "wildness."

> The American writer inhabits a country at
> once the dream of Europe and a fact of history;
> he lives on the last horizon of an endlessly
> retreating vision of innocence -- on the "frontier,"
> which is to say, the margin where the theory of
> original goodness and the fact of original sin
> come face to face.[47]

> From the beginning of our literature, the question
> has been posed: Is the "natural" a source of
> spontaeous goodness, instinctive nobility, un-
> tutored piety? Or is it the breeding ground of
> a black, demonic, destructive force hostile to
> our salvation? Or is it the common spring of
> two conflicting impulses, one positive, one
> negative?[48]

Narratives of frontier captivity epitomized
the demonic image of Indian savagery. Francis Hopkin-
son's "The Treaty" (1761) describes the capture of
Beautiful Rosetta by a band of Indians and the attempted
rescue by her lover, Doris. Doris is captured, however,
and then tortured to death. Rosetta dies broken-hearted

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[47]Leslie Fiedler, _Love and Death in the American
Novel_ (Rev. ed.; New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1966), p. 7.

[48]_Ibid._, p. 86.

at his feet.[49] Maurice Thompson in <u>Alice of Old
Vincennes</u> describes Indians as "a type of inhumanity
raised to the last power ... under the hideous atrocity
of nature...."[50] And Phillip Freneau in "The Rising
Glory of America" (1722) speaks of:

> Dim superstition with her ghastly train
> Of daemons, spectres and foreboding signs
> Still urging them to horrid rites and forms
> Of human sacrifice, to sooth the pow'rs
> Malignant, and the dark infernal king.[51]

"The Indian of the captivity narrative was the con-
summate villain, the beast who hatcheted fathers, smashed
the skulls of infants, and carried off mothers to make
them into squaws."[52]

The need to distinguish America from Europe
led to a counterstrain in the literary conceptualization
of the Indian. This was a genre of primitivistic
writing which focused on the goodness, simplicity and
"nobility" of Indian life; the image of the "noble
savage." In this genre the Indian was presented as a
paradoxical man, one who was civilized because he was
uncorrupted by civilization.[53] Works of this type were
generally dramas of romance between whites and Indians,

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[49]Hopkinson, cited by Pearce, p. 180.

[50]Thompson, cited by Nicholas J. Karolides,
<u>The Pioneer in the American Novel 1900-1950</u> (Norman:
University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), p. 209-210.

[51]Freneau, cited by Pearce, pp. 180-1.

[52]<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 58.

[53]<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 138.

and most often depicted a white man marrying or falling
in love with an Indian princess. The convention of the
noble savage used white notions of hereditary nobility
to invest the Indian with personal nobility. Barbarism
was transcended by painting the Red man (woman) white.

Indian princesses modeled on Pocahontas
were the main subjects of these dramas. James
Croswell's A New World Planted (1802) told the love and
marriage story of a Massachusetts Pilgrim and an
Indian princess (named Pocahonta). The princess possessed
beauty, wit and skin whiter than the skin of other
Indians. James N. Barker in The Indian Princess;
or La Belle Sauvage (1808) declared that it was "impossible
to distinguish a noble savage from a noble white man."
And in The Forest Princess (1848) by Charlotte Barnes
dying Pocahontas has a vision of the future of Virginia
embellished with "Washington, the Genius of Columbia,
Time, Peace, and the Lion and the Eagle all taking part
in the final tableau."[54]

Ambivalence ("double-facedness") vitiated
attempts to paint the Indian exclusively red or white,
however. Consistently, "barbaric" or "noble" images
only confused Americans who experienced the Indian as

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[54] Sources for these quotes in Pearce, pp. 172-3.

both simultaneously. The literary Indian had to permit

the white experience of both pity and censure, for he

was only a reflection of white rationalization. Thus,

in spite of Hopkinson's bloody narrative of Rosetta

and Doris, the author also pictures some Indians as:

> Untouch'd by art, e'en in the savage breast,
> With native lustre, how doth reason shine!
>   ...
> What noble thoughts, what noble actions rise
> From in-born genius, unrestrained and free![55]

In the same year that Freneau wrote "The Rising Glory

of America" he offered a positive view of the Indian

in "The American Village:"

> The gen'rous soul insir'd the honest breast,
> And to be free, was doubly to be blesst.[56]

And the full text of the passage cited here from

Thompson's <u>Alice</u> reveals total ambiguity within a

single sentence.

> ... but under the hideous atrocity of nature
> lay the indestructible sense of gratitude so
> fixed and perfect that it did its work almost
> automatically.[57]

The final outcome of this ambiguity was an Indian

stereotyped in white American consciousness as super-

ficially simple, innocent and loyal (Tonto was the

grandson of Chief Logan!) but with a deeper potential

for savage brutality and violence.

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[55]Hopkinson, <u>loc. cit.</u>

[56]Freneau, <u>loc. cit.</u>

[57]Thompson, <u>loc. cit.</u>

... these views are corollary and have root in
a like romantic deficiency: a stereotype of
sweeping qualities without depth or comprehensiveness
.... On the one hand, the Indian is known to be a
cruel savage, intent on the destruction of the
pioneers. On the other hand, he is given certain
positive attributes that do not necessarily
redeem him but function in the further stereotyping
of his character.....[58]

Once established, this stereotype was

employed by generations of American writers and was

absorbed by generations of American audiences. It

was the literary expression of the rational-philosophical

explanation of the Indianas racially inferior though,

occasionally, individually superior. In effect, the

"scientific" formulation: historically anterior =

morally inferior, was itself nothing more than an

ethnocentric stereotype of the human social experience

in its entirety. Literature and politics merged in

white America's image of the Indian. Both tried to

resolve -- conceal -- two antagonistic images of man,

one "noble" the other "savage." And in the process,

both allowed individual virtue to perish at the hands

of social arrogance required for American self-definition.

The effect on the subliterary character of
the Indian was disastrous. Where earlier even
unsympathetic writers .. .had tried to understand
Indian motives, ... later writers felt no need
at all even to give the pretense of plausibility
to Indian character. As a result, the Indian was
treated more and more like "the enemy" in the
propoganda war movies. ... the Indian problem
... became more or less a straightforward state-

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[58]Karolides, pp. 209-210.

ment of how "our side" won. The Indian ...
plays the negative to positive American virtues
which are unhesitatingly affirmed.[59]

The Indian enemy of mass literary and media productions
is a political-social antagonist, one who threatened
American national identity and had to be defeated.

The Indian is comprehended in America as
an attacker of forts, wagon-trains, and ranches, i.e.,
as a social threat. In this way the individual Indian
and his potential virtue is concealed and avoided, but
not eliminated. But his covert presence perpetuates
white ambivalence toward the "enemy." A later work
which illustrates this attitude is Hamlin Garland's
The Silent Eaters (1923), a biographical account of the
Sioux chief and medicine man, Sitting Bull. Sitting
Bull was an individual Indian with social and political
significance for America [60] (like Tecumseh, Pontiac,
Chief Joseph, et. al.). The Silent Eaters universalized
the individual Indian, Sitting Bull, presenting him
finally as an extended metaphor for the decline of
the Sioux nation as a whole. Garland, by virtue of
America's ambivalence, was able to separate the person
from the people and arouse feelings of both pity and

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[59]James K. Folsom, The American Western Novel
(New Haven: College and University Press, 1966), pp. 146-7.

[60]Sitting Bull, along with Crazy Horse, Gall
and Two Moon, directed the Indian defeat of General Geroge
A. Custer and the Seventh U.S. Cavalry on the Little Big
Horn in 1876. Afterwards, this reknowned warrior gained
Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and gained even more notoriety.
Throughout, Sitting Bull remained hostile to the white man's
world.

censure in his readers.

> While he can admire Sitting Bull's courage,
> resourcefulness, and so on, at the same time
> he may consistently condemn these qualities
> as out of place in the white world inevitably
> to come. Hence Sitting Bull can be personally
> admired, but at the same time the position for
> which he stands need not be affirmed.[61]

The Sioux were "the enemy," but had "great
chiefs," as was the case with the Ottawas under Pontiac,
the Shawnee under Tecumseh, the Cheyenne under Dull Knife,
the Nez Perce under Chief Joseph, the Commanche under
Quanah Parker, the Apache under Geronimo. While John
Wayne battles Sioux, Cheyenne and Apache on the screen,
Americans battle their chiefs in their seats. The two
can never be apart in the mind of white America.

> Their names would become as well known as
> those of the men who tried to destroy them.
> Most of them, young and old, would be driven
> into the ground long before the symbolic end
> of Indian freedom came at Wounded Knee in De-
> cember, 1890. Now, a century later, in an age
> without heroes, they are perhaps the most
> heroic of all Americans.[62]

Ambiguity, Anxiety and National Identity:

America's Real "Indian Problem."

The white man does not understand the Indian
for the reason that he does not understand America.
He is too far removed from its formative process.
The roots of the tree of his life have not yet
grasped the rock and soil. The white man is troubled

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[61]Folsom, pp. 149-150.

[62]Dee Brown, <u>Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee:</u>
<u>An Indian History of the American West</u> (New York: Bantam
Books, 1972), p. 13.

by primitive fears; he still has in his con-
sciousness the perils of this frontier con-
tinent, some of its fastness not yet yielding
to his questing footsteps and inquiring eyes.
... The man from Europe is still a foreigner
and an alien. And he still hates the man who
questioned his path across the continent.[63]

In Chapters III and IV I argue that the anxious
and unfulfilling experience of American settlement of
the Western frontier reflected unresolved Oedipal con-
flict. America was unable to experience "possession"
and establish an unambiguous relationship to the land
as maternal analogue through transformation. America
was frustrated in attempts to secure a viable masculine
identity. Within this broad psychodrama of the American
West the Indian played a crucial role. His role was
defined in the first instance by his previous possession
of the land, secondly by his opposition to white ter-
ritorial expansion and Indian dispossession, and thirdly
by the image and impulses of his "primitive" appearance
evoked in white consciousness. Each element of the
Indians' role posed a "threat" to the psychological
goals of American continental activity. Combined, they
made the Indian chief protagonist in the psychodrama of
the American West.

The conflict between America and the Indian
has been over the land of North America: its possession

63Chief Standing Bear, _Land of the Spotted Eagle_ (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1933), p. 248.

and control. Culture clash, relative economic and military power, etc. were elements affecting the format of white-Indian relations, but did not define it. Fundamentally, the issue at stake was (and remains) the land.[64] And it is in their attitudes toward the land -- the land as "Mother" -- that whites and Indians are most distinguished. The land served as a cultural lightning-rod, grounding the basic assumptions for North America's mythopoeic and historical civilizations.

The land was recognized as "mother" by both Indians and whites. But the former, possessing her, revered her. The latter, lacking possession, wanted but resented her and thus sought to change her. Representative Cyrus L. Dunham, citing the "great Tecumseh -- for he was great, though a savage," presented the earth as the "common mother" of both white and red man. (See Chapter IV.)[65] And Secretary of War James Barbour declared in 1826 that:

> The love of our native land is implanted in
> every human bosom, whether he roams the wilderness, or is found in the highest state of civilization.[66]

Yet profession of love for the mother-land is not sufficient as evidence of a _loving attitude_. She was a maternal

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[64]See Deloria, _Custer_, p. 174. This contention is supported by Prucha in _American Indian Policy_, p. 139.

[65]The Dunham quote, found in Chapter IV, is cited by Henry Nash Smith, _Virgin Land_, p. 172.

[66]Cited by George Dewey Harmon, _Sixty Years of Indian Affairs; Political, Economic and Diplomatic 1789-1850_ (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), p. 354.

object, but one "wild" and not possessed by whites. She
therefore had to be taken -- by force if necessary --
and transformed (by agriculture) to satisfy the needs
of America. The desire for love but the inability to
secure it in the present rendered America's maternal
attitude ambiguous. America simultaneously experienced
love and hatred, desire and frustration, gratitude and
envy.

> In general, Americans do not experience "this
> country" as a "motherland" in the soft, nos-
> talgic sense of "the old country." "This
> country" is loved almost bitterly and in a
> remarkably unromantic and realistic way.[67]

America's maternal experience was not one of love,
reverence and respect, but one of ambivalence, frus-
tration and rage.

In contrast, the Indian's entire attitude
toward the land suggests a secure positive love-re-
lationship. Even the white man had to admit that the
Indian was the <u>true</u> "child of Nature."

> With this sacred pipe you will walk upon the
> Earth; for the Earth is your Grandmother and
> Mother, and she is sacred. Every step that is
> taken upon Her should be as a prayer.[68]

> You ask me to plow the ground! Shall I
> take a knife and tear my mother's bosom? Then
> when I die she will not take me to her bosom to
> rest.
> You ask me to dig for stone! Shall I dig

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[67]Erik H. Erikson, <u>Childhood and Society</u> (2d
Rev. ed.; New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1963), p. 305.

[68]Words of White Buffalo Woman to the Sioux
upon giving them their sacred pipe, sacred symbol of their
nation, in <u>The Sacred Pipe; Black Elk's Account of the
Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux</u>, recorded and edited by

under her skin for her bones? Then when I die
I can not enter her body to be born again.[69]

The Indian, experiencing a secure maternal relationship,

could perceive the fear and insecurity which permeated

the whites' relationship to the land. He was able to

intuit the psychological meaning of America's omnivorous

social activity.

> Many times the Indian is embarrassed and baffled
> by the white man's allusions to nature in such
> terms as crude, primitive, wild, rude, untamed,
> and savage. ...
>   But nothing the Great Mystery placed in
> the land of the Indian pleased the white man,
> and nothing escaped his transforming hand. ...
> But since for the Lakota there was no wilderness;
> since nature was not dangerous but hospitable;
> not forbidding but friendly, Lakota philosophy
> was healthy -- free from fear and dogmatism.
> ... In sharing, in loving all and everything,
> one people naturally found a measure of the thing
> they sought; while, in fearing, the other found
> need of conquest. For one man the world was full
> of beauty; for the other it was a place of sin
> and ugliness to be endured until he went to
> another world, there to become a creature of
> wings, half-man and half-bird.[70]

Existential problems for the Indian were

resolved in a mythopoeic system of cosmic _unity_: the

unity of past, present and future, of life and death,

of Man and Nature. "You see, we Indians live in eternity!"[71]

Indians _lived_ what the Americans dreamed of and longed for.

Psychoanalytically, Indians, through the mythology and

rituals of their cultures, collectively experienced some-

Joseph Epes Brown (Baltimore: Penguin Books, inc., 1971),
pp. 4-6.

[69] Words of Smohalla, preacher of the Sahaptan
Indians, to white treaty delegates in the 1860's. Cited
by Weston LeBarre, _The Ghost Dance; The Origins of Re-
ligion_ (New York: Delta Book, 1972), p. 219.

thing analogous to the dual-unity of the womb. The Indian was not separate from the land or Nature; he was One with her. Indian identity (and masculinity) was secured by cultural identification with the present environment; American identity, in contrast, was insecure from tension and opposition to the environment.

The conflict between America and the Indians may be comprehended as one between psychically "rich" and psychically "impoverished" maternal experiences.[72] To the extent that whites viewed Indians as "children of Nature," and to the extent that the land represented their "common mother," whites subjectively experienced Indians with all of the jealousy and rage that a neglected or rejected child would experience toward a more favored offspring. This is the psychoanalytical meaning of the Indian in white American consciousness: within America's broader unresolved Oedipus Complex there existed sibling rivalry between whites and Indians for possession and "love" of the mother-land. As possessors of that love by historical antecedence and a positive ("rich") cultural experience, the Indian occupied stable psychological ground. As historical "successors" in need of that love, America aggressively "stormed the barricades"

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[70]Standing Bear, Land, p. 196.

[71]Ella Deloria in a letter to R. Clyde McCone, cited by him in "TIME AND TIDE: A Study of the Conflicting Concepts of Time of the Dakota Indian and Western Civilization" (unpublished Masters dissertation, South Dakota State College, Brookings, S.D., July, 1956), p. 30.

in hope of securing possession of the "high-ground."
What America's psycho-social frontier commandoes could
not realize was that a part of themselves, a portion of
their own psyches, waited for them above.

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The psychological threat posed by the
Indian to the white man was based on the libidinal
nature of his relationship to the land. From the time
of America's earliest settlements it was the Indian's
body, his appetites and passions, his lack of inhibition
and self-consciousness, that simlultaneously attracted
and repulsed the civilized observer. Repulsion was
expressed by likening Indians to wild beasts, attraction
by comparing them to children. In either case, it was
the white man's own libidinal impulses, repressed by
civilization, which were excited by savage spectacles.

> /Captain John Smith's/ Indians are comely, brown
> (but all born white), close shaven, very strong
> and agile, inconstant, timorous, quick of apprehen-
> sion, "all Savage," covetous, malicious, as honest
> as could be expected. He is fascinated and re-
> volted by their gaudy dress, their barbaric
> ornaments, and their monstrous body painting.[73]

> The people bothe man and women are naked, neither

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[72]Erikson suggests that the "richness" of the
Sioux world-experience is, in fact, derived from their
integrated experience of the biological mother. "Only
such integration /of somatic, mental and social patterns/
provides a sense of being at home in this world." Erikson,
Childhood, p. 156.

[73]Pearce, p. 14.

> suffer they any heare to growe on their bodies,
> no not on their browes, the head excepte..... There
> is no law or order observed of wedlocke, for it is
> lawful to have so many women as they affect, and
> to put them away without any daunger. They be
> filthy at meate and in all secrete acts of nature,
> comparable to brute beasts.[74]

> Their dark coloured bodies, half-naked... running
> after and beating one another with fire-brands,
> accompanied by their horrid yellings, formed a
> a scene the most resembling our ideas of hell
> that could be imagined.[75]

> ... that heart educated by his condition to love
> with all the powers of being, and to hate with the
> exasperated malignity of a demon...[76]

> /The Indian is/ is slave of appetite and sloth,
> never emancipated from the tyranny of one passion
> save by the ravenous demands of another.[77]

The Indian's greatest "crime," his greatest threat, to

the white man, was passionate indulgence without the

appearance or seeming ability of self-control (repression).[78]

This is what made the Indian "savage," "uncivilized,"

from social and psychoanalytical perspectives.

What the Indian represented in the white

psyche was the Unknown; psychoanalytically, he repre-

sented the id., the unconscious. It is from the inter-

action between id, ego, and superego that the experience

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[74]William Cunningham (The Cosmographical Glass,
1559), cited in Lewis Hanke, Aristotle and the American
Indians; A Study in Race Prejudice in the Modern World
(Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1959), p. 99.

[75]Benjamin Franklin, cited by Lawrence, p. 15.

[76]Thomas J. Farnham (Travels in the Great
Western Plains, 1843), cited by Pearce, p. 65.

[77]Horace Greeley in 1859, cited by Rogin, p. 281.

[78]"The Indian, delighting in war and in glorious

of anxiety arises.

> We can rationally fear the known, but can only be
> anxious about the unknown. Culture is thus necessarily
> in part a defense against irrational anxiety --
> "irrational" since it is not a real fear of the
> unknown but of the unconscious or the repressed,
> and "anxiety" because it is from the Unknown
> within us.[79]

America's Indian policies were attempts to defend the

white ego from invasion by internal libidinal impulses,

impulses triggered externally by the Indian on the

frontier. In short, securing the Western boundaries of

the nation from "hostile" Indinas meant securing the

boundaries of the white American ego from the "hostile"

portion of itself: the id.

> Indians attacked the young nation at its
> boudaries, keeping them confused and insecure...
> A securely individuated ego requires a stable
> sense of boundaries between the self and environment,
> and whites insisted America, too, needed stable
> boundaries to mature.[80]

For whites the "wild," "free" relationship

between the Indian and Nature had great emotional

attraction. It represented the same psychological goal

toward which whites were unconsciously striving in

their "civilizing" activity on the frontier, but which

the nature of that activity left unrealized. Those

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deeds, is yet ignorant of the greatest victory of which
man is capable -- the conquering of one's self." Mary
Eastman in notes for her husband's /Seth Eastman/
Indian portraits, 1850. Cited by Pearce, p. 118.

[79]LaBarre, p. 341.

[80]Rogin, p. 285.

whites who were raised by Indians preferred the wilderness
to civilization, and Indians who were shown the
"advantages" which civilized life offered were not in-
clined to change their life-style. There was something
in a "life of ease, of freedom from care and labor"
which resonated within the hearts of Indians and whites
alike:[81] the possibility of harmony and unity with
one's environment -- ultimately, the longing for maternal
unity.

Indians as the "children of nature" occasioned
the longing for childhood bliss in white consciousness.
This is the psychological foundation for the romanticized
noble savage. The appeal of a life-experience of natural
simplicity, harmony, warmth and freedom stood in striking
contrast to maturity, "progress," growth and repression
demanded by civilization. Andrew Jackson's joyful
affirmation of inevitable social progress and succession
is contradicted by America's longing for the stability
and security of the "old oaken bucket." The human
cost of Western migration was anxiety over lost child-
hood innocence, love and maternal warmth.

> Doubtless it will be painful to leave the graves
> of their fathers; but what do theymore than our
> ancestors did or than our children are dow doing?
> ... Our children by the thousands yearly leave

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[81]Benjamin Franklin to Peter Collinson, May
9, 1753. The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, ed. L. W. LaBaree
(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), IV, p. 481.

the land of their birth to seek new homes in
distant regions. Does humanity weep at these
painful separations from everything, animate and
inanimate, with which the young heart has be-
come entwined? Far from it. It is rather a source
of joy....82

... separated forever from the roof umder which
the companions of his childhood were sheltered,
from the trees which have shaded him from summer's
heats, the spring from whose gushing fountain he
has drunk in his youth, the tombs that hold the
precious relics of his venerated ancestors!83

The anxiety occasioned by the Indian focused
on America's emotion-laden attitudes toward youth and
aging. (The ambiguity inherent in these attitudes and
the problems created for American self-definition in
the _real_ present world were elaborated in Chapter IV.)
Because of the Indian's identification with the land,
he exacerbated the conflict in American consciousness
which animated social activity: the desire for maternal
love (Nature) versus the demands of civilization (imple-
mented in America as a European superego); America's
Pleasure principle versus its Reality principle.

White anxiety over the Indian was defined
by the experience of maternal object loss. Indians
as present-oriented "loved" possessors reminded America
that it did not and could not possess the mother-land
in this life (and only possibly in the future).

82Andrew Jackson, Second Annual Message to
Congress, December 6, 1830, in _Removal_, p. 51.

83Henry Clay, cited by Somkin, p. 99.

Cultural distinctions reinforced psychological conflict.
White oral-libidinal attempts to secure the maternal
continent paralleled their perception of Indian gratifi-
cation with mother. The Indian was an external symbol
of the whites' own impulses, an external threat arousing
internal lusts. He was a memory symbol of primal
traumatic experience to white consciousness.[84] That is,
he evoked in the white man memories of historical maternal
separation and object loss, reminding him of his unloved
condition. As a primal memory symbol the Indian fostered
ambivalence and anxiety in the white psyche. The conflict
between the Indian-ideal (pity) and the Indian-reality
(censure) for America, the conjunction of primitive
innocence and violence in the white mind, and the resulting
picture of the Indian as a "child," all point to an inter-
pretation emphasizing the oral-maternal backdrop of
white-Indian antagonism.

The Indian, by virtue of possession, stood as
a psychological obstacle to white maternal consummation.
The Indians' relationship to the land was characterized
by impulses which whites were afraid to recognize in
themselves. It was therefore necessary that America master
(repress) it own impulses by projecting them onto the
Indian and then master (repress) him. Like land transfor-
mation, transforming the Indian into a reflection of the
white man was part of securing the white ego from libidinal

[84]Sigmund Freud, The Problem of Anxiety, trans.
Henry Alden Bunker, M.D. (New York: The Psychoanalytic Quar-
terly Press and W.W. Norton Co., 1963), pp. 20-1.

encroachments. External occasions of internal anxiety
were repressed in an effort to achieve a stablized nar-
cissistic world-experience.

> The Indian is the strangest compound of
> individualism and socialism run to seed. It is
> this being that we endeavor to make a member of
> a new social order. ... to do this we must
> recreate him, make a new personality.[85]

To make a new personality for the Indian was to make a
repressed personality, a non-threatening, de-eroticized
personality: a white, civilized personality. America's
Indian policy of transformation-"civilization" must be
viewed therefore as repressive political-social activity
in that it attempted to define the internal boundaries
of the national ego by projecting   unconscious im-
pulses onto significant external others and then re-
pressing these others. Socially repressing the Indian
was as much self-repression as other-repression; Ameri-
ca's civilization of the Indian was the epitome of a
purely self-referential historical experience.

> If, then, we wish to find the most basic level
> of understanding of repression in society, we
> have to see it as a collectively reinforced and
> institutionally formalized panic about going
> mad, about the invasion of the outer by the inner
> and of the inner by the outer, about the loss of
> the illusion of "self."[86]

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[85]The Federal Superintendent of Indian Schools
(1885), cited by Gordon MacGregor, Warriors Without Weapons:
A Study of the Society and Personality Development of
the Pine Ridge Sioux (Chicago: The University of Chicago
Press, 1946), p. 36. /My italics./

[86]David Cooper, The Death of the Family (New
York: Vintage Books, 1970), p. 33.

The Politics of Castration

on the Frontier.

The danger of this stage /infantile geni-
tality and ambulation/ is a sense of guilt over
the goals contemplated and the acts initiated in
one's exhuberant enjoyment of new locomotor and
mental power... . While autonomy concentrates
on keeping potential rivals out, and therefore
can lead to jealous rage most often directed against
encroachments by younger siblings, initiative brings
with it anticipatory rivalry with those who had
been there first and may, therefore, occupy with
their superior equipment the field toward which
one's initiative is directed. Infantile jealousy
and rivalry... now come to a climax in a final
contest for a favored position with the mother;
the usual failure leads to resignation, guilt
and anxiety. The child indulges in fantasies
of being a giant and a tiger, but in his dreams
he runs in terror for dear life. This then is
the stage of the "castration complex," the in-
tensified fear of finding the (now energetically
eroticized) genitals harmed as a punishment for
the fantasies attached to their excitement.
Infantile sexuality and incest taboo, cas-
tration complex and superego all unite here to
bring about that specifically human crisis during
which the child must turn... to the slow process
of becoming a parent, a carrier of tradition.
Here the most fateful split and trasnsformation
in the emotional powerhouse occurs, a split be-
tween potential human glory and potential human
destruction.[87]

America's psycho-history focuses on securing

possession of the maternal continent wrested away by

rebellion from the tyrannical father, England. After

rebsllion America tried to assert its masculinity by

material-maternal consummation, but found the Indian in

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[87]Erikson, __Childhood__, pp. 255-6.

possession of the continent west of the eastern seaboard.
Indeed, the Indian possessed Mother even before Father
England and shared her with him during colonization.
How to account for this anterior possession and justify
two struggles of maternal conquest was the problem facing
the new nation. The Indians recognized no "father" other
than the "Great Spirit;" they lacked discipline and
authority. The psychological goal of American Indian
policy was _to become the Indians' Father_, imposing,
self-control and gaining other-control. The Indians would
have to become the "children" of the "Great Father" in
Washington instead of children of Nature. In so doing,
America hoped to gain primary possession of the mother-
land and secure its masculinity; it would "raise" the
Indian from childhood to maturity like any kindly father
would do. By becoming a Father to the Indians white
America hoped to become the father of itself.

When one speaks of American policies of Indian
removal, reservations, and "civilization" what one is
really describing is the destruction of Indian manhood
by the white man in an effort to affirm his own. Rogin
calls this _infantilization_ of the Indian,[88] and indeed
it was. For to become a father to the Indian America had
to reduce the Indian from the status of a free and self-

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[88]Rogin, p. 304.

sufficient man (clearly they were the fathers of them-
selves before the arrival of the white man) to that of
a helpless, dependent creature. In short, America's
paternalistic policies sought to render the Indian im-
potent toward his environment.

> Paternal benevolence permitted symbolic cas-
> tration and infantilization; the Indian no
> longer confronted the white world with inde-
> pendent power and subversive cultural alter-
> natives.[89]

To understand the psychological significance of American-
Indian relations on the frontier is to understand it as
the politics of cultural castration.

Castration anxiety is a function of maternal
object-loss. It reflects the male fear of losing his
penis, the guarantee of reunion with mother or a mother-
substitute, as punishment for forbidden lust toward mother.
Thus, castration anxiety expresses the fear of under-
going a second maternal separation and becoming helpless
once again. Fear of castration is inextricably bound to
the need for maternal gratification.[90]

American insecurity over its masculinity is
evident in the earliest treaties the new nation negotiated
with the Indians. "The U.S. assumed an attitude towards
the Indian which ill-reflected actual American power."[91]

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[89]Ibid.

[90]Freud, Anxiety, p. 78.

[91]Horsman, p. 22.

In spite of the superior military power of the Indians
in the Old Northwest (They were the recent allies of
the British during the Revolutionary War.), America found
it necessary to emphasize over and over again that it
was <u>they</u> who were <u>giving</u> peace to the Indians and not
the other way about (the desire for secured, superior
control), that it was their land by right of conquest
(a claim to mother based on Oedipal rebellion), and that
the Indians ought to be grateful for the kindness of the
United States in not taking the whole thing (If America
was to be a father, it wanted to be recognized as a kindly,
benevolent father: fear of falling prey to usurpation
itself -- Oedipal guilt.). In short, America indulged
fantasies of being a giant or a tiger. At a meeting with
the Six Nations at Fort Stanwix in October, 1784, American
commissioners asserted claims to land and gratitude:

> The King of Great Britain ceded to the United
> States <u>the whole</u>, by right of conquest they
> might <u>claim the whole</u>. Yet they have taken but
> a small part, compared with their numbers and
> their wants.[92]

At Fort Pitt in January, 1785 the claims of Wyandot and
Delaware Indians were contradicted by the American com-
missioners:

> You next express your gladness that the Six
> Nations your uncles have <u>given us</u> a part of
> <u>their</u> country. But it is <u>quite the</u> contrary.

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[92]Cited by Horsman, p. 19.

> We have given the hostile part of the Six Nations
> some of the country which we have conquered from
> them.... we claim the country by conquest; and are
> to give not receive.[93]

And in a letter written by the Indian Commissioner,

Richard Butler, to the Shawnee, in January, 1786,

recognition of America's conquest was demanded in the

form of Indian humility and gratitude.

> We plainly tell you that this country belongs to
> the United States -- their blood hath defended it,
> and will forever protect it. Their proposals are
> liberal and just; and you instead of acting as
> you should nave done, and instead of persisting
> in your folly, should be thankful for the forgive-
> ness and offers of kindness of the United States.[94]

Repeated protests of power and demands for gratitude

suggest that America did not in fact possess that power

or deserve that gratitude. Beneath fantasies of

power and virility, America was running "in terror for

dear life."

American usurpation would be achieved by

a process of cultural reduction in which the Indian

would be changed from an independent power to a de-

pendent, inferior "brother" in need of white guidance

and education.

By perceiving the Indian as a "child of

Nature" and a "younger brother" ambiguity confused his

psychological role in addition to his image. Was the

Indian truly a "younger sibling," as his primitive

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[93] Ibid., p. 20.

[94] Ibid., p. 22.

condition indicated to the whites? Or was he an "older

sibling" by virtue of his previous occupation and

possession of the maternal land? This confusion of roles

intensified the threat experienced by America from its

"Indian brethren." The Indian served as the psycho-

logical focal point for the feelings of jealous rage

experienced by both an older sibling trying to prevent

encroachments of a younger rival, and by a younger

sibling attempting to secure the love and attention

possessed by those who were there first. Ambiguity

occasioned guilt and anxiety, for the "threat" was

amorphous and the maternal goal unreachable. All

that America could do was to try to eliminate that

threat by denying Mother to his sibling rival, be he

younger or older. But in so doing America denied Mother

to itself.

The Indian perceived by America was a

projection of its own psyche. America saw "good"

and "bad" Indians; the former reflected the American

dream of blissful union with Mother Nature, the latter

reflected the guilt fostered by America's civilized

(repressive) superego over that libidinal dream. The

conflict between whites and Indians, between civilization

and savagery on the frontier, was the struggle of the

American <u>conscious</u> to repress its unconscious dream-

life and remain "civilized." The "bad" and the "good"
Indian could not be separated for civilized social act-
ivity, however. Both had to be deprived of Mother and
the power to possess her (castrated) because of the
white man's secreted maternal longings and the guilt
they occasioned. America feared punishment for libidinal
land lust -- castration anxiety -- and punished
(castrated) the Indian symbol of realized maternal love
instead. Thus the Indian was a scapegoat that relieved
American castration anxiety and Oedipal guilt; he was
also a scapegoat upon whom America projected the
vengeful and murderous fantasies of frustrated mascu-
linity.

In Custer Died For Your Sins Vine Deloria
recounts an incident which clearly illustrates the
psycho-social significance of the Indian in white
American consciousness.

> During my three years as Executive Director
> of the National Congress of American Indians it was
> a rare day when some white didn't visit my office
> and proudly proclaim that he or she was of Indian
> descent.
> ...
> Whites claiming Indian blood generally tend
> to reinforce mythical beliefs about Indians. All
> but one person I met claimed it on their grand-
> mother's side. ... No one, it seemed, wanted to
> claim a male Indian as a forebear.
> It doesn't take much insight into racial
> attitudes to understand the real meaning of the
> Indian-grandmother complex that plagues certain
> whites. A male ancestor has too much of the
> aura of the savage warrior, the unknown primitive,
> the instinctual animal, to make him a respectable

member of the family tree. But a young Indian
princess? Ah, there was royalty for the taking.
Somehow the white was linked with a noble house
of gentility and culture if his grandmother
was an Indian princess who ran away with an
intrepid pioneer. And royalty always has been an
unconscious but all-consuming goal of the
European immigrant.[95]

What is the significance of America's "Indian grand-

mother complex" if it is not the white man's castration

anxiety and fear of male Indian potency? What is the

white man's ancestral Indian princess if the image of

a "civilized" Indian through whom he could mate with

the maternal continent and not become savage himself?

What is the immigrant's unconscious desire for royalty

if not the desire to become the father of himself?

The fascination with which Indian massacres

and scalpings have held the white imagination is more

clearly understood in light of this psycho-social

interpretation. Indians have been pictured in the

white imagination destroying wagon-trains, settlements,

etc., and murdering, torturing or carrying away white

women and children before the eyes of helpless white

men. In short, Indians attack the symbols of secured

masculinity: home, wife and children. Although Indians

are not pictured raping or sexually molesting white

women, as in America's fantasies of blacks, the threat

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[95]Deloria, pp. 10-12.

they pose is one which strikes at the foundation of
white masculinity nevertheless; first by deinying to
the white man objects of masculine assertion and then
by making them their own (White women become humble
squaws to the Red Man after they have been quarrelsome
wives to the white man. White children raised by
Indians refuse to return to civilized society.) But
behind every "Indian massacre" vividly described lay
the desire by whites to massacre the Indian -- to do
to him what they experienced him doing to themselves.
Whites played-up the Indian massacres in Minnesota and
at the Little Big Horn as unjustified barbarism, but
concealed the white massacres at Sand Creek and
Wounded Knee as "military operations." A brief look
at the white massacre of Black Kettle's Cheyenne at
Sand Creek, Colorado, in 1864 cannot fail to suggest
the castration anxiety and frustrated masculinity
that lay beneath the surface history of white-Indian
relations in Amerida.

The massacre of 105 Indian women and children
and twenty-eight men at Sand Creek by more than seven
hundred U.S. trooper under the command of Col. John
M. Chivington, a Methodist minister, occurred at
daybreak on December 29, 1864. Black Kettle's band
had recently been promised protection against troops
and hostile Indians if they camped peacefully at
Sand Creek. Chivington's troops attacked the sleeping

camp by surprise and proceeded to commit "acts of barbarity of the most revolting character; such, it is to be hoped, as never before disgraced the acts of men claiming to be civilized."[96]

> /Col. Chivington/ having full knowledge of their friendly character, having himself been instru-mental to some extent in placing them in their position of fancied security, ... took advantage of their inapprehension and defenceless condition to gratify the worst passions that ever cursed the heart of man.[97]

The first-hand accounts of the massacre (both white and Indian) clearly show that the atrocities and mutilations committed by the American soldiers were expressions of sexual rage, unfulfilled maternal love and frustrated masculinity. Women's "private parts" were cut out and exhibited on sticks, saddle-bows and on the soldiers' own heads while marching in the ranks. Everyone -- men, women and children -- was scalped. Pregnant squaws had their wombs slit open. Braves had their testicles cut off. Indians' fingers were cut off to get at their rings.[98]

This massacre has been ignored by Congress in its failure to provide compensation to surviving relatives of the victims. It has been dismissed by

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[96]From the Report of the House of Representatives Committee to investigate the incident, cited by Vine Deloria, Jr. (ed.), _Of Utmost Good Faith_ (New York: Bantam Books, 1972), p. 246.

[97]_Ibid._, p. 247.

[98]Testimony of First Lieutenant James D. Cannon, _ibid._, p. 249 and Brown, p. 89; and confirmed by testimony of Robert Bent, recounted by Brown, p. 88.

some white historians as an aberration, as an action peculiar to Chivington and his troops. But the large number of troops involved, the peaceful disposition of the Indians, and the willingness of Chivington to publically advocate the killing and scalping of all Indians, even infants, in a speech in Denver not long before the massacre[99] suggest the contrary: that the Sand Creek massacre, and other white massacres, expressed the unconscious desires and fears of many, if not most, Americans who confronted the Indian on the frontier. Killing may be accidental, but massacre, mutilation and exhibitionism have deep psychological roots. The psycho-social implications that Sand Creek holds for white America seem obvious.

The whites' fascination with scalping and other techniques of "Indian barbarism" also reveals castration anxiety as an important psychological force behind American-Indian relations. It is not clear whether Indians practiced scalping before the arrival of the white man in the Western Hemisphere -- whether or not it was a native practice. What is clear, however, is that the white man engaged in this practice himself from

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[99]Brown, pp. 88-9.

the time of the earliest settlements, and it was he
who emphasized it as a symbol of victory by placing
a monetary premium on enemy scalps. Though it is
generally known that both British and Americans en-
couraged and **paid** Indian allies to scalp enemies in
the French and Indian Wars and the American Revolution,[100]
there is evidence that whites encouraged the scalping
of Indians by fellow-whites even before these wars.
The following is an exerpt from a proclamation issued
by the Boston City Council on November 3, 1755 which
emphasizes scalping as the white man's tool for Indian
genocide:

> ...I do hereby require his Majesty's subjects
> of the Province to embrace all opportunities of
> pursuing, captivating, killing and destroy --
> all and every of the aforesaid Indians.
>
> ...
> For every scalp of a male Indian brought
> in as evidence of their being killed as aforesaid,
> forty pounds.
> For every scalp of such female Indian or
> male Indian under the age of twelve years...,
> twenty pounds.[101]

In contrast to the white man, many Indians
did not regard a scalp as the most important symbol of
success in warfare. "Counting coup" on a fallen enemy
(touching or striking him with a stick or weapon first)
was the supreme symbolic act of victory for an Indian

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[100]For example, see George Catlin, _Illus-
trations of the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the
North American Indians: in a series of Letters and Notes_
(8th ed.; London: Henry G. Bohn, 1851), I, pp. 239-240.

[101]Cited by Deloria, _Custer_, p. 14.

warrior of the plains, for example. It seems that, regardless of origins, scalping had a peculiar attraction for the white man in America. And in spite of the fact that victims were known to have survived scalping, slicing off an enemy crown remained the symbol for victory and death in white American consciousness.

Scalping, an activity without overt cultural or religious sanction in Western society, must have possessed psychological significance for its white practicioner and supporter. Psychoanalysis would suggest a symbolic proximity between scalping, circumcision and castration. But whether or not it is meaningful to categorize the human body as a large phallus, the relationship between scalping and Indian genocide in American consciousness cannot be ignored, nor its psycho-social significance minimized. Rogin has argued that scalping and other so-called "Indian atrocities" allowed the white man to indulge his fantasies and socially manifest primal rage. "Punishing the criminal permitted them to participate in the forbidden criminal activity."[102] The reflexive nature of this violence is what is important. By punishing the Indian the white man tried to assuage anxiety stemming from his own fear of punishment. Symbolic

[102]Rogin, p. 287.

castration of others reflected fear of one's own cas-
tration. And scalping as the white man's tool for cas-
trating the Indian likewise reflected white fears of
being scalped themselves. America's Indian policy was
one of cultural castration, and scalping must be seen
as symbolic castration on the level of individual combat.

***

In taking the Indians' land, destroying their
cultures, diminishing their power and annihilating their
autonomy, the white man sought to secure his own iden-
tity, power and masculinity. The focus of white-Indian
conflict was the land of North America, symbolically
appreciated by both as the Mother from whom they derived
the nourishment of national identity. Indians were iden-
tified with the wild land; they both had to be transformed
for Americans to feel secure with themselves. America's
infantile frustration and rage with the land was pro-
jected onto the Indian with disastrous results.

Within the overall Oedipal context of American
Western expansion the Indian posed a threat as rival
to American consummation with (consumption of) the
maternal land. The conflict between whites and Indians
was thus imbued with all the fear, jealousy and destruc-
tive rage of sibling rivalry. The ambiguity in America's
attempts to explain the Indian and itself only exacerbated
these feelings.

Finally, America attempted to eliminate the
threat posed by its sibling rival by culturally castrating
him. Depriving the Indian of his identity and masculinity
was essential for America to assert its masculinity
over the continent. However, the Indian despoiled was
a projection of the white psyche. His destruction could
not resolve the antagonism chewing at the heart of
American identity: the conflict between Nature and
Civilization on the frontier; irreconcilable Eros and
Thanatos. With the Indian rendered impotent, America
thought it was alone with the continent. But America
had destroyed only itself. Nothing was resolved or
gained. As long as America feared the wilderness and
tried to change it, it could not fully love the land
or be loved by her. The spirit of the Indian lives!
For he was the only one to love and reverence the
mother-land, and thus was the only true Man of
America.

Chapter VII.

The Repression of the Sioux Ghost Dance:

Potency and Preservation of "Civilized"

Ego.

> ... the power of a thing or an act is in the
> understanding of its meaning.
>
>   -- Black Elk (Hehaka Sapa),
>   Holy Man (wichasha wakon) of
>   the Sioux.[1]

      The wise men tell us that the world is
growing happier -- that we live longer than our
fathers, have more of comfort and less of toil,
fewer wars and discords, and higher hopes and
aspirations. So say the wise men; but deep in
our own hearts we know they are wrong. For were
not we, too, born in Arcadia, and have we not
-- each one of us -- in that May of life when the
world was young, started out lightly and airily
along the path that led through green meadows to
the blue mountains on the distant horizon, be-
yond which lay the great world we were to conquer?
... And when at last we reached the toilsome sum-
mits, we found the glory that had lured us onward
was only the sunset glow that fades into darkness
while we look, and leaves us at the very goal to
sink down, tired in body and sick at heart, with
strength and courage gone, to close our eyes and
dream again, not of the fame and fortune that were
to be ours, but only of the old-time happiness
that we left so far behind.
      And with men, so it is with nations. The
lost paradise is the world's dreamland of youth.[2]

      On the morning of December 29, 1890 (twenty-

six years to the day after the Sand Creek massacre of

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    [1]The Sacred Pipe; Black Elk's Account of the
Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux, p. 123.

    [2]James Mooney, The Ghost-Dance Religion and
the Sioux Outbreak of 1890, abridged with an introduction
by Anthony F.C. Wallace (Orig. publ. as Part 2, Fourteenth
Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary
of the Smithsonian Institution, 1892-3; Chicago: University

Black Kettle's Cheyenne) more than five hundred soldiers

of the Seventh U.S. Cavalry and the First U.S. Artillery

under the command of Colonel James W. Forsyth "en-

gaged" a band of three hundred and seventy Miniconjou

and Hunkpapa Sioux (120 men and 250 women and children)

under Chief Big Foot on Wounded Knee Creek, twenty miles

northeast of the Pine Ridge Indian Agency. There were

about one hundred warriors in the band. By noon nearly

three hundred of Big Foot's people had been annihilated.

The Government lost twenty-five men.[3] This incident

has been described by white historians as the "Battle"

of Wounded Knee, " a regrettable, tragic accident of

war that neither side intended, and ... for which neither

side as a whole may be properly condemned."[4] Indians

called it a "massacre," and saw it as the revenge of

the Seventh Cavalry for their defeat under General

Custer in 1875.[5] (Photographs of the victims of

Wounded Knee still hung on the walls of Pine Ridge's

only drug-store and soda-fountain as late as 1937.[6])

An interpretation mid-way between these two suggests

that "the first shot was fired by an Indian, and that

the Indians were responsible for the engagement; that

the answering volley and attack by the troops was right

and justifiable, but that the wholesale slaughter of

women and children was unnecessary and inexcusable."[7]

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of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 1. /Hereafter cited as "Mooney"./

[3]Figures cited in Mooney, pp. 119-20 and in
Robert M. Utley, The Last Days of the Sioux Nation (New
Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 227-8.

Despite these differences, all analyses of
the "Ghost Dance <u>War</u>" have focused on the actors and
events immediately involved to ascertain causation and
responsibility. (For example, the analyses of Mooney
and Utley.) Analyses of the "Ghost Dance <u>Craze</u>"
among the Sioux, however, have considered Sioux-American
history in the round and have placed the Ghost Dance
in a comparative religious-anthropological perspective,
emphasizing millenarian characteristics which link it
to "crisis cults" in other societies and times. (For
example, the analyses of Mooney, LaBarre, Aberle and
Lesser.) These two distinct types of inquiry have
separated the historical facts of the Ghost Dance <u>War</u>
from the anthropological and religious facts of the
Ghost Dance <u>movement</u>. And by so doing, the microscopic
analysis of history has been separated from amcroscopic
analysis of society. Ideally, the two should be
joined for a complete understanding of the motivations
behind -- the meaning of -- social action. For as
Black Elk observed, it is the <u>meaning</u> of the act
which gives it <u>power</u>. History without culture and
culture without history must miss the meaning of man
as an actor wielding social power.

I say <u>ideally</u> the two must be joined

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[4]Utley, p. 230.

[5]James H. McGregor, <u>The Wounded Knee Massacre
from the Viewpoint of the Sioux</u> (Baltimore: Wirth Brothers,
1940), p. 82; Elaine Goodale, letter to the Commissioner of
Indian Affairs, Hanuary 12, 1891, in <u>U.S. National Archives</u>
Special Case 188, R.G. 75, document 1874-91. /All material/
from this case in the National Archives hereafter cited by
document number only./

because clearly there are practical problems affecting

such a union. For example, the lack of a written history

-- indeed, the lack of even "historical consciousness"

as Western Civilization understands it -- among many

Indian tribes makes retrospecitve historical analysis

very difficult. And, likewise, the complexity and

heterogeneity of American society poses problems for

broad social analysis. Further, there are problems

occasioned by the location of the observer vis-a-vis

the subject society: observations are made as a

"participant" or as an "outsider" and either has

drawbacks. In spite of practical problems, efforts

have been made to establish a written body of Indian

history -- for example, George Hyde's history of the

Sioux nation: Red Cloud's Folk, Spotted Tail's Folk

and A Sioux Chronicle; and Dee Brown's Bury My Heart

at Wounded Knee. And the broad analysis of American

society has been tackled by sociologists and anthro-

pologists like Margaret Mead, David Reisman, Jules

Henry and Phillip Slater. But none have discovered

an event , activity or attitude that required micro-

scopic and macroscopic analysis for fully elucidating

social meaning. The repression of the Ghost Dance among

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[6] Erik H. Erikson, Childhood and Society, p. 116.

[7] Mooney, p. 119.

the Sioux is a case which requires analysis on both
levels, I believe.

Analyses of the Ghost Dance have totally
ignored the broader meanings and motivations attending
the white man's actions. Brief mention is made of
specific psychological and emotional factors like
the Seventh Cavalry's revenge motive or the fearfulness
of inexperienced Indian agents. On the whole, however,
it is accepted without critical analysis that the
white man perceived the Ghost Dance as a "threat" and
naturally responded with military power for "protection."
There has been no evaluation of the subjective per-
ception of this threat or of the significance of
military intervention in its elimination. The history
of Sioux-American relations in the nineteenth century
has been used to explain the Indian but not the white
man. It would seem as if Indians were the sole actors
on the frontier while whites simply reacted to
Indian opposition. Indians were not acting, however,
but reacting to the white man's "inevitable" civilization.
There could not be a clear white reaction to the Indian,
therefore; rather, the whites were the primary actors
from the beginning. It is to the whites' perceptions
and motivations, general and immediate, that one must
turn, to gauge the deeper meaning of the historical
actions known as the "Ghost Dance Troubles."

In this chapter I shall explore some of
the ways in which America's general experience of the
Indian permeated its experience of the Sioux during
the Ghost Dance of 1890. It is both a general psycho-
social analysis of America and the Indian and a psycho-
historical analysis of actors in a specific episode.
This Ghost Dance analysis is a case-study of American
masculinity on the frontier; the Ghost Dance is
treated as a psychodramatic event reflecting certain
critical themes in American psycho-history. With the
Ghost Dance, psycho-social theory will be grounded in
the "hard data" of history.

This chapter begins with two brief historical
descriptions to acquaint the reader with the history of
the Sioux in America and with the Ghost Dance on the
Sioux reservations in 1890. These are followed by an
analysis of the Ghost Dance which focuses on its links
to the great Sioux Sun Dance and elaborates its
psychoanalytic significance as a threat to the white
man.

Before proceeding,however, a caution and
a reminder to the reader: I make no claim to historical
or social "objectivity" in my treatment of America
and the Ghost Dance. The usefulness of psychoanalytic
theory was suggested by the content of America's social
experience. Its "appropriateness" is confirmed by a

subjective appreciation of this relationship by reader

and author. This inquiry asserts that America's psycho-

logical experience of self and environment has perpetuated

disequilibrium in the collective American psyche. From

this, American social activity toward the Indian and

the land (and possibly others overseas) has derived a

specific aggressive and destructive character. It would

be an act of intellectual and moral cowardice to avoid

passing judgement on this experience or to fail assigning

responsibility for its results. I intend to make these

judgements explicit in the Afterward. For now, however,

the moral coda of this study remains:

> No behavior exists apart from definable human
> beings; and it depends only on the way we look
> at it whether we see "personality" or "culture."
>   ... Culture is not omnipotent God! Society
> is not a transcendent Absolute! There is nobody
> here but us people.[8]

A Brief History of the Sioux[a] and America.[b]

Originally the Sioux lived in the lake region

at the headwaters of the Mississippi River, occupying an

area extending as far east as Lake Superior. Early in

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[a]Also known as "Dakota" or "Lakota" meaning
allies. They were dubbed the "Sioux," meaning "enemy,"
by their enemies.

[b]Unless otherwise noted, sources for the his-
torical material in this section are: Mooney, pp. 69-72;
Utley, pp. 6-7 and Chapter IV; Gordon Mac Gregor, Warriors
Without Weapons, pp. 29-30; and Dee Brown, Bury My Heart
at Wounded Knee, Chapters 5-8 and 11-12.

the eighteenth century French traders gave firearms
to the Ojibwa Indians, bitter enemies of the Sioux, who
then drove them West into the prairies. Some Sioux settled
in the Minnesota River valley while others pushed farther
West, reaching the Missouri River by 1760 and the Black
Hills of Dakota by 1780. These westernmost Sioux were
the Teton division of the Sioux nation. The Teton con-
sisted of seven confederated tribes: Oglala, Brulé, Hunk-
papa, Miniconjou, Sans Arc, Two Kettle and Blackfoot (not
to be confused with the Blackfeet Indians of Montana).
On the plains the Teton found herds of buffalo and ac-
quired horses and firearms. Their large numbers and these
resources permitted the Teton to secure extensive hunting
grounds. By the nineteenth century Sioux power extended
from Minnesota to the Rocky Mountains and from the Yellow-
stone to the Platte Rivers. Up until 1868 millions of
buffalo and hundreds of miles of free range made these
Sioux the richest, most powerful, proudest and "wildest"
of the plains tribes.

As was the case with most plains tribes, Sioux
society was male-centered. The primary social activities
of hunting and warfare reflected and reinforced masculine
masculine social evaluation. They "knew only the male
principle, virile power."[9] The competitiveness and self-

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[8]Weston LaBarre, The Ghost Dance, p. 47.

[9]Ibid., p. 130.

reliance of the hunt was tempered by social demands for generosity with the products of the hunt. Thus, while no Sioux male owed subservience to another, he willingly provided for the needs of others.[10] Responsibility for one's actions was inculcated early in the life of the Sioux child by complete parental (especially maternal) indulgence and absence of coercion; but in turn, parents and relatives expected social cooperation. Loyalty, generosity and respect for parents and relatives was the cement of Sioux social life; these relationships (in contrast to the material acquisition of American culture) formed the basis of social morality.

> ... the cultural demand for generosity received its early foundation from the privilege of enjoying the nouishment and reassurance emanating from unlimited breast feeding.
>
> ...
>
> Generosity... was not inculcated by calling stinginess bad and "money" dirty but by calling the give-away good. Property as such... had no inherent goodness.[11]

Within a male oriented network of familial relationships the most important bond was that between father and son. It was the father who trained a son for his economic and social role as hunter, warrior and chief. Thus, when one speaks of the "disruption" of the traditional life of the Sioux by whites to effect "civilization," one is

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[10]Ibid., p. 127.

[11]Erikson, Childhood, pp. 137, 141.

describing not only the disintegration of a human-oriented society which had integrated individuals' psychological needs with the needs of society, but, specifically, the destruction of masculine roles from which the society as a whole derived a sense of potency and identity. The Sioux understood the goal of America's Indian policy as the "castration" of their nation. We may understand it that way as well.[12]

America's need for a secure overland route to Oregon and California occasioned its first treaty with the Teton in 1851. By this treaty the whites were allowed passage through the Platte River valley while the Teton and other plains tribes were free to roam as far south as the Arkansas River. But for the first time separate tribes were assigned separate territories demarcated by the Federal Government. The "homeland" of the Teton was to be bounded by the Heart, Missouri White and North Platte Ribers and the Black Hills.

By 1865 white greed for gold created the need for a route between Fort Laramie (Wyoming) and the gold fields of Montana: the Bozeman Trail. The trail ran through the Powder River country, the Sioux's sacred hunting ground, and Teton under the Oglala Chief Red Cloud successfully blocked the trail during 1864. In June of 1865 the Government sent troops to establish a chain of forts to protect the Bozeman

Trail. From then until the summer of 1868 Red Cloud waged war against the soldiers to preserve the Powder River country and succeeded in bringing civilian movement along the trail to a halt. After heavy casualties and defeats at the hands of the Sioux (the Fetterman massacre and the Hayfield and Wagon Box fights near Fort C.F. Smith, for example), the U.S. sought to end the war by any means short of surrender. In the spring of 1868 the forts on the Powder River were abandoned in compliance with Red Cloud's precondition for treaty negotiations and the Bozeman Trail was closed. Red Cloud and the Sioux achieved what no European power had been able to do: the decisive military defeat of the United States in the Western Hemisphere. This was the first war lost by America; but the treaty subsequently negotiatied paved the way for future destruction of the victorious Sioux.

On its face the Sioux Treaty of 1868 seemed to be a document of white capitulation, but it laid the groundwork for American transformation-civilization of the Sioux. While the Government gave up the forts on the Bozeman Trail and guarenteed that the Powder River country and other Sioux lands would be "set apart for their absolute and undisturbed use and occupation," the Sioux renounced claims to a greater part of their
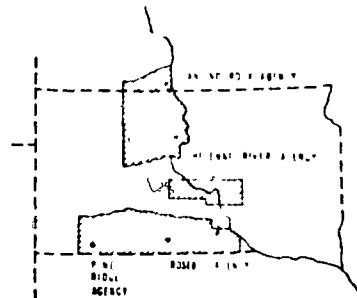
MAP 1

REDUCTION OF THE GREAT SIOUX RESERVATION
1868 to 1890
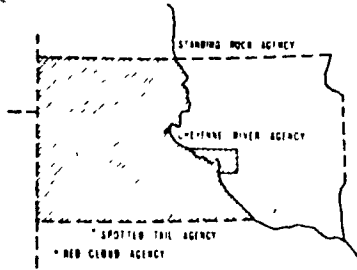
TREATY OF 1868
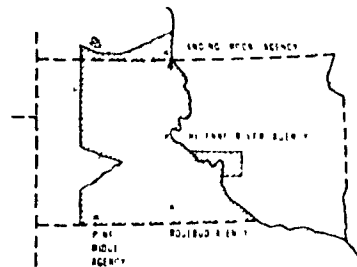
AGREEMENT OF 1876

ACT OF 1889

territory. They were to be located on the "Great
Sioux Reservation" which comprised all of the present
state of South Dakota west of the Missouri River, but
did not include the Powder River country. (See Map 1.)
Indians were given freedom to hunt on the Powder River
as long as game abounded -- which to the Sioux must
have meant forever. Later, Red Cloud claimed that
these portions of the Treaty had been misinterpreted
to the Indians during the negotiations, that he had
never agreed to settle on the Missouri River, and would
remain on the forks of the Platte River in the Powder
River country. At meetings in Washington in 1870
the Government backed down and agreed that the Oglala
could live as well as hunt in the Powder River country.[13]
The remainder of the treaty, in apparent contradiction
to "undisturbed use," provided for the appointment of
Indian agents and the establishment of government agencies
on the Reservation. Annuities, rations, cows, physicians,
farmers and teachers were promised. In return the Indians
agreed to allow surveying and construction of railroads
and military posts in their territory. The Sioux,
fresh from military victory, interpreted these promised
"benefits" as deserved <u>tribute</u> to keep them at peace

[13]Brown, pp. 176-182.

and failed to gauge the threat posed to their way
of life in the future. By accepting a reservation and
government "assistance" the Sioux were not accepting
captivity, settlement, or civilization by any means.

> The Dakota came onto the reservation not as a
> vanquished people but rather as eagles driven
> by a winter storm to accept captivity and food
> until they could fly away again.[14]

But in the long run the portions of the treaty per-
taining to reservation life meant that "at one stroke
they were reduced from a free nation to dependent
wards of the government."[15]

The building of railroads brought large
numbers of hunters and emigrants to Dakota. They
began to rapidly exterminate the buffalo; the Sioux
realized that hunting access to the Powder River
country was fast becoming a hollow promise. Gold was
reported in the Black Hills as a result of a controversial
expedition (incursion) under the command of General
George A. Custer in 1874, and thousands of miners and
desperadoes invaded the Black Hills in spite of Indian
protests and Government promises. In 1875, the
Government ordered the Sioux to vacate the Powder

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[14]Julia B. McGillycuddy, _McGillycuddy --
Agent_ (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1941), p. 153.
Cited in MacGregor, _Warriors_, p. 22.

[15]Mooney, p. 70.

River country and withdraw to the boundaries of the
Reservation. The result was the Custer war and
massacre and the imposition of a new agreement in
1876 by which the Government, through intimidation
coupled with promises of increased annuities, "pur-
chased" the Black Hills from those Sioux Chiefs not
fighting in the Powder River country. The Sioux,
shorn of one-third of their reservation (see map 1.),
were left divided, dissatisfied and hostile. The
repercussions of the treaties of 1868 and 1876 were
noted by Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas J.
Morgan in 1891:

> Within eight years from the agreement of 1876, the
> buffalo had gone and the Sioux had left to them
> alkali land and Government rations.
> It is hard to overestimate the magnitude
> of the calamity as they viewed it, which happened
> to these people by the sudden disappearance of the
> buffalo and the large diminution in the numbers
> of deer and other wild animals. Suddenly, almost
> without warning, they were expected at once and
> without previous training to settle down to the
> pursuits of agriculture in a land largely unfitted
> for such use. The freedom of the chase was to be
> exchanged for the idelness of the camp. The
> boundless range was to be abandoned for the
> circumscribed reservation, and abundance of plenty
> to be supplanted by limited and decreasing Govern-
> ment subsistences and supplies. Under these
> circumstances, it is not in human nature not
> to be discontented and restless, even turbulent
> and violent.[16]

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[16]Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian
Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1891
(Washington: Government Printing Office, 1891), I, p. 132.
/Hereafter cited as Report, Commissioner and the year
of the report./

Efforts to impliment civilization for the
Sioux were begun between 1876 and 1883. In 1879 the
Sun Dance -- the most important and sacred of all their
rituals -- officially and publically condemned; the
Oglala held their last Sun Dance in 1881 and the Brule
held their last in 1883. In 1882 the last great buffalo
hunt was permitted and by 1883 the Teton ahd killed their
last buffalo.[17] Missionary schools and churches were estab-
lished on the Reservation and Indian children were sent
east to be "educated" into civilized life at boarding
schools. Efforts were made to introduce farming, stock
raising and manual crafts. Physicians were brought to pro-
vide medical care; they also served to undermine the power
of traditional medicine men. On some reservations "law and
order" was introduced by police forces composed of "pro-
gressive" Indians responsible to the Government's agent.

The Black Hills rapidly filled with
settlers by 1880. These settlers were cut off from
eastern Dakota by the Sioux Reservation. The Reservation
denied more than 43,000 square miles to settlement and
economic exploitation. A bill committing the Govern-
ment to ask the Sioux if they wished to cede more than
half of their remaining lands in return for clear title
to five separate reservations slipped through Congress

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[17]George E. Hyde, A Sioux Chronicle (Norman:
University of Oklahoma Press, 1956), p. 75; MacGregor,
Warriors, p. 32.

as a rider to a civil appropriations bill in August,
1882. The commission dispatched on this mission of
inquiry returned to Washington with an agreement
signed by only 384 chiefs, not the three-quarters of
all adult males required by the treaty of 1868. The
amount offered was so small (8¢/acre) and the methods
used to get signatures so unjust that Indian rights
associations in the East succeeded in getting the
agreement defeated in Congress. Another commission
was dispatched in 1888 and also failed to obtain
Sioux agreement to further land cessions. Finally,
in 1889 General George Crook, an old Indian-fighter,
led a new commission to treat with the Sioux. In the
face of persistent opposition Crook threatened that if
the Sioux failed to agree this time their lands would
be taken away from them with less compensation than he
was then offering. The commissioners "carried
persuasion to the verge of intimidation"[18] and barely
obtained the necessary signatures.[19] The Teton sur-
rendered one-half (11,000,000 acres) of their remaining
territory by the Sioux Act of 1889 and were located on
six separate reservations scattered throughout western
South Dakota. (See Map Y.)

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[18]Bishop W.H. Hare to Sec. of Interior John W,
Noble, January 7, 1891. Doc. 2440-91.

[19]Ex-agent(of Pine Ridge) McGillycuddy stated that
while the agreement barely carried with the Sioux nation as a
whole, a strong majority was against it on the Rosebud and Pine
Ridge reservations where most of the Ghost Dance "trouble" took

But perhaps the most catastrophic event
for the Sioux nation and its traditional way of life
was the passage of the General Allotment Act of 1887,
sponsored by Senator Henry L. Dawes, a self-proclaimed
"champion" of Indian rights in Congress. The goal of
the Dawes Act was two-fold; to break up the communal
(tribal) basis of Indian land-holding and institute
family land-holding and private property in its
place; and to open up more territory to white settlement
in the West. In 1887 Senator Dawes declared that the
reservation system had "already" been destroyed by
inevitable white land-greed, and that the Indian had
only one chance for survival: adapting himself to white
civilization.[20] The Superintendant of the Carlisle
Indian Schoo., R.H. Pratt, saw the Dawes Act as "the
first enactment of any law looking to the divorcement
of the Indian from the worse than slavery of his old
communistic systems...."[21] Another called it "The
Star in the East for the Indian tribes."[22]

Under the Dawes Act each family head would,
upon application, receive a patent for one hundred and
sixty acres of land. The Government would hold these

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place in 1890. Mooney, p. 76.

[20]Sister Mary Antonio Johnston, Federal Relations
with the Great Sioux Indians of South Dakota (Washington:
Catholic University of America Press, 1948), p. 9.

[21]Ibid., p. 11-12.

[22]Ibid.

patents in trust for twenty-five years after which it
was to be conveyed to the allottee or his heirs in fee
simple. After all the Indians of a tribe had accepted
allotments, or sooner if the President decided, the
United States might negotiate with the tribe for sale
of surplus (unalloted) lands which would then be thrown
open for white homesteading. Money from the sale of this
land would be held in the U.S. Treasury and interest
from it would be appropriated by Congress for the
civilization of the tribe. Indians who successfully
adapted to civilized life would be granted citizenship
in the state and the nation.[23]

The Great Sioux Rservation contained nearly
twice the land necessary for allotment. In retrospect,
it is clear that the treaty negotiations leading up to
the agreement of 1889 were primarily motivated by greed
for this land and only secondarily by a desire to "better"
the life of the Indian.[24] The admission of North and
South Dakota, Washington and Montana to statehood in
November, 1889 lent a sense of urgency to white lust for
Sioux land. And the Sioux agreement of 1889 altered the
Dawes Act by allowing the purchase of surplus lands be-
fore surveying or allotment had taken place. While it

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[23]Sources for the Dawes Act: Johnston, pp. 5-7;
Utley, pp. 42-4.

[24]Johnston, pp. 32-3.

was hoped that the Sioux agreement would allow the gradual

implementation of allotment and white homesteading; on

February 10, 1890 President Harrison announced acceptance

of the land agreement by the required number of Sioux

and threw open the ceded territory to white settlement.

No surveys were made to determine precise boundaries

for the new reservations; no provisions had yet been

made for the Sioux to take allotments. The difficulty

in farming Dakota's alkali soil forestalled the expected

land-rush, but the Sioux then feared that the amount

of money promised in the agreement from homestead

sales ($1.25/acre) might be reduced. Further, they.

feared that once the Government got the land rations

and annuities would be reduced. This fear was heightened

by the presence of an official Government census-taker.

Fears and suspicions seemed confirmed when,

two weeks after Crook's commission departed, the order

came to reduce the beef issue at Pine Ridge by one million

pounds and at Rosebud by two million pounds. The cut was

a result of a general economy drive by Congress contained

in the same act by which the commission had been appointed.

But the subtlties of congressional causality were lost on

the Sioux who felt they had been tricked once again by

the Government. This cut exacerbated the division among

the Sioux between "progressives" (cooperative -- the ones

who ceded the Black Hills in 1876) and "reactionaries"

(uncooperative, "irreconcilable," traditional), and even

made the Government's Indian "friends" suspicious allies

at best. It "caused intense feeling against the Sioux
Commission among those who had signed the bill. They
were made the targets for derision by the non-signers,
who called them fools and dupes... ."[25]

> In a general council I signed the bill...
> and 580 signed with me. The other members
> of my band drew out and it divided us, and
> ever since these two parties have been di-
> vided. ... The commission made us believe
> that we would get full sacks if we signed
> the bill, but instead of that our sacks are
> empty. ... we have never been benefited
> one bit by the bill; and, in fact, we are
> worse off than we were before we signed the
> bill.[26]

The announcement of the land agreement and
the cut in rations culminated what for the Sioux seemed
to be a series of fatal disasters. In 1888 their cattle
had been diminished by disease. In 1889 their crops were
a failure because stock had trampled the fields while
they were kept at the agencies to treat with the com-
missioners in the middle of the farming season. Epi-
demics of measles, influenza and whooping cough ravaged
the Indian camps. (At Pine Ridge the death rate rose to
forty-five per month out of a total population of 5,550.[27])
Then came another entire crop failure in 1890. Thus,
by the fall of that year the Sioux were brought face-to-
face with starvation and death from crop failure, disease

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[25]Hugh Gallagher, Agent, Report, Commissioner--
1890, p. 49.

[26]Statement of American Horse, a "progressive"
Sioux, cited by Mooney, pp. 84-5.

[27]Utley, p. 57.

and reduced rations. "The people said their children were all dying from the face of the earth, and they might as well be killed at once."[28] Then came news of the Indian Messiah in the West.

A Brief History of the Ghost Dance
on the Sioux Reservations in 1890.

The religious movement which sparked "trouble" on the Sioux reservations in 1890 has been called the "Ghost Dance," "Dance of the Dead," and the "Prophet Dance." Whatever called, this movement was one of many eschatological revitalization movements in which various Indian tribes of North America participated. Among Northwest tribes dances to hasten the return of the dead and the coming of a "new world" predated white contact and seem to have been an "integral part of the culture... from whence the cult spread in its better known revivalistic form first to California and then to the Plains."[29] Mooney noted parallels in the content of the Ghost Dance of 1890 and movements among the Cherokee and Creek in 1811, the Kanakuk and Kickapoo in 1830 and the Paiute in 1870.[30] However, the Ghost

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[28]Mooney, p. 57.

[29]Herskovits, cited by David F. Aberle, "The Prophet Dance and Reactions to White Contact," _Southwestern Journal of Anthropology_, XV (1959), p. 75.

[30]James Mooney, "The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890," _Part 2, Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the_

Dance doctrine received by the Sioux in 1890 was directly

inherited from the Paiute messiah Wovoka and my historical

description therefore begins with him.

Wovoka, "The Cutter" (a/k/a Jack Wilson),

lived near the Paiute Walker Lake Reservation in Mason

Valley, Nevada. His father, Tavibo, had been the prophet

of a ghost dance movement among the Paiute in 1870. One

day in 1889 or 1890 "the sun died," Wovoka "fell down

dead, and God came and took him to heaven." (Mooney

sets the date as January 1, 1889 based on the total

solar eclipse which occurred then.[31]) In heaven Wovoka

saw God and all the people who had died long ago living

as they once did on earth, hunting plentiful game, happy

and eternally young. God told him that upon returning

to the earth he should preach goodness, love and peace

with the white man to his people. Indians were not to

lie or steal and were to abandon war-like traditions.

If they did this, God promised a reunion with friends

and relatives in another world where there would no longer

be sickness, death and old-age. Wovoka was then given a

dance to bring back to his people. By performing this

dance Indians would secure God's promised happiness and

hasten the event. This was the "Ghost Dance."[32]

Smithsonian Institution, 1892-3 (Washington: Government
Printing Office, 1896), pp. 676-7. /Hereafter cited as
"Mooney, Report."7

[31]Mooney, p. 16.

[32]Material on Wovoka and the Ghost Dance in
Mooney, pp. 13-16.

The Indian millenium was expected to occur in the spring of each year following the promulgation of the Ghost Dance doctrine "for very natural reasons, that the regeneration of the earth and the renewal of all life would occur in the early spring."[33] Spring of 1891 was the critical season for the Sioux.

The manner in which the earth would be regenerated and the Indians reunited was variously interpreted as the doctrine spread. Among tribes east of the Rocky Mountains it was generally belived that God would cause natural catastrophe -- earthquake, hurricane and lightning, landslide, or walls of fire followed by flood -- to destroy the old (including whites) and establish the Indians' "new earth."

Essentially, the Ghost Dance doctrine of Wovoka was a gospel of peace and love for the Indian race in its present existence. In the future, however, Indians would be united on a regenerated earth while whites would be left behind on the "old" earth or would be otherwise destroyed. An overruling spiritual power would bring this about without human assistance once the Indians had made themselves worthy of such happiness. The Ghost Dance was a ritual expressing belief, worthiness and expectation --

[33]Mooney, p. 19. Mooney notes that this is also the season when the great annual ceremony of the Sun Dance took place among the prairie tribes.

of past power and glory as much as future deliverance.

While belief in return of the dead was com-
patible with the traditional religious beliefs of many
tribes,[34] a gospel of inter-tribal peace and love was
a radical divergence from traditional Indian life. Warfare
had been a central activity for tribal and cultural
preservation and for masculine affirmation. The poten-
tial of the Ghost Dance for altering "savage" life al-
lowed some whites to see it as a means of bringing the
Indian from savagery to civilization. "It is such a
revolution as comes but once in the life of a race."[35]
It should be noted, however, that the Ghost Dance re-
ligion's assertion of love and peace was based on Indian
racial solidarity. Indians would live in peace among
themselves and with the white man until the millenium
arrived. Whites could view it as a civilizing influence
only by virtue of _their_ belief in the permanence of
white civilization in America. For the Indian, however,
there was no place for the white man or his civilization
in an Indian millenium which would make the past ("savagery"
in white men's terms) come true in the present for eternity.
From the Indian perspective, the Ghost Dance was attrac-
tive for its ties to the past, not for its promise of

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[34] "Although the doctrine was sufficiently
abstract to allow for a wide variety of local interpre-
tations... it was effectively barred from any people (such
as the Navaho) to whom the very idea of ghosts, and any
talk of their revival, was offensive." A.F.C. Wallace,
"Introduction" to 1965 publ. of Mooney, p. viii.

future "progress." Peaceful coexistence with the whites
was a present disposition which in no way contradicted
an anti-white ideology. "We shall bury you!" remained
the future vision of the Ghost Dance religion.

One of the first to bring Wovoka's doctrine
east of the Rockies was Porcupine, a Cheyenne, who re-
ported that, for the present, Indians "were not to quarrel
or fight or strike each other, or shoot one another; that
the whites and Indians were to all be one people."[36] But
beneath the peaceful character of the Ghost Dance was
the belief in imminent white destruction. Thus, the
Walapai Indians, while also stressing that their present
activity toward the whites was not hostile, pointed out
that after the redeemer came "They would be unable to
prevent /the whites'/ destruction even if they wished."[37]
The apocalyptic vision was closely tied to earthly and
tribal regeneration, both of which were to be supernatural
events. Peaceful coexistence is understood as a humble
religious response to divine, transcendent power. Human
action, other than dancing for the millenium, simply had
no place.

In spite of the characteristics which the Ghost
Dance religion had in common among all of the participating

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[35]Mooney, p. 25.

[36]Ibid., pp. 27, 40.

[37]Ibid., p. 28.

tribes (return of the dead, dancing, present peaceful
coexistence, and final destruction of the whites
followed by a new earth), whites have interpreted the
historical occurrence of peace on some reservations
and conflict on others as an indication of local
alterations in the religion. Whatever "alterations"
may have taken place were more "additions" than "changes."
For example, the ghost shirts worn by the Sioux were
thought impermeable to white bullets. This is an
attitude consistent with the anti-white apocalyptic
vision of the original doctrine, though it does reveal
the particularly intense concern over white inter-
ference among the Sioux. In any event, the ghost
shirts did not fundamentally change the Ghost Dance
from a peaceful into a hostile religious exercise.
(See below.) To see the Ghost Dance practiced by
the Sioux as a "perversion" of Wovoka's gospel, then,
is at best misleading; to see its "hostile," "belliger-
ent," "anti-white" character as an aberration caused
by local grievances and conditions of deprivation is
a failure in religious understanding by the white man.

Rumors of the messiah and his vision had
reached the Sioux by the fall of 1889, while Crook's
commission was finishing its canvass of the agencies,
just before the ration-cut was announced. An eleven
man delegation was sent to Walker Lake to directly

assess the messiah. They returned to Pine Ridge, Rosebud and Cheyenne River reservations in March, 1890 and brought with them a positive and wondrous report of the imminent return of the dead and promise of eternal Indian life.

> And the Great Spirit spoke to us saying: ... The earth is getting old, and I will make it new for my chosen people, the Indians....
>
> I will cover the earth with new soil to a depth of five times the height of a man, and under this new soil will be buried all the whites, and all the holes and the rotten places will be filled up. The new lands will be covered with sweet-grass and running water and trees, and herds of buffalo and ponies will stray over it, that my red children may eat and drink, hunt and rejoice.
>
> ...
>
> My brothers, I bring you the promise of a day in which there will be no white man to lay his hand on the bridle of the Indian's horse; when the red man of the prairie will rule the world and not be turned from the hunting grounds by any man. I bring you word from your fathers the ghosts, that they are now marching to join you, led by the Messiah who came once to live on earth with the white men, but was cast out and killed by them. ... I traveled far and am sent back with a message to tell you to make ready for the coming of the Messiah and the return of the ghosts in the spring.[38]

The dance was inaugurated immediately and spread to a majority of the tribe by October. Among the Tetons, two "non-progressive" medicine men, Kicking Bear and Short Bull, became Wovoka's leading apostles.

The main dance ground at Pine Ridge was

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[38]Kicking Bear, leading apostle of the Ghost Dance on the Sioux reservations, cited by W.C. Vanderwerth, *Indian Oratory: Famous Speeches by Noted Indian Chieftains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), pp. 246, 244.

at No Water's camp on White Clay Creek, twenty miles

from the agency. A great Ghost Dance was held there

in June at which ghost shirts were worn for the first

time. These shirts were believed to be impenetrable

to bullets or any other weapons. Mooney commented that

"to cover the body in battle was not in accordance with

Indian usage, which demanded that the warrior should

be as unincumbered in movement as possible," and that

war-paint had the same magical protective power.[39]

Mooney drew no other conclusions about their purpose,

instead of drawing the obvious conclusion that these

shirts were not intended for "battle" or "warfare"

(offensive as well as defensive activity) but instead

had some other purpose within the sacred ritual of

ghost dancing. Impenetrability to others' bullets

suggests divinely sponsored defence to allow the con-

tinuation of dancing without interference.[40] Whatever

courage or arrogance the Sioux may have drawn from

their supposed invulnerability, an analysis like

Utley's which asserts militant aggressiveness and the

desire for present conflict with whites[41] is not warranted

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[39]Mooney, p. 34.

[40]An interpretation linking the ghost shirts
to the sacred ritual of the Ghost Dance is confirmed by
the Oglala medicine man Black Elk who was "given" a ghost
shirt to bring back to his people during a dream-trance
visit to the other world. Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life
Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux, as told through
John G. Neihardt (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961),
p. 247.

[41]Utley, p. 87.

by the content of the Ghost Dance doctrine among the
Sioux or any other tribe. Impermeability does not
equal aggression Whatever "hostile acts" or violence
the Sioux may have committed in 1890 were acts in
defense of their religion and freedom to worship as
they desired. The only nation on a "militant crusade"
was the United States in its determination to suppress
the Ghost Dance at any cost.

> If I were agent here /Pine Ridge/, I would
> let them dance themselves out. What right have we
> to dictate to them on a religious belief founded
> on the teaching of the religion of the white man?
> If the Seventh Day Adventists get up on the rooves
> of their houses, arrayed in their ascension robes,
> to meet the "second coming" the U.S. Army is not
> rushed into their field.[42]

In August two thousand Indians assembled
at White Clay Creek to dance. The agent (Hugh Gallagher)
sent police out to break it up but the dancers refused.
The agent returned with more police. The dancers
again refused and a few warriors leveled their guns at
the Government representatives and asserted that they
were ready to defend their religion with their lives.
The agent and police withdrew. On the Rosebud reservation
the agent (George Wright) succeeded in halting the dancing
led there by Short Bull. However, a temporary absence
by the agent was sufficient opportunity for reinauguration

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[42] Dr. V.T. McGillycuddy (ex-agent at Pine Ridge),
cited by Stanley Vestal, New Sources in Indian History
1850-1891 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934), pp. 88-9.

of the dance and defiance of Government authority. On October 9 Kicking Bear went to the Standing Rock reservation at the invitation of Sitting Bull and inaugurated the dance at his camp on Grand River. After Kicking Bear's removal by agent James McLaughlin, Sitting Bull declared his intention to continue the dance. At the Cheyenne River reservation Ghost Dances were gegun at the camps of Chiefs Big Foot and Hump in September.

By the middle of October, 1890, the principal centers of Ghost Dance activity among the Sioux were Pine Ridge, where the old Oglala chief Red Cloud was an adherent, and at Standing Rock, under the reknowned "irreconcilable" medicine man of the Hunkpapa, Sitting Bull. At this time dancing divided the tribe along established "progressive" and "reactionary" lines. Prime leaders of the Ghost Dance were Sioux who had refused to sign the treaties of 1876 and 1889; nonparticipants and supporters of the Government were Sioux who had signed these treaties and were generally friendly to "progress."

> I consider the prime movers in the present
> trouble, those non-progressive Indians who in
> time past were recognized as leading Chiefs,
> notably Red Cloud, Sitting Bull, with some others...;
> these men... refused to sign the recent treaty, and
> were not permitted to accompany the delegation to
> Washington, last December.[43]

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[43]Agent George Wright to Commissioner, December 5, 1890, Doc. 38608-90.

I find there is a great discord between the two
factions of Indians here, those who signed the late
Sioux Bill and those who did not. Those who did
not sign the bill are among the prime leaders in
the ghost dance with but few exceptions and those
who did sign the bill are among the friendlies who
have stood so nobly by the Government and the
Agent....[44]

In October Gallagher was replaced as agent
for Pine Ridge by D.F. Royer, a political appointee
"destitue of any of those qualities by which he could
justly lay claim to the position -- experience, force
of character, courage, and sound judgement."[45] Royer
was unable to establish his authority over the Indians,
who quickly dubbed him "Young-Man-Afraid-of-Lakotas."
By October 12 he reported that half of Pine Ridge's
Indians were dancing, were beyond agency control, and
called for military intervention. On October 11 the
agent at Cheyenne River (Perain P. Palmer) reported
that Big Foot's band was dancing continuously, that
"nearly all" were armed with Winchester rifles, and
that his police were afraid.[46] Throughout the rest of
October Royer and other agents sent telegrams of
alarm requesting military assistance. And after
consultations with General Nelson A. Miles, military
commander for the Department of the Missouri, assistance
from the War Department was officially requested by the

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[44] James A. Cooper, Special Agent at Pine Ridge,
to Commissioner, January 10, 1891, Doc. 2804-91.

[45] Herbert Welch, President of Indian Rights Assoc.,
cited by Mooney, p. 93.

[46] Palmer to Commissioner, October 11, Doc. 32090-90.

Secretary of the Interior. On November 13 the President
directed the Secretary of War to assume military respon-
sibility to prevent an "outbreak;" on November 17,
troops of under General John R. Brooke were ordered
to the reservations. The first troops arrived at Pine
Ridge on November 19 and were immediately reinforced.
By the end of the month nearly three thousand soldiers
were in the field in Sioux country.

> The Red Skins left their Agency, the Soldiers left
>   their Post,
> All on the strength of an Indian tale about Messiah's
>   ghost
> Got up by savage chieftains to lead their tribes
>   astray;
> But Uncle Sam wouldn't have it so, for he ain't
>   built that way.[47]

Upon the appearance of troops, a large
number of ghost dancers under Short Bull and Kicking
Bear fled to the Bad Lands, an area northwest of the
White River on the edge of the Rine Rdige reservation,
fifty miles from the agency, and established a Ghost
Dance stronghold in the natural protection afforded by

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[47]W.H. Prather, Ninth Cavalry, U.S. Army,
"The Indian Ghost Dance and War," in Mooney, p. 137.
Prather's ballad "became the favorite among the troops
in camp and with the scattered frontiersmen of Dakota
and Nebraska, being sung to a simple air with vigor and
expression and a particularly rousing chorus, and is
probably by this time /1893/ a classic of the barracks."
Mooney, p. 136.

the rough terrain. (See Map 2.) During their flight
the ghost dancers destroyed the houses and property
of "friendly" Indians and captured a large portion of
the agency's beef herd. Fear of the soldiers caused
others to join them and soon over three thousand Sioux
had gathered in the Bad Lands. The whites were anxious
over the dancers' future intentions; the Indians were
anxious over the whites'.

Meanwhile, in accordance with instructions
from the Indian Commissioner, the several Sioux agents
forwarded lists of those Indians generally considered
trouble-makers and leaders in fomenting the ghost dance
disturbance. It was hoped that their arrest and removal
from among the Sioux would help restore order. Kicking
Bear and Short Bull were in the Bad Lands, however; and
Red Cloud was old and blind and had not offered overt
resistance to the Government. That left Sitting Bull
at the head of the list of major offenders.

From 1883 (when Sitting Bull was allowed to
return to the Standing Rock reservation after imprison-
ment at Fort Randall following his return from Canadian
exile) to 1890 he and Agent McLaughlin clashed for the
control and allegiance of the reservations' Hunkpapa.
McLaughlin cultivated "progressive" (usually non-heriditary)
chiefs and a loyal Indian police force; Sitting Bull

asserted his chieftainship by custom, heredity and re-
cognition. Even in 1890 he remained the most powerful
medicine man of the Sioux. With Sitting Bull's open
advocacy of the Ghost Dance, McLaughlin had an issue
to secure his archrival's removal.

Sitting Bull's arrest was urged by McLaughlin
as early as June, 1890. This request was repeated in
October and November, but he cautioned that the arrest
be made when the weather turned colder and was less
favorable for prolonged Indian resistance, should that
occur. By December the Indians holed up in the Bad
Lands were making no hostile demonstrations, the
presence of troops had stopped the dances near the
agencies, the military had been placed in control of
the agencies and had ordered the issue of full rations
due under the treaty. The only dancing outside of
the Bad Lands was at Sitting Bull's camp at Grand
River and at Big Foot and Hump's camps on the Cheyenne
River reservation. The time seemed favorable for the
arrest and on December 5 it began to snow. On
December 10 General Miles ordered the military to
"secure the person of Sitting Bull, using any peactible
means."48 The order was forwarded to the agency by

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48Miles to Gen. Ruger, December 10, 1890,
Report, Commissioner -- 1891, I, p. 333. Also cited by
Utley, p. 152.

December 12. McLaughlin and the commanding officer at
Standing Rock planned to arrest Sitting Bull on the
next ration day when most of the Grand River Indians
would be at the agency. But word was received that Short
Bull and Kicking Bear had invited Sitting Bull to join
them in the Bad Lands and on December 14 observers re-
ported that Sitting Bull was fitting up his horses for
the journey. The arrest had to be made immediately since
a medicine man of Sitting Bull's stature would have breathed
new life into the Ghost Dance throughout the Sioux nation;
once on the road, Sitting Bull would be impossible to
catch. On the morning of December 15 forty-three Indian
police, reinforced at a distance by two troops of the
8th Cavalry, arrived at Grand River, found Sitting Bull
in bed, placed him under arrest and ordered him to the
agency. While Sitting Bull was dressing excited Indians
congregated about his house and, upon emerging, he refused
to go and urged his people to rescue him. A fight ensued
at the outset of which Sitting Bull was shot dead through
the body and head by two Indian policemen. The Grand River
Indians fled into trees surrounding the camp. Indian
police found Sitting Bull's seventeen year old son Crow
Foot hiding in the house and, after knocking him to the
ground, shot him to death. Eight "hostile" Indians were
killed in the fight; six Indian police were killed or

mortally wounded. Fugitives from Sitting Bull's band
fled to the Bad Lands or joined the dancers at Big Foot
and Hump's camps; but most surrendered at the agency
within a few days of the fight.

Hump and Big Foot were the only Ghost Dance
leaders remaining outside of the Bad Lands after the death
of Sitting Bull. Hump was considered extremely dangerous
by the whites, but his band's return to the agency was
peacefully secured by Captain E.P. Ewers (5th Inf.) who,
as the officer in charge of their reservation for seven
years, had gained their confidence and respect. Hump later
assisted Ewers in securing the return of a large number
of the Sitting Bull fugitives. This left only Big Foot's
band, which had been under constant surveillance during
December by the 8th Cavalry.

In the middle of December the commander of
the 8th Cavalry received orders to arrest Big Foot. Big
Foot, however, had just informed him that he intended to
go to the agency for annuities and it was decided to
make the arrest there. Along the way to the agency
Big Foot's people passed near their own village. Most
wanted to stay there since that was where they would
live once the "emergency" had ended. But the military
ordered Big Foot to leave for the agency the next day
(December 23) and brought in reinforcements (the entire
force of the 8th Cavalry) to see that this order was obeyed.
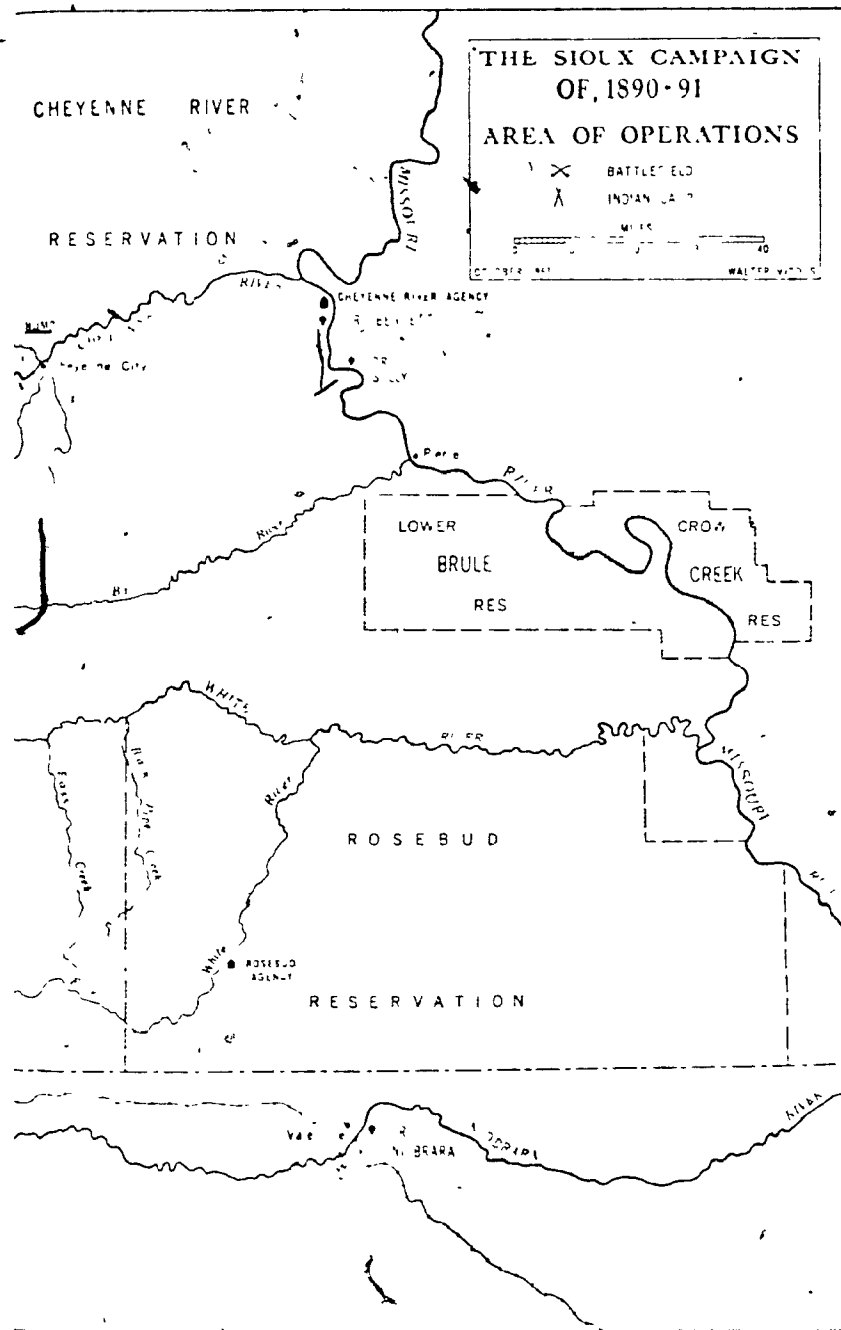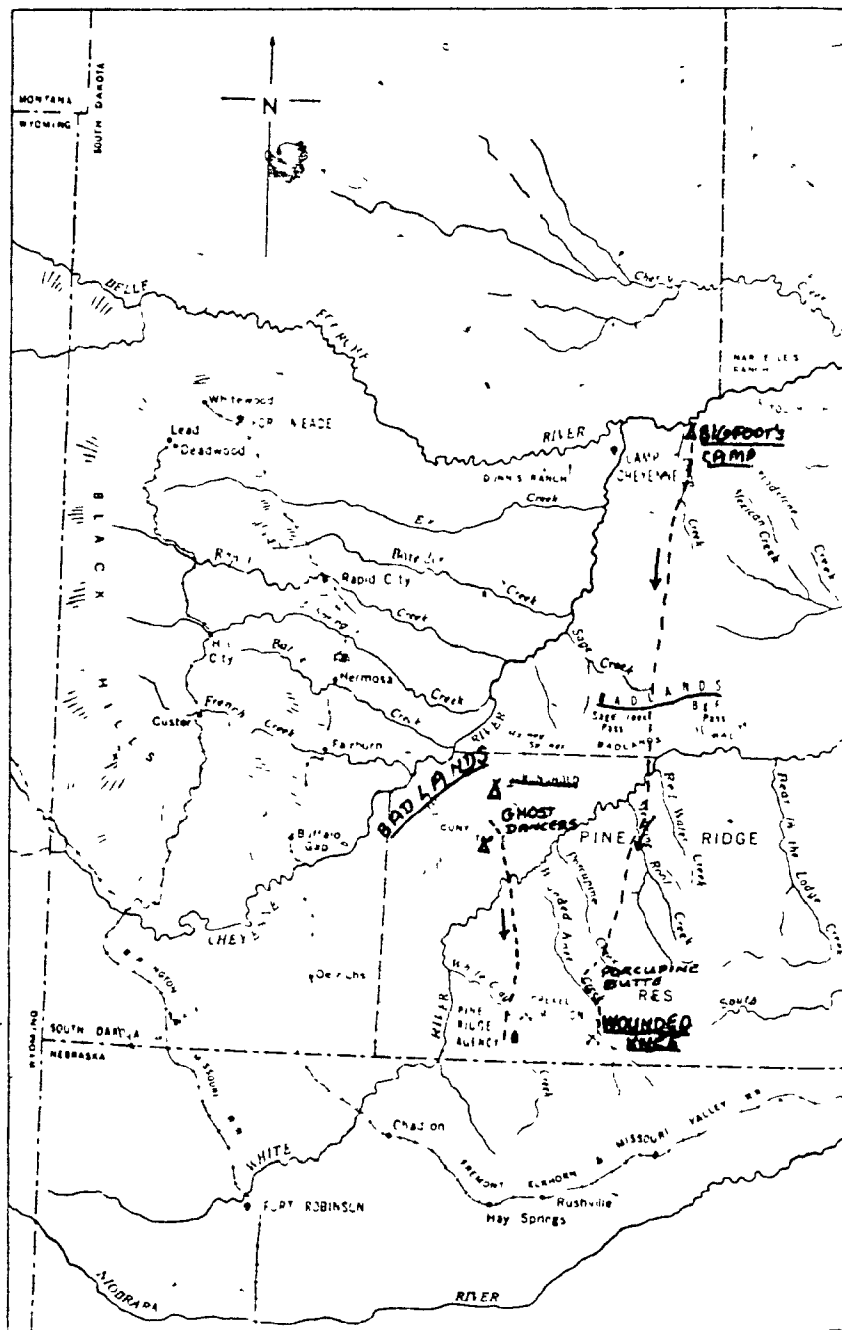
THE SIOUX CAMPAIGN
OF, 1890·91

AREA OF OPERATIONS

✕ BATTLEFIELD
⅄ INDIAN CAMP

MILES

MAP 2
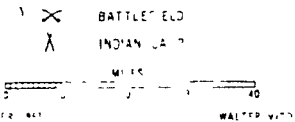
Big Foot slipped away during the night, however, and
headed south for Pine Ridge and the Bad Lands. The In-
dians in the Bad Lands had been surrounded by troops
in the meantime and were gradually being forced back
toward the agency. When they received the news of Sitting
Bull's death, the return of Hump to the agency, and the
"arrest" of Big Foot the entire force broke camp (De-
cember 27), left their stronghold in the Bad Lands,
and headed towards the Pine Ridge agency with troops
following behind. (See Map 2 for general locations of
camps and movements during the "Ghost Dance Campaign.")

Big Foot's renegade band was intercepted on
December 28 by the 7th Cavalry under Major Whitside at
Porcupine Butte. Upon seeing the troops Big Foot raised
a white flag and asked for a parley. This was refused.
The Seventh's terms were unconditional surrender; Big
Foot accepted. The Indians and troops moved on to camp
for the night at Wounded Knee Creek, twenty miles north-
east of the Pine Ridge agency. A strong case for the
peaceful disposition of the Indians was made by Philip
Wells, a half-breed interpreter present at the "scene
of action" between the 7th Cavalry and Big Foot's band:
if the Indians were indeed hostile and desired a clash
with the soldiers, they would have fought Whitside on
December 28 at Porcupine Butte.

I do not believe they had any intention of
fighting, and for these reasons, first: When Major
Whitside met Big Foot at Porcupine Butte Big Foot
was drawn up in battle array and was perhaps equal
to Whitside in numbers, or nearly so.

Second, the ground was in his favor, being
adapted to the Indian style of fighting; whereas,
the soldiers could have had, for a while at least,
to operate in the open plain.

Third, after the Indians knew they were dis-
covered and the troops were coming, the Indians
had ample time for defensive preparations and did
not improve the opportunity to make themselves more
impregnable. ...

Fourth, But the Indians surrendered. This was
when the actual <u>surrender</u> was /Porcupine Butte/.
When they came to Wounded Knee they were prisoners
in possession of their weapons.[49]

During the night of December 28-29 four ad-

ditional troops of the 7th Cavalry (making a total of

eight troops) and four pieces of artillery were brought

up to Wounded Knee to secure the surrender. On the morning

of December 29, 1890 the military attempted to disarm

its prisoners. The Indians produced only two rifles volun-

tarily and the soldiers were ordered to search the tipis.

The search produced only forty old, worthless rifles but

created a great deal of excitement among the Indian women

and children since beds and furniture were overturned

and occupants driven outside. Indians present claim that

everything that could have been used as a weapon was taken

in this search, even the awls used by women for bead-work.[50]

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[49]Philip Wells interview in Eli S. Ricker Col-
lection, <u>Nebraska State Historical Society</u> (Microfilm),
Tablet 4, p. 47 ff.

[50]Statement of Joseph Black Hair, survivor.
McGregor, <u>Wounded Knee</u>, pp. 132-3.

MAP 3

WOUNDED KNEE CREEK
DECEMBER 29, 1890
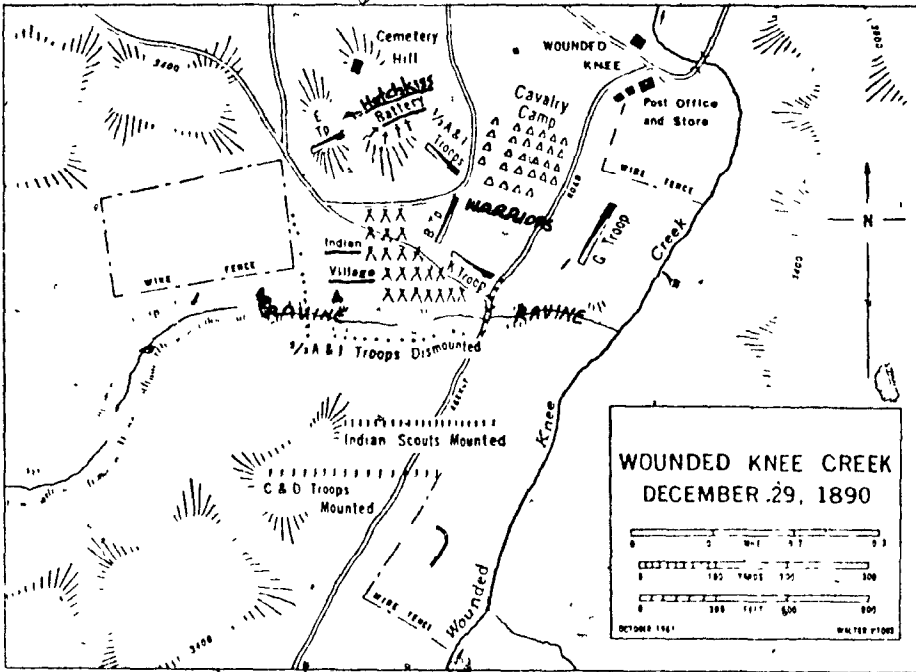
While the search was underway a medicine man,
Yellow Bird, danced around the warriors (who had been
separated from the rest of the camp by soldiers -- see
Map 3.) exhorting them to rely on their ghost shirts for
protection against the bullets of the soldiers. The sol-
diers faced the Indians and loaded their rifles. They
were then ordered to search beneath the blanket of each
warrior for for weapons. Joseph Horn Cloud, a survivor of
the massacre, recounted that during the search an officer
told the Indians:

> "I want you all to stand in a rank before the
> officers. ... I want the same number of soldiers
> to stand in front of the Indians and take their
> cartridges out of their guns and cock them and
> aim at their foreheads and pull the triggers. After
> this you will be free. Afterwards you will go to
> the Agency and I will give you nine beeves." Some
> of the Indians were getting wild at such talk,
> and some said, "We are not children to be talked
> to like this." A man cried out: "Take courage!
> Take courage!"[51]

During the search an Indian fired a shot. Whites claim
that a warrior drew a rifle from under a blanket and
fired, which was followed by a volley from other warriors
with heretofore concealed weapons.[52] Indian survivors
claim that a deaf Indian was seized from behind by sol-
diers trying to disarm him. The Indian waved his rifle
protesting that it was his property. In the struggle a
shot went off in the air.[53] Indians claim that this was

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[51]Joseph Horn Cloud interview, Ricker Collection,
Tablet 12, p. 9 ff.

[52]Mooney, p. 118; Utley, p. 212.

[53]Joseph Horn Cloud interview, loc. cit.

the only shot fired before the 7th Cavalry unleased a
volley of carbine fire directly into the warriors (and
fellow-soldiers[54]) twenty-five feet in front of them.
One white observer claimed that not more than five or
six Indians had guns when the fighting began.[55] Most of
Big Foot's warriors were killed in this first "exchange."
On hearing the rifle fire from the camp, Hotchkiss guns
positioned on a rise above the camp opened up, raking
it with two-pound artillery shells at the rate of fifty
per minute. (See Map 3.)

> In a few minutes two hundred Indian men, women
> and children, with sixty soldiers, were lying dead
> and wounded on the ground, the tipis had been
> torn down by the shells and some of them were
> burning above the helpless wounded, and the sur-
> viving handful of Indians were flying in wild
> panic to the shelter of the ravine, pursued by
> hundreds of maddened soldiers and followed up
> by a raking fire from the Hotchkiss guns, which
> had been moved into position to sweep the ravine.[56]

> When I reached the ravine, of course, there was
> a lot of Indians flowing up the ravine and I
> was with them, and on each side of this ravine
> soldiers were shooting down on us until we got
> so far we couldn't go any further as a line of
> soldiers got in front of us so we took refuge
> in the big ravine. In this ravine where we took
> refuge, most of them were women and children and,
> of course, defenseless and helpless; above them
> the soldiers just got near them and shot these
> people down.[57]

> The bodies of women and children were scattered
> along a distance of two miles from the scene of
> the encounter.[58]

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[54]General Miles to Commissioner of Indian Af-
fairs, March 13, 1917: "The disposition of the troops was
such that in firing upon the warriors they fired directly
toward their own lines and also into the camp of the wo-
men and children... ." Cited by McGregor, Wounded Knee,
pp. 92-3.

A Dakota blizzard struck that evening, freezing the Indian corpses which littered the field into grotesque postures. On January 1, 1891 a detachment of troops and civilians was sent to Wounded Knee to bury the dead Indians and rescue any survivors. The dead were stripped of their ghost shirts by white souvenir-hunters and dumped stiff and naked into a long trench one upon the other until it was full. Earth was heaped over them and "funeral" was complete.

> It was a thing to melt the heart of a man, if it was made of stone, to see those little children, with their bodies shot to pieces, thrown naked into the pit.[59]

> I did not know then how much was ended. When I look back now this high hill of my old age, I can still see the butchered women and children lying heaped and scattered all along the crooked gulch as plain as when I saw them with eyes still young. And I can see that something else died there in the bloody mud, and was buried in the blizzard. A people's dream died there. It was a beautiful dream.
> ... the nation's hoop is broken and scattered. There is no center any longer, and the sacred tree is dead.[60]

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[55]Richard C. Stirk Interview, Ricker Collection, Tablet 8, p. 330 ff.

[56]Mooney, p. 118.

[57]Statement of John Little Finger, survivor, McGregor, _Wounded Knee_, pp. 120-1.

[58]_Report, Commissioner--1891_, I, p. 130.

[59]Comment of one of the burial party, cited by Mooney, pp. 131-2.

[60]_Black Elk Speaks_, p. 276.

The Ghost Dance Dream:

Indian Affirmation; Denying the

"Great White Father."

> All men dream: but not equally. Those who dream
> by night in the dusty recesses of their minds
> wake in the day to find that it was vanity; but
> the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for
> they may act their dream with open eyes, to make
> it possible.[61]

The Sioux were perceived by whites as the

"fiercest" and "wildest" of the plains tribes; they were

the tribe least disposed to adopting white civilization

and abandoning traditional ways. Sioux power and op-

position to the white man was effectively demonstrated

in the wars fought in the 1860's and 1870's to preserve and

protect their territory. As powerful opponents of white

civilization, the Sioux posed the greatest threat to

white identity and masculinity. As one South Dakota ty-

pically put the the Sioux version of the "Indian problem"

in 1874:

> What shall be done with these Indian dogs in our
> manger? They will not dig gold or let others do
> it.... They are too lazy and too much like
> mere animals to cultivate the fertile soil, mine
> the coal, develop the salt mines, bore the petroleum
> wells , or wash the gold. Having all these things
> in their hands, they prefer to live as paupers,
> theives and beggars; fighting, torturing, hunting,
> gorging, yelling and dancing all night to the
> beat of old tin kettles.[62]

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[61]T.E. Lawrence(suppressed Introduction for
The Seven Pillars of Wisdom), cited by LaBarre, Ghost
Dance, p. 305.

[62]Editorial from the Yankton, S.D. Press
and Dakotaian, September 3, 1874. Cited by Donald Jackson,

The Sioux did not reflect the activities of white civil-
ization: farming, mining, drilling, getting rich. They
did not reflect the white man's experience of himself.
Instead, they "preferred" to be poor and engage in ac-
tivities of excessive emotional display (and libidinal
content). This newspaper editorial condenses the fear,
hatred, condescention and narcissism that defined Ameri-
ca's experience of the Indian. The goal, then, for Ameri-
can Indian policy in the last decades of the nineteenth
century was, as Commissioner Morgan put it, "to carry
this matter /civilizing the Indian/ so far towards it
final consummation as to put it beyond the range of
anxiety."63

    Whites viewed the "defeat" of the Sioux
in 1877 and the surrender of powerful "hostiles" like
Crazy Horse, Gall and Red Cloud as the first step in
asserting American authority -- asserting its paternal
role -- over the Sioux. The reduction of the Great
Sioux Reservation in 1876 was celebrated as a triumph
of white power and masculinity in Dakota; it was a
response to the ego-shattering defeat and massacre of
the Seventh Cavalry under General Custer. The Sioux

63Report, Commissioner -- 1891, I, p. 9.
/My italics./

were "crushed" but not annihilated. Everything was "taken from them" except life. In other words, they were rendered impotent -- castrated -- and posed no more of a threat to America than would a "miserable beggar."

> Themost numerous and until recently the most powerful tribe of Indians within our borders are now completely crushed. We have taken from most of them everything except life. They are now poor miserable beggars unable to avenge their wrongs and they know it.[64]

Once on the reservation, the Sioux proved to be unwilling and ungrateful children. "Miserable beggars" were not supposed to harp on past power and glory and certainly were not supposed to be arrogant. The Sioux refused to give up past customs like communal property holding, polygamy and primitive-naturalistic religion. America was afraid that, unless a concerted effort were made to suppress these old practices and inculcate civilization, the new generation of Indians would grow up just like their fathers; the future of America would contain the threat of a savage past.

> Among the people of this tribe communal interest in property, polygamy, heathen worship and other barbarous customs prevail almost as generally as when they lived on the buffalo and had no home. Unless these practices are suppressed, the youth must grow up like their fathers, a horde of painted savages, filled with the darkest superstition,... recognizing prowess in war as the

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[64] The Reverend Thomas W. Williamson (1877) cited in Esther S. Goldfrank, "Historic Change and Social Character: A Study of the Teton Dakota," _American Anthropologist_, v. 45, (1943), p. 80.

only superiority invicible to both civilization
and Christianity, despising enlightenment and
industry, and returning nothing for the bounty of
the government, which they deem to be greatly
indebted to them for consenting to remain at
peace.[65]

First on the list of "barbarous customs"

that threatened the white man and had to be eliminated

was the Sun Dance. This annual ritual of supplication,

self-torture and self- (tirbal) affirmation denied

self-reflection, paternal authority and masculinity

to the whites while giving the same to the Sioux.

> The Sun Dance was the greatest of all
> ceremonies with the Lakotas, for upon its precepts
> their society was established. Given to them
> during an earthly visit by the Holy Woman /White
> Buffalo Woman/, emissary from Those Above, this
> ceremony forms the Lakota decalogue.[66]

The sun was not worshipped _per se_, but its bearing on

all Sioux life was recognized as the power of the

Great Mystery, _Wakan-tanka_. For example, the Sioux

saw the fondness of the buffalo for sunflowers as a

sign of divine presence in the everyday activity of

hunting (tribal sustenance).[67]

The Sun Dance was given to the Sioux long

ago when they had become "lax" in their prayers and

were therefore "losing their strength" as a people.

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[65]Captain William E. Daugherty, Acting Agent
for Lower Brule Agency, _Report, Commissioner -- 1878_, p. 35.

[66]Chief Standing Bear, _Land of the Spotted
Eagle_ (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1933), p. 220.

[67]_Ibid._, 46-9.

Wakan-Tanka sent it to them for "aid."[68] From the Sun
Dance the Sioux obtained their "World-Tree," the cotton-
wood (wagachun). It was their "center and also the people,
for the tree represents the way of the people. Does it
not stretch from the earth here to heaven there?"[69] The
Sun Dance ritual affirmed the Sioux nation as the _axis
mundi_.

The Sun Dance occurred in the spring of each
year. The various tribes of the Teton, dispersed throughout
the rest of the year, came together for four days of
prayer and dancing during which the nation's warriors
recounted exploits in warfare and hunting for the benefit
of the younger generation. The Sun Dance contained a
tremendous force for social cohesion in addition to
an appeal for supernatural blessing for the tribe and
participants. "The Sun Dance was a drama of Dakota
culture."[70]

On the fourth day of the Sun Dance a number
of warriors voluntarily offered their flesh in ritual
sacrifice to expiate the sins of the nation and gain
renewed strength for the next year. A leather thong
attatched to the cottonwood tree (at the center of the

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[68]_The Sacred Pipe_, p. 68.

[69]_Ibid._, p. 69.

[70]MacGregor, _Warriors_, pp. 90-1.

dance ground) was passed through slits cut in the
warrior's chest and back. While thus suspended from
the tree he danced gazing directly into the sun until
the thongs tore loose from his body. To the Sioux the
flesh represented ignorance, and this self-torture
symbolized a liberation from the bonds of the flesh
allowing the investment of supernatural power.[71] During
the sacrifice holy men prayed to Wakan-Tanka for mercy
"that my people may live!"[72] The Sioux regarded them-
selves as superior to all other people but presented them-
selves in the Sun Dance to Wakan-Tanka as humble suppli-
cants because, in order to achieve virtue and status
in Sioux society "men had to have the power that came
only from the supernatural."[73] Hence, in a male-centered
society like the Dakota, the Sun Dance had psycho-cultural
significance as a ritual which reaffirmed the masculine
power of both individual warriors and the society as a
whole.

Whites universally characterized the Sun Dance
spectacle as "barbarous," "attrocious," "heathenish,"
"demoralizing," "reprehensible," "cruel," and "disgusting."[74]

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[71]The Sacred Pipe, p. 85.

[72]Ibid., p. 93.

[73]MacGregor, Warriors, p. 85.

[74]Sources for these quotes: Report, Commissioner--
1880, p. 37; --1882, p. 99; --1884, pp. 37, 85; --1885, p. 44;
Catlin, Illustrations... of the North American Indians, I,
pp. 232-3.

But beneath the conscious white condemnation lay a certain unconscious attraction. As George Catlin observed early in the nineteenth century, the Sun Dance was both a "curious and disgusting scene" to the white man.[75] The attractiveness inhered in America's ambivalent experience of Indian savagery; it was a function of libido, repressed by civilization, stimulated by Indians' ritual dancing. The white man confronted a portion of himself in this dance of masculine testing and assertion.

> ... there is no attraction that brings people
> from such a distance as a certain tribal dance,
> for the reason that the white mind senses its
> mystery, for even the white man's inmost feelings
> are unconsciously aroused by the heat of the
> tomtom. They are heart-beats, and once all men
> danced to its rhythm.[76]

Abolition of the Sun Dance was critically important to whites once the Sioux were secured on reservations. Though some whites admitted that the Sun Dance did "not particularly interfere with /Indian/ progress toward self-support," it was nevertheless regarded as "barbarous and reprehensible, and must be given up before they can be considered fairly on the road to the civilization and status of the white man."[77] The Sun Dance was a threat to the white man because, as a traditional ritual of tribal solidarity and savage masculinity,

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[75]Catlin, Ibid. Catlin was one of the first whites to witness a Sioux Sun Dance.

[76]Standing Bear, p. 257.

[77]John W. Scott, Agent, Report, Commissioner--1884, p. 85.

it exposed the precarious libidinal foundation of America's
civilized masculine identity. By participating in the
Sun Dance the Sioux refused service as America's mirror;
they refused the role of Children for the American Father.
Repression of the Sun Dance played an important part
in America's overall policy of cultural castration.
What other way is there to interpret actions of one
culture to proscribe the rituals which another deems
essential to its masculine virility and cultural iden-
tity?

White fear and rejection of the Sun Dance
was the most outstanding example of the anxiety occasioned
by primitive, "heathenish" religion. Another example,
at once more humorous and more revealing, concerns the
Sioux ritual for the "keeping of the soul." In this
ritual, the memory of a dead Sioux was preserved by
his family by "keeping" his soul in a tipi for one year,
after which it was "released" to wreak vengeance on
enemies while journeying to the spirit-world.[78] This
custom was prohibited by the Government in 1890; it was
required that on a certain day, established by law,
all souls kept by the Sioux had to be released![79]

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[78]For a complete discussion of the meaning and
practice of this ritual among the Sioux, see The Sacred
Pipe, Chapter II.

[79]Joseph Epes Brown in The Sacred Pipe, p. 10, fn.

But it was the rituals involving dancing
that excited the fear of whites most. As Standing Bear
perceived, it was the mystery, the Unknown, stirred by
the beat of Indian drums -- the primitive heart-beat
in all men -- that aroused unconscious feelings. By
awakening the white ego to repressed libido the Indian
dance aroused anxiety and the need for psychic defense.
Defense was achieved by eliminating the dancing; and
the justification for elimination was that dancing
harmed the Indians' health. White psychological disin-
tegration was projected externally as Indian body-
destruction. Thus, one Sioux agent claimed that "ex-
cessive dancing" was the cause of "many of the unnecessary
ills that have prevailed among them for years. Frequent
cases of incipient consumption and lung diseases has
been the result of this most pernicious practice."[80] In
addition to sacred purification, however, the sweat-baths
used before dancing were a hygienic treatment. Among the
Sioux, purifying the body was an integral part of purifying
the soul.[81] For the white man, however, dancing _had_ to
be bad for the Indian because it was bad for himself.
White anxiety over Indian dancing is understood when we
realize that the Indian was a _body-symbol_ in white con-

[80]J.A. Stephan, Agent for Standing Rock,
Report, Commissioner--1880, p. 58.

[81]The hygienic effects of the sweat-bath are
mentioned by Mooney, p. 66.

-303-

sciousness. Dancing is _body-action_ -- the libido phy-
sically and socially expressed -- and threatens the
civilized psyche with erotic invasion. It threatens
to destroy the boundaries between ego and id. The
primitive body is a symbol for the unconscious of
"civilization." Fantasized self-destruction in the
former is really the destruction of _self_ in the latter.

Whites' fear of the Ghost Dance of 1890 was
partucularly acute because of direct links to the Sun
Dance which they thought had been successfully eliminated
in 1883. Both dances were rituals of cultural affirmation
and regeneration; both sought to provide justification
for the Indian future by conceiving it as "a simple
continuation, an exact and faithful copy of the past...
transcending all multiplicity, all change and all time... ."[82]

> ... if we look closely at the Ghost Dance we
> can discern certain themes -- (such as trance,
> self-torture, the excision of discordant ideas,
> the renewal and reemphasis of community values,
> the reconciliation of disputants) -- which it
> had in common with the great Sun Dance... . Thus
> the Ghost Dance was heir to the Sun Dance; the
> traditional gave authenticity to the new.[83]

As they did in the Sun Dance, the Sioux in the Ghost
Dance begged _Wakan-Tanka_ for mercy "that my people may
live."

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
[82]Ernst Cassirer, _The Philosophy of Symbolic
Forms_ (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), II ("Mythi-
cal Thought"), p. 126.

[83]Kenelm Burridge, _New Heaven, New Earth: A
Study of Millenarian Activities_ (Oxford: Basil Blackwell,
1969), p. 80.

The father says this as he comes,
The father says this as he comes,
"You shall live," he says as he comes,
"You shall live," he says as he comes.[84]

The similarity of white reactions to the Sun Dance and the Ghost Dance is striking. In 1890, as they had previously for the Sun Dance, agents objected to "men being clothed more in paint and feathers than in civilized dress" (anxiety over the Indian body-symbol) relating "past exploits in time of hostility... to an appreciative audience of young people."[85] They also claimed that the Ghost Dance caused "demoralization" among the Sioux "until /they were/ completely exhausted physically, morally and intellectually."[86] And in 1890, as with the Sun Dance in 1880, "excessive dancing" contributed "greatly to the injury /of the Sioux's/ physical body and health... ."[87] In 1890 Indian body-destruction remained a symbol for white anxiety, in spite of the fact that authorities attributed the high sickness and mortality rate among the Sioux to a cause clearly under the control of the Government: prolonged hunger from reduced and inadequate rations.[88]

Like the Sun Dance, the Ghost Dance was a ritual of cultural regeneration and Sioux masculinity. It therefore posed a direct threat to American masculinity

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[84] Ghost Dance song, cited by Mooney, p. 304.

[85] J. George Wright, Agent for Rosebud, Report, Commissioner--1890, p. 62.

[86] J. George Wright, Report, Commissioner--1891, I, p. 411.

and identity. By affirming traditional Sioux culture --
making the past come true in the future -- the Ghost
Dance was necessarily antagonistic to "civilization"
and denied America objects for present and future self-
definition. Psychoanalytically, it upset America's attempts
to achieve a stable narcissistic identity-experience
via object-cathexis. Ghost-dancing Sioux were demon-
strating the failure of past American object-cathexis
and refusing to allow its continuation in the future.

The Ghost Dance may be understood from a
psycho-social perspective as an event that occasioned
primal memory traces in white American consciousness.
Dancing Indians as libidinal symbols raised the spectre
of white separation anxiety: maternal longing, uncon-
summated love and unfulfilled masculinity. They raised
castration anxiety as a direct corrollary of primal
separation and Oedipal guilt. Widespread masculinity-
affirming dancing fifteen years after the last "hostile"
Sioux were thought "emasculated" forced America to con-
front the failure of policies of cultural castration
and its failure to become Father to the Sioux nation
and itself.

87A,P. Dixon, Agent for Crow Creek and Lower
Brulé, Report, Commissioner -- 1891,-I, p. 397.

88"The people were often hungry and, the
physicians in many cases said, died, when taken sick,
not so much from diease as for want of food." Bishop
Hare, cited by Mooney, p. 72.

The threat posed by the Ghost Dance to
white men was disrepect for their authority and power:
the refusal to recognize the white man or his Govern-
ment as the Indians' "Great Father." By threatening
law and order on the reservations the ghost-dancers
threatened whites' experience of masculinity and raised
their fear of impotence vis-a-vis the Indian (castration
anxiety).

> Some of the disadvantages originating from this
> ghost dance is the believers in it defy the law,
> threaten the police, take their children out of
> school, ... and if the police are sent after the
> children they simply stand ready to fight before
> they will give them up. When an Indian violates
> any law the first thing they do is to join the
> ghost dance and then they feel safe to defy the
> police, the law and the Agent.[89]

By participating in the Ghost Dance the Sioux regained
a sense of their greatness and power; for a short time
they became the fathers of themselves and owed sub-
survience to no other nation.

> There has been hopes of checking a further spread
> of the craze by persuasive means and good counsel.
> But when told that the Department is displeased
> with their actions these dancers sullenly -- answer
> the Indian is displeased with the Department and
> will dance.
> ...
> ...Sitting Bull's band on Standing Rock agency
> are preparing for an outbreak and there is no
> doubt now that the Hostile Indians at all the

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[89] Royer to Commissioner, October 30, 1890,
Document number missing.

dancing camps are preparing to defy the authority
of the Department.[90]

In white consciousness defiance of authority constituted

- an "outbreak;" psychologically, Indians' refusal

to be white men's children raised the dreaded spectre

of America's own Oedipal overthrow.

> Disaffected Indians assuming a hostile
> attitude. Different bands consolidating. They declare
> their intention to fight. They denounce all
> appeals and persuasion from the department.
> Serious trouble seems inevitable.[91]

> Indians are dancing in the snow and are wild and
> Crazy. I have fully informed you that employees
> and government property at this agency have no
> protection and are at the mercy of these dancers.
> Why delay by further investigation we need
> protection and we need it now.[92]

The following "Statement of Facts" was

sent to President Harrison by the citizens (male) of

Mandan, South Dakota during the Sioux Ghost Dance.

It illustrates the extent to which white fears of

Indian power and masculinity were aroused by even the

vaguest rumor of an outbreak. The men of Mandan fan-

tasized a malignant and mysterious Indian threat so

horrendous that it could only contained by killing off

"every Indian that presents his face in this country

in the future." The images used to portray this

"threat" -- arrogant braves, mysterious scalping signs,

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[90]Palmer to Commissioner, November 10, 1890,
Doc. 35105-90.

[91]Cooper to Commissioner, (Telegram), November 22,
1890, Doc. 36145-90.

[92]Royer to Commissioner (telegram), November 15, 1890
Doc. 35349-90.

unquenchable fires, arms "to the teeth", molested and
"overawed" women and children -- clearly suggest a
white experience of insecure masculinity and
castration anxiety.

> Settlers by the score come to town and tell of
> Indians armed to the teeth, who when the male
> members of the family are present and during their
> absence, act insultingly -- draw mysterious
> circles around their heads, indicating that there
> will be some scalping done -- start fires that re-
> quire the utmost effort and care to extinguish,
> and which if not extinguished would burn much
> property.
> ...
> While this is being written there are camped within
> the city limits of Mandan, over 100 Indians, armed
> to the teeth, and our wives and our children are
> asking why these red men are allowed to molest
> and overawe and annoy us....
> The most conservative men in this community
> will be powerless to suppress the determination of
> the majority of the settlers to kill off every
> Indian that presents his face in this country in
> the future, unless the government does something
> to protect us.[93]

The disarmament of Big Foot's warriors at
Wounded Knee may also be seen as a clear attempt to
reassert paternal authority over the last renegade
ghost-dancers. If Joseph Horn Cloud's account is not
completely fictitious, then what occurred immediately
before the fighting broke out was nothing other than
a ceremony of symbolic castration -- infantilization.
Indeed, the warriors present perceived it in these
terms -- as an attempt to reduce them to the level of

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[93] "Statement of Facts" from the citizens of
Mandan, S.D. to President Harrison, November 17, 1890,
Doc. 36661-90.

children. Forcing Indian warriors to play racial

Russian roulette with the officers of the Seventh

Cavalry was a "ceremony of degradation" analogous to

those described by Rogin (dressing Indians in petticoats

to inculcate respect for women) As the epitome of

America's psychic war aginst the Indian.[94]

The case of Sitting Bull also suggests

the deep psycho-historical nature of America's repression

of the Ghost Dance. In the person of Sitting Bull the

white man confronted one of the last powerful "irrecon-

cilable relics" of the Sioux nation. Sitting Bull was

a threat to the American Father because he refused to

behave like a grateful child. He refused to be infant-

ilized! Immediately after his return to Standing Rock

from prison in 1883 he asserted his divine right to

chieftainship to the Agent and members of the Dawes

Commission visiting the reservation. He insulted them

by calling their conduct worthy of drunkards and walking

out. But he apologized later that day for "making their

hearts bad" and agreed to listen to what they had to say.

Instead of graciously accepting his apology, however,

Senator John Logan demanded Sitting Bull's humility,

[94]Rogin, p. 304.

gratitude and respect -- demands strikingly similar to

those made by American treaty commissioners to eastern

Indian chiefs one hundred years before (See Chapter VI.).

Indian hostility to official representatives of the

United States -- personifications of the nation -- seems

to elicit repeatedly the strongest assertions of American

Fatherhood.

> I want to say further that you are not a
> great chief of this country, that you have no
> following, no power, no control, and no right
> to any control. ...You are fed by the government,
> clothed by the government, your children are
> educated by the government, and all you have and
> are today is because of the government. If it
> were not for the government you would be freezing
> and starving today in the mountains. I merely
> say these things to you to notify you that you
> cannot insult the people of the United States
> of America or its committees. ... The government
> feeds and clothes and educates your children
> now, and desires to teach you to become farmers,
> and to civilize you, and make you as white men.[95]

By repeatedly emphasizing food, clothing and education

for Sitting Bull's children, Senator Logan was trying

to show the chief that he was no longer a father to

anyone; that the United States was father now instead.

Sitting Bull refused to humble himself to the

white man throughout his life, however. In 1890 America

was still trying to make a child of him (to destroy his

fatherhood and render him subservient and impotent) by

threatening punishment if cooperation and respect were

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[95]Cited by Brown, p. 400.

not forthcoming.

> /Sitting Bull/ must show his good intentions
> and his submission to the authority of the
> Department and its agent by prompt obedience
> to and compliance with all regulations of the
> Indian service, ... and that he should exert
> whatever influence he may have over any of
> the Indians to turn their backs upon the
> medicine men who are seeking to divert the
> Indians from the ways of civilization.[96]

The standing battle between Agent McLaughlin and Sitting

Bull was animated by America's father-authority needs;

this is seen in the agent's demands for subservience.

These demands were imbued with fear of the apparently

mysterious basis of Sitting Bull's potency and mascu-

linity.

> Sitting Bull is a polygamist, libertine,
> habitual liar, active obstructionist and a great
> obstacle in the civilization of these people... .
> ...
> "Sitting Bull" is a man of low cunning, devoid
> of a single manly principle in his nature, or
> an honorable trait of character, but on the con-
> trary is capable of instigating and inciting
> others (those who believe in his powers) to do
> any amount of mischief.
> ...
> He is opposed to everything of an elevating nature
> and is the most vain, pompous and untruthful Indian
> I ever knew.[97]

> I cannot understand how he held such sway over or
> controlled men so eminently his superiors in every
> respect... .[98]

Sitting Bull's advocacy of the Ghost Dance was perceived

by whites as "open rebellion" against paternal authority.

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[96]R.V. Belt, Acting Commissioner, to McLaughlin, October 29, 1890, Report, Commissioner--1891, I, p. 330.

[97]McLaughlin to Commissioner, October 17, 1890, Doc. 32670-90.

[98]McLaughlin, Report, Commissioner--1883, p. 49.

He was not even given the benefit of "incitement to
rebellion."

> /Sitting Bull's/ aggressiveness had assumed
> proportions of open rebellion against constituted
> authority notwithstanding that every honorable
> means to change him from his imprudent course
> had been resorted to.[99]

The last powerful _Sioux_ _Father_ caused anxiety in America
over the usurpation of its father role. "Sitting Bull's
Rebellion" had to be terminated "by any means" and to
this end McLaughlin gave his police complete freedom
in dealing with the chief:

> ... you must stop him and if he does not listen
> to you do as you see fit, use your own discretion
> in the matter and it will be all right.[100]

To make sure that Sitting Bull would be a father to no
one, his son Crow Foot was murdered in cold blood.

For over two hundred years America tried to
transform the Indian and his land into objects "just
like the white man;" but finally America could not see
or realize itself in either. The Ghost Dance recapitulated
for America its failure to secure identity in history:
its failure to become the father of itself. The Ghost
Dance therefore assumed psycho-historical importance
far out of proportion to whatever threat could have been
reasonably expected from the promulgation of its doctrine.

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[99]McLaughlin to Commissioner, December 24,
1890, Doc. 26-91.

[100]McLaughlin via Louis Primeau (interpreter)
to Lt. Bull Head of the Indian police, December 12, 1890.
Cited by Vestal, p. 12 and by Utley, p. 153.

They believed that their subjugation would be
followed by liberty, and that the limited
power of their race was to increased by the
unnumbered host that was to appear. It was a
threatened uprising of colossal proportions,
extending over a far greater territory than did
the confederation... led by Tecumseh, or the
conspiracy of Pontiac... .[101]

In retrospect, it seems that America feared the "un-

numbered host" even more than the Indians believed in

their return.

"Lessons" of Wounded Knee, White

and Red.

The "lesson" taught to the Indians by the

Ghost Dance repression and massacre at Wounded Knee was

one of white power. It was a lesson demonstrating the

lengths to which America would still go (in 1890: the

year that the frontier "closed;" fifteen years after

the last "hostile" Sioux were placed on reservations;

twenty-five years after Sand Creek) to obtain an ordered,

self-reflecting Indian, to alleviate castration anxiety

and experience masculine power. The psychological meaning

of the annihilation of Big Foot's band is seen in the

social effect desired by whites: "Indians have learned

that it is dangerous to oppose by force, the law of the

Great Father."[102] The psycho-history lesson we may learn

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[101]Nelson A. Miles, Serving the Republic (First
publ., 1911; Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1971),
p. 238.

[102]J. George Wright, Report, Commissioner--1891,
I, p. 412.

from Wounded Knee is that the experience of the Great
Father remained elusive for America throughout its
history.

> ... the demon of the place and the unappeased
> ghosts of the dead Indians act within the un-
> conscious or underconscious soul of the white
> American, causing the great American grouch,
> the Orestes-like frenzy of restlessness in the
> Yankee soul, the inner malaise which amounts
> to madness, sometimes.[103]

> ... in the Indian the spirit of the land is
> still vested; it will be until other men are
> able to divine and meet its rhythm. Men must
> be born and reborn to belong. Their bodies
> must be formed from the dust of their fore-
> fathers' bones.[104]

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[103]D.H. Lawrence, _Studies in Classic American Literature_, p. 36.

[104]Standing Bear, p. 248.

AFTERWARDS.

Wounded Knee, Sand Creek and
My Lai: Massacre and Meaning
in American History.

It is not difficult to understand the incidents
in Southeast Asia if one knows anything about
Wounded Knee. The recent report of a government
committee stating that My Lai was so out of
character that it raised the defense of tem-
porary insanity for the soldiers participating
shows an appalling lack of knowledge of American
history.[1]

In 1868 the Sioux became the first nation to
militarily defeat the United States. In 1968 it looked
as though North Vietnam would be the second. Both of
these nations were viewed by Americans as technologically,
culturally, ideologically and racially inferior. By
successfully thwarting the armed might of the "greatest
nation on earth" the Sioux and the Vietnamese thwarted
white America's masculine power. Both on the plains of
the West and in the jungles of Vietnam, America was ren-
dered anxious and insecure by more primitive nations.[2] That

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[1]Vine Deloria, Jr. (ed.), Of Utmost Good Faith
(New York: Bantam Books, 1972), p. 255.

[2] Suggesting that the Indians and the North
Vietnamese and Viet Cong occupied similar psychological
territory in American consciousness is not simply fanciful
speculation -- noris it coincidental. At Senate hearings in
1965 General Maxwell Taylor discussed the difficulties of
the pacification program in Vietnam as follows: "... it is
very hard to plant the corn outside the stockade when the
Indians are still around. We have to get the Indians farther
away in many of the provinces to make good progress." Ter-
ritory outside of the control of the South Vietnamese govern-
ment was called "Indian country" by American officers. "It

technological inferiority was more than compensated by
a psychological superiority; driven by the need to pro-
tect and defend their Motherlands, their tenacity and
tactics overcame technological disadvantages. Wars
separated by one hundred years of history and five
thousand miles of ocean elicited strikingly similar res-
ponses from the American public. These similarities
are highly suggestive from a psychoanalytical viewpoint.

In 1969 three hundred and forty-seven Vietnamese
civilians, mostly woman and children, were gunned down by
a company of American soldiers on a routine "search and
destroy" manoeuvre in the hamlet of My Lai. Photographs
of dead woman and babies piled into a ditch shocked
Americans. They wondered how American boys could have
committed such an atrocity. Most Americans, I would
hazard a guess, have never seen photographs of the dead
of Wounded Knee or read accounts of the Sand Creek massacre.

A Congressional committee investigated My Lai
and, like the committee which investigated Sand Creek, was
outraged and disgusted. They refused to believe that good
American boys did such a thing to unarmed woman and child-
ren. Like Sand Creek, America wanted to understand the
My Lai massacre as an act of "abnormal" men, perverted men,

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was a joke, of course, no more than a figure of speech, but
it put the Vietnam War into a definite historical and mytho-
logical perspective... . To the American settlers the defeat
of the Indians had seemed not just a nationalist victory,
but... the triumph of light over darkness, of good over
evil, and of civilization over brutish nature. Quite un-
consciously, ... similar language /was used/ to describe
/the/ war against the NLF." Francis FitzGerald, Fire In

men whose sadistic thoughts were not shared by the
nation as a whole.[3] But a team of psychiatrists found
that the men involved (including commanding officer
William Calley) were "sane." In fact, "My Lais" were
not an extraordinary occurrence in Vietnam.

The statements of soldiers who either parti-
cipated or observed American atrocities in Vietnam re-
veal a type of anxiety which psychologically links them
to the soldiers of Colonel Chivington's command in 1864
and those of the Seventh Cavalry in 1890. One soldier
saw two platoons set fire to a hamlet and then machine-
gun the fleeing women and children (the Hotchkiss guns
of Wounded Knee). Others saw Americans rape, torture
and mutilate Vietnamese women[4] (like Sand Creek).

> /We/ went through the villages and searched the
> people... the women would have all their clothes
> taken off and the men would use their penises
> to probe them to make sure they didn't have any-
> thing hidden anywhere and this was raping but it
> was done as searching.[5]

War correspondents knew that "many soldiers used to carry
around in their wallets pictures they had taken of Viet-
namese men and women in obscene positions, obscenely
wounded."[6]

The Lake; The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam
(Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Co., 1972), pp.
367-8.

[3]See report of the congressional committee
which investigated My Lai, cited by FitzGerald, p. 370

[4]FitzGerald, p. 372.

[5]Testimony of Scott Camille, "Michigan Winter
Soldier Investigation," p. 3. Cited by FitzGerald, chapter
13, fn. 21, p. 466.

> And when you shot someone you didn't think you
> were shooting at a human. They were a gook or
> a Commie and it was okay, 'cause, like, they
> [the American officers] would tell you they'd
> do it to you if they had the chance.[7]

Frances FitzGerald also recounts that in the barracks
late at night an experienced sergeant would tell stories
about Viet Cong atrocities: women and children murdered,
prisoners tortured, victims' ears or genitals cut off.[8]

The actions of Americans in Vietnam and the
images and character they gave to the "enemy" suggest
the same unconscious forces at work as those behind
American action and imagination on the Western frontier.
Frustrated sexuality, normally hidden from public
view, surfaces in military actions which merge
the "searching" and raping of Vietnamese women. And
stories of "VC atrocities" served the same psychological
function as stories of "Indian atrocities," allowing
Americans to indulge their forbidden sexual fantasies.
The "enemy" on the plains and in the jungles was, above
all else, a sexual threat to America.

> The expressiveness of the soldiers' language
> made even more explicit the fact that these
> stories were largely fantasies -- and fantasies
> of exactly the same sort that the Americans had
> created about the Indians and Prospero about
> Caliban. ... GIs mentally stripped the Vietnamese
> of their humanity in order to deliver themselves
> of their own guilty desires.[9]

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[6]FitzGerald, p. 371.

[7]Testimony of Scott Camille, loc. cit. Cited
by FitzGerald, p. 371.

[8]FitzGerald, p. 371.

[9]Ibid.

The "penis probe" of Vietnam is the "genital head-
piece" of Sand Creek. Massacre and mutilation, rape and
torture -- fantasized in (projected onto) feared others,
acted out by oneself -- express frustrated American
masculinity as symbols of primal rage.

In Vietnam it was hard, if not impossible,
for Americans to distinguish by appearance between
"enemy gooks" and "allied gooks;" it was usually diffi-
cult for Americans to distinguish between "friendly"
and "hostile" Indians on the plains. It was easier not to
make the distinction at all. America's genocidal aphorism,
"the only good Indian is a dead Indian," was translated
into a faulty syllogism for Vietnamese genocide: "since
all Communists in Vietnam are Vietnamese, and since the
only good Communist is a dead one, then all Vietnamese
had to be killed."[10]

"Punishment" and "destroying their morale" were
the justifications -- psychological justifications --
advanced by the Joint Chiefs of Staff for continued bombing
of North Vietnam in the face of Defense Secretary McNamara's
evidence that bombing could not reduce infiltration from
the North.[11] America needed recognition of its power
and authority by the North Vietnamese; in effect, it
wanted them to accept the role of an "inferior" nation.

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[10]Ibid., p. 373.

[11]Ibid., p. 375.

America did not want to fight an equal in Vietnam.
It did not want to recognize that an entity different
from itself. (Communist, Yellow, Agricultural, Confucian,
Buddhist, etc.) could be equal to itself; for in that
recognition America's narcissistic world-experience
would collapse, leaving in its place only the experience
of existential dread. Bombing the North and "Peace with
honor" were policies of psychological defense to avoid
facing the crack in America's looking-glass. North Viet-
nam refused to accept "punishment," however, and America's
persistence in a strategy of attrition thus became a
strategy of Vietnamese annihilation.

> The American military commanders would have
> been shocked or angered by such a charge, but
> in fact their policy had no other military
> logic, and their course of action was indi-
> stinguishable from it. By 1969 South Vietnam
> had become one of the three most heavily bombed
> countries in history -- the other two being
> Laos and North Vietnam.[12]

Like the Indian, the Vietnamese were offered
the choice of "Civilization" (democracy as understood by
America) or death; the offer is the crystallization
of America's narcissistic world goals. The offer and the
goal are generated by America's need for a fulfilling
experience of masculinity in the face of on-going maternal
deprivation.

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[12]Ibid.

Americans have always been a people with
marked genocidal proclivities: our systematic
extermination of the Indian, the casual killing
of American blacks during and after slavery,
and our indifference to dropping an atomic
bomb on a large civilian populace... reflect
this attitude.[13]

The more America proclaims its masculine iden-
tity as "the greatest and most powerful nation on
earth -- second to none" the surer we may be that its
masculinity remains unfulfilled and that maternal love
remains unconsummated. Psychologically, American his-
tory is a nation's lust in action with all its atten-
dant consequences. The dead of Wounded Knee, the dead
of My Lai speak as husks of expended spirits, wasted in
shame.

> Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame
> Is lust in action; and, till action, lust
> Is perjured, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame,
> Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;
> Enjoyed no sooner but despised straight;
> Past reason hunted, and no sooner had,
> Past reason hated as swallowed bait
> On purpose laid to make the taker mad:
> Mad in pursuit, and in possession so;
> Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
> A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe;
> Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.
>   All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
>   To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

-- Shakespeare, Sonnet 129

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[13]Philip Slater, The Pursuit of Loneliness, p. 33.

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