

Ideology and Bed-Wetting

A case is an instance of something. What the textbook rebellion exemplified is the not-wanting-to-know that I have called agnosis. Far from being peculiar to fundamentalists or mountaineers or the uneducated, agnosis limits the thought and action of virtually everyone everywhere. But to illuminate this universal condition we have to "get down to cases." To take the case for the problem would be a grave mistake. What leaders of the book rebellion said and what the book objectors wrote have furnished ideas that allow us to explore specifically a state of mind common in some degree to the rest of the world. Extremity heightens and clarifies what may be too easily passed over ordinarily, and the blunt enactment of attitudes in Kanawha County makes it easier to follow out their consequences and trace back their origins.

Since fear increases agnosis in any type of person, the more that conflict, want, crime, environmental poisoning, and other negative forces gain strength the more the mind tends to retrench. Conservatism is rising all over the world, but conservatism is not a mere political ideology. Among other things, it is a direction in which very different types of people move when they become anxious. The defense perimeters of the mind are the parameters it places on knowledge and understanding. Book censorship is only an outer symbol for this inner state of siege.

Leaders of the textbook controversy boasted that their example set rolling a conservative buildup that swept the country by the eighties. However large their role, it is true that during the latter seventies America went their way. This was reflected only partly in censorship itself. The momentum gathering there set off alarms throughout the publishing and educational worlds that sound more insistently even at this writing (1988). In 1979 Edward B. Jenkinson wrote:

Since the battle of the books in Kanawha County in 1974, incidents of censorship or attempts at censorship have increased markedly. During the 1977-78 school year, more incidents of removing or censoring books occurred nationally than at any other time in the last twenty-five years.¹

In 1981 Stephen Arons:

Incoming battle reports include a nationwide survey made public April 30 by its sponsors, the Association of American Publishers, the American Library Association, and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. The survey indicates that the nation is in the midst of a surge of book censorship which seems designed to cut off independent thought at its educational roots. . . . Responses . . . point to the involvement of more than 20 percent of the nation's school districts and 30 percent of its school libraries in challenges to literary works and textbooks. . . . The AAP report understates the magnitude of the movement. . . . Judith Krug, director of the ALA's Intellectual Freedom Committee, is alarmed that the number of reported incidents of attempted book censorship in school and public libraries ballooned immediately after the November 4 election of Ronald Reagan, and has continued at a record rate along with the rising fortunes of the new right.²

In 1985 *USA Today* reported:

Efforts to censor books, films and curriculum in public schools rose dramatically this year with incidents reported in 46 states. . . . The liberal People for the American Way found a 37 percent increase in censorship over the 1983-84 school year. "People who used to be content trying to remove *Catcher in the Rye* or *Huckleberry Finn* have set their sights on the entire curriculum," said Barbara Parker, spokeswoman. . . .³

At the end of 1986 the lead article on the front page of a Sunday *Houston Chronicle* was "More Books Rejected as Censorship Effort Grows":

"In the last year, censorship reports to us have soared by 35 percent across the country. More and more school districts are reporting attempts, and half are successful," said John Kean, anti-censorship chairman of the National Council of Teachers of English.⁴

The conservative buildup became apparent in many other single-issue contests besides censorship. Factions coalesced to lobby and get votes for school prayer and private schools and against abortion, women's rights, pornography, and gay rights. Jimmy Carter's sponsorship of the Equal Rights Amendment and his efforts to tax unintegrated private schools spurred tremendous organizing and lobbying by opponents among both Democrats and Republicans. Powerful coalitions emerged in time to help elect Ronald Reagan in 1980, someone formerly regarded as too extremist to ever bid successfully for the presidency. Armed with hit lists of undesirable candidates, these coalitions raised funds and waged voting campaigns in local and state elections as well as national.

Two such coalitions were the Moral Majority, headed by TV evangelist Jerry Falwell, and the Pro-Family Movement, headed by Washington political strategist Paul Weyrich. These joined forces with each other and some smaller organizations under the general rubric of the New Right, which had several leaders, one of whom was its fund-raiser Richard Viguerie, also publisher of the influential *Conservative Digest*. Another was popular TV evangelist Pat Robertson, who worked for collaboration between Protestant fundamentalists and conservative Catholics. Estimating combined forces at around 80 million in 1980, Robertson said, "We have enough votes to run the country. And when the people say, 'We've had enough,' we are going to take over."⁵ The election of Reagan somewhat fulfilled this prophecy. In a memorandum of August 18, 1986, the Reagan administration's Private Sector Task Force recommended, as part of its antidrug campaign, that federal officials should start an "education-information program through the churches, with particular emphasis on the Christian Broadcast Network [Pat Robertson's network] and its constituency,"⁶ a proposal that the American Jewish Congress criticized as unconstitutionally singling out one religion or church. In building CBN into a \$182,000,000-a-year conglomerate, Robertson had set the prototype for evangelical TV ministries and for their political liaisons.

By the time Robertson became a candidate for the presidency in 1987 many preachers and politicians of the New Right were undergoing public scrutiny or trying to survive outright scandals, like the Reagan administration itself. Another pioneer evangelist, Oral Roberts, had recently drawn much satiric criticism for having vowed to God that he would die if he did not receive enough contributions to save his organization. Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker, leaders of another evangelical organization called Praise the Lord, were ousted upon revelation of sexual and financial misconduct. When Jerry Falwell took over PTL, the Bakkers and their followers engaged him in acrimonious inter-pastoral recriminations. Meantime, after setting up several victories for the extreme right in the 1986 congressional elections, New Right leader Lyndon La Rouche was charged by the federal government with obstructing investigation into possible misuse of tax-exempt funds for political purposes—an allegation also leveled at Pat Robertson himself, who was trying to protect his presidential campaign by carefully distancing himself from his beleaguered fellows in the television ministry.

This unraveling of much of the New Right paralleled of course the unveiling of the Iran-Contra affair. A typical figure linking Reagan administration activities and private efforts was Carl "Spitz" Channell, a conservative activist convicted of defrauding the government while trying to raise funds for the Nicaraguan Contras in tandem with the covert intrigues of Lt. Col. Oliver North. Two former advisers of President Rea-

gan, Michael Deaver and Lyn Nofziger, were investigated for peddling influence, and the attorney general himself, Edwin Meese, was fighting charges of both financial misconduct and impeding justice in the Iran-Contra investigations. The long shadow that these hearings cast over the end of Reagan's presidency cast doubt also on whatever underlay his great popularity and that of the movement that helped carry him into office.

On grounds of pure economic self-interest, working-class Americans would generally do better to vote for liberal candidates, who favor unionism and champion the wage earner rather than the shareholder. Since workers number a majority, conservative candidates would have a very hard time ever winning if they could not hold out other incentives. So it is usually only through social and moral issues that conservatives can carry an election (though a bad showing by either party always helps the other.) It is this central but little discussed fact that makes the rise of the New Right so important. The Reagan victories represented a triumph of alignment between a standard Republican platform and these social/moral issues, the equivalent of the teaming up of Elmer Fike with the fundamentalist ministers.

The social/religious constituency of Reagan became very disgruntled during his first administration because he dragged his heels on their issues and rode herd instead on economic problems and overseas policies. He tried very hard, however, to exempt unintegrated private schools from taxes, well aware that Carter lost to him partly over this issue. Significantly, as the 1984 election neared, Reagan began wooing Hispanic Catholics with talks on school prayer and abortion (knowing that his other domestic policies left them little other reason to vote for him) and then pulled out the stops on "pro-family" issues in 1984 itself, notably with his sponsorship of a bill for school prayer.

Interestingly, it was during this same decade of mid-seventies to mid-eighties that Moslem fundamentalists also became extremely active in politics. It was they who assassinated Egypt's President Sadat, took over Iran under the Ayatollah Khomeini, and began a crusade frankly called a holy war (jihad). Hard times often bring on reactionary moods and governments; that is a predictable response to anxiety about cultural changes, unemployment, inflation, and general loss of control over society and environment. The attacks in America on the separation between church and state seem to be part of a worldwide impulsion to reinstitute theocracy. Whereas our deistic, Freemasonic founding fathers created America as a theocracy in the sense of government guided by universalist spirituality (consider "In God We Trust" and the mystic symbols of the Great Seal as shown on the dollar bill) but disjoined from even their own Christian church, the theocracy popular so far today is government by a

particular, culture-bound religion. Inasmuch as such a trend can give a religion access to an army, it sets up the dreadful possibility of holy wars on all sides.

In fact, anti-Communist crusading, which intensified considerably under Reagan, goes far beyond the opposition of economic ideologies or even the competition between superpowers for hegemony. The most zealous "pro-family" anti-Communists say they have God behind them. In an interview in a 1980 issue of *Conservative Digest* Paul Weyrich said:

What is behind the thrust against the traditional family values? Well, first of all, from our point of view, this is really the most significant battle of the age-old conflict between good and evil, between the forces of God and forces against God, that we have seen in our country.

We see the anti-family movement as an attempt to prevent souls from reaching eternal salvation, and as such we feel not just a political commitment to change this situation, but a moral and, if you will, a religious commitment to battle these forces.⁷

Let's compare this declaration of holy war with another by Robert Welch, founder of the John Birch Society, which is named for a man said to have been killed by Chinese Communists and is dedicated to all-out war on Communism. At the end of *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society* Welch places an epigraph from *The Life of John Birch*: "With his death and in his death the battle lines were drawn, in a struggle from which either Communism or Christian-style civilization must emerge with one completely triumphant and the other completely destroyed."⁸ Such salvos are like those of the Ayatollah Khomeini, which justify sending scores of thousands of frequently unarmed teen-agers to suicidal deaths in a crusader war such as that with Iraq.

The Kanawha County case prefigured an increasing American trend toward a sort of de facto theocracy, an evangelical governance of the nation that, under the guise of defending freedom against Communism, feels justified in moving toward a police state at home while intervening militarily in countries abroad. During Reagan's 1984 reelection campaign, the New Right presented itself as the wave of the future—progressive, positive, and powerful. It depicted Democrats as old-fashioned, negative crybabies. Reagan's landslide victory demonstrated the appeal of this promotion, which even won over voters young enough to be Reagan's grandchildren. But this greatest conservative triumph of contemporary America represented actually a whole country running scared in the face of accumulating social and technological change, a perpetually precarious economy, and chronic dread about international conflicts.

In the Kanawha County book rebellion we can see the true heart of the New Right—its basis in fear and faithlessness—for the attitudes and

causes championed by the dissenters were reiterated during the 1984 conservative tide that swept Reagan into the White House for the second time. Explicitly or implicitly, the Republican Convention of 1984 opposed the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion, the nuclear freeze, detente with the Soviets, desegregation, prosecution of civil rights violations, and federal regulation of corporations to protect the environment and the consumer, but favored high defense spending, saber-rattling against the Soviets, school prayer, the dropping of programs for minorities and the poor while increasing harsh measures against criminals (who come mostly from deprived communities), greater military intervention in Central America, strong and secret roles for the CIA and FBI, and more police powers to seize and search. No matter how elegantly argued or suavely expressed, the feelings and ideas behind Reagan's conservative triumph were essentially the same as those voiced in Kanawha County by people fearful and faithless enough to think that if their children encountered new ideas they would turn their backs on them. However much wealthy, well educated, well bred, and well groomed New Rightists may wish to disavow their country cousins and poor relations, they're all in the same ideological family.

Epitomizing this kinship is the conservative think tank in Washington, D.C., the Heritage Foundation, which played a significant part in the antitextbook campaign and in the formulation of policy for the Reagan administration. As mentioned, it sent to Charleston its legal counsel to aid in defending book dissenters arrested for civil disturbances such as blocking buses and schools. So close was the Heritage Foundation to the Reagan administration that the proposals it submitted for legislation on such matters as the budget were difficult to distinguish from drafts that the administration ultimately proposed.

The first-term Reagan administration adopted many Heritage Foundation ideas — abolishing the Education Department, extending tax breaks to segregationist schools, limiting laws that bar colleges from discriminating against women, re-introducing prayer in school, and cutting student aid programs, among others — as its own.⁹

Among a half dozen solid New Rightists that Reagan appointed to the Department of Education was Dr. Robert Billings, former executive director of the Moral Majority (awarded a doctorate by a Tennessee Ph.D. mill later discredited by the state) and Charles Heatherly, former director of special projects for the Heritage Foundation.

After the reelection, Heritage Foundation officers boasted on television interviews of their high score in influencing policy, and it was common knowledge that a great deal of interaction habitually occurred dur-

ing both of Reagan's terms between this private conservative lobby and the president's faction of the government. Elmer Fike was a member of the foundation, as he said; and as the letter from Congressman Phillip Crane quoted in chapter 3 shows, the Heritage Foundation was actively seeking to help other such censorship campaigns as the one in Kanawha County. It behooves thoughtful citizens to consider what it means to support, on the one hand, the violent and illegal tactics of people fanatically opposed to learning and thinking for oneself and, on the other hand, the policies of the president of the United States. But the Heritage Foundation merely symbolizes the deep affinity between the rowdier elements of fundamentalist conservatism and the sophisticated organizations of the New Right, which do not of course firebomb schools or make grammatical mistakes as the creek preachers did but who second their motions.

What links them across differences in style and decorum is, contrary to all New Right rhetoric, a profound lack of faith, a negative conviction about human beings, a fear of individual development, and an authoritarian reliance on a sort of group mind. The positive, forward-looking, born-again, free-spirited individualism claimed by the New Right represents an attempt to overcome this negativism by denying it and by fantasizing its opposite. The fact is, as we will see, that planks in the platform of this reactionary conservatism correspond to symptoms in the syndrome of agnosis, which in the wake of Hitlerism many psychologists studied extensively as the "authoritarian" or "prefascist" or "dogmatic" personality. A salient trait, they determined, is the rejection of self-examination in favor of crusading against evils one unconsciously wants to eradicate from oneself. The resurgence of this very dangerous tendency under an exuberant "progressive" conservatism bears looking into indeed.

But in keeping with the very principle of looking within, we must not ascribe this trait only to certain groups just because they tend to act out or betray it most evidently. Preferring aggression to self-development is a universal tendency, and it is quite clear that under stress virtually anyone may become more guarded and regressive, regardless of political affiliation. Thus many poor, working-class, and minority people voted for Reagan in 1984 because he seemed strong and reassuring even though his actual policies went against their interests. It is, in fact, the deep disturbances of today's world that account for so much retrenchment into religious fundamentalism and extreme rightism. So let's examine agnosis not as a party matter but as a malady to which anxiety makes anyone susceptible.

The last period of comparable anxiety occurred just as modern depth psychology and psychoanalysis were reaching maturity. Out of this con-

junction was to come research of importance to understanding the syndrome at hand. It was the period of worldwide depression, unemployment, and bitter aftermath to World War I that led into World War II. Alarm at the appeal of Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco prompted psychological investigation of the fascist personality well before the blitzkrieg itself tore across Europe.

In his monumental *Escape from Freedom* (1941) Erich Fromm applied to history and politics such clinical concepts as that of sadomasochism and explained the German lower middle class's enthusiasm for Nazism as a longing to escape from the self-responsibility of freedom into authoritarian submission. During the decade following World War II behavioral scientists launched research into the fascist-prone personality with all the moral passion kindled by the Holocaust and by the feeling that such a close call for civilization simply could not be allowed to occur again. In our own era of chronic anxiety about international tensions, terrorism, and the possibility of nuclear incineration, a review of this research may be more than merely appropriate.

In 1950 the team of Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford broke ground with *The Authoritarian Personality*, which aimed to relate ideology to personality and which set lines of inquiry still framing major research and theory today. From the perspective of a survey of research in 1978 Goldstein and Blackman synopsized the authoritarian portrait in this way (*Cognitive Style*):

The authoritarian individual is proper and concerned with status and success, probably stemming from his parents' insecurities with status. This parental concern and anxiety results in strict training practices. This strictness leads in turn to a repression of faults and shortcomings. Aggressive impulses that cannot be expressed against parents are displaced to weaker minority group members. The faults and shortcomings that were repressed are projected onto the minority group members, thus providing rationalizations for aggressive behavior.¹⁰

Another team pursued dogmatism, rigidity, intolerance of ambiguity, and other traits of the authoritarian syndrome and, led by Milton Rokeach, published in 1960 *The Open and Closed Mind*. Followed by parenthetical remarks of my own, here are principal traits they give as characterizing the closed mind:

—General lack of discrimination. (A tendency to lump things together has been regarded by Heinz Werner and other developmental psychologists as characteristic of less developed individuals.)¹¹

—Orientation toward an extreme past or future. (This represents avoidance of the here-and-now in favor of conserving the old, associated with authority, or trying, from anxiety, to program the future.)

– Passive and forgetful. (Reliance on external, rewards-and-punishment authority naturally induces passivity. Forgetfulness may seem a less obvious consequence until one considers how an active putting together of knowledge for oneself makes the parts easier to remember because of the meaningful coherence.)

– Isolation of particular beliefs and disbeliefs from each other. (This lack of consistency owes no doubt to the fact that the person is not thinking for himself or herself but taking over from the authority a conglomeration united mostly by certain emotions, which provide consistency indeed.)

– Self-contradiction. (This must follow as a consequence of the lack of consistency among ideas. Consistency exists in the unconscious motivation of the personality but not in the avowed ideology or overt behavior, where one looks for it. Inner conflict usually leads to self-contradiction.)

– Paranoia. (In the book objections this showed as counteroffensive to attacks against parents and Christianity and America that were not made in the texts but were read into the texts by the objectors. In his classic "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," Richard Hofstadter connected paranoid traits with conspiracy theories held by zealous partisans.¹² Senator Joseph McCarthy's hot hunt for Communists in America was an immediate inspiration.)

– Belief in an unfriendly world. (Here we are getting down to basics, and to causes. This is the emotional premise from which not only paranoia but the other traits as well are "logically" derived. This may be hard to see sometimes because it is buried under an overcompensatory emphasis on "goodness.")

– Disbelief in one's capacity to cope. (Coupled with the last, this makes for a very negative and explosive outlook that explains why one might not want to know and might accuse others of morbidity, depression, and violence.)

Hypothesized for the sake of further research, these traits have been generally confirmed and extended by subsequent investigation. In another survey of research of 1978, *Dimensions of Personality*, Howard Ehrlich reports that people who scored high in dogmatism or closed-mindedness also

– had lower sensory acuity, were more dependent on external support in evaluating sensory input, and restricted their sensory experience as in tasting fewer foods;

– responded less favorably to new art and music, preferred popular to classical music and classical to avant-garde (whereas low-dogmatics as a group liked all three equally), and generally rejected novelty and change;

– as patients, took longer to accept blindness and to complete inpatient psychiatric treatment;

- as psychiatric nurses themselves, gave less effective treatment to their mental patients and responded to them more as if the patients were inferior;

- liked each other better than others liked them;

- were low in self-esteem, self-reliance, and self-confidence;

- were high in ethnocentrism, prejudice, and rejection of others, rejecting other religions in proportion to dissimilarity with their own, rejecting artists, scientists, leftists, physical deviants, and other ethnic groups;

- were more conservative and more confident in accepted beliefs, accepted the tried and true despite inconsistencies, and were cautious about new ideas;

- on certain tasks conformed more with confederates whom they regarded as high-status than with those they regarded as low-status;

- in the 1964 and 1972 elections chose more conservative candidates.¹³

“The rejection of self and the rejection of others,” writes Ehrlich, “is highly correlated and probably has the same developmental basis.”¹⁴

Some of the most telling description comes from Rokeach himself, who wrote that his team’s findings confirm the assumption of similarity across “personality, ideology, and cognitive functioning,” indicating very close interaction among emotion, beliefs, and intelligence. Confirmed too has been the strong correlation he found between dogmatism and anxiety, and this anxiety seems to be a factor of child-rearing. Low scorers in dogmatism

express more ambivalence toward their fathers and mothers, report being more widely influenced by persons outside the immediate family, and report having had relatively fewer anxiety symptoms in childhood. On the other hand, the reports of middle and closed subjects are on the whole similar and, compared with open subjects, they reveal more glorification of parents, a more restricted influence by persons outside the family, and a greater incidence in childhood of thumb-sucking, nail-biting, temper tantrums, nightmares, walking and talking while asleep, and bed-wetting.

All of the preceding suggest the hypothesis that when ambivalence toward parents is not permitted expression it leads both to anxiety and to a narrowing of possibilities for identification with persons outside the family. Both, in turn, are interpreted as leading to the development of closed belief systems.¹⁵

It is illuminating to juxtapose this earthy set of findings with an hypothesis the researchers made as stated early in their report.

It is assumed that the more closed the system, the more will the content of such beliefs be to the effect that we live alone, isolated and helpless in a friendless world; that we live in a world wherein the future is uncertain; that the self is fundamentally unworthy and inadequate to cope alone with this

friendless world; and that the way to overcome such feelings is by a self-aggrandizing and self-righteous identification with a cause, a concern with power and status, and by a compulsive self-proselytization about the justness of such a cause.¹⁶

What a fascinating profile. Surely more and more of us earthlings are tending to fit it as national and international conditions degenerate. Perhaps this sketch can help to explain the current increase in censorship, racism, intolerance, factional militance, reversal of civil rights, and general repression. It has been noted that as employment goes down the membership of the KKK rises. Especially astute, I believe, is the connecting of feelings of unworthiness and inadequacy to self-aggrandizement and self-righteous identification with a cause. Censorship is just such a cause.

The striking idea of "compulsive self-proselytization" deserves thought. One way people try to control their feelings and their behavior is to keep telling themselves what it is they must or must not do. This occurs considerably as self-recitation in one's inner speech, a reversion to the child's prattle as it talks itself through some action it is just trying to master or has difficulty getting itself to do. When inclined to deal outside with inner matter, we may just keep exhorting other people to do what we are trying to get ourselves to do. We all do some of this, but the more we feel inadequate or under pressure to please an authority by behavior that seems beyond our capacity, the more we may resort to self-proselytizing, trying to convert ourselves to principles and behavior that did not arise from within, that still feel alien. If also not much given to going inward (which the researchers labeled "anti-intracception"), we may make a shrill cause out of the difficult program so that we can in exhorting, denouncing, and proselytizing others create outward drama that will rebound to activate ourselves to do as we are admonishing others to act.

I felt this phenomenon at work in the book objections on such themes as challenging authority, animality, and materialism, faith in absolutes, or seeing the good side of things. I felt I was listening to someone much tempted underneath to kick back at authority (as in the book rebellion itself), who felt ideals of spirituality were taxing his or her sensuality and self-interest to the limit, and who was having a difficult time indeed keeping faith in the absolutes held before him or her and not falling into depression over the fears of incapacity and futility. (Look again at Avis Hill's song "Give God the Glory" [at the end of chapter 6], which tells of his near-suicidal feelings before finding Christ.)

Most "born again" people I have heard of hit rock bottom in their life and escaped despair and ruin only by the feeling that Christ intervened in their negative train of acts and thoughts and saved them.

The life on the frontier did not allow for an optimistic social gospel. One was lucky if he endured. Hard work did not bring a sure reward. Therefore the religion became fatalistic and stressed rewards in another life. The important thing was to get religion, get saved, which meant accepting Jesus as one's personal savior. It was and is a realistic religion which fitted a realistic people. It is based on belief in the Original Sin, that man is fallible, that he will fail, does fail. We mountaineers readily see that the human tragedy is this, that man sees so clearly what he should do and what he should not do and yet he fails so consistently. . . .¹⁷

Testimonials by former criminals and drug addicts make up an important part of evangelical services or jamborees of the Billy Graham sort, as they do of Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. These examples enable the distraught to admit their own "sins" and to accept a "higher power," and this performs a valuable psychological service. Thus some people may need an external authority to guide them until they develop inner discipline and direction toward salvation.

Of great value in understanding agnosis is a psychological scale originated over thirty years ago by H. A. Witkin and refined by others ever since. It runs from "field-dependence" to "field-independence" and concerns how much one relies on sources outside one's own mind, whether things or people, for knowledge and judgment. The main idea of it may best be gained from visualizing the original experiments that gave birth to it. The subject was asked to indicate when a pole he or she was holding within a simple frame was upright. To the extent the subject relied on kinesthetic sense of gravitation and verticality—on inner reference—he or she was deemed field-independent. To the extent the subject relied on visual alignment of the pole with the frame—on outer reference—he or she was deemed field dependent.

Researchers wondered if a person tending one way or the other in this purely perceptual situation would also tend to refer inwardly or outwardly in, say, problem-solving or social situations; experiments expanded into cognition and interpersonal relations. "The dimension reflects the degree to which people function autonomously of the world around them,"¹⁸ says Donald Goodenough in *Dimensions of Personality*. The field may be either the physical environment or other people. "People who are oriented toward external fields in perceptual-intellectual functioning also tend to be oriented toward external (interpersonal) fields in social situations."¹⁹ "People are self-consistent in mode of field approach across a wide variety of situations."²⁰

Goodenough says that one pole of the dimension is as good as another: an airplane pilot might do better to orient from instruments or horizon line sometimes than by inner gravitational feel, and a field-dependent person is more out-going. But he says too that "The evidence indicates that the indi-

vidual moves from a state of relative field-dependence to a state of greater field-independence during the course of development from childhood to young adulthood."²¹ Field-independence increases between ages eight and seventeen and then levels off. If we assume that maturation consists of growth toward better functioning, then field-independence would seem more mature.

The fact that the child is most egocentric but also most field-dependent is worth thinking about. This paradox really means that the child *confuses* internal with external orientations and that it *must* orient toward the field but does so *subjectively*. The key concept, after all, is *dependence*. To be oriented toward the field is not the same as to depend on the field.

Perhaps the bipolar model misleads; perhaps we do not have to acquire one at the expense of the other but may, rather, retain external orientation when it is appropriate—in ministering to others, for example, or when perception may be disarranged and unreliable—and yet be able to operate autonomously when that is most appropriate. It is this factor of deliberateness, of will and consciousness, that should perhaps be joined to the current concept of this dimension to clarify its relationship to maturity. Some people orient to the field by necessity and limitation, whereas others may orient more freely both ways. People classified as field-independent, on the other hand, may include actually two kinds—those who *cannot* switch to field-orientation when that would be most appropriate and those who are not limited to the one pole but may will either way because of a consciousness of both at once.

Nomadic hunter-gatherer cultures, which have only a loose structure outside the family and require individuals to function self-reliantly, foster field-independence by their child-raising, which is permissive. Farmer-herder societies, on the other hand, which are sedentary and elaborately structured, and require that people get along well and obey rules, foster field-dependence by a strict, authoritarian upbringing. So historically, cognitive style has shifted with cultural evolution but shifted in the opposite direction from the individual's growth toward field-independence.²² (In other words, ontogeny does not recapitulate phylogeny in this case.)

This understanding casts the permissiveness of one faction of modern American culture into a different light from that of the stereotype of lawless degeneracy. Since much of America has evolved beyond the sedentary agrarian society with its need for field-dependency to a society resembling hunter-gatherers in respect to mobility, confrontation with constant change, and the need for improvisation, the shift back to permissiveness probably represents a further adaptation to cultural conditions putting a premium on self-reliance. But of course we have to distinguish some parental indifference and haplessness from this purposeful permissiveness. Allowing children to wise off becomes something very different when

combined with making them fight their own battles and with punishing them for babyishness and passivity, all of which parents do in many nomadic and hunter-gatherer societies. Perhaps, however, many Americans have moved intuitively with their subculture in this direction but do not understand the real function of permissiveness and therefore mix up the kind that produces independence with a kind of anything-goes resignation to today's cultural confusion (which drives others to attempt greater severity).

The research evidence seems to show that an authoritarian upbringing plays a major role in limiting thought and behavior (given the special meaning of "authoritarian" as developed across the studies reviewed here).

Some investigators have argued that authoritarian child-rearing styles are conducive to the establishment of authoritarian government that, in turn, help perpetuate an authoritarian nationalistic style (cf. Erikson, 1942; Fromm, 1936, 1941; Reich, 1945). Brown (1965) noted that authoritarianism is characteristic of low-socioeconomic, less-educated individuals. For example, Stewart and Hoult (1959) postulated that authoritarianism is negatively correlated with the number of social roles an individual is able to play. They reviewed a number of studies showing that high authoritarianism is found among the less educated, older people, rural residents, the disadvantaged, members of more dogmatic religious organizations, members of lower socio-economic groups, and social isolates, as well as among people reared in authoritarian families. In each case, the potential for mastering a variety of roles is limited. Stewart and Hoult postulated that individuals with limited role experience cannot take the roles of others outside their reference group, that they cannot understand or sympathize with such outsiders, and that they feel hostile toward, and reject, members of such outgroups.²³

The earlier researchers' assertion that "people who are high in political and economic conservatism tend to be high on ethnocentrism and anti-Semitism"²⁴ receives partial confirmation in this finding: "A number of studies have indicated that individuals high in authoritarianism have a rightist political orientation (Hanson, 1975). For example, Thompson and Michel (1972) found authoritarianism related to political conservatism and Christian traditionalism" (*Cognitive Style*).²⁵ *Dimensions of Personality* also reports that authoritarianism is associated with conservatism, but the conservative-liberal dimension is complex. Studies do not show, for example, that Republicans score higher on authoritarianism than Democrats, the respondents differing only on particular issues or candidates. Working-class Americans are liberal in economics but conservative on social and moral issues.²⁶ Both Republicans and Democrats embrace a broad band of the liberal-conservative spectrum,

and in some localities one has to register with the dominant party simply to enjoy a significant vote (in primaries).

After saying "The prefascist authoritarian should be especially responsive to conspiracy theories of social, political, and economic events," à propos of Hofstadter's theory of the paranoid style in public life,²⁷ Dillehay goes on to point out in *Dimensions of Personality*: "Given that the paranoid style seems to be especially associated with right-wing causes on the American scene, we can still speculate that susceptibility to the appeals of this style increases with the general stress of bad political, social, and economic times."²⁸ As an example of hard times influencing people toward authoritarianism he cites the study of

Sales (1972), who examined rates of conversion to authoritarian and non-authoritarian churches during economic good times and bad times in the United States. He studied the period 1920 to 1939 since it contains a period of economic prosperity (1920-1929) and one of depression (1930-1939). He found that conversion to authoritarian churches (the Southern Baptist Convention, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the Roman Catholic Church) increased during economic bad times and decreased during better periods. For the nonauthoritarian churches (the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, the Congregational Christian Church, the Northern Baptist Convention, and the Protestant Episcopal Church) the findings were just the opposite: Conversion rates for these churches decreased during bad times and increased during good times. The implication is that authoritarian appeals of certain churches were more successful during periods of elevated anxiety with everyone, not just with the especially susceptible authoritarians. Sales' classification of churches as authoritarian or nonauthoritarian, it might be added, seems to be based on a careful consideration of the content and style of belief in the different denominations. The denominations do differ in terms of such matters as submission to authority, condemnation versus toleration of outgroups, and emphasis on sin and transgression.²⁹

By no means is research in psychology itself a favored authority. But some investigation does convey how much family and social relations and cultural norms shape thought and feeling and influence the political and religious convictions that determine public policy—which in turn influences the family and individual and stirs the circular forces on around again.

The wisest use of research findings would surely be to help understand what opens and closes the heart and mind in ourselves as individuals and to recognize these causes and effects when multiplied into social forces. In modern America most child-rearing blends permissiveness and strictness in subtle ways that make either-or discussions absurd. Some parents spoil their children rotten between beatings, while other parents cruelly

criticize their children for not having used their freedom as the parents had intended. Coldness has a way of cutting across research parameters, and anxiety has a way of flourishing throughout human community. Either will *make* a child stupid – which is the main thing we need to keep in mind – and no I.Q. test will tell us how intelligent that child *might* have been. Fear cripples, and any upbringing that relies on it for control will brutalize and stupefy. But anxiety induced in adulthood by hard times will also feed the bigoted, dogmatic, censorial potentiality of personality that everyone bears within.

We may want to believe that our ideology comes from on high – as indeed it should – but we can learn from some of this psychological correlation just how much it comes instead from personality, and personality from culture. At least this is so until we transcend personal conditioning. And there is the rub: to the extent *I think as I was treated and reared*, I suffer from partiality and some degree of ethnocentrism and dogmatism. *Any* human and material conditioning produces limitations of the sort that turn up in these research findings. (And who has grown up free of fear?) The more we base our ego on certain localized identities – of family, church, race, nation – the more strongly do we bind our mind to the limitations of each of these human partialities.