

**ESCAPING THE FROZEN LAKE:
INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL IDEALISM MANIFEST
AS FORMS OF RELIGION AND RELIGIOSITY**

A Dissertation

by

FRANK S. STANFORD

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

December 2003

Major Subject: Sociology

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December 2003

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ABSTRACT

Escaping the Frozen Lake: Individual and Social Idealism Manifest as Forms of
Religion and Religiosity.

(December 2003)

Frank S. Stanford, B.S.; M.A., Texas A&M University

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Stjepan G. Mestrovic

The role, basis for, and function of idealism in religion and religiosity are examined as both an individual and social phenomenon. Religion is divided into two manifestations of idealism that are described as conventional religion and unconventional religion. William James' frozen lake, used as a metaphor for religious personality types, is expanded to include a range of fear and depression based emotional forces that prompt various forms of idealism. Karl Marx's concept of utopia, Max Weber's protestant ethic, Emile Durkheim's anomie and totemic worship and Georg Simmel's social forms are described and compared as idealist manifestations.

Robert Bellah's American civil religion is extrapolated to an institutional form of civil religion in Texas A&M University's Corps of Cadets as an organization utilizing totemic and philosophical ideals, collective representations, collective effervescence, civil ceremonies and intolerance as elements of the social solidarity. A personal, qualitative account of the indoctrination into this unconventionally religious organization, including quotations from members, is compared to the paradigms of

religion as theorized by Bellah and Durkheim in order to display the use of idealism in the institutional setting.

Theoretical perspectives of consumerism as described by George Ritzer and Campbell, as well as Thorstein Veblen's account of devotion are shown to have idealistic representations on both an individual and social level. This dissertation takes the reader from a concept of a non-supernatural existence to the use of idealism in various forms in order to assuage the awareness of painful aspects of reality. A method for a positive, naturalistic approach to the frozen lake is offered.

To my Dad
Walter O. Stanford

Who has always been there for me

and

Captain David Allen
(1963-2003)

A fellow navigator who would have been

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I could write a dissertation alone on the help I have received for this project. And I am referring less to the actual help on the project that you are about to read, but on the project that has been my academic life. This project began ten years ago with my returning from the Caribbean after having lived on a boat for two years. I yearned to discover and understand the purpose and meaning of life – not a short order - and thought what better place to develop such answers than the Philosophy department at my alma mater. Several dissertations could be written on my experiences during the time I managed to squeeze a master’s degree into five years. Or possibly a European screenplay.

At this point I would like to thank John J. McDermott to whom I owe deep gratitude for single-handedly dragging me out of the hole I had dug for myself during those years. Both my master’s degree in philosophy and the dissolution of my fear and loathing for academia occurred as a result of his determined efforts. A number of my own efforts to thwart my success were met with the words, “G-ddammit Stanford... you WILL (insert list of necessities), and you WILL walk that stage!” And I did. Thank you John, none of this could have happened without your efforts.

During my tribulations in the Philosophy department I discovered a professor in the Sociology department who, like John McDermott, lectured to packed classrooms and had a known following of students as a result of his scholarly and critical, yet relaxed and highly interactive teaching method. Along with a number of graduate students from various departments around campus, including the Philosophy department, I had become

a regular student of Stjepan G. Mestrovic. “Stipe” was the impetus for my traveling to the former Yugoslavia during the Bosnian War in order to film the destruction and publish columns for both the student, and the local newspaper. A year following the completion of my master’s degree he encouraged me to enter the Sociology department’s Ph.D. program.

He offered to be my dissertation director and told me, “You can write on whatever you like as long as it has to do with Sociology.” This statement has, upon many occasions since, haunted both of us and prompted the already somewhat familiar exclamation, “G-ddammit, Frank, (insert name of famous theorist) didn’t mean THAT, that’s YOU!” As chairman of my committee, Stipe has been both an invaluable emotional support and an invaluable academic support during the process of this degree, as well as a driving force leading to its fruition. Which has happened. Thank you Stipe, I could not have gotten this far without you.

The topic of this dissertation came about as a result of my venturing into the classrooms of the Anthropology department. Although I hadn’t met her, Sylvia Grider’s name was frequently published locally as an academic authority on matters of traditions as part of the culture of Texas A&M University. Ever fascinated with the cultural mindset of this university, of which I was very familiar, I sought out Sylvia to discuss my wishes to learn from her academic insights of such phenomena. I took several courses from Sylvia, further developing my interest in this university’s culture as following religious patterns. Although my topic broadened from what I originally planned, she has been a tremendous source of information and intellect throughout this

process, both in the classroom and during informal conversations. Thank you Sylvia, this topic would not have developed (or pass through the Graduate Office's scrutiny) without you.

The courses I have taken from Alex McIntosh have been both useful and terrifying, as there are fundamental elements of Sociology with which I am not friends. However, to my pleasant surprise, Alex apparently found my theoretical, post-modern interpretations of consumerism and religion to be interesting at least and somewhat agreeable at most, with his own theoretical perspectives. And I took literary and theoretical license to the hilt in his classes. On occasion, and without Alex's consent, I have exclaimed in response to Stipe's red-faced frustrations, "But, Alex thought my stance on that issue was a viable perspective." It has purchased me some academic freedom on several occasions, and that, Alex, is a testament in itself to both your academic and personal nature.

I have understood from other graduate students that it is to my misfortune that I never had a class with Ed Murguia. But because of numerous accolades, both from students and professors alike, I asked Ed to be on my committee. Although a former student of Ed's raved about him to me, it was when I saw Ed's interest and understanding of the very abstract art I have in my home that I knew he belonged on the team. Ed is unflappable and perspicacious with abstraction, a necessity for my sociological writing.

I would also like to thank my graduate advisor, Mark Fossett, for his guidance and patience in untying the apparently unprecedented departmental knots I unwittingly

produced. Perhaps I have redeemed myself by indirectly helping to rewrite departmental policy clarifications. Katherine Henderson's course was extremely helpful in the acquisition of qualitative data I have used in chapter IV. Department Head Rogelio Saenz always made "being sent to the office" an amiable and productive experience. Dessie and Barbara, administrative assistants extraordinaire, always knew how to help me with information and to ward off the administrative disasters to which I am occasionally prone. I would also like to thank my fellow graduate student classmates for politely putting up with my frequent classroom outbursts and what may have seemed like intellectual diversions, even though Socrates and I know they really weren't.

In addition to these key individuals which made my experience in the Sociology department a pleasant and productive one, I have a great deal of gratitude for the support of Brian Stagner, Michael Hand, Rhoda Steiner, Kevin Swan, Mike Pinney, Paul Ketchum, Brooke Smith, and my neighbor Nancy Schneider who unsolicitedly now knows more about sociology than any layperson deserves to withstand. You all have helped keep this road smooth for me.

And many thanks to the girls at the Fox and Hound for serving me beers every Friday night during the last four years. Those beers, smiling faces, and my art in which many of them have participated, have played as important a role in this endeavor as any other.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Human emotion is a magical thing. Magical, that is, in the sense that it can interpret itself as magical, and particularly in the sense that it is very much not that which language defines as “magical.” That having been said, and additionally that this is not a topic implementing neurology, it is important to make clear the direction whence this proposal and dissertation are stemming. Being that my interests lie in the human nature of the mind, the emotion it produces, its societal manifestations, and its *human* nature alone, the essence of this theory presupposes an existentialistic approach to reality.

This theory of the emotional mechanisms of the individual and social mind allows for interpretations of the nature of that which is conventionally and traditionally regarded as “God,” “gods” or anything falling outside of “the natural” to be assumable as false. I say *allows for* because having no knowledge of the existence or nonexistence of a supernatural, but a theory for the motivation for its human mental creation, I argue that entities such as conscious supernatural beings, religion, religiosity and the shape of the individual and societal emotional personality, stem from mental and social mechanisms alone. In other words, were there no existent supernatural, humankind

This dissertation follows the style of *American Sociological Review*.

would have the drive and capacity to invent it. This invention is what this theory assumes because this theory will show that it likely *could* be and this assumption of invention helps solidify the theory. The emotional mechanism spawning this invention of ideal and how it manifests in what I regard as two forms of religiosity, is what I shall try to explain.

Admittedly, this assumption cannot be shown to be the case regarding the supernatural, and I am aware of the possibility that this assumption is false; however, my argument is that the human mind, which is both separate but irremovable from the social mind, like a molecule in a solution, can and does construct its own emotional reality as if it has nothing to do with any forces deemed supernatural or conventionally religious. This theory holds that the individual/social mind has the power and motivation to be the creative force of that which not only manifests itself as both conventional religion, and what I deem unconventional religion, but what will later be defined as religiosity, spirituality, the philosophical as emotional, the emotional, and how they appear in the personality of the individual and the society.

Much of this dissertation is inherently philosophical. We are dealing with ideas, concepts, ideals, suppositions and theory to the extent that a philosophical groundwork is not only necessary, but unavoidable. Regardless, this is a work of sociology and how the philosophical and emotional elements of human beings as individuals create the same elements in society. It is perhaps against the grain of established academic social thought to suppose that the mind of the individual creates the mind of society instead of the reciprocal. However, to see the societal organism is to see the individual organism

and vice-versa. It is to understand that the mind of the individual is a metastaticization of the mind of the society and vice-versa as well. These two elements, inextricably intertwined, are mirrors of each other caught in a seemingly infinite reflection. This theory holds not that a direct and linear influence departs from one element attaching itself to the other, but that they are entities in, and of, themselves as well. It is for this reason that so much attention will be paid to the mind and the emotionality of the individual.

This all supposes a broad theory to be sure, but linking these human facets together - religion, religiosity, spirituality, the philosophical, the emotional – displays that an existential, non-supernatural explanation of reality can be shown to be the apparent case, or at the very least to be viable by itself as the case. It is not as much an argument for an existential reality as it is an argument showing all that is needed for the individual and the society to flourish emotionally, and that which is deemed spiritual, exists within those elements.

Being that this theory deconstructs what is most often the very nature of the deepest sense of meaning in the human condition, it is also important to note that the conclusion following this theory does not, as alluded to in the previous sentence, hold that upon complete deconstruction we are left with a handful of nothing, as is often associated with existentiality. In fact, I argue that the case is actually to the contrary, that what is left in your hand is actually the *discovery of your hand*. This depth of discovery can promote awareness and empathy for others' "hands" which on the societal level promotes an emotional, empathic, individual, self-imposed social order: a social

order not based upon sanctions levied by culture, government or religious ideology, but a social order created by the mass - as individuals - through the most basic extrapolation from emotional self-awareness, the emotional awareness of other.

I do not have an illusion that this theory could ever be actualized on a mass scale or could ever yield such a utopian outcome. In fact, like Marx's communism, it leaves out a very important aspect of humanity, the emotional element manifest, religion, religiosity and the need for idealism to drive them. To Marx, emotional attachments and voids are not only unnecessary, but also detrimental. However, my theory, which would culminate into the idea of social order described above, includes emotional attachment as *necessary* and only in particular contexts to be detrimental. What this theory as culminating into a social order does *not* include is the emotional nature of humanity to fill innate philosophical-as-emotional voids with an internalization of an ideal. Awareness and empathy for others' conditions does not entail a salve for emotional wounds, fear of death, or for the deepest questions concerning purposes and meanings in life.

Durkheim, on the other hand, in opposition to Marx regarding the importance of religion, holds most generally that religion is both true and good. Philosophically, this must mean that truth is a relative plane that exists within the believer's constructed reality, having little or nothing to do with any approach at objectivity. It is true that kangaroos have supernatural aspects, to the Aboriginal. It is true that Ganesha will remove obstacles in one's life, to the Hindu. To this, I can understand and agree, but

only in the context of subjectivity. Outside of subjectivity, these truths cease to exist or at the very least cannot be shown to exist in any objective manner.

Apart from the notion that religions are true in this Durkheimian sense, it also shows that they are positive. What makes them positive, to Durkheim, is that functionally they behave as elements of societal survival. This includes a wide range of functions, including purpose and meaning, as I mentioned above, and a host of other aspects such as cohesion, and manners of support. What my theory addresses, however, is that the same emotional element that for Marx keeps individuals and society from progressing and dealing with reality in order to fix their own problems, is the emotional element that for Durkheim keeps society stable and actually fixes problems by not recognizing them as problems. This sort of similarity will arise again below when I discuss Weber and Marx.

Putting this idea parabolically, to Marx, villagers faced with a drought destructive to their crops and livelihood are wasting their time and energy dancing and making offerings to a god or gods for much needed rain. Religion is useless and presents no relief from the problem at hand. The villagers should spend this time and energy figuring out a way to irrigate the crop, salvage the crop, find an alternative food source, or move to a less arid environment. The positive outcome for this absence of religion is that real-world problems can be solved or prevented. I regard the negative outcome of an absence of religion to be that in failure to solve real-world problems of any kind, as well as for deeper psychological issues, there exists no emotional assuagement for the non-physical pains in life.

In contrast to Marx, Durkheim considers the religious activity that this scenario promotes for the villagers to be a provider of a collective effervescence, a group cohesion and a manner of support for the village. If any of the villagers starve to death, the religion will aptly assuage these losses by providing the village with the belief that the dead are not only not really dead, but are on a journey now, perhaps without the problems of famine or any other pains of physical life. The living villagers have a deep purpose and action to take in order to promote rain and stop the famine, and the dead are not really gone, in fact, they are better off.

The negative aspect to Durkheim's stance is that villagers starve to death in pain every time there is a drought, instead of moving or taking effort to fix the problem. This aspect is disregarded in that there is never perceived to be a problem without hope and a believed action to counter it. The manner in which these versions of practicality or logic are perceived in this account is the difference between Marx and Durkheim. How I see these accounts as similar with regard to the value of religion is that to both theorists religion emotionally removes villagers from a particular reality. To Marx it matters that dancing fails to make it rain, to Durkheim it matters that they are dancing collectively. The as-close-to-objective reality that religion removes is indeed that human action cannot cause rain. What we call specious reasoning can certainly be used to deny this, but the importance lies in how one perceives the outcome. Which matters more, starvation, or how one interprets it?

As with any theory, the definition of terms used and how they will be used in this dissertation is of utmost value. Because many terms are subject to a very wide spectrum

of interpretation, the terms used will only reflect the meanings defined below for the purpose of this theory unless otherwise noted. The following terms are often confusing given a wide range of contexts, so they will be defined as per their usage in this endeavor.

God. This term as written with a capital “G” can be used as a name for a very general supernatural entity to a very specific one. God is what some regard a grand cosmic consciousness or creative force and however that is defined at one end of this spectrum, to a very specific entity of which a great deal of specific information is written about at the other end of this spectrum. The term is entirely relative to the mind of the culture and the mind of the individual. For my purposes, the word God is referent to whatever supreme entity may or may not exist outside the realm of what is known as natural reality. In other words, in this dissertation God is a human conceptual construct, both on the individual and the social level, of what is inexplicable outside the realm of the social as well as the hard sciences. My theory holds that any anthropomorphic characteristics given to this idea are human and social psychological projections made in order to create a more “knowable” ideal in the sense of providing an ability to relate.

god. This term as written with a small “g” is what this theory regards as being what is thought of as, or is being treated as an entity in the range of a *supreme being, a supernatural being, or an entity of ultimate meaning or ideal*. As these definitions hold, “God” to some individuals and societies is simply “a god” to others. The reciprocal is true as well. For instance, for Muslims the term “Allah” refers to “God,” but to some non-Muslims the term “Allah” denotes “a god.” We may also use the term “god” in the

manner that an individual or society that is obsessive with regard to something concrete or symbolic, such as money, sex, or fame is used as a “god” that is worshipped in the non-conventionally religious sense of the term “worship.” Money and sex are not thought of as supernatural, but they can be thought of as entities or achievements of ultimate meaning or an “ideal.”

Worship. Webster’s Dictionary defines “worship” to include both the sense of the divine [pertaining to a deity, a god] and to idolize or “have great love or admiration for.” As with many terms of this broad nature, a great deal of metaphor is implemented. To say “worshipping gold,” for instance, is metaphorical for gold as being *a god* in the sense that it is, or is associated with ultimate meaning in life. This is an important distinction as even those who could be said to “worship” gold and its acquisition as being ultimately meaningful, would make a distinction between gold and whatever force was believed to be the creator of the universe. Were gold to be believed as the supernatural creative force behind the universe then gold would then be worshipped as God, or “a god” of the “worshippers” to those other than its worshippers in this context.

Religion. When I use the term **conventional** religion I am referring to a ritualistic practice involving the worship of what are believed to be supernatural deities or a deity. The Aboriginal worship of Kangaroos in Australia is regarded as a conventional religion in so far as the kangaroo is believed to have some spiritual or supernatural aspect to it that distinguishes it from other beings. Worshipping Gonesh is of the conventional religion of Hinduism; Jesus, likewise with Christianity, but not Jesus in Islam, as Muslims do not worship or regard Jesus to be supernatural. Animism is a

conventional religion, as is Voodoo, Satanism and Paganism. When noted, I will also use the term “religion” in reference to any practice involving the broadest sense of the term “worship.” This use of the term “religion” does not necessarily include a concept of the supernatural.

A starlet who “worships” fame as an ideal, has as her religion the practices entailed in achieving that ideal. She may identify with the conventional religion of Catholicism but also practice the worship of fame as **unconventional religion**. Both involve worship, ritual, practice and belief in an ideal, but the conventional religion is the only one addressing creation, eschatology and like concepts regarding the supernatural. Likewise, the acquisition of money is a religion to those who idealize and “worship” currency and/or that which it represents.

To say that science is a religion for some is to say that it too is idealized and worshipped even though by definition science is natural, rational and intended to be replicable. Buddhism does not traditionally hold Buddha to be a supernatural being; therefore, Buddhism, although religious in nature - having worship, ritual, and philosophical idealism - does not meet the requirements to be a “conventional religion” as it will be used in this dissertation. It is in line with this reasoning that Buddhism is often referred to as a philosophy to distinguish it from a religion. Of course there is dissention to this definition at the very least from a functionalist standpoint.

Functionally, in many senses, the practice of Buddhism or any other religious practice not necessarily incurring the supernatural, is indeed socially and psychologically similar. The importance of the difference, however, is that the element of the supernatural, the

ideal that I propose does not exist, is still going to exhibit itself in some other form, or laterally to it as an ideal, among most of those whose religious practice does not entail it. Buddhism arguably maintains a system of ideology, certainly ritual, and many other characteristics that would qualify it as an unconventional religion, although it is considered to be conventional in the East.

Religiosity. For the purpose of this work the term religiosity refers to the nature of the mind to emotionally attach to an ideal and to manifest itself in some physical or mental activity that further promotes this attachment. Religiosity in the **conventional** sense entails those thoughts and actions that maintain a level of attachment to religion in the conventional sense. A Jew having a particular level of religiosity refers to the level at which the Jew adheres to the Jewish religious belief system regarding the supernatural.

Religiosity in the **unconventional** sense refers to the level of emotional attachment, mental and physical activity that promotes adherence to a belief system that may, but does not necessarily, include conventional religion and the supernatural. Robert Bellah's definition of American Civil Religion found in chapter four denotes a religiosity surrounding that, which is America and American. My use of the term "religiosity" in this unconventional manner however, may entail, but does not require the addition of any references to God in the civil religion as it does for Bellah. Nor does it require that which is "civil" to be involved. The passionate reverence for a football team's mascot, a celebrity such as Elvis, the dollar, winning, fame, beauty, God, a god, Gonesh or Buddha is essentially the same mechanism albeit to varying degrees. They

entail worship of an ideal with an attempt to make the ideal a reality in the individual mind and in the mind of society.

Existential. This term has many definitions and nuances in philosophy, as it entails the thought of numerous philosophers who either regard themselves existentialists, and/or are regarded by others as existentialists. For the purpose of this theory the term will be used to denote the concept or manner of thought that is concerned with things from the standpoint of their being existent, but not what essence or purpose or any meaning an object may or may not have, or is thought to have or not have.

A number of theorists hold views on religion and religiosity in the conventional sense as well as what I regard as the unconventional. Some of these views appear to be quite contradictory such as theories put forth by Marx and Durkheim regarding religion, but I think they differ only from a particular logical perspective and in theorized social importance. My approach to the existential emotional mechanism that yearns for, creates and utilizes an ideal encompasses them all as a similar manifestation. I will discuss at length what I see as otherwise unapparent similarities between these theorists - Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Simmel, James and Bellah among others - and how they fit into this broad theory I propose. But first, I will start with what I see as the root of thought that leads us into this vast emotional arena.

A cockroach, when placed in a cardboard structure such as a half-gallon milk carton with the top opened up, will slowly crawl about the bottom investigating the walls and the puddles of milk it may still hold. It is trapped, but assumedly has no concept of

its plight. It will wander about the bottom of the carton without fervor or particular purpose for some time. But if the top edge of the carton is set on fire, such that the flame which burns cardboard and wax very slowly, begins to descend upon the cockroach, the cockroach will continue its manner of movement until it becomes aware of its impending doom. True and immediate danger has not yet reached the cockroach. Neither heat nor smoke has descended sufficiently to be harmful, but the awareness has an effect such that frantic efforts to escape its entrapment ensue. Similarly, William James writes of individuals being what he calls *once-born* or *twice-born*. The difference between his two categories of individuals is that the twice-born individual's perspective of life is one in which the individual experiences life as though they live on a frozen lake. The lake is surrounded by cliffs, from which there is no escape. The lake is melting with every passing day. This individual is aware that his plight is to eventually fall through the ice to his death. This perspective has a great deal to do with the individual's perception of the nature of existence.

People become deeply aware of their mortality at different points in their lives. For some it is too early in life perhaps, killing an innocence often retrospectively regarded as the pleasure of youth. Others consciously or unconsciously enlist a myriad of methods to assuage the fear of this impending fear of the apparent and the unknown. Neuroses, obsessions and compulsions develop in a vast spectrum of levels to provide escape from thoughts of mortality.

Passionate interests and hobbies would not likely fit the Freudian definition of neuroses, but I claim the level of obsession for these endeavors is just simply lower,

although in cases it may very well not be, thus fitting the Freudian definition. One can quite readily escape one's entrapment by being submerged in any project or task of most levels of interest. For some it takes a higher level of interest than others, but none-the-less, a diversion is created. However, deep emotional attachments to other beings provide the healthiest diversion as the deepest sense of purpose and meaning. It is at this point that religion and religiosity, both conventional and unconventional, both individual and social, enter as a primary reaction to a component of the human condition.

It seems appropriate to start with Plato who arguably is the start of all [at least Western] thought encompassing the empirical, the rational, the individual and the social. Being that his philosophy is not only vast but exceeds the parameters of this work, we will discuss only the Allegory of the Cave (Plato 1961), and only as it fits into this theory. The most compelling theme woven into this story is what describes Plato's "simile of the line." This line entails Plato's metaphysics as categories of understanding. The story of the cave is metaphor for an individual discovering and emerging from each level of understanding until he reaches a point being "out of the cave" where by an ultimate or clear understanding of reality is obtained.

But there is a lesser-acknowledged social aspect embedded in this story as well. The story begins with a prisoner in a cave who is tied with other prisoners such that they can only see in one direction towards projected shadows on the cave wall. They have been in this position their entire lives. Aside from what these projected images represent to Plato, the prisoners are a society and they have a very similar perspective of reality for reasons not germane to this story. One prisoner breaks free and makes his way to the

mouth of the cave, all the way becoming aware of different realities of which he and the others have been unaware.

The prisoner escapes to discover his own enlightenment of an apparently objective reality, but this is not where the social importance of this story lies. Plato then speculates that were the prisoner to return to his society after becoming aware of a deeper reality, and inform the others, they would kill him.

The assumption of murderous action is in reference to the death of Socrates, but from a social standpoint it exemplifies the power of, and the attachment to, an internalized ideal of reality for a society. Even in the face of one of their own, having had an experience that at the very least would be worth considering, the tale of an experience that might free them from their plight no less, the society chooses to hold on to what it has accepted as truth. The perspective of this dissertation holds that this adherence to an internalized perception of reality is a deep emotional attachment to what is believed. To become aware of anything else would not only threaten, but also destroy the comfort of belief in a perceived knowability. So we have attachment regardless of rational accounts of its validity. This leads us directly to Georg Simmel.

The Simmelian perspective asserts that individuals, which can be extrapolated to society, act, think and believe according to their emotions and construct a rationale in order to provide for them a logic that will, in a perceived rational manner, allow the emotionally driven mental or physical event to be internalized as a sound and decisive conclusion. In other words, reason follows emotion and emotional attachment. Examples for this perspective abound. The reason I deserved to be beaten by my spouse

is because I burned the toast. My son could not have killed that man because he would never do such a thing. The smallest fork must only be used for the shrimp [as an emotional attachment to the ideal of what is regarded as “proper dining etiquette”]. I believe the scriptures of my religion because the scriptures say that they are true. And so on. Simmel’s social philosophy will be further shown to exemplify this aspect of human nature as it pertains to my theoretical perspective.

The Parsonian functionalist perspective has some similarity to Durkheim’s functionalism with regard to religion in that it is concerned with normative consensus, social control and a sense of meaning. These characteristics are also found in Durkheim’s theory but seem to me to have something of a Kantian “thing in itself” (Kant, 1927) perspective, that social interactions as cohesion and collective effervescence are social ultimate realities manifesting themselves phenomenally. They provide functions to society, but they are truths that stand alone. Kierkegaard branches off of this perspective to hold that truths surrounding religion and its activity stand alone, but as a subjectivity. To say that religion provides a function for society is difficult to dispute, but to take a step behind this function is to say that religion and religiosity are functional elements of emotionality as well as philosophical elements from which some emotionality emerges.

The manner in which functions of religion have a negative impact to Marxist theory is the same mechanism that provides a positive impact in Weberian theory. To speak of the term “alienation” brings forth Marx’s concept of religion as being an alienating force. This term, *alienation*, much as it sounds, is a negative aspect of society

that for Marx is an effect of religion. Other factors in society directly produce alienation for Marx as well, but it is the religion factor that is best juxtaposed to the Weberian concept of alienation, which conversely holds religion to be an antidote. Although on the surface, albeit a thick surface, these two theorists hold views in complete opposition to the role of religion in society, this theory of emotional manifestation draws the two together beneath that surface in such a way that they coincide.

Weber (2002) coins the term “iron cage” to denote the state of humanity to be removed and essentially *alienated* from a profound sense of anti-materialism forged from basic Protestant ideology. This term as written speaks of Protestant culture and how it begets capitalism, but it also follows an embedded emotional path that corresponds inversely at face value to Marx’s theory, however, upon deeper investigation it follows in and from the same direction. The oppositional nature of the two theorists’ impressions of religion acting upon society is readily apparent. Marx sees religion as an alienating wedge driven between society and the reality that change and progress are entirely within the powers of the people. His oft-quoted statement that religion is the opium of the people exemplifies this viewpoint of religion seen as a purveyor of distorted reality such that society will rely upon it in order to escape its true reality. In so doing, society becomes a restraint upon itself as an entity that can and must fix its own problems. The individual and the society are alienated from reality.

Weber, on the other hand, speaks of the iron cage as a self-imposed constricting force that keeps society in a state of rationalism that is far removed from its aesthetic foundation, the foundation of an ethic that promotes asceticism for a religious principle.

So, Marx claims utter and complete rationality is a savior from the grip of irrational belief; that a Weberian “iron cage” is not only a safe place to be for the progression of society, but also a place from where actual reality can be viewed clearly and without the distortions of religion.

Marx also sees man as pouring himself into a believed god as also alienating man from himself. Much in the same way that a worker is alienated from his production by the purchase of his labor, leaving the worker with a void from whence the product came - his very being - Marx also sees the worship of a god. Marx claims, “The more man puts into God, the less he retains in himself” (2001). In contrast, the Calvinist Protestant ethic of which Weber spoke holds that man was fulfilled and given identity, not to mention salvation, by the purpose of labor and asceticism as a glorification of God.

For Marx, an iron cage of rationality is positive, for Weber it is negative. For Marx, religion is an irrational distortion of reality and a detractor from the development and fulfillment of self. For Weber, religion provides a promotive force for fulfillment, purpose and identity. These are the differences, and list goes on. But *both* theorists are interested in *fulfillment*. Both theorists are interested in an identity that includes *identification with others* but also includes a deeper sense of self that is unfettered and untarnished with the acquisition of material possession. Both theorists hold labor as something both pure and possessing a salvation. A man’s labor is something that is ultimately his, and for both theorists man owes his labor - his very being - to himself. This preceding sentence may seem untrue from the Weberian perspective, as a man’s labor is a tool for some assurance of entering Heaven. But what is a desire to spend

eternity in the most pleasant manner other than a desire to provide yourself with pleasure? To please a god? Why? So that the god will reward you with pleasure. And not simply pleasure, but a salvation from an eternity of pain. The believer is left with essentially no choice, as a believer, that is.

Weber wants man and his labor to have a deeper purpose, one removed from his immediacy in the form of the material, but instead found in the realm of the *external*. Marx too, wants man and his labor to have a deeper purpose, one removed from immediacy in the form of pecuniary compensation but instead found within the realm of the *internal*. So for Marx, man owes himself to himself through his labor. For Weber, man owes himself to himself through his labor by way of an internalized belief system. For both, conventional religion is a vehicle for emotionality, purpose and identity, but for Marx it is a false vehicle and therefore a detractor from those elements as positive manifestations. And if religion is a vehicle for the projection of the self, and if then from a Durkheimian social perspective, being a manner in which to worship one's society, then we can conclude that society is god and the individual is god once-removed from these projections that make object out of subject. In this way Marx and Weber are saying the same thing but using otherwise oppositional terms.

Weber writes with much deeper emotional language than Marx, who arguably writes with none - save an anger - straining, giving birth and zeal to his rationality. But Marx promotes a sense of social connectedness as well, in the form of class identity and class-consciousness. The term "comrade" is laced with a sense of social connectedness. The term is certainly from an idea of Marx that ensures a collective identity. These

terms, in the context of religiosity, are about what I see as a reflected emotional sensation bouncing back off a religious belief, making Weber's externalization of purpose of labor the same thing as Marx's "life" that is put into a product and *should* be retained from it. The iron cage, for both of them, is a state whereby this emotional element is missing. For Weber it is missing if there is no God-purpose, for Marx it is missing if it is taken away from the individual by another, a member of the bourgeoisie, or the grandest bourgeois concept imaginable, the believed-in God. The iron cage to both of them is simply the absence of this "it."

The above is a sample of the comparisons I will be making in the following chapters regarding this nature of human emotionality and how it exhibits itself in aspects social, particularly as it pertains to religion and religiosity. Other theorists who will be compared to this theory and to each other in the same vein, James, Durkheim, Weber and others, will follow in a similar manner. The differences in these theorists' schools of thought abound and are often topics of contrast, but they still share a very common thread that is the human emotional condition from which hangs a tapestry as the basis for what I will argue is the most basic human driving force, occasionally even subordinating food, water and the physical aspects of survival. It is not money that drives the robber baron, fame that drives the starlet, nor religion that drives the missionary. It is the power of how those ideals make them feel.

CHAPTER II

THE FROZEN LAKE

“Mankind is in a position similar to that of a set of people living on a frozen lake, surrounded by cliffs over which there is no escape, yet knowing that little by little the ice is melting and the inevitable day drawing near when the last film of it will disappear, and to be drowned ignominiously will be the human creature’s portion. The merrier the skating, the warmer and more sparkling the sun by day, and the ruddier the bonfires at night, the more poignant the sadness with which one must take in the meaning of the total situation” (James 1961: 124).

It is from this metaphor of perspective written by James and its extrapolations that my theory is spawned. From the awareness of the parallel between the melting of ice and time passage until death, a myriad of emotional ramifications intermingle to become integral to the human condition. This frozen lake example of a view of life can be seen in two ways that could serve usefully in principle for the topic of this dissertation, but one way carries with it the greatest weight.

The less useful manner is for one to see this metaphor in the way that perceiving a frozen lake is simply an awareness that *life on this earth* or only physical, human life will cease for everyone at a point, and without escape. For this particular manner, emphasis is on earthly life because this example could be pertinent to a view of life that

includes a positive, spiritual afterlife or a life after physical death. To be aware that life - as one has known it and will know only of it until death - will come to an end can certainly have a significant emotional impact. Because of this, at the very least, some emotional significance is given to the prospect of death. Lack of awareness of this impending end to an earthly life, however, is for the most part relegated to children, those who are as children in capacity, or those who have had no experience with death whatsoever.

Because the awareness of this plight of mankind that is an end to earthy existence is paramount to my commentary on religiosity, I am forced to consider that a similar type of emotional ramification could still follow from a belief in a life *outside of earthly existence*, an “afterlife”. The emotional importance of earthly existence could still be felt with this belief, albeit to a much lesser impact. In contrast, the more significant view of life and death, the one which holds life on earth to be the only form of living, is the view that fosters profound neuroses, which lend themselves to what I regard as religiosity.

It is this weight, this impending awareness of life being a journey in time and experience, from birth to death, that I think yields the tremendous emotional impetus to desperately seek methods in which to thwart such awareness. It also yields the despair that concludes James’ metaphor. So, for clarification purposes of my theory and this dissertation, the metaphor of James’ frozen lake is not simply one depicting an awareness of the end of one’s life on earth as merely a changing of conscious form, but the assumption of the end of one’s entire and terminal consciousness of any kind.

ONCE-BORN AND TWICE-BORN

This being said, we can take a deeper look into the nature of this plight and its emotional ramifications. First, we will look at what James (1961) meant by his categories of religious-being as “once-born” and “twice-born” (80) marked by whether one sees their time remaining as existent, conscious entities to be a time frame as terminal and inevitable as the melting of a frozen lake. James describes a level and nature of religiosity relative to the acceptance of this metaphor. I will introduce new categories and sub-categories stemming from and expanding upon the ideas of the states of being either once or twice born and what all that entails. These new categories will be treated as points in a linearity of consciousness.

Authenticity

To see the human condition from the frozen lake perspective is what James regards as a “twice-born” perspective, and that the depression and suffering stemming from such a perspective yields an authenticity to one’s life. Authenticity is the element in a thought or experience that makes the mental and physical experience truly one of the experiencer. To think or experience authentically is to own one’s thought and experience without the significant prompting of social forces influencing, directing or

producing those properties. To come to identification with a political party that is the party of one's family and friends, is likely not one of authenticity. Nor would it be likely that identification with a political party that is despised by a parent with whom the individual has great hatred, be an authentic identification. Although it is possible that these identifications may indeed be authentic, it is very difficult to remove the deep social factors that may be involved.

In contrast to the authentic experience, the inauthentic experience is also a "second-hand" (James 1961: 42) experience, or one that is followed, taught, or believed due primarily to social forces. To harbor a racial hatred, a racial respect, follow a religious doctrine, pursue an occupation, or to live in a lifestyle or dress in the manner of a social group in which one identifies due to the influences of others is a second-hand method of living regardless of any objective truths or falsities involved in the method.

For instance, a philosophy professor once gave an example for describing what was and what was not knowledge. The definition of knowledge we were given to adhere to was "justified, true belief." He spoke of a girl in junior high school who was a poor student. She skipped the day her astronomy class learned of the last two planets in the solar system, so she believed there were only seven planets. But to fool her younger brother, she told him there were nine. This story is designed to question whether the younger brother "knew" there were nine planets, and as per our definition of knowledge, he did not, as being prompted by his sister did not qualify as "justified." Likewise, one who internalizes a belief system due to social forces does not have justification or first-

hand thought regarding the system. The little brother second-handedly believed there were nine planets, and in this case he was unknowingly and unjustifiably correct.

It is perhaps easy to see how second-hand knowledge or belief is not necessarily a detriment to the individual or society. In fact, there could be found positive aspects to it, particularly in cases whereby the internalized belief is objectively true. But in cases whereby the socially promoted belief is not objectively true, or cannot be shown to be objectively true such as Shi'ite Islam being the true religion and Lutheranism being a false one, second-hand belief may lead to disdain, hatred, negative psychological factors, and at worst, violence. Yet the mass second-hand belief in either camp will promote a social cohesion in that camp. Social cohesion is often laced with second-hand knowledge and belief because many must be influenced in order to agree upon common beliefs. The tighter this cohesion the more dangerous outside influences and groups are seen to be. And the more dangerous is this cohesive group to outsiders.

In defense of second-handedness, it would be almost impossible to live life devoid of such social influences. A purity of individuality could only exist in a social vacuum such that the individual had no outside influences at all. This would have to include even language which is arguably necessary in order to engage in thought. But this level of second-handedness is not what concerns me, as it is an inextricable element of living among others.

To engage in thought through the use of a socially learned language, wear "Levi's" in an American "blue-jeans culture," or drive a particular vehicle because the popular advertisement caught one's attention, and the like, would perhaps take a greater

conscious effort to avoid than to create a personal, individualized substitute. What I am speaking of as second-handedness is the lack of awareness that these influences are individuality-robbing influences. To wear blue-jeans in a “blue-jeans culture,” purchase vehicles or purses, or think in terms of “good and bad” or “right and wrong” in the way one’s society or sub-culture has defined them, and to believe that one’s decisions were made because jeans are truly the best pants, a Jeep is the best vehicle, or wearing sandals to the office as truly being wrong is to have simply internalized the overt or covert edicts of one’s culture. This is second-hand belief. Second-hand belief plays a large role in the internalization of ideals, which will be discussed later.

Twice-Born, James

The Jamesian “twice-born” individual, however, has become aware and faced the painful reality of mortality. This awareness leads the individual to a Jamesian undulatory emotional nature to living, depression, angst and neurotic behavior. The twice-born individual may also have a passion for religious devotion that far exceeds the dispassionate level of interest in the religious practice and belief of the once-born individual. It is here that I will begin to interject my expansion of this Jamesian concept of being born “once” or “twice.” This altered, expanded version, unless otherwise stated, will be the one to which I will refer throughout the remainder of this dissertation.

The Jamesian “frozen lake” refers specifically to awareness of mortality, but my “expanded frozen lake” although ultimately culminating in the awareness of mortality, also includes an enormous range of other painful realities. These painful realities may or

may not be apparent painful realities in any sort of objective sense, but they include the very subjectively painful awarenesses that are subconsciously or consciously threatening to a belief system that maintains a safe distance from the Jamesian frozen lake. These are realities which, when made aware take the individual closer to the edge of the Jamesian frozen lake, or perhaps to its center. To breach one's shielding that affords protection from awareness of such realities is to enter the first category of the realm of the twice-born, denoted by some elements of panic and neurotic attempts to re-shield oneself. This is the point where passion can become an evidential barometer.

Classic examples include the young woman who, sexually violated as a child, some years later, engages in promiscuous behavior exclaiming how meaningless the act is to her, that she forms no attachments and does not get emotionally damaged by the frivolity and transience of her actions. She may in fact idealize her behavior and actually enjoy a great deal of guarded pleasure from it. This young woman also actively avoids emotional intimacy with partners as she knows at least on a subconscious level that if she comes face to face with her own emotionality and the sexual act becomes one of emotional intimacy rather than frivolous pleasure, she will be forced by her own mind to recognize and experience the agony of her childhood experiences. At this point, the young woman, defenseless from her edge of the frozen lake, is primed to face the frozen lake itself.

It would be common, during a period of depression following this emotional recognition, for the young woman to be attracted to, or become involved in, a conventionally religious practice. If conventional religion is not engaged in, it would

also be common for the young woman to engage in an unconventional religion. She may passionately immerse herself in an endeavor, or begin or increase usage of drugs for the purpose of escaping or diverting this recently recognized painful reality. A drug or an endeavor, such as a political or social cause, may become idealized in this case. If the new idealization of the teachings and belief of a conventional religion are internalized, this pain will be escaped through the use of denial provided by the new ideal. In some cases, all three methods, or a combination of them, including the promiscuity may be used. In these cases, an intense emotional confusion is now the object of defense, as even an introspective glance would expose the hypocrisy of activity. The psychological method will then become one of elaborate situational rationalizations, precariously balanced upon one another in a continuous state of denial, confusion, hypocrisy, guilt, shame, power, diversion and likely rage.

Likewise, a father who in periodic displays of intense rage, beats his son, or his wife, but does not discuss or even acknowledge his actions, is in denial. At any, even distanced, reference to his behavior, he will vehemently deny, divert or angrily respond such as to avoid the emotional realization in what he engages. If forced to face the action, to himself or to another, he may rationalize that “this was how I was raised, and I turned out okay, goddammit!” Full, emotional acknowledgement of his actions is greatly feared, at least on a subconscious level, as it will then force him to acknowledge his own physical and emotional pain at the hand of his own father, and/or the pain of his mother at the hand of his father. And then, were this acknowledgement to occur, the door would be left open for the realization of the pain he has inflicted upon his own son,

and his own wife. And now, once again, we are in a situation whereby this individual is primed for belief in a conventionally religious ideal in order to deny the furthering of realizations now left open by an unguarded emotionality. An unconventional religion may ensue as well.

Both of the above examples are classic ones. It is important to mention that there are many variations of this theme that is the edge of the frozen lake. These two scenarios, albeit common, are not relegated to the genders used in my depictions. Any combination of gender and abuse will play out in a similar fashion, if it plays out at all. It is also important to note that the painful reality that is the edge of the frozen lake does not necessarily entail what is defined as abuse. It may also show itself as the realization of a painful emotional neglect, or absence. I also want to mention that another psychological mechanism, which is a method stemming from denial, is emotional death. In these cases, the individual has either learned, from experience of intense pain, to “shut off” their emotionality, or if the pain occurred at a sufficiently early time in childhood, perhaps they never developed it such that it could be “turned on.” This method of denial is the theme of, and the case of, the character “Meursault” [from the French, “meur,” meaning “death”] found in Albert Camus’ *The Stranger* (1942).

The significance of this “expanded frozen lake” perspective is to provide explanation for driven adherence to belief systems outside of the impetus of mere socialization. Adherence to a belief system provides a shield from the expanded frozen lake, a shield from threatening realities that are thwarted to an extent that will stave off the even more painful birth of further realization, which may occur or is felt to be

threatening. At this initial point of painful awareness, if/when it occurs, it may soon follow that numerous previous beliefs are questioned and then seen as those having been simply internalized at the behest of one's society or a previously unprocessed perception of reality. These minor epiphanies occur like a row of dominoes falling in slow motion, and falling in a very natural succession. Such awarenesses, whether embraced or unsuccessfully thwarted, may lead to a difficult and tumultuous experience of not only a change of realities, but of a change to an awareness of painful realities.

The Sartrean concept of meta-thinking is an intellectual parallel to this emotional event as I have described it. Sartre writes of the basic human mental ability to think about an object. To think about an object is to have that object as the object of one's thought. But to then question one's thought about an object is to abstract the original thought into another object of thought itself. One may then question why one is questioning one's original thought about an object, and so on, ad infinitum. At this point of departure Sartre considers the mind to become a "monstrous impersonal spontaneity" that will take on a life and direction of its own. Concrete, specified thought may still be engaged in, but gone is the lack of awareness to such thought abstractions. Also gone is the previous mental peace, which accompanied the previous state of thought, or in a sense, a lack there of.

Sartre's "monstrous impersonal spontaneity" implies, in Sartre's choice of words, that at least some level of discomfort stems from this jettisoning of prior cognitive simplicity. This discomfort occurs, if for no other reason, the mental method always previously used by the individual has dramatically changed, giving way to the shock of

newness. However, there is an overwhelming nature to this monstrous spontaneity as a point of no return whereby ownership and control of the mind have now been taken over by the mind itself. The very nature of this type of revolution is such that regaining control of the mind is at the very least extremely difficult (Sartre 1936-37).

This nature is of the same type as glancing into a room with a previously bolted door that kept the viewer unaware of its contents. Once the glancing has occurred and the contents of the room have been made aware to the viewer, no matter how briefly, the viewer is now faced with either recognizing awareness of that which the new knowledge affords, or making an attempt to fool himself into believing that he saw nothing, or something else more emotionally palatable. The latter is essentially the plight of the twice-born religious person, whether conventionally or unconventionally religious.

Once-Born, James

The “once-born” individual, in contrast, has a happy, shallow existence largely free of the erratic nature of mind, action and depression that a twice-born perspective entails. The once-born individual sees the universe in a more or less positive vain, accepting its nature but living a dispassionate existence. Such an individual’s lack of passion is a function of the maintenance of their once-born status. This status may be actively or passively maintained. In *The Varieties of Religious Experience* James (1961) denotes the once-born personality as an optimism that:

...may become quasi-pathological. The capacity for even a transient sadness or a momentary humility seems cut off from them as by a kind of congenital anesthesia. (82)

James (1961) includes an excerpt from a text of Dr. R. Bucke of whom an example is made in the description of Walt Whitman as follows:

His favorite occupation seemed to be strolling or sauntering about outdoors by himself, looking at the grass, the trees, the flowers, the vistas of light, the varying aspects of the sky, and listening to the birds, the crickets, the tree frogs, and all the hundreds of natural sounds. It was evident that these things gave him a pleasure far beyond what they give to ordinary people. . . . it had not occurred to me that any one could derive so much absolute happiness from these things as he did. He was very fond of flowers, either wild or cultivated; liked all sorts. I think admired lilacs and sunflowers just as much as roses. Perhaps, indeed, no man who ever lived liked so many things and disliked so few as Walt Whitman. All natural objects seemed to have a charm for him. All sights and sounds seemed to please him. He appeared to like (and I believe he did like) all the men, women and children he saw (although I never knew him to say that he liked any one), but each who knew him felt that he liked him or her, and that he liked others also. I never knew him to argue or dispute, and he never spoke about money. He always justified, sometimes playfully, sometimes quite seriously, those who spoke harshly of himself or his writings, and I often thought he even took pleasure in the opposition of enemies. When I first knew him, I used to think that he watched himself, and would not allow his tongue to give expression to fretfulness, antipathy, complaint, and remonstrance. It did not occur to me as possible that these mental states could be absent in him. After long observation, however, I satisfied myself that such absence or unconsciousness was entirely real. He never spoke deprecatingly of any nationality or class of men, or time in the world's history, or against any trades or occupations – not even against any animals, insects, or inanimate things, nor any of the laws of nature, nor any of the results of those laws, such as illness, deformity, and death. He never complained or grumbled either at the weather, pain, illness, or anything else. He never swore. He could not very well, since he never spoke in anger and apparently never was angry. He never exhibited fear, and I do not believe he ever felt it. (82-83)

The preceding quote by a friend of William James was intended as a description of the Jamesian once-born personality, and there are certainly elements in it that follow my own description of the once-born personality in relation to conventional or unconventional religiosity. However, based upon this description alone, Whitman seems a possible candidate for a following category of mine far removed from James' once-born perspective, yet sharing some particulars to be discussed later.

Once-born, Expanded

From my perspective of what religion and religiosity entails, the once-born individual is one who may follow James' description, and/or have some identity with, or following of, a conventional or non-conventional religion, but lives without a driving emotional force attaching them to it. This individual, having not experienced an awareness of the mortal plight of themselves, at least in a deep, meaningful manner, nor having any other painful reality looming in their subconscious, does not see a plight as placing any pressure upon them at all. This plight is either entirely unfathomed - as is the case with a child, believed to not exist - as would be the stance taught by a conventional religion, or is simply not deeply recognized for other reasons of capability.

For the once-born of a conventional religious identity, an acceptance of a life hereafter, the ritual and general dogma that such a religion may entail in order to secure such life hereafter, and the social acceptance that follows from this manner, all provide what James regards to be this "second-hand" existence. I contend that this existence is a dispassionate, passive delusion that keeps the individual at a safe distance from the frozen lake, the painful realities leading towards it, and all that they entail emotionally and philosophically.

Other factors may keep once-born individuals from the frozen lake as well. It may be an inability to intellectualize their own existence and mortality, either as a

function of mental inability or of the lack of experiences/prompting such that an unexercised ability may be exercised. Those without conventional religious identity may derive their second-hand experience of life from whatever society with which they identify and whichever ideals are accepted by this individual, largely through the identified-with society or sub-culture. In this way, as with complete internalization of a positive religious belief system, a structure of delusions exist in the mind of the once-born such that thoughts of possibilities to any alternatives are nonexistent.

An internalized perception of reality deeply embedded in a societal system of norms, rituals and ideals can provide a completely second-hand experience of existence in which little or no truly individual thought is implemented or even existent. This dispassionate delusion and/or lack of awareness of reality, in comparison to what I will later call a passionate delusion, may seem non-delusional to an observer of the same belief system and will certainly seem non-delusional to its holder, but I contend that the delusion still exists as a deep acceptance of ideals and a socially designated world-view about the way things are - or are not - and what is important and what is not. .

Twice-Born, Expanded

As mentioned earlier, the Jamesian twice-born individual has faced “the frozen lake” to some extent, or directly feels the threat of the prospect of demise. The expanded twice-born perspective, however, entails a wider spectrum of levels of awareness as well as a range of emotional manifestations of awareness. In order to become fully aware of painful aspects of reality, it is necessary that the individual

discover that they have previously thwarted this reality in some way, either by simple lack of awareness, or through a delusion such as denial, among other defenses.

This discovery not only entails that the individual becomes aware of a previous lack of awareness or delusion, but it also forces the door open to become aware of other possible delusions that are still thwarted. For example, to continue with the aforementioned metaphor of glancing beyond the previously bolted door, the viewer made aware of what exists beyond that door will subsequently wonder what some other bolted doors may have hidden behind them. He may wonder what other doors may exist with unknown caches of knowledge of which he has been previously unaware.

If an individual is merely at the edge of the expanded frozen lake, grappling with a painful awareness, he will experience discomfort as a result. If he then does not become aware of a Jamesian frozen lake perspective of finite mortality as reality, then a domino effect of awareness, starting with the first acceptance of painful reality, will likely lead to it eventually unless delusions are utilized as a method of escape. I contend that many otherwise once-born individuals are aware of the possibility of this domino effect at least at a subconscious level, and thereby vehemently defend against “going there” or losing any aspect of their second-hand reality which may lead to it.

I am reminded of an example of this effect told to me by a female graduate student. Up until her sophomore year in college she had what she considered a happy existence complete with family vacations, church affiliation, directions and purpose of study and future occupation. This would constitute a once-born perspective. But in the middle of her sophomore year she received a phone call in her dorm room from her

mother. She was informed that her mother and father were going to get a divorce, that there had been problems for years and they had been intending to end the marriage for some time.

The student claimed that although this event occurred seven years prior, she still remembers everything that was in the room, where it was, and how it was placed. From that point forward she said she no longer took for granted any of her previous beliefs. Her religious identity changed, her political identity changed, her direction of study and occupational direction changed, as well as many other aspects of her life that were previously bereft of scrutiny, repressed, suppressed or thereafter became seen as simple followings of her particular socialization. She experienced a great deal of depression prompted by this initial event and the subsequent realizations stemming from it. She had told me that because she could find no way to pretend her parents' divorce was not true, she had begun to question all of her previously held beliefs and unprocessed assumptions which she realized she had taken for granted as true or unimportant. Rapidly, due to an onset prompted by a solitary experience, she had gone from being once-born to becoming twice-born.

We see that it was not necessary for this student to initially come face-to-face with the prospect of life being as a frozen lake with no escape. In fact, the phone call from her mother had nothing to do with death, religious views of mortality, eschatology or any other aspect conventionally religious. But the student was quickly faced with not only a significantly painful emotional event, but an event that began an intellectual process that led her to numerous other realities of which she had previously thwarted or

was unaware. It also led to the deep questioning and jettisoning of the religious ideology with which she previously identified. She had arrived upon the surface of the Jamesian frozen lake from having been forced to its edge.

There is, however, another possible outcome to the emotional scenario found in this same setting. Let us suppose our student is of the same once-born identities as mentioned previously. She has the same political, religious, future-occupational identities that she has acquired in a second-hand, once-born manner. These identities may either be marginally nonexistent, or rather dispassionate ones, as would be the case in the first category once-born individual, or they may be more strongly held, as would be the case in the second category once-born individual. However, given the deep emotionally afflicting event surrounding the phone call from her mother, this student, instead of going *through* a profound depression and emerging with her own undiverted authentic perspectives, might well have - in a supreme effort to thwart or alleviate the pain of the event, delved deeply into her previously loose identification with a conventional religion. Or in the case that no previous conventionally religious identification is held, she may either, in a deep search for an ideal to divert her fear of continual painful awareness, find a conventionally religious ideal to internalize, or continue to search and/or find unconventionally religious ideals in order to maintain a diversion.

SUBCATAGORIZATIONS

Once-Born

The once-born individual may be in one of two categories. The purely once-born individual is not aware - that is also to say not bothered - for whatever reason, of a disturbing aspect of reality, such as some personal need, failing, violation, abuse, or the possibility of a godless, terminal existence, all of which qualify as the expanded frozen lake. This individual may be sub-consciously aware of such realities but is quite able to thwart thought or distress of them by removing possibilities of such thought becoming conscious through methods like intellectual isolation, control of thought, environment, adherence to an idealism, emotional repression or submersion in a once-born subculture or activity. This category of once-born individual is able to exist in the happy, shallow manner as described by James. However, such activity passively utilized in order to maintain this emotional status may become obsessive and neurotic in order to continue avoiding the painful awareness of reality, and it may become ever more obsessive and neurotic as awareness looms closer and closer overhead. If indeed it does. If this activity commences, the individual is primed to enter the second category of being once-born.

These categories hold fast whether the individual has a conventionally religious identification or not. The conventionally religious, first-category, once-born individual, when threatened with conscious awareness of painful reality will cling more tightly to

their religious belief system, or divert to another. Likewise, the unconventionally religious once-born individual, when threatened with conscious awareness of painful reality will either cling more tightly to their unconventional religion, or divert to another. The most significant criteria for the classification of being once-born is for the individual to have not sufficiently dealt with painful reality such as to produce depression as the manifestation of that acceptance.

James (1961) speaks of once-born religiosity as an “optimistic type” and as being those “...who can think no ill of man or God, and in whom religious gladness, being in possession from the outset, needs no deliverance from any antecedent burden” (79).

This level of religiosity in a once-born individual is of the first category and what I regard to be a *passive delusion*, or a shallow level of awareness of a reality that has been presented to them or that they have internalized. This reality has a captive nature to it as it provides the individual with an emotionally isolated view of the world around them.

This delusion takes little effort to maintain, but is ever-present as a filter to thoughts and events that might otherwise force the individual to consider alternatives to their world-view. An appropriate metaphor for this status is found in the story of Siddhartha Gautama, the first Buddha. Siddhartha was a young prince who lived with his father in a walled compound. The father allowed no sick or aged citizens to remain within these walls so that his son would never have to experience the painful realities of life. This is a purely once-born level of internalization of awareness. But like Plato’s prisoner in the cave, Pandora and the Biblical Adam, Siddhartha, in an act of defiant

curiosity, ventured beyond those walls to discover the reality from which he had been unaware.

For the first-category, once-born individual who does not identify with a conventional religion, any number of second-hand identifications will suffice in the same manner. Identifying with the particulars of one's culture or subculture acts in very much the same way as identifying with a conventional religion. These second-hand identifications do not have supernatural answers to deep questions regarding existence, death and greater purpose, but the purely once-born individual is perfectly satisfied without asking, or even having the need to ask or ponder such questions. Passive delusion is as a wall around Siddhartha's city for the purely, or first-category, once-born.

The second category of being once-born could also be classified as a pre-twice-born standing. It would be difficult to say the individual is entirely unaware of painful realities regarding mortality or other realities, because the actions and manner the individual takes to avoid such realities is spawned from some level of awareness which is likely sub-conscious but nonetheless actively avoided or defended. Logically, in order to be defensive, one must on some level have something to defend against. The individual may be unsure of what is happening to their more peaceful, previous state of mind, if there was one, but continues to ward off painful reality from becoming a conscious state. The purely once-born individual, with little or no awareness of such reality, has nothing to actively defend against and therefore exhibits none of the aforementioned behavior.

The second-category once-born individual who is conventionally religious will use religion much more than the first-category individual. It will become a stabilizing device. Any questioning of the validity of the conventional religion by the first-category individual, prompting a diversion to another conventional religion, is a sign of the looming second category. The second-category once-born status is one that has caught a glimpse of a question, a painful reality, or a reflection of them, but has thwarted an approach to the extended frozen lake with conventional religion, thereby remaining somewhat unblemished by conscious awareness of painful reality. Likewise, the individual who is not conventionally religious may change from one social or personal identification to another in order to maintain the same shallow, mildly questioning, optimistic existence.

I use softened terms such as “glimpse,” “somewhat,” and “mildly questioning” in my description of the second-category once-born individual because the individual in this category is on the verge of becoming twice-born, but not yet there. They may be able to maintain their once-born status until their death, but it will take some effort. There is a wide range of personality types that will manifest themselves in a wide range of behavior in this category. This category sustains the first elements of the use of an ideal by the individual. As will be discussed later, this use of an ideal carries with it numerous ramifications. Some of these ramifications, such as the ideal becoming exposed as merely thus, will force this individual into becoming twice-born.

GRIEVING THE FROZEN LAKE

It is important to be clear in stating that “depression,” in this case of becoming twice-born, follows “acceptance” rather than the more recognized reciprocal. In the widely recognized lineage of “the five stages of grief” (Kubler-Ross 1969) that people tend to experience when faced with a loss, the “acceptance” stage follows the “depression” stage. The reason being is that acceptance is regarded as the end of a painful processing of stages. These stages are regarded as parts of a process ending with a healthy mental state even though an individual may become fixated in any given stage.

The five stages are denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. For the most part, my categorizations of being once-born or twice-born follow loosely in this lineage. The reason for the reversal of order of the last two stages is that in my lineage there is no reality to assuage through acceptance. The frozen lake awaits us all, as it becomes a painful reality at the moment of awareness but is also a reality still yet to come. Acceptance of this reality actually yields depression rather than helps it wane. My procession of stages does contain a final stage, but it is a manner of facing, processing and living in spite of the painful reality rather than allowing it to pass.

Painful reality for a person requires that the person become fully emotionally aware of it, otherwise it may simply be reality to them and they live an inauthentic existence. The tragic loss in this case exists as a plight necessarily, yet merely unactualized through emotional experience. The experience of awareness of this plight creates the sense of loss. To put this in the manner in which the stages of grief are more

often associated: the loved one has always been dead, but the once-born is unaware of the loved one or has a delusion of the loved one and/or their death. The loved one must be recognized as an entity, and/or then recognized as dead before the stages commence.

These conventional stages of grief are implemented in the forms and levels of religiosity as I have categorized them. As mentioned earlier, one must happen upon painful reality, have painful reality forced upon one, or become embedded in a learned or created delusion. Conventional religion has denial of painful reality as a major element. This denial takes numerous forms and denies numerous aspects of as-close-to-objective reality.

Where there appears to be no justice objectively, there really is. The conventional religious believer is taught that they are simply unable to see or understand the justice because it occurs supernaturally. Bad things are not really bad things, they are taught to merely be parts of a good, divine plan. Death is not really death, just earthly death. A devoutly religious college student once told me that all things were part of God's good plan. I offered a scenario of a four-year-old girl being abducted, raped, tortured and murdered as a rebuttal. I thought that surely this scenario would be regarded as an entirely bad one. The student told me this could be part of God's good plan because it might cause the rapist at some point in his life to become saved as a Christian.

This is the power of the stage of denial manifest. If the denial is not even seen as conflicting with reality then this is being purely once-born. If the denial seems somewhat conflicting, such that it is necessary to engage in active denial, then this is the

second category of being once-born. The following are the stages of grief as they pertain to conventional religion.

Anger. To harbor anger at reality, anger at others and project anger onto a very often angry depiction of a god are very common religious attributes. Anger occurs as a stage of grief because it is the mind wanting to direct blame to an object responsible for a painful reality. The idea of Satan creates an object of this anger as well, but arguably not as much as the idea of God. Interestingly, the Bible contains many stories of the Judeo/Christian god doing horrific deeds to humanity as punishment. Smitings, drownings, burnings, the slashing open of pregnant women and the mauling of children through the divine sending of bears out of the woods (Kings 23-24), among many other stories, display this intense anger that for practical purposes of definition would seem to be what is otherwise described as Satanic, or certainly evil. Even in the case of the Biblical story of Job, with all the agony that befell him and his family, who were killed, the Judeo/Christian god actually encouraged Satan to perform these atrocities in the interest of a wager (Job 11-12).

Bargaining. The psychological stages of grief regard bargaining as the stage whereby the individual tries to make a deal with their god to assuage, undo or fix the painful problem. Conventional religion, however, is itself a bargaining table. One does what the god says to do in exchange for at a least a deed, or at most a blissful eternity. If one does not do what the god says, one is given eternal agony. Conventional religions can be very specific about the nature of this bargain, they explain what all is necessary to bring to the bargaining table, what other deals may be made regarding repentance, and

what is expected in return. Belief in the bargaining is of utmost importance, as without it the religion has no power over the individual whatsoever.

Bargaining also occurs in the second category of being twice-born. This is the category whereby the individual attempts to thwart the reality of the frozen lake with conventional or unconventional religion. If the individual becomes a devout believer then the frozen lake is kept at bay. If the individual just acquires enough money, objects or power, etc., then both the extended frozen lake and the frozen lake will be kept at bay. This will be discussed further with the description of the categories in being twice-born.

Depression. The last two stages of grief are extremely important elements in conventional religiosity although they function more at the beginning of the religious process rather than at the end, yet they act as perimeters keeping the individual attached to his belief, or at least working to do so. Depression and acceptance in the conventionally known stages of grief are at the end of the process because depression is the feeling of pain of the reality of loss. No longer is the pain of the loss fought off by other mental mechanisms because acceptance is a complete surrender to the painful reality. Once acceptance has been made, then the past can become the past and a new emotional journey can commence.

In the realm of the conventionally religious, however, the painful reality that leads to depression cannot be escaped by leaving it in the past as can be done with other painful realities or losses. The frozen lake cannot ever be left in the past, because it is the inevitable future. Therefore, the individual is left with a choice of acceptances to assuage his depression or the threat of it. He may choose to accept that this is his plight,

the plight of all men, and live his life from - what seems to be bleak at the time - the bleak perspective of the frozen lake, *or he may choose to accept the doctrine of a conventional religion.*

Acceptance/Denial. This latter form of acceptance, however, unlike the final stage of acceptance in the conventionally known five stages of grief, is not the end of a lineage of stages, as it is not acceptance of a loss or a painful reality. It is the acceptance of a denial of it. And along with that denial, as with the process of the five stages of grief, which start with denial, is a following myriad of denials, anger, bargaining and continual reaffirmation of acceptance. As long as the acceptance is continually bolstered, the anger channeled to others or away from the god through a satanic ideal, and the bargaining and denial are continually reinforced through religious propaganda, the depression can be thwarted. This also occurs to a similar extent in the unconventionally religious category of being twice-born, which we will discuss shortly.

So, in my categorization process of religious attachment, the loss that someone may find painful is not only the loss of the innocence of non-awareness and the loss of the person to herself – in the form of finite mortality, but also the loss of the sense of purpose and direction in life as a result of that finite mortality. The tragic loss, the experienced painful reality that prompts the stages of grief may process cognitively as follows: “I miss being young/er when these thoughts didn’t occur or matter.”[loss of innocence], “If there’s no god or afterlife, I’m going to die and life will be over, just like that.” [finite loss of self/consciousness], “I’m going to die anyway, so why does anything matter at all?” [loss of purpose]. And here we have the beginnings of

depression that will encourage some form of escape. Conventional religiosity may assuage it, unconventional religiosity may create a diversion, or some form of a post-acceptance twice-born perspective may bring peace. This is the third category of being twice-born.

It is also common for the once-born individual to adhere himself to a conventional or unconventional religious belief system in order to avoid coming into the chain of thoughts mentioned above. This individual may become very devout or deeply involved in whatever endeavor he has idealized as a diversion from painful reality. This may entail a passionate adherence to the accumulation of wealth, power, sex or fame. These ideals are very common, but there are many others. It may entail some other type of addictive escape such as drinking, drugs, partying, extreme sports, obsession with a hobby or reckless abandon. As with conventionally religious devotion, at some saturation point, the individual may realize that there is no escape after-all. Regardless, we now have the birth of depression and a first-hand facing of the frozen lake.

Twice-Born

I have divided twice-born individualism into three categories. The initially twice-born individual, who has faced the disturbing awareness of the frozen lake, or is nearing its edge, is often neurotically possessed with its implications. Depression from this awareness and those awarenesses stemming from it are a major part of this person's life as a passing stage or a permanent one. Whether forced upon him radically, or

gradually made evident, the reality of the frozen lake deeply affects this individual whose delusion[s] have been shattered.

In relation to the Jamesian frozen lake, the expanded frozen lake extends to include all painful realities whose significance is such that their awareness is capable of being a belief system-changing event. For the most part this would entail that the painful reality be previously unknown, repressed, or not have been experienced cognitively or emotionally. A painful reality matching this criteria, having been made aware, contains within the experience of it the seeds of questioning other hidden or thwarted painful realities. It becomes a gaping hole in a dam that holds back these painful realities. It is the opening of Pandora's box.

Once the dam has burst or the safely contained realities have flown out of the box, the individual finds himself overwhelmed with reality not unlike Plato's prisoner standing at the mouth of his cave. No previously utilized method of distraction or self-deception will work anymore as the awareness of such methods as distraction or deception has robbed them of their once useful power. The twice-born person is an emotional mess, neurotic, mood swinging and depressive. Awareness has been fully or at least significantly realized in order to create emotional, psychological and philosophical turmoil in the individual. This is pure Jamesian twice-born awareness, also possibly prompting a depth, devotion and fervor of religiosity in stark contrast to the religiosity found in the Jamesian once-born individual. This state of turmoil is the first category of being twice-born since emotions have been released as a result of an awareness.

The second category, twice-born individual is further divided into two sub-categories. This individual makes a desperate attempt at delusion to assuage the awareness of his painful reality in the form of a religion. This is the basis of what may become a passionate delusion. He may either make an attempt to avoid the looming frozen lake perspective or that which leads to it, by way of delusion in a **conventional religion** which denies the frozen lake by providing a perspective of salvation from death as well as diminishing the significance of other painful realities. Or he may find some other method of escape.

This other method may be what I regard as an **unconventional religion**. This type of religiosity and practice includes addictions and/or some compulsory endeavor and/or internalized **ideal**, which yields or is believed to promise intense pleasure in which the engagement-of provides psychological relief. This method of escape does not deny the frozen lake in the manner of conventional religion, but instead makes a passionate attempt to thwart its knockings at the door of the mind. Often this active thwarting includes periodic displays of intense rage, the reason being that the individual's deepest fears and pain are repressed and thwarted by an ideal, but occasionally surface as displacements of anger directed at other than their true cause

I also contend that twice-born conventional religiosity yields the same manner of passionate behavior as twice-born unconventional religiosity. The unconventionally religious twice-born individual may find neurotic pleasure in the acquisition of money, power, revelry, fame or some other aspect of life associated with pleasure and positivity that bolsters and maintains his created, shallow identity. An unconventional religiosity

may be an ideology only, requiring no material objects, such as with authoritarianism, liberalism or conservatism. The unconventional religiosity only needs an ideal to uphold, or worship. To believe or to behave as though salvation from despair is wealth, beer, fun, following rules of those in authority, voting Democrat or voting Republican is affectively the same as believing salvation is found in Jesus, Mohammed, Shiva or good works. This individual will also stand to suffer from a painful depression and sense of despair at their awareness to the contrary, were it allowed to resurface.

The conventionally religious twice-born individual, the devout “fundamentalist,” although under the guise of thwarting the frozen lake perspective, will also take on a neurotic drive to desperately maintain their conventional religious belief as an escape from reality and their previous experience of depression. This conventionally religious person will have far more passion and fervor for their religion than the once-born conventionally religious person. These neuroses, these obsessions, passions and fervor have as their driving force the escape of a reality made aware, or of a reality desperately fought off. Likewise, their unconventionally religious counterpart will act in the same way, desperate for more money, more power, more fame, or more of whatever is internalized as a reliever, their ideal.

It is somewhat difficult to make a clear distinction between the second-category once-born individual and the second-category twice-born individual. Depression is the most distinctive element differentiating the two. But as is the nature of theory, gross generalizations are made. This theory does not contend that once-born individuals necessarily do not experience sadness, as they may. Nor does it contend that the

depressions twice-born individuals experience are all of the same level, they are not. But generally, the severity of sadness of a once-born individual, if sadness occurs at all, is of much lesser significance than the depression that accompanies a newly twice-born individual.

The twice-born individual has fully experienced the agony of the frozen lake perspective, if only for a short period of time. The once-born individual has not. The once-born individual's identification and passion for a religiosity may increase intensity over time, as may the new-found religious fervor of the twice-born. But the once-born's religious fervor, if any, is driven by a fear of having to face what may be reality. The twice-born's religious fervor is driven by a fear of having to face reality yet again. In both cases, and in both categories entailing religiosity, an **ideal**, a believed-in objectification of salvation or ultimate diversion, is necessary.

THE IDEAL

A great portion of this broad theory pertains to the use of what I call "the ideal." For my purposes, an ideal is a concept-only term as the ideal is by its very nature non-existent outside of the mind. Although the term is often used as being representative of something concrete, it is not. This is its use as a metaphor, but in such colloquial contexts it is understood as representative definitiveness. The term entails "perfection," but even a dictionary will regard the term as being in concept only, by definition. We can speak of an ideal sock as one that will not fall down into one's shoe, or that has no

holes, but this assumes that a sock with these properties is “perfect,” and it is at this point the term as representative of something concrete loses its colloquial meaning.

To say that a sock is “perfect” assumes that it must also have a perfect number of threads or be a perfect color, etc., and at this level of definition the ideal becomes entirely subjective. This term is extremely important for this theory as it holds conventional religion, religiosity and much of what is treated as ultimate meaning in life to be purely ideal, but constructed mentally, driven by emotions, to not be *only* of the mind, or not of the mind at all, but to be real and actual, concrete and achievable *in some way*.

To make real in the mind - for reasons yet to be addressed - what exists in concept only, is my premise for belief in conventional religion. This is also my premise for belief in unconventional religion and religiosity such as in the case of the starlet with her passion and adherence to the acquisition of the ideal of fame. In this endeavor to make ideals real, a paradoxicity necessarily exists requiring psychological delusion in order to maintain belief in the ideal as real or achievable. Our starlet must believe that at a point of currently unachieved fame her emotional void will be filled in the future, that a perfection will be reached. This belief provides purpose, direction and drive for the starlet. Thomas Hobbes addresses this mechanism as well, but reduces the basic mechanism to a desire simply for the acquisition of *more*.

The most powerful aspect of the ideal is that it is created as an object bearing a deep meaning to the individual and the society. The paradoxicity exists in that the ideal must *remain an ideal* in order to have power to motivate belief and action, but must be

believed as achievable at the same time. If what is regarded as ideal is actually achieved or becomes real, such as the realization of an idealized quantitative level, cognitive dissonance occurs, then the ideal itself, and its power, will soon vanish. To idealize fame is to never be famous enough. To idealize wealth is to never be wealthy enough. To win an Oscar as an ideal or achieve millionaire status as an ideal becomes meaningless as the ideal is achieved, or soon thereafter. One must then win two Oscars or achieve two million or those deep meanings and driving forces vanish as well, so then three must be attained...or the ideal must change. To reach the end of the rainbow is to reach the end of life, and many actualize that very end by suicide if they truly believe they have reached it, yet it still fails to assuage their void of meaning.

Christianity teaches “goodness” as an ideal to strive for, but as understood from the Christian perspective it can never be achieved. No matter how “good” one becomes, the concept of original sin maintains a flawed status for a believer. But salvation from this flawed status lies in the making of the idealization of a “perfect” human [Jesus] to be real to the believer. Even so, believed ideals still exist for which to strive but never reach. The Christian emotional mechanistic equivalent to the fame-seeker would be for her to internalize that she should continue to strive for fame, and to accept that she will never be famous enough, but that she is already infinitely famous if she just believes that she is. When one adds the element of eternal miserable condemnation for the unbeliever, the impetus to believe becomes one not only of positive reinforcement, but negative reinforcement as well.

The antithesis of the ideal is **devaluation** of other than the ideal, or more directly, that which threatens it. Devaluation necessarily accompanies idealism. To believe in and/or to endeavor to achieve an ideal is to protect the ideal as a defense mechanism. Implementation of such protection requires the idealizer to subsequently devalue other beliefs and endeavors, which in so doing serves as an added or alternate defense. This implementation may also result in devaluation of more objectively rational methods of dealing with the ideal itself, such as recognition of the ideal as only such, but also other methods of dealing with the reality against which the ideal is defending. To believe a religion or political party is ideal is to devalue other religions or political parties. To believe wealth or fame is ideal is to devalue the lack of it and that which is associated with the lack of it. The more vehement the idealism, the more vehement becomes the subsequent devaluation of other.

This use of the ideal created in the mind itself is a manifestation of deeper philosophical and emotional voids that can also exhibit themselves as elements of what psychologists deem “personality disorders,” many of which include devaluation as a criteria. I contend that conventional religion, at least the Western versions, are laced with the anthropomorphic projection of elements of these disorders that weave reality with the ideal, produce paradoxicity and contradiction, but do so in the endeavor to maintain belief in an ideal. This is parallel to James’ (1961) reference to the Epicurean advice to “Seek not to be happy, but rather to escape unhappiness...” (125) The attachment to the ideal is to escape unhappiness, the frozen lake or its edge. I contend that the stronger the attachment to the ideal, the greater the fear of the unhappiness of

which it shields. Because the ideal is not reality, but reality is almost impossible to ever thwart, contradictions and paradoxes abound in both the disorder of the individual and the society.

Likewise, unconventional religiosity even in the most basic cases of non-social emotional attachment, such as a mother's love for a son, may result in disbelief even in the face of overwhelming empirical or even rational evidence such as numerous witnesses and courtroom film which irrefutably display the son as a murderer. The ideal that the son "would never do such a thing" is so powerful and linked to the maintenance of other ideals such that maintenance of the disbelief in the ideal's apparent falsity may be hard fought at least, or in extreme cases may never be internalized. Denial is implemented and painful reality is thwarted once again.

By my definition, an ideal is a religious objectification as is a religion an ideal. They are addictions. Whether being alcoholic, workaholic, sexaholic, Christian, Jew or Muslim, an ideal is believed in as a salvation or a diversion from the frozen lake itself or painful realities constituting the edge of the frozen lake. This is not to say that all idealizations are directly responsible for thwarting some painful reality from the believer's conscious mind. But I am claiming they are at the very least indirectly responsible by way of redirecting identity to an external source, maintaining an internal void through delusion and maintaining a safe distance from reality.

To have an ideal is to gain identity from it. But this is an identity gained from *outside* of the individual. Because an ideal will provide an identity, the individual who lacks a deep sense of identity, or sense of self, is driven to identify with an ideal. On the

cultural level, the less depth of identity a society has, the shallower the society and the more the society will embrace ideals. America is such a society to be sure, but in addition to being a shallow culture, American ideals are shallow ideals. America stands for capitalism, consumerism, wealth and the freedom to pursue them. Big cars, big houses, designer clothes, purses perfume, jewelry, furniture and even designer appliances are all symbols of an ability to spend. Ideals such as spending, earning to spend and accumulation function as elements keeping America from societal introspection.

To borrow from theorist Pitirim Sorokin, America has left its traditional stage for what Sorokin (1957) regards as a sensate stage. What has happened, however, is a shift in ideals from deeply rooted, traditional religious ideals to sensate ideals. One of the reasons societies shift ideals is because ideals fail to assuage deeper problems that continually arise. Conventionally religious, traditional ideals fail and sensational ideals fail. If traditional ideals did not fail, then societies would never move on from them to subsequent ideals, but they do, and then those fail too. They fail because they do not exist. They are ideals.

On the individual level, adherence to ideals is an indication of a lack of introspection. A lack of introspection allows for a lack of solid self-identity, which in the case of a culture as well, produces a vacuum to be filled by an ideal. Conventional religion is the most common emotional ideal. It is the ideal often touted as the true answer to false idealism. Ironically, conventional religion is the grandest ideal of all and being an ideal, by nature, its falsity is assumable according to definition. Unlike the

possession of money or fame as an ideal, which can be achieved to a point whereby the individual will face the failure of his ideal as salvation, conventional religion offers an ideal that by definition is boundless and unachievable outside of delusion. The ideal of perfection, love and salvation itself, without a medium, creates an ideal impervious to disproof.

As mentioned earlier, one who idealizes fame can be driven to achieve their ideal to the achievement of winning eight Academy Awards, but at some point will likely realize that simply more awards or fame will not assuage what awaits them at the edge of the frozen lake, and certainly the frozen lake itself. Conventional religion, however, if believed, promises eternal life, love and pleasure. This promise denies the frozen lake and its edge, as significant, entirely. Like the unconventional religions, which hold fame, money, power, etc., to be delusional ideals of salvation upon achievement, conventional religion produces a delusion of salvation upon death. And dead men cannot suspect or realize they were wrong.

Ideals, as providers of identity, direction, purpose and salvation, are fiercely protected by their believers. Not only does the believed ideal provide such positive elements in life, but they also protect the individual from a depth of introspection that is certain to eventually uncover painful reality. This being so, intense rage and/or devaluation as a defense often meets any outside threats to the believer's ideal. Like a starving dog will viciously defend its food against threats much greater in size than himself, the idealizer will defend his believed ideal.

Many powerful businessmen will stop at little to continue their achievement, yet businessmen jumped out of buildings during the Great Depression. Their only, or at least primary identity was their ideal of wealth. Many wealthy entertainers, who clawed their way to the top, have killed themselves at prosperous time in their lives. Their ideal was fame, but it was not enough. Durkheim's study of suicide showed that suicide rates are many times higher in developed countries than undeveloped countries, and higher among wealthy individuals than poor ones. His explanation is that *anomie*, or disconnection is the root of such cultural and individual suicide rates, and this rings true. But it is not the wealth of a society or the possession of wealth that creates the anomie, it is the direction they take towards achievable ideals, ideals that cease to function as such upon achievement.

More traditional, religious societies and individuals, which are more deeply socially connected, have much lower suicide rates but they are more connected because the ideals believed in are those which promote an emotional fulfillment that thwarts the edge of the frozen lake and the frozen lake itself. Conventional and unconventional religions are delusions of idealic salvation, but conventional religious delusions are unachievable and unknowable, thereby safe from disproof and despair as a result of that disproving. Once again, dead men cannot know that they were wrong.

To add further seemingly oppositional language, this is not to say that those projected elements mentioned previously are bad or somehow wrong. It is here that I plead the case for this judgment of ideals to be a philosophically value-free judgment as displayed in the following metaphorical statements: If leprechauns do not exist except in

the mind, as I propose is the case for the supernatural, to believe they are real would seem to be false, but only from a logical, concrete standpoint. However, if to believe that leprechauns do not exist leads one into despair, social ostracizing and unrelenting agony or death, it would seem to be wrong or even illogical to *not* believe in leprechauns, but instead from a practical standpoint in this case. If one is unable to choose to believe in leprechauns or ideals-as-reality as the case may be in order to avoid despair, then another mental/emotional mechanism must be implemented in order to provide purpose, one that remains logical to the individual and free of apparent self-deception, yet entails the practicality and positivity of emotional fulfillment.

The third category of being twice-born is a more developed twice-born perspective. This is the individual who has faced the frozen lake perspective, experienced depression and despair of this plight among many others and is aware that there is no permanent escape, yet this awareness yields no neuroses - a peace and a humor with reality is achieved. This individual may have begun as once-born, traversing the categories of this theory until a point is reached whereby this peace is achieved. The edge of the frozen lake is no longer a threat, as it has been tread upon. The frozen lake itself is no longer a threat as it has been not only be accepted, but fully mourned.

Or this individual may have been of a culture or a mindset whereby the frozen lake is taught as a part of reality, eliciting no fear or desperation for ideals to assuage or thwart a painful introspected identity. Upon reading the description of Walt Whitman as an example of a once-born individual, I wondered if he indeed matched that category. We were given a substantial written description by a man who knew him, but I suspected

Mr. Whitman was only truly known to himself. And perhaps some readers of his poetry who *saw* him and understood. As I mentioned earlier regarding the account of Walt Whitman, there are some similarities between the purely once-born and my last theoretical category of being twice-born. These similarities are as such in emotion and action indeed, but are also a world apart. I think they are as the sparkle in a child's eye upon beholding a new and exciting event, and the sparkle in the eye of the old man who is beholding the child.

The individual of this last category of being twice-born, arguably a category that is "post-twice-born," has devised, encountered, discovered or realized another method of contending with the frozen lake - this big looming sea of thinning ice that binds and owns us all. It is a method that can only be internalized first-hand, an authentic method, free of delusions thwarting the reality that the lake is melting, but full of awareness embracing the reality that the lake is still frozen.

CHAPTER III

MARX – SECULAR RELIGION

Marx was not a religious man, nor did he espouse religious practice. In fact, he detested its practice, practice that not only follows religious belief but also is followed by further internalization of religious belief. But, for my contention that Marx essentially did indeed espouse religion, a secular religion - or what I regard as unconventional religion - it is necessary to see the infusion of idealism, social connectedness associated with that idealism, and a deep sense of emotional fulfillment stemming from these factors, as being embedded in a Marxist society.

The idealism that Marx implemented in his philosophy of society, in what I regard as an unconventional religious manner - a society living in a utopian [ideal] fashion, with equality and security - acts in the same way that a conventionally religious idealism does, providing for an equality, a security and a utopian [ideal] afterlife. Socially, a conventional religion creates a culture of its own, a community and a social identity both feeding off of and into individual identity. Once an individual recognizes himself as a believer in a conventional religion, he feels accepted and validated by interacting with a society of like-believers. And a society of believers further embeds an identity-as-believer in a member. The writers of some conventionally religious doctrine were aware, at least to some extent, of this social influence on the believer in that as regular socialization with fellow believers is encouraged, socialization with unbelievers is discouraged.

The Marxist unconventional religion carries with it many aspects of conventional religion in addition to collective identity and utopia. Collective recognition of symbols, creeds and other members as “comrades” also add to the religious nature of Marxist communism. Symbols such as a hammer and sickle stand not only for a common identity, but a particular identity that defines the members individually and collectively. The Christian cross, the Islamic Crescent and the Jewish Star of David all create a collective identity as well as remind the members of just how they are connected to one another.

As a Jew, one is individually and collectively descended of King David’s people and their place in God’s eyes, thus the Star of David as a symbol. As a Christian, one is individually and collectively saved by a crucifixion from eternal damnation, thus the Cross as a symbol. The hammer and sickle represent that each member is a worker, that collectively they are all workers, and that being a worker provides equality, security and a utopia for both each individual, and collectively as well. In like manner to the use of the hammer and sickle as symbol, the term “comrade” not only denotes sameness amongst members but also fuels connectivity and a positive relation to other members. To be comrades under communism is to be as brothers and sisters under Christ or Islam.

Marx also regarded personal fulfillment to be extremely important as a by-product of owning one’s labor. Marx (2002) does not venture to use or imply a term such as “personal fulfillment”, but he does make statements such as:

...the worker is related to the product of his labor as to an alien object...the more powerful the alien world of objects which creates over and against himself becomes, the poorer he and his inner world become, the less there is that belongs to him as his own... The worker puts his life into the object... (87)

Marx's use of words and phrases like "...he and his *inner world*..." and "...worker puts his *life* into the object..." draw strong implications for a Marxist sense of emotional fulfillment. Marx is interested in workers having a healthy *inner world*. He also states that, "The more man puts into God, the less he retains in himself." Being that Marx did not believe in a god, that which Marx regards as something that can be put into God or an idea of God - that he could instead retain in himself - is an emotional element belonging entirely to the individual. Marx, however, takes pains to avoid such emotionality-designating terms. None-the-less, I contend this feature of Marxism is very much a part of what I consider to be a non-conventional religion. There is one distinctive element, however, that a conventional religion attacks and an unconventional religion can only avoid, and that is the issue of finite death - the frozen lake.

Conventional religions generally maintain physical death as a very important part of one's life. This is the point whereby the individual may continue to live in some eternal void, damnation, or eternal bliss. In some religious beliefs there exists no described bliss or damnation, but instead the person's "soul" or "spirit" becomes a part of a larger force upon death. Still other religions hold beliefs whereby the individual continues to live on in either some other form of life upon their death, or continues to live on as another person.

The term "death" in conventional religions is often carefully referred to as "physical death" or the end of "earthly life" in order to denote that life is not over upon death; that there is no final death with which to contend. Unconventional religion, however, does not allow for an after-life to provide assuagement of the painful

awareness of mortality. Unconventional religion must rely entirely upon not only the structure of the religion, but also those mechanisms of the human mind which prompt attachment to the structure as diversion, thus resulting in assuagement of the pains of reality.

Unconventional religion provides a diversion of thoughts regarding the reality of death. It provides a direction towards an ideal with promise of fulfillment, aggrandizement, power, purpose, acceptance and even love. Unconventional religions are belief systems other than conventionally religious ones that provide an ideal under which the individual or society struggles to achieve. Material acquisition, for example, is an unconventional religion in that marketers try to promote belief that products will provide happiness, and consumers accept this belief as a system that is a web of jobs, prestige, common interest and solidarity with others of like belief, power, wealth or similar levels of interest in them. If to Marx conventional religion is the opiate of the masses, my claim is that unconventional religions such as consumerism, materialism and a host of others, including the use of actual opiates, are opiates as well.

The ideal of the particular unconventional religion of consumerism, on its most basic plane, is that by having *more* of what the ideal promotes, eventually a point will come whereby the consumer will achieve the ideal and thereby salvation from the pains of life will subsequently occur. This “point” however is part of the ideal of “more.” There exists no point, of course, but as part of the ideal, acquiring “more” is internalized as being in the right direction towards some sort of undefined goal. More money, for example will allow for more things, or it will at least represent ability to purchase them.

The higher the level or status of things, or the monetary representation of them, the more important the person will feel and the more social power they will indeed have or have access to. Their purpose is to strive to achieve this point whereby great acceptance, admiration and a sense of solidarity will come from the others who share this same religious belief. A Heaven will exist on earth.

The preceding example of materialistic consumerism is merely a sample of unconventional religiosity that is prevalent in the United States. There exist many others. Of course what I regard as Marx's secular, or unconventional religion is quite the antithesis of consumerism. There are not any qualities particular to consumerism which directly provide what I claim unconventional religion provides, but it is the emotional manifestations that contain the power of consumerism/materialism as a religion. The striving for acquisitions which promise fulfillment and admiration [love], the membership of a large faction of others who share this same belief system, and the constant striving for more and more money in order to maintain good standing in this society are all manifestations of consumerism.

Likewise, Marx's very anti-religious philosophy contains the elements that any other unconventional religion contains. To be a comrade is to not only have an instant connection with other individuals, but to belong to a group. Common identity provides a sense of solidarity and to labor for the common good of the group to which one feels solidarity is a utopian societal ideal. To believe it as a societal ideal provides the impetus to do so. To own one's labor is to own what Marx considers to be *owning oneself*, which provides a strong Marxist *inner world*, and is an ideal as well. I contend

that this is an ideal of an emotional fulfillment. As with both forms of religion, if the ideals of the philosophy are successfully taught and believed, the drive to achieve them will follow naturally. This is what it is to be religious, unconventionally or conventionally. Marxist ideals for a utopian society however, which I consider to be the case for all ideals, were not fulfilled, nor could they ever be by definition.

As I mentioned earlier, the primary difference between a conventional and an unconventional religion is that conventional religion directly addresses death/painful realities of life and provides an escape from it through belief of its denial. The escape from death/painful realities of life that unconventional religion provides is of the diversionary type. A nationalism, a social/political philosophy or the belief system of a cohesive group with a common identity and purpose all provide an ideology for which to strive. The diversion occurs in the directed activity and thought involved in achieving the ideal believed in. Once again, the ideal, as is the nature of ideals, is unattainable. However, belief in its possible achievement allows for a never-ending purpose and direction and therefore diversion. Heaven will be in tasking and achieving.

The problem with Marx's unconventional religious ideology is that it not only provided an insufficient diversion from the painful aspects of reality, *an insufficient "opiate,"* but the other opiate, the conventionally religious one, was made inaccessible to not only the once-born individuals but the twice-born individuals as well. Soviet nationalism coupled with an inefficient economy did not provide a satisfactory level of belief in the ideal of communism in order to yield a sufficient diversion. In addition to

this emotional failure, the lack of conventional religiosity needed to add hope to the miseries of life created an emotional vacuum.

INTEGRATION AND ALIENATION

Society as organism, or a single individual, shares many of the elements of the actual individual person from a psychological standpoint. This is not to say that social theory is akin to “social psychology” as an academic field or endeavor, it is not, but instead what I am going to call “the psychology of society.” This psychology of the society manifests itself in what is culture. It is impossible to separate the two, as they are integral parts of each other. Being that society as organism is as an individual, individual personality traits [traits as intertwined with the psyche] and all that affect them can be extrapolated to the personality of the culture.

Integration as used in a Durkheimian sense, is an interpersonal bonding in a culture. Perhaps used in his most well known manner, integration is the key element found in a society that is inversely correlated with suicide. The higher the interpersonal bonding, or integration in a society, the lower the suicide rate. This term can be quite easily seen to be not only a sociological term, but a term with a direct reference to individual psychology as well.

In psychology, the term would be broken down into the emotional mechanisms involved in integration. Interestingly, and although Marx’s terminology and concepts include integration as a by-product or even as a theme, Marx does not have any terms

that directly relate to the concept of integration. The closest Marx comes to the use of this term is within the form of social identity. In order to have revolution, a group of individuals must have a strong identity as one being. In order to regard oneself a Proletariat, one must strongly identify with other proletariats as such. But this is the closest Marx can come to social integration.

The key element of integration is an emotional attachment to the other. And this comes with strong social identity. This is the same element that gave rise to the terms “brother” and “sister” as used colloquially in Black communities. Due to the strong identity as being a member of the Black race, or social group, an individual may regard another of this group to be a “sibling” - a very emotionally connective idea - with some other in the same group having the same identity although the two may never even meet. Replace the word “Black” with “worker” and you have a similar Marxist social identity situation which adopted the term “comrade” in the way the terms “brother” and “sister” are used in the Black community. The level of social identity in a society is a distinctive feature of its culture.

Marx would stop the description of integration at the point whereby an individual identified another as a member of their same group. Marx looks at this element in culture from the outside only, but Durkheim looks at this element from the outside as well as the inside. It is also interesting that Marx, when delving into what I am calling the “inside”, skips the externalization or even projection of emotionality to others. Marx is well aware of this “inside” but not in terms of how it is a connective

force. Marx regards alienation as a negative human aspect, as would Durkheim, but to Marx, alienation comes from a lack of fulfillment for the identity of the Self.

To expound on this concept of Marx's that I think is very relevant and true, but incomplete, I will discuss how I see the intricacies of this Marxist "inside" in relation to what Weber regards as an *iron cage*. Marx puts people in an iron cage as a method of safety and what he calls alienation. For Marx, the iron cage leaves an individual safe from exploitation and in a position to experience his species being in a pure manner.

Of this illustrious, far-reaching concept of the iron cage that he coined, Weber (2002) writes:

The Puritan wanted to be a person with a vocational calling; today we are forced to be. For to the extent that asceticism moved out of the monastic cell, was transferred to the life of work in a vocational calling, and then commenced to rule over this-worldly morality, it helped to construct the powerful cosmos of the modern economic order. Tied to the technical and economic conditions at the foundation of mechanical and machine production, this cosmos today determines the style of life of all individuals born into it, not only those directly engaged in earning a living. This pulsating mechanism does so with overwhelming force. Perhaps it will continue to do so until the last ton of fossil fuel has burnt to ashes. According to Baxter, the concern for material goods should lie upon the shoulders of his saints like a 'lightweight coat that could be thrown off at any time.' Yet fate allowed a steel-hard casing to be forged from this coat. To the extent that asceticism attempted to transform and influence the world, the world's material goods acquired an increasing and, in the end, inescapable power over people – as never before in history. (123)

Weber wrote this piece at the turn of the 20th Century and its fruition and implications have carried far past the time of its conception into the culture of today. Although the "last ton of fossil fuel" has not yet slipped into a wispy stream of smoke, the nature of capitalism and the psychological juggernaut it has become in at least Western culture and currently boarding in the East, this steel-hard casing, this "iron

“cage” of rationalism long devoid of its aesthetic foundation will remain and evolve until the last gasp of humanity fades into silence.

What Weber spoke of and what I am reiterating is that very core of humanity, the drive and the broadest meaning in life of which is emotional attachment outside of material gain. Although its inclusivity is implied by my previous statement, I am speaking more generally in the sense that Weber referred to the Protestant Ethic. Yet I am going to take it a step behind the Protestant Ethic, Protestantism, religion, or even a grand ideal that provides a basis, or ethic, in Weber’s case. Although I am going to use a term we will see throughout this answer, to say that a *reason* is needed to drive this juggernaut is not to say a *rationality* induced action is performed. My intention is to denote by the term *reason* a driving purpose outside and beyond the fruit of the labor, the satisfaction or sensation this fruit promotes.

This purpose, in Weber’s account of how capitalism came to pass is of course the asceticism brought about in the Calvinistic interpretation of how the road to a pleasant eschatology is paved. The hope and intention of an afterlife in heaven was the *reason* outside of the fruits of protestant labor and the fruition of modern capitalism. Accumulation of wealth and its use to further that accumulation, all in the face of delayed or even thwarted immediate gratification, was fed rationally by this very irrational belief.

In contrast, Marx’s economic theory is based upon quite the opposite, yet a very similar aspect. First let me be clear and brief in what I see as the Weberian dilemma. An outside, irrational, emotional attachment manifests itself as asceticism which leads to

capitalism in which eventually emerges the individual in an *iron cage* devoid of, and *alienated* from, the original irrationality that began this evolution. This is a negative outcome, for Weber. A meaninglessness now follows from, and in, the accumulation of wealth.

The contrasting Marxist interpretation of an iron cage is that the worker himself is being alienated *by externality, through* his labor. External purpose and product actually places the worker *in* an iron cage rather than emancipating him from it. Marx would say that Weber's emancipation from the *iron cage*, which in his case would be to gain or re-gain the original meaning behind what started capitalism – a protestant ideology – is becoming *alienated*. He makes my point by stating that, “The more man puts into God, the less he retains in himself” (Marx 2001: 87).

This statement does not argue in-depth for my point, but clearly the begets of capitalism in Weber's view was by putting more into God. The protestant ethic does not claim God is getting anything in the way a capitalist takes from the worker thereby alienating him from his product, [instead the individual is “getting something”] but nonetheless, as is Marx's intention, actions done for the purposes of appeasing God, assuring one's destiny or by gaining an implication of one's destiny, as is more appropriately the case here, is still putting oneself elsewhere and not retaining it in himself.

I also see a distinct similarity in these two theorists' otherwise opposing approaches to alleviation from an *iron cage*, and that is the nature of whatever action is placing the person in an *iron cage*. In this way Marx and Weber are essentially saying

the same thing, but we have a semantic problem. Both are saying that the worker/individual should have some other higher purpose to drive their labor. Both of these higher purposes are manifested emotionally in the individual.

Marx regards the emotional element of life to essentially be a force that alienates, thereby making my argument invalid, but Marx was unaware that when he uses phrases like "...the less he retains in himself." he is speaking of a sense of self-fulfillment he thinks comes from the individual's labor *not* being objectified, but subjectified. Marx says the individual "puts his life into the object [produced]," certainly referring to something deeper than sweat or the economics of man-hours. This reference to "life" as something one puts into a product, or invests into a God as something that should be going into the person himself, is an emotional element. I could use the term "spiritual" here, but Marx would turn over in his grave and I regard emotionality to entail what is regarded as spirituality, not the other way around.

So, Marx is arguing for a self-oriented emotional element to be at least a large part of the product of labor, he just does not use those words. Weber too, is arguing for this goal, but he does not use those words either. Weber calls this emotional element God, or the satisfaction and purpose of action directed towards God, or satisfaction due to a God-provided outcome or strived-for outcome. It matters not to my argument, it is all about what I see as a reflected emotional sensation bouncing back off a religious belief, making Weber's externalization of purpose of labor the same thing as Marx's "life" that is put into a product and *should* be retained from it.

The *iron cage*, for both of them, is a state whereby this emotional element is missing. For Weber it is missing if there is no God-purpose, for Marx it is missing if it is taken away from the individual by another, including the God. The *iron cage* to both of them is simply the absence of this “it.” Marx and Weber share the same embedded root of an idea that they convey in two apparently oppositional manners. For one theorist, this root, this “it” or emotional element which I will call the deepest sense of Self or identity and that others might call “soul,” is lost *unless* one directs it toward a god. For the other, this element is lost *if* one directs it towards a god. But both are very aware of the existence and importance of *it*.

Marx and Durkheim also share terminology in which the root of their logical sequence is the same. In contrast to the Cartesian human dualism that is body and mind, Durkheim divides the human into body and socialized being. Although there is not a great deal of difference in these two thinkers regarding the body, Descartes, the rationalist sees all else as manifestation of the mind. One could also say that Durkheim follows this, but only in the way the mind is affected by social influence. Durkheim (1951) calls this duality *homo-duplex*. *Homo-duplex* has little to do with individual thinking as coming from only the individual. Whereas Descartes would say that an individual’s concept of mathematics would be pure rationale, pure thought and use of mind, Durkheim would say this concept of mathematics wouldn’t exist without socialization. For instance, the concept of five does not exist outside of the idea of five things, and a socially constructed language that denotes both. The only fault I can find

with this postulate is that the postulate cannot be disproved, as it would be impossible to find one mathematician who was ever devoid of social influence in his life.

I often consider the case of feral children, unable to be taught right from wrong, learn language and grunting about like animals, to make points regarding both the power of human influence and what I see to be the most basic, animal nature of mankind. However, in this case of *homo-duplex*, the feral children example would hold Durkheim to be correct. Feral children, having had no, or insufficient socialization are as what we call lower animals. Descartes' "mind" in the feral child is rendered essentially useless without some modicum of socialization.

Homo-duplex, as in Cartesian duality cases as well, is often engaged in conflict. Of course there is a whole-ness and a fluidity about the mind and body as a balanced being, a yin and yan. But psychology and philosophy are quick to display mind and body as dissonance. Psychologically speaking, the mind is adept at determining states of the body, and the body – not just the brain-as-body - is adept at influencing the mind as well. Philosophically, the simple question that yields much conflict is the question of individual identity belonging to the mind or the body. Assuming mind comes out of brain, many students have been forced in a philosophy class to ponder whether a brain transplant would be a mind with a new body or a body with a new mind. Where at this point would the identity of Self lie?

Durkheim would side step this land mine by saying that the identity would come from neither the mind nor the body, but from the culture that this new being was submerged in. Hypothetically, the new being, in a Durkheimian sense would have the

identity of the individual from which the brain came, regardless of the previous owner of the body. But Durkheim would say that the mind would control identity only because it would retain a social identity that would transcend the body. However, Durkheim would also say that were this new being to be submerged into a completely different culture, the identity of the being would change from whatever identity the mind had previously, and would become enmeshed in the culture which it now resides.

In contrast, Marx's *species-being* (2001: 52), or what I am going to call the Self, is threatened by outside influences. In this regard, one could say that species-being most closely relates to Descartes' concept of mind as a rational entity, but with the species-being carrying with it an identity of Self unfettered by outside influences. The species-being regards outside influences and physical objects, but they are objectified by the species-being; they are internalized as entities outside of the being as existing at best to be neutral and inconsequential, and at worst, a threat to the freedom of itself.

Marx is clearly aware of this internal element of the individual. But he takes great strides in his writings to keep his level of the species-being from going deeper into what satisfies it or he at least is keeping this being from extending laterally, expanding to include the emotional attachments that Durkheim argues come from integration or bonding in a social manner. Descartes left out this emotional nature of the "mind" as well. In fact, I would say that Marx is actually deeper into the emotional realm than the rationalist Descartes, because species-being, to Marx, *has* a depth other than the purely rational [although Marx tries to rationalize this, stating that a worker puts "his life" into

what he produces, that this is of ultimate importance displaying Marx's interest in an internal sense of an individual's Self].

Many of Marx's writings include themes and specifics that he sees as threats to this species-being that I also regard as Self. In his avoidance of seeking out deeper emotional elements of this being, Marx speaks negatively of these threats that *are indeed* emotional connections, but they are as external, alienating forces. I agree with some of what Marx sees as threatening to the Self, in that putting one's life into a product only to have that invested life taken away is threatening, and in religion as a force that takes away from the individual's Self as well.

Durkheim would say that the emotional force would come from the identity and connection with the other workers in production, and that the importance of religion is that it provides meaning as a collective social force. To Durkheim, that which is threatening, yielding *anomie*, is that which takes away from these senses of meaning - of emotional attachment. In this sense Marx encompasses more than Durkheim in that Marx is interested in the Self *as* the Self, in addition to the Self as a socially connected being such as is the case with class consciousness and all that is social surrounding it.

As I stated earlier, Marx gives a great deal of importance to collectivity, as in identification as proletariat or worker, and as in identity with other workers as comrades in this common effort. But the common effort in both categories is to yield "life"-keeping results. His "life" to Marx, as noted earlier, is what the worker "puts into the object [of his labor]." I see little difference in this statement of Marx's than describing as "life" what an artist puts into his art.

Marx does not realize that the actual life-keeping, or maintenance of Self/identity is occurring in the connections with those who share this common identity, he only knows this common identity is a strength and is important to the group, but also to the individual. This can even be shown to be the case in situations where strongly connected groups throughout history have remained so, and even become strengthened by, oppression in general and certainly the attempts and successes of the oppressive force to extract Marx's "life" from them, or "break them" through demoralization and loss of identity. There is certainly a loss of Self involved in this oppression, the loss that Marx regards as deepest meaning, but this strong sense of Self, of keeping what one puts life into, has also been shown to be insufficient for the individual.

Durkheim's *Suicide* (1951: 319) does not go into individuals' deep sense of Self, but certainly covers studies of societies oppressed to the point whereby a strong philosophical sense of Self, to which Marx's species-being – devoid of emotional connection with else – is reduced. But nonetheless, societies with strong social integration yield much lower suicide rates. The philosophical sense of Self, is indeed important, and it is at the top of Maslow's (1970) hierarchy, but clearly from Durkheim's study, the sense of Self or at least the desire to refrain from extinguishing it altogether, is a function of the connectivity to other individuals.

Like Descartes with his Mind and Body dualism, and Durkheim with his *homo-duplex*, I too have found a dualism in social theory as well. I will simply call it sociology from the inside and sociology from the outside. *Sociology from the outside* entails all the concepts and themes that have to do with forces outside of the individual.

All kinds of forces, oppressive ones, positive ones, outside thought, outside religious forces, outside concrete objects, concepts such as objectivity, or outside-ness, and culture as they are affective on the individual and the culture itself, but from the outside of the individual.

Sociology from the inside entails all the concepts and themes that have to do with social forces as they affect individual's mind. I would otherwise call these terms psychological ones, but these forces have a social component. Alienation is a force on the inside of the individual, so is the will to life, a blasé attitude, one half of homo-duplex, the sensation of collective effervescence, the feeling of grief and the awe of the sacred. Many of these terms are dualistic in this nature as well, and some fit much more squarely into one category or the other if for no other reason than the societal effect on the individual is how the term is defined, as opposed to some element that affects culture as an organism. For instance, "alienation" is one of these terms. A particular social environment has an alienating effect, but the alienation is felt by the individual alone.

Many theories from my perspective are similar stances of a big picture with much less conflict between them that is otherwise apparent. That is not always the case of course, as interpretation of such theories can place them on opposite sides of a spectrum. But like I see Marxist alienation as the same as Weber's *iron cage* even though one holds religiosity as a producer of alienation and the other holds it as a reliever of such, I still see the common theme in both of them. They are speaking of the effects on the *inside* of the individual. Weber regards this effect as such, but Marx refuses to come closer than acknowledging an "inner world." And in further ironic

complication of this simple theme, Marx thinks alienation comes from the outside, and Weber thinks it comes from beliefs held on the inside, when it is actually a combination of both. These intellectually negotiable complexities abound in many of the comparisons of social theorists, but in a grander scheme of things they have in general a more simple similarity of idea and purpose.

IDEALISM AND OBJECTIFICATION

In addition to the more directly referential statements Marx makes regarding alienation, labor and religion, the Marxist perspective on alienation as well as idealism also runs parallel to my expanded view of the Jamesian Frozen Lake. It is necessary to use the term “parallel” as although I find a common linearity between Marx’s ideas and my own, it is almost a certainty that Marx would not have. However, being that I think a common ground exists between numerous theories, including my own, concerning the nature of Man’s need of emotional fulfillment, that which will act as that fulfillment and that which threatens that fulfillment, it is necessary to convey this parallelism in other facets of their broad theories rather than simply those directly concerned with conventional religion.

The most difficult aspect of this attempt lies not in the conveyance of parallelism between theories of threats to fulfillment, but between theories of fulfillment. Being that conventional religion provides a believed escape from the frozen lake, it is this psychological method that allows for the greatest hope of fulfillment. I say “hope” of

fulfillment because the belief that allows escape from the frozen lake entails that the individual be dead in order to come to believed actual fruition. Prior to death, this belief only *promises* eventual fulfillment. This delusion provides sufficient relief from the fear of mortality, in the form of hope, that although the hope still remains to be actualized, the individual derives a sense of fulfillment in the absence of fear, the frozen lake. This statement implies that conventional religion does not provide emotional fulfillment, only the thwarting of threats to its possibility. To the conventionally religious, threats are that which detract from, or jeopardize, conventionally religious belief.

This is likewise the case with unconventional religiosity as well, except that the promise of fulfillment is found in some form of accumulation, accumulation of wealth, fame, sex, knowledge, etc. In other words, in both forms of religion, fulfillment, - which takes very different forms - is an ideal, and therefore does not exist. Of course, this is not to say that there are no fulfilling elements in life that are achievable, there are many, and there are many methods by which to find or create these fulfillments. But what I am speaking of as nonexistent is the *ideal* of fulfillment, some sort of fulfillment to end all fulfillments. Any theory or belief that provides this type of fulfillment is an idealic one, and therefore I regard it as false. The parallel that exists with regard to the achievement of fulfillment can only exist clearly in its simplest form, the ideal. Heaven, or heaven on earth.

The parallels of that which threatens fulfillment are easier to make in that anything that can be construed as dangerous to belief in one of the forms of fulfillment as ideal, is a threat. For every ideal, there exist many, many threats. For the

conventionally religious, anything that does not uphold the religious ideal to be true, is a threat to that ideal being maintained, and therefore vehemently fought off. The fundamentalist who believes the earth is no more than ten thousand years old in order to maintain the ideal of the inerrant literalism of how they have been taught to interpret the Bible, must therefore hold any scientific evidence to the contrary to be a threat.

Likewise, unconventional religious practice will vehemently fight off that which is seen as a threat to its ideal. Regardless of the level of wealth of one who idealizes wealth, any threat to the reduction or elimination of accumulation is regarded as a threat.

In the case of threats to what Marx calls a man's "inner world" or his "life" that he puts into something, anything that detracts from that sense of Self, identity, soul, core being, or whatever it is to be called, is a threatening element. To Marx, that which results in an alienation of the worker, or the alienation of the worker from his product is a threat to the worker's being. Likewise, Durkheim sees that which promotes anomie in an individual, lack of social integration, is a threat to that individual's being. There is a clear parallelism with the terms "alienation" and "anomie." In fact, the two terms arguably have a very similar meaning.

Marx makes some mention of the alienating nature of religion, that by putting himself into a god, a man retains less in himself. Like the object of labor is the product – an alien object - the object of emoting, or what is called spirituality, or unanswerable philosophical questions, with those endeavors as "labor" - is God. God is the object of that which those endeavors create. God is the ideal representation of the emotions that are projected onto the ideal as object. Marx (2001) states:

The worker puts his life into the object and this means it no longer belongs to him but to the object. So the greater this activity, the worker is without himself as an object. What the product of his labor is that he is not. So the greater the product the less he is himself. The externalization of the worker in his product implies not only that his labor becomes an object, and exterior existence but also that it exists outside him, independent and alien, and becomes a self-sufficient power opposite him, that the life that he has lent to the object affronts him, hostile and alien. (87)

I find this perspective of how Marx contends the relationship between “himself” or “life” and the product of the “labor” into which the man is placing “himself” and his “life” to be utterly in line with the psychological function and result of belief in a god and of a practice in religiosity, both conventional and unconventional. If one were to replace the word “worker” with the term “believer,” the word “labor” with the term “believing,” the words “himself,” “life/inner life,” and “his own” with the terms “authentic self,” “emotional being,” or “self-identity,” then we have God or gods as an ideal, an object, and religiosity, both unconventional and conventional as the practice-of, or striving-for, those ideals. These ideals, nonexistent as such, and whose power resides only the mind of the idealizer, rob the subject, the believer, from ownership of self, emotional self-awareness and authentic self-identity. For example, when we replace these words in Marx’s statement it reads as such:

“The believer puts his *self-identity* into the *god* and this means it no longer belongs to him but to the *god*. So the greater this activity, the worker is without an object [object as himself]. What the product of his *believing* is that he is not. So the greater the product the less is his *authentic Self*. The externalization of the *believer* in his product implies not only that his believing becomes a *god*, and exterior existence, but also that it exists outside him, independent and alien, and becomes a self-sufficient

power opposite him, that the *self-identity* that he has lent to the *god* affronts him, hostile and alien.”

So if a man puts his identity, his emotionality into an ideal, whether it be a god [wealth, for example] or God, he therefore loses that identity and emotionality, it is no longer his, it belongs to something else. In keeping with Marx’s statement, the oppositional nature of this external object is the on-going battle between man and his ideals. The dehumanizing power of the created ideal, God, over the man, providing guilt and fear of expressing human will, is the same mechanism as money, sex or fame having a dehumanizing power over the man who will often completely self-destruct before letting go of his ideal. This is the power of the ideal manifest; a man rendered inauthentic or martyred by his God, or unconventional religious devotion to some ideal in the form of greed.

Marx’s careful descriptions of alienated labor are sufficient evidence to display Marx as being one aware of emotional depth. What does a term like “alienation” mean if it does not convey a sense of lone-ness, estrangement or isolation? His well-used term has very emotionally charged connotations. Marx, the rationalist, was aware of the mechanics of emotional depth and its importance, but due to his own repressions was only able to describe emotionality in as-close-to rational, mechanical terms as possible. Without even the most colloquial terms like “soul” at his disposal due to their association with religious supernaturalism, Marx is relegated to describing depth of being, and sense of self, with terms such as “inner-life.”

If we look at the Frozen Lake and the ideals that I deem to be objects of conventionally and unconventionally religious belief, and place them onto Marx's template for alienation in labor, we find a match. Marx's intention is to achieve a state of being, wholeness, authenticity that only ownership of self and what the self produces can yield. What the self produces is emotionality, fear, hope, joy, anger, compassion, and a desire for explanation. If these emotions are projected upon a being external to the individual, then they cease to belong to the individual. The believer becomes defined by his product only in terms of their external projection and explanation.

The individual fears, but fears what? Fears the idea of a god. The individual feels hope, but must derive this hope from an ideal object providing it, an object which acquired the hope from the individual's projection. The individual feels joy, but the joy is believed to come from the security of the object. The individual hates, but this feeling is explained by the other god that shares conventional religion, Satan, the object of feelings deemed negative. The individual feels love and compassion, thus the popularity of human martyrs in popular religions, Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha, Krishna. These martyrs, as humans, are relatable objects of love and compassion.

This theme of idealization internalized in religion is understood by Marx (2001) as stated:

Certainly, Luther removed the servitude of devotion by replacing it by the servitude of conviction [*idealization* in this theory]. He destroyed faith in authority by restoring the authority of faith. He turned priests into laymen by turning laymen into priests. He liberated man from exterior religiosity by making man's inner conscience religious. He emancipated the body from chains by enchaining the heart [*emotionality* in this theory]. But even though Protestantism was not the true solution, it formulated the problem rightly. The question was now no longer the battle of the layman with the exterior priest; it

was the battle with his own interior priest, his priestly nature. Protestantism, by turning laymen into priests, emancipated the lay popes, the princes, together with their clergy, the privileged and the philistines. Similarly philosophy, by turning the priestly Germans into men, will emancipate the people. (77)

This last sentence is evidence of Marx's *lack* of understanding of ideals and the function they serve, which will be discussed shortly. But the statements preceding this last sentence point to the beginning of Protestant Man's binding to what Weber (2002) considered to be *this-worldly* (53). That which is in *this world* begins with the individual himself, and so does Protestantism. "Restoration of faith" is essentially allowing the individual's hopes and fears to be the driving force for religious identity and devotion rather than an identity as a member of a devoted society that is identified with a religion. The Protestant is indeed freed from religious authority but is now bound by his own drive for an ideal to release him from reality.

In the society of today, Christian fundamentalism exists as the evolution and growth of this premise. The believer is taught that his very emotions about everything are spiritual, placed by, and created by the spirit of God or Satan. Love, caring, hope, consciousness of what is taught as right or wrong, and even otherwise mundane thoughts are attributed to the external being that is God. Once internalized, this belief system provides its own proof of divine and evil existence. The individual is taught that their love for a parent, mate, or simply another person is God or Jesus manifest in them. They feel love, so they have proof of the deity. They are taught that their feelings of lust are sinful and of Satan or Satan's demons floating about. They feel lust, so they have proof of these entities as well. Because so many natural human emotions are deemed sinful or evil, the believer is besieged with guilt and fear of displeasing their ideal thereby not

only losing actualization of promised fulfillment and the sense of security that promise provides, but also the fear of eternal agony and damnation as the necessary alternative. Just in case the individual is so careful as to avoid all natural human thoughts, feelings and behaviors deemed sinful, the belief includes their status of being damned as innate. The belief provides the fear, the belief provides the escape, the believed escape then further provides guilt and fear. And so on, as a continuous cycle. The individual is “enchained” by his emotions just as Marx states.

While writing this chapter I received a forwarded email religious testimony by an individual who not only exemplifies these statements by Marx as I have extrapolated them, but also adheres to the second twice-born category of internalizing a conventionally religious ideal to escape the pain of reality made aware. I have decided to include it. The testimony in its entirety, and exactly as written, is as follows:

Guys, several of you are my close friends from way back and some of you I don't know at all, but I went through this and I know now that I never will again because I'm not lost anymore. For those of you that know me you know that I have done just about everything of this world, but about a year ago I began to be burdened about what my life was all about and I was blessed with a Christian upbringing so I started searching for God, but I was not strong enough to change myself. I tried going to church and listening to Christian music and just being a good guy for a while but I really wasn't different. I really can't explain what happened to me, but one day God offered me the chance to accept him and I did. I spent the entire day in my room on my knees weeping and finally experienced the changing power of the Holy Spirit. It was the most amazing experience in my life and I now have a continual growing relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

I said I was blessed with Christian upbringing, but the truth is that I was only exposed to the truth, my seven-year-old salvation wasn't real and I was just comfortable in the surroundings of the church. My family was "Christian" but the truth is that my dad probably isn't saved. My family only exposed me to the truth and did not really seek after God's desire for our lives. We were designed as God's simple creation for a man to give God the glory and have a relationship with Him and lead a family seeking God's desire for their lives. Man was created

and sin entered the world causing us to get further and further from the desire of God. Look at our world, it becomes worse every day and it becomes harder for us or our children to see the real reason that we were created. If you read this, I have prayed that this would show you the truth and you would seek our creator for the purpose of your life.¹

According to this theory, as stated in the second chapter, this individual who is now in a twice-born, second category state of idealization made the transition from once-born second category idealization. During the once-born state of being, he previously attempted to thwart painful realities through the achievement or actualization of unconventional religious ideals. These ideals, represented by whatever his statement "...done everything of this world..." entails for this individual, were realized at some point to be ultimately unfulfilling, as they are ideals and do not exist.

The painful realities of the edge of the frozen lake began to enter his mind, causing great pain and strife. At some point during this time, he was taught and thought to re-idealize his emotions to a conventional religion, which admittedly previously manifested itself in what I regard as once-born social identity exemplified by his words, "...my seven year old salvation wasn't real, I was just comfortable in the surroundings..." During a tremendously significant release of repressed and suppressed emotionality, this individual internalized the new ideal that this religion provided him. He has now psychologically deluded himself into a sense of security, and an escape from the frozen lake.

¹ This emailed testimony was forwarded to me, copied from my mailbox and used within the same hour. A more appropriate source during this chapter could not have been. It was sent to me by a former philosophy student of mine for comment. I do not know the author other than his name on the email.

This new conventionally religious idealization will subsequently entail the devaluation of that which threatens it, certainly my theory were he to read it and probably including high-school biology texts and the scientific like, but certainly including his first apparent devaluation, which is the judgment of his own father's likely eternal supernatural damnation. In Marx's (2001) terms, this individual has made his "inner conscience religious" (77). He is not following the edicts of a priest, although there is now likely a clergyman and a society regularly experienced by this individual in order to maintain and strengthen his delusion. He will now identify with his new ideal with great fervor, as he is aware of the painful reality of the frozen lake waiting for him were he to question and risk losing his new delusion- providing ideal.

Returning to Marx's statement regarding philosophy as being the emancipator of the people, this is an indication of Marx's inability to understand the need, the drive, for idealization. His logical steps from the Reformation as one of freeing the believer from external authority, to the believer then becoming under the authority of his own conscious, had indeed as he states, "...formulated the problem rightly." But this next step, resulting in the believer being freed from himself through philosophy disregards a basic philosophical concept, that is, to what could be described as the Will. I am not referring to Nietzsche's (1964) "Will to Power" (1909-11), but the Schopenhauerian "Will to Life" (Hollingdale 1970: 275), the will that deceives.

Like Marx, Schopenhauer is a rationalist. However, unlike Marx, Schopenhauer laces his rationalism with enormous emotional depth and awareness. His Will is the internal force that directs human actions to those of procreation or destruction, but also

cunningly deceives the mind in order to fulfill the human reproductive destiny.

Schopenhauer claimed that reality was so brutal, pessimistic and painful that the only rational action to take in the face of such reality would be to commit suicide. The Will, however, deceives the mind into optimism in order to thwart harsh reality, saving the individual from self-destruction and thereby saving opportunity for reproduction.

This concept provides a philosophical explanation for the human drive to idealize. The edge of the frozen lake and the frozen lake itself represent the painful realities of the individual's life and life in general. Such agony emerges upon the realization of such reality that the Will yearns for a catalyst of deception, so idealization is born. Schopenhauer's Will is as the motor reflexes of the body recoiling flesh from that which threatens it. When the mind is in danger, this Will engages in deception in order to recoil from painful reality. Often, if not always, this Will is a Will to Idealize, as ideals act to divert, subvert, mask, and deny painful reality such that an optimism can be maintained.

Ideals, figments of the mind designed to provide purpose, direction, promise of fulfillment, and even promise of avoiding death, are the tools of this Will. Much like Schopenhauer's rational solution to this state of affairs that is pessimistic reality, the third category of being twice-born is not the way *out*, but the way *through* the problem. Schopenhauer relies on the awareness of the sublime in order to reach a point whereby triumph over the Will could be achieved. Likewise, this third category is a state whereby delusion-free appreciation for life in spite of the frozen lake is achieved. This

sublimity can be seen in the description of this category aforementioned in the second chapter as “the sparkle in the eye of the old man who is beholding the child.”

Marx does not allow for the need of such a psycho/emotional solution to the pessimism of the realities of life. Emotional ramifications as dangerous to the individual are dealt with by Marx in the manner of eliminating or discouraging them. His famous statement likening religious belief to an opiate is similar as my delusive idealism and Schopenhauer’s Will as deceiver. It *is* the same from the standpoint of escapism. To use a drug, a delusion or a deception in order to thwart the painful nature of reality, to the mind of Marx is a waste of time and energy that could be better used in a physical or intellectual manner in order to change the way things are for the better. However, Marx not only does not see the overwhelming power of the experienced pains and fears of reality, that make him unable to see the need for such methods of thwarting them, but therefore he necessarily does not see the need for a rational solution to this problem which is essentially the frozen lake. His rational solution is that there is no problem. Marx is once-born second category, and the ideal saving him from the pain of becoming twice-born is his system of ideals, particularly the ideal of utopia.

It is important to note that what I mean by Marx’s blindness of the power of emotionality and its need for creating methods to assuage pain is that Marx himself is inauthentically aware of this pain. He is aware of its effect on the proletariat class of the populace however. He is also aware of the mechanism that drives its production. Marx (2001) writes:

The foundation of irreligious criticism is this: man makes religion, religion does not make man. Religion is indeed the self-consciousness and self-awareness of

man who either has not yet attained to himself or has already lost himself again. But man is no abstract being squatting outside the world. Man is the world of man, the state, society. The state, this society, produces religion's inverted attitude to the world, because they are an inverted world themselves. (71)

These statements reiterate what I regard as a major impetus for attachment to an ideal or a system of ideals. That is, lack of Self. "...who has not yet attained to himself..." is a direct reference to an individual who has no authentic identity, thusly creating a vacuum for which an ideal is needed to fill. With these statements, Marx had reference to religion as this void-filling idealism, but it also applies directly to unconventionally religious idealism such as materialism or power seeking. The statement, "or has already lost himself again..." is a direct reference to what I regard the state in which a man finds himself, or at least must stare at himself when previously held ideals have become sterile.

Although perhaps less obvious, this quote could also qualify as describing the state in which a man finds himself when he is facing the frozen lake and is desperate for an ideal to cling to. This being the second category of being twice-born. For an individual to find herself is to become first-hand, or authentic. The authentic individual, having been released, or having fought off idealism as a substitute for identity and a diversion from reality, has no need or propensity for conventional or unconventional religiosity.

It is interesting to me that Marx used this particular quote regarding the loss of oneself "*again*" because it may imply Marx's awareness that ideals created to assuage reality, allowing a man to be in a state whereby he has "not yet attained to himself," are false and therefore allowing for the state having "lost himself *again*." The interest lies in

that many statements of Marx display an awareness of psycho/emotive mechanisms, yet Marx also has great disdain for them. To recognize them in others is to be at least sub-consciously aware of them in yourself. This is the case for Marx, I believe, yet ironically he was unaware that his concept of utopia was idealization, carrying with it the very mechanical elements in himself that he took great pains to project onto his society.

At this point let me say that in addition to utopia being an idealism, which, as I have stated is an unconventionally religious belief, thus forcing Marx to exist in the same realm of which he attempts to free the worker, Marx also idealizes the Proletariat as an entity. In keeping with his own thoughts of religious belief as a projection onto a deity, with which I also agree, Marx does the same with the Proletariat.

Marx essentially lived a Bourgeoisie life, yet idealized that which the Proletariat represented. Although he did not strive to become a worker, he did strive to create an ideal, utopian life for a Proletariat society. In accordance with this dissertation's conceptualization of religiosity as idealization and idealization as religiosity, as well as Marx's own theory of religious belief as projection, Marx was projecting his own emotional identity onto the lower class of society. This class of society as his ideal left a necessary disdain for, and devaluation of, the Bourgeoisie class, of which he was a member, and which he indeed devalued. The implication then becomes one of Marx's projected self-loathing.

Being that idealization acts as a diversion or denial of painful reality, the case of Marx would then be one whereby Marx felt a conscious or subconscious pain, dissonance, guilt, stress, embarrassment or unmatched identity with his station in life.

Likewise, in keeping with this theoretical perspective, Marx also idealized a utopian society as one having overcome all forms of alienation. In such a society the individual would recover the essence of what it is to be human, one who creates and maintains connection with that which he creates. If the eradication of alienation is an ideal of Marx, then we must assume its antithesis is devalued by him. It was. Marx regarded capitalism to be one of the forces alienating a man from his labor, and therefore castigated its practice. Once again, the theoretical assumption would then be that Marx himself felt very alienated, projected that sensation onto the working class, and devalued the class of which he was a member, displacing the devaluation of himself.

Marx (2001) also goes on to say:

Religious suffering is at the same time an expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the feeling of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless circumstances. [T]he abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness. The demand to give up the illusions about their condition is a demand to give up a condition that requires illusion. The criticism of religion is therefore the germ of the criticism of the valley of tears whose halo is religion. (72)

“Illusory happiness” in this case is second-hand inauthentic happiness. To give it up is to face the frozen lake, “the valley of tears.” Since I am contending that idealization is religious, thereby making the religion of Marx the ideal of communism, then the preceding statement regarding religious suffering would apply to Marx’s religion as well. Marx suffered *through* the Proletariat. Their suffering as he described it, of being alienated, was his own. This was both his expression and his protest. This fight for the Proletariat, his subconscious identity as oppressed and repressed was his own “sigh,” his own feeling and passion in a “heartless world” and his own “soul” in

what he believed to be a “soulless circumstance.” Marx was in a condition that required an illusion, an *ideal*, an illusion of a utopia, and this condition was one he could not give up. Of course I cannot with any certainty delve into the mind and emotionality of Karl Marx. These statements are extrapolations of my theory, some of Freud’s and then merged with Marx’s own regarding religion. But if this theory is valid, and its extrapolations to Marx’s own are valid as I have shown them to be, then these statements regarding Marx’s emotional drives for his idealism are valid as well.

This logical structure, this mechanical lineage is as applicable to the individual as it is to society. This structure is further described as Marx discusses religion enmeshed with the state. With my own parenthetical interjections displaying how this theory applies, Marx writes:

The so-called Christian state is the Christian negation of the state, but in no way the state realization of Christianity. [*the Christian state is a negation -“projection”- of itself onto, and as, the Christian ideal thereby rendering its “realization” or becoming real, impossible.*] The state that still recognizes Christianity in the form of a religion, does not yet recognize it in a political form because it still has a religious attitude to religion, that is it is not the real elaboration of the human basis of religion because it still accepts the unreal, the imaginary form of this human kernel. [‘in the form of a religion’ *is the idealized form*, ‘the real elaboration...human basis of religion’ *is the reality of Christian man-made principal both written and received by man*. ‘the unreal, the imaginary form...human kernel’ *is the unreal ideal/projection of what is authentically human, the kernel.*] The so-called Christian state is the imperfect state and the Christian

religion serves as a supplement and a sanctification of its imperfection. [“imperfect state” is simply *REALITY*. *The religion is the ideal that thwarts the reality of the imperfection.*] Religion therefore necessarily becomes a means for the state, and the state is one of hypocrisy. [*the state, the society, the individual who idealizes is ALWAYS one of hypocrisy because the ideal believed in is impossible to achieve.*] There is a great difference between the perfect state counting religion as one of its presuppositions because of the deficiencies in the general essence of the state, and the imperfect state declaring religion to be its foundation because the deficiencies in its particular existence make it a deficient state. [*this is the great difference between a state using religion as a guiding or cultural force, and a state using a religion as an ideal to fix its problems.*] In the former, the imperfection of even a perfect politics shows itself in religion. The so-called Christian state needs the Christian religion in order to complete itself as a state. The democratic state, the true state, does not need religion for its political completion. Rather it can abstract from religion, because it realizes the human foundations of religion in a secular manner.” [“...the imperfection...shows itself in religion” *because the religion as ideal forces imperfection necessarily in its holder. The democratic state does not need religion, as it is secure in itself, because “it realizes the human foundations of religion...” i.e. it does not idealize religion, at least for the state*] (Marx 2001: 55).

It is evident to me that Marx understands this mechanism of the ideal very well, but he sees this mechanism only in conventional religion as an idealism. He sees neither idealism as a religion nor idealism as having the same mechanism as religion. Had he done so, he would have recognized his own idealism, applied his mechanical theory of

religion to it, and discovered not only the flaws and distinctions of his idealism but the aspects of himself driving the idealism. Upon reading some of Marx's letters and letters to Marx, some elements of a battle with positive identity and identity itself, surface. Marx is very idealistic, and as explained in the second chapter idealism is a filler to an internal void, a lack of identity or a fear of reality. These aspects may be greatly repressed as well.

We read in a letter from Marx's father references to his son's emotionally damaged personality:

...does your heart correspond to your head, to your talent? Does it have room for the softer feelings of this world, which provide such essential comfort for the man of feeling in this vale of woe? Your soul is obviously animated and ruled by a demon not given to all men; is this demon a heavenly or a Faustian one? Will you ever – and this is the doubt that causes me the most pain – be receptive to true human happiness – domestic happiness? Will you ever...be able to spread happiness to your immediate surroundings? (Kamenka 1983: 10)

The preceding letter is at the very least an evidence of Marx's own internal strife as experienced by his father. Marx (2001) responds at length, but I will abbreviate some pertinent excerpts:

When I left you [father], a new world had opened before me, the world of love, at first a love full of longing and void of hope. Even the journey to Berlin...depressed me profoundly, for the rocks I saw were no rougher, no harsher, than the sensation of my soul...(9)

He begins with these lines that intertwine "love" with despair, a distinct mark of emotional confusion at the least. He goes on to describe to his father, mostly his academic accomplishments and brief descriptions of philosophical works of his, with occasional references to his own episodic rages and depressions. We get a clear picture of a very neurotic and emotionally strained individual. Through other letters and the

Communist Manifesto itself, we learn of a pronounced disdain of the very class of society to which he belongs. I cannot determine whether his idealization of the Proletariat and his devaluation of the Bourgeoisie was first an idealization with the subsequent devaluation of the higher class, leading to self-loathing, or the reverse as prompted by his own hatred of his emotional treatment of himself thereby spawning a devaluation of himself through the class with which he identified, with a subsequent idealization of the antithesis, the labor class. I suspect the latter, as apparently Marx's internal strife, which I would argue produced a self-loathing, if not a deeply repressed one being previously well in place. In which case the loathing of the Bourgeoisie, a displacement for the loathing of himself, manifested itself as an idealization of the class with which he had no identity, practice or association whatsoever.

So my theory of religion and religiosity as idealism, and idealism as religion and religiosity, following the same mechanisms that Marx describes with regard to conventional religion, gives at least a viable picture of Marx the individual caught in the same psycho/emotional machination that he detested. The idealism that his work imposed upon a society as communism was as destined to fail as if the society had placed their faith in a god. Marx the idealist, the high priest of the Communist religion imposed upon his congregants an ideal dogma for salvation. Following his criticisms of religious belief, the dogma robbed the people of themselves, the salvation was an unachievable ideal innately unachievable, and the perfect state was rendered imperfect by its own religion.

CHAPTER IV

DURKHEIM: PARADIGMATIC EXTRAPOLATIONS

To define religion is a formidable task indeed, not unlike arriving at an agreed-upon definition of art. There exist as many definitions of religion as cultures and subcultures the world over. In keeping with the subjectivity of such an endeavor I have included my own very broad definition in the introduction to this dissertation. However, a basic common thread common to many accepted definitions, as well as my own, is that religion provides a sense of meaning to those who identify with it. This sense of meaning will fluctuate to the degree of identification.

Regularly included in definitions of religion are beliefs of entities higher than humanity. Monotheistic, polytheistic, and pantheistic interpretations of these entities commonly referred to as “gods” abound in most of the world’s religions. In addition to belief in the higher being[s] are creation myths explaining existence, events caused by, or stopped by the being[s], and practices surrounding the belief. Many religions follow this description, some more loosely than others, and some do not follow so closely at all. As encompassed in my own theory of religion as idealism, I am including Emile Durkheim’s model of that which constitutes religion and religious practice.

Durkheim’s criteria for a religious practice is primarily from a social perspective. He is less concerned with what may or may not be an outside-of-society objective fact, truth or logic that perhaps can only be asymptotically approached, but is other than his own social logic system. His model does not address questions as to the creator of the

universe or humankind, or actual events being influenced by any supernatural forces.

But, the Durkheimian perspective, although less concerned with the psychology of the individual than the society, is none-the-less a lesson in individual psychology as well as social psychology.

I contend that Durkheim's social psychological structure of religion is inextricably intertwined with the function of idealism as religion from my own perspective. However, although I see Durkheim's model as one entailing the function of idealism as I have described it, I do not see my "religion as idealism/idealism as religious" necessarily entailing the entire Durkheimian social perspective, although many aspects of it are entailed. My concept of what constitutes a religion or a religious practice rests upon idealism, idealism as necessarily entailing an escapism.

Unlike Durkheim's theory, my theory does not require a present and/or active collectivity, although it often includes one; it only requires a single mind and an emotional need for identity, connectivity or void-filling, which occurs *through* an ideal, thereby providing a fulfillment that thwarts the frozen lake. What follows from this statement is that were many of these single minds and emotional needs to be *actively* engaged in a collectivity, we would have a case much more closely resembling Durkheim's model, including collective effervescence and other elements of a society which make its force greater than the sum of its parts.

It is important to note that when I speak of single minds and the absence of a collectivity, I do not mean to imply that the single individual is without the continuous effects of socialization. She is not. However, the distinction I wish to make is one

between the case of the individual who finds, creates and attaches to an ideal that is either borrowed from some element of society or as an original creation, and the case of the individual who is embedded in, drawn into, or forced into a social group in which a pre-existing ideal is encountered and internalized.

To use a metaphor in order to apply this distinction, let us hypothesize that a young child with no conventional religious ideals or identification is abandoned on an island with no other human beings. This is not to say that this child is a feral child having gone through no socialization whatsoever, because at the very least this child having thought processes would entail the use of a previously, and socially, embedded language. With rudimentary thought capability established in this child, my theory supposes that this individual, without the *active* influence of a surrounding society, would create his own god, gods or idealism. This is what I regard as the single mind with emotional needs. In contrast, were the same child - regardless of his pre-existing conventional or unconventional religious identity or idealizations - to be abandoned on the island already populated by a society, he would at some point internalize the religion or idealizations of this society. This is what I regard to be *active* social influence on the internalization of a religion or idealism. The latter example follows the Durkheimian perspective.

We will begin this chapter with Durkheim's (1995) religion being defined as:

A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs, and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them. (44)

In addition to this sociological statement, a number of general tenets as described by both Durkheim and Bellah will play a significant role in this chapter. They are as follows:

According to Emile Durkheim:

A religion is a phenomenon that involves SACRED and PROFANE representations, which unite people into a “church” or a collectivity.

This duality exists necessarily and includes all aspects of a society. That which is sacred is given a significance in meaning to the society. This designation, which may be given to any object or objects, locations or actions, is given arbitrarily. To Durkheim, all that exists is profane, that is to say ordinary. Upon designation, that which is profane becomes sacred, thereby placing it in a recognized realm apart from that which has not been designated, or that which remains profane. Sacred objects or aspects are given reverence and a special place in the society.

Societies worship themselves. This sanctity given to the society promotes harmony, cohesion and common values that are necessary for society to survive.

The metaphysical nature of a god or gods is not important to Durkheim, as he considers the society to be actually worshipping itself. In this sense the society is actually the “higher being” in the religion and the form named as the higher being[s] is a projection of the desires and fears of the society. Although, regarding the social practice of religion, my theory would agree with this previous statement, it also holds that projection is also occurring on the individual level. The individual worships himself, as an egoistic/anomic practice such that the projection onto a god or gods is a projection of

the individual's desires and fears as well. Durkheim regards societal self-worship as a stabilizing force for the society. A commonality is formed and strengthened, giving strength to the group. My theory holds self-worship, through projection, for the religious individual to be a stabilizing – although perhaps not healthy – force for the individual.

Psychological effects provide meaning, emotional stabilization, purpose, ethics, rules, sense of justice and freedom from mortality.

These factors are applicable socially as well as individually. Emotional stabilization in a society will promote emotional stability in an individual. Such stability may come from designations of particulars to the society as sacred. The religion provides answers to questions thus limiting questioning and open-ended thought that may arrive at mental discord. Purpose and direction provide a method for living, and what I regard an ideal for which to strive. Ethics, rules, and justice provide a basic legal or moral system that may embed itself in a political manner. This legal aspect provides a behavioral stabilization. Lack of mortality is in agreement with my theory's function of conventional religious idealism as an escape from the frozen lake. In that regard, death is eliminated for the believer.

Religion is an immense social cooperation using a vast system of symbols.

Crosses, The Virgin Mary, Crescents, The Star of David, and The Christian Ichthus are all very commonly displayed symbols of the Western religions that recognize the god of Abraham. These symbols, as well as many others, denote a group with which any member can share identity. The theory of this dissertation holds this tenet as well. Not only can a symbol carry with it a recognizable indication of a social group, but the

symbol provides a sense of identity for the individual. This identity is not only important to the individual as an indicator of who he/is, to themselves, but also both as a member of a group as well as an indication of membership to others of the group. A commonality, a connectedness, is achieved through the common use of common symbols.

BELLAH: CIVIL RELIGION

In 1967, Robert Bellah published an important article in the professional journal *Daedalus* which took the Durkheimian model from a broader perspective to a more specific one. Bellah applied the theory of religion-as-social-entity to what he called, “American Civil Religion.” This new model used the basic Durkheimian criteria to extrapolate this religious entity to include not just the idea of a recognized religion but also the collective behavior, identity and attachment to a culture, nation, or nationality, specifically that which is American nationalism. Bellah contended that nationalism had the same general elements of conventional religion, with only minor alterations. Civil religion is then a religiosity in a political or cultural identification.

Upon being exposed to Bellah’s paper, I immediately became aware that this concept could then be further extrapolated to any institutional organization, including those consisting of a small fraction of the general population that followed Durkheim’s model with a conventional religion, or Bellah’s model with an American nationalistic

one. More specifically, I was aware that the criteria for Bellah's civil religion matched the collective belief and behavior of not only a nation, but Texas A&M University.

Upon further extrapolation, in an effort to find the elements both common to, and at the basis of, religious belief and behavior, I arrived at the bifurcation of idealism into two religious forms, conventional and unconventional religion. These are indeed two distinct types of practice and belief, but they share a common function and general psychological method. In contrast to the theories of Durkheim and Bellah, my theory does not regard active, present social elements to be necessary, although they can most certainly follow naturally, significantly and powerfully.

Fear, both conscious and unconscious, drives my theoretical construct. Although conventional religions can and often do teach fear, I contend that fear can also be born in the dark recesses of the individual mind from less social influence, such as awareness of mortality or emotional damage, rather than only from more social influences prompting the belief in an angry, vengeful god. Regardless, I will compare Durkheim's criteria with Bellah's following my written account of my indoctrination into a civil-religious organization. My labeling this organization as religious is extrapolated from Bellah's extrapolation of Durkheim.

In the following paragraphs I will give a Durkheimian description of emotions elicited from religion and a Jamesian description, compare the two and then apply them both to the actual case of which I have studied, that of the Corps of Cadets at Texas A&M University. My reason for doing so is that I wish to include an account of how my definition of religion and religiosity, which includes but exceeds the boundaries of

Bellah's Civil Religion, plays a role or rather, is the role of an organization of which I am very familiar. I contend that this institution and its military organization on which it was founded, is not "as a religion," but under Durkheim's definition, as well as Bellah's and my own, *is* a religion. The internalization of the belief system it promotes, the fervor, the rituals, the attachment and practice, all meet our requirements of "religiosity."

At one time I intended this study itself to be my dissertation, but after doing a number of interviews of current members of this organization, of which I too was a member, [arguably I still am, in the way a Catholic is always a Catholic, they have merely left the church] I decided to go deeper into this phenomenon to investigate its very roots. My argument is that the very roots, or even *root*, from which grows all that is regarded as religion in the world, as mentioned in my previous chapters, is the same mechanism at its base that drives a starlet to fame, a businessperson to countless millions, or a college student as a military cadet to draw a sword on a cheerleader in front of 50,000 spectators, as was the case at a well-publicized Aggie game in the 1980's. This mechanism, perhaps disguised, can be made evident in the theorists I have included. To William James the experience of religion is a very personal one, it may or may not be a purely subjective experience, but it is only the subjectivity and personal use of the religious experience that interests him. As discussed in a previous chapter, for James, to be once-born is to be shallow and happy with the way things are. An individual, who accepts the way the universe exists as being more or less positive, falls into this category. Durkheim, on the other hand, sees religion as entailing a Jamesian "happy confidence" as well as pain, initiation rites, suffering and sacrifice. The pain,

suffering and sacrifice, which are often woven into the theme of the religion, are also often imposed by the religion on its followers in some sort of symbolic fashion, or an actual physical one. The Durkheimian model entails this full range of elements amongst its own.

James's description contains a parallel to this model as Durkheim includes both once-born AND twice-born characteristics. The happy confidence that religion produces is both an escape from reality as well as a shallowness. The shallowness occurs when a believer is a once-born type of person. This person has not experienced the pain and suffering first hand in the manner of the Jamesian twice-born individual. The once-born person experiences religion like they already experience life, in a shallow manner, more or less happy, somewhat dispassionate and with a positive or neutral view of the universe. For these people the themes of pain and suffering in religion place them in a state of awe of the symbols that represent such. The imposed pain, suffering and sacrifice are infused as a way to artificially create a passion for the religion.

But for the twice-born type of individual, who knows pain and suffering quite well, religion allows a desperately yearned-for escape from reality. If the believer is able to engage in the delusion [largely to deny the frozen lake and divert its edge] in the manner of a Jamesian religious experience, then the religion can have a much deeper meaning to the individual than all the church and ritualistic activity James speaks of as superfluous, OR they may become neurotically obsessed with such religious activity in a desperate attempt to maintain the delusion.

This having been said, I will commence with my account of the Corps of Cadets as a religious organization, promoting a religiosity as a self-worship of the society by using pain and suffering to create passion, which yields a Durkheimian social cohesion. This organization falls much more directly into the Durkheimian model than James's, but I do regard the Corps experience as a religious experience where one can be "consumed by the Aggie spirit." And like James's religious experience, the fervor and passion produced by this religious organization is distraction from reality. Unlike the temporary religious experience, The Church of Aggie-ism continues to help maintain this distraction as attachment to the organization and its ideals. Commonly, as with conventional religion, this distraction maintains for the life of the believer.

Read this account as one of a recruit being inducted into a religion. If it is thought of as more of a "primitive religion," it is easier to see the psychological recruitment take place, although some elements clearly mimic more conventional techniques, or as they were derived.

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY AS A CIVIL RELIGION: A QUALITATIVE ACCOUNT

Why did you come to A&M? I asked. "I went to my grandfather's muster...I prayed about it...I felt God told me this is where I should be."

--- interview # 3

Texas A&M University is sprawled out along side the banks of the Brazos River in a deeply conservative and devoutly Christian region in eastern Central Texas.

Although the campus itself is a couple of miles from the river, the land owned by the university for agriculture and ranching purposes extends far past the river and includes thousands of square miles all over Texas. The university is responsible for the greater wealth of academic information regarding agriculture, which influences the state of Texas, the United States and much of the world. But there is another aspect to this institution that is as far reaching but reaches far deeper than any of its academic prowess, notoriety, research millions, or job placement ability. Texas A&M is a “church.” Its students, known as “Aggies” are its faithful congregation, eager to spread the word, recruit converts and live the philosophy that I shall call “Aggie-ism.”

I am an Aggie. Like a Jew who is an atheist, I have an acquired identity to this philosophy, this religion of Aggieland, regardless of my lack of personal convictions towards it. Although being an Aggie is arguably a non-genetic identification, it most certainly is a cultural one eliciting strong emotional responses ranging from blind, life-sacrificing devotion to utter disgust and mockery of the same. An infidel, a blasphemer enrolled at Texas A&M is still an Aggie, albeit a non-practicing one. However, those non-practicing Aggies are described by more devoted members as “two-percenters”, denoting the almost insignificant nature and numbers amongst the believers although the number is arguably much higher than two-percent. In an effort to better understand this phenomenon I deem religious, I have gathered information directly from twenty military cadets by interview and have collected numerous quotes from students who have written letters to the editor of the university newspaper, *The Battalion*.

It is important to mention that I was a four-year member of an organization on campus of roughly two-thousand students called the Texas Aggie Cadet Corps. This organization is a military unit vestigial of the origination of this university. For almost a hundred years Texas A&M was an all-male military academy boasting training for officers of all wars and military action with U.S. involvement. To officially start my studies of the nature of Aggie belief, during the spring of 2001, I returned to the military sector of the campus to interview the legacies of my former involvement in this organization, “The Corps.” However, my unofficial commencement of this study began in the last weeks of August 1984.

In order to provide a base of information to better understand the social and psychological setting in which many non-military [“non-reg”] students, and all cadets experience life as a student, I am including my own accounts of an event known as “Fish Camp” as well as a glimpse into the first few weeks of my freshman year as a cadet. Although a number of years have come and gone since I was a member, and some hazing forms have changed to a less strenuous form or have been eliminated completely, the general nature of the military academy setting and its daily regimen has remained the same. It is through this window into my past as a cadet that one can see through the eyes of my interview subjects.

Q: What was Fish Camp like? “I thought there were so many people there, like four or five hundred, it’s gonna suck. The discussion group helped out...I became friends with cabin mates. It was overwhelming... a high. There was so much spirit during Fish Camp that I thought about not joining The Corps because I saw how much fun non-regs had.”

--interview #2

“Fish Camp was great...some of the people were so gung-ho it almost seemed fake...I got chewed out by a counselor.”

--interview # 14

I arrived on campus in the morning with a well-packed duffle bag full of all the items a person might need for a four-day camping trip in East Texas. I was signed-up, paid and ready to board the bus taking several hundred soon-to-be freshmen students to an event known as “Fish Camp.” The term “fish” at A&M comes from usage in The Corps to denote a freshman cadet, in the same way that West Point uses the term “plebe.” The term has come to include all freshmen at A&M regardless of the military school involvement. Fish Camp was officially regarded as indoctrination to the Aggie way of life, but unofficially it was purported to be one of the most enjoyable events a student could have. And it WAS fun. Although many students at A&M in general and certainly the larger part of Fish Camp participants are members of Aggie families, there still existed for even the most Aggie-familiar students an unrealized potential of identity as Aggie. And Fish Camp was created in order to mold that unrealized identity.

We arrived at a camp used for Methodist Church retreats, a beautiful camp in the green and sweet smelling Piney Woods of East Texas. We were immediately assigned cabins with five other same gender campers and told where and when to report to our first meeting. We all assembled in a large cafeteria with a stage at one end on which stood the Fish Camp Director. We took seats in those metal, institutional folding chairs and waited. “HOWDY!!” the director bellowed over the loud speaker and several of the 400 or more students answered back. “HOWDY!!” he bellowed again. We got it this time and all returned the thundering greeting. We were then told that soon we were

going to be Aggies, members of the finest and friendliest family in the world, and that all Aggies say “howdy.” That was rule number one. Many rules were to follow.

Aggies help each other out. Aggies love Texas A&M. Aggies “wildcat”, which as freshmen meant that whenever we heard “class of 88” mentioned by the leader or when an appropriate time to clap occurred for any reason, we were to raise our hands straight up over our heads as though we were signaling a touchdown, and yell at the top of our lungs “AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAY!!!” This went on for a number of seconds or until the leader raised his clenched fist or raised his fist and loudly spoke, “REST.” Aggies do not like “t.u,” that “other university” in Texas. Aggies never “boo.” Never. Instead, when disappointed, or slighted in some way, Aggies “horse laugh” or make a loud hissing noise. Aggies never lose football games; they are merely “outscored.” Aggies are friendly. Aggies love Reveille, the pure-breed collie mascot known as “Miss Reveille Ma’am” to freshmen. Aggies do “yells” in unison which are short, loud, rhyming cheers designating one’s Aggie subgroup and ending with the phrase, “...the best damn outfit anywhere!” Yells are performed by leaning over forward at the waist with one’s hands over one’s knees, called “humping it”, and shouting at the top of one’s lungs. But most importantly, “Aggies don’t lie, cheat or steal,” as that is the “Aggie Code of Honor.”

So, four days of wildcatting, yelling, nighttime dances, “discussion group” sessions where an older student gave advice on being a college student, games, more yelling and wildcatting ensued until the short week was over and we all felt like Aggies.

This experience at Fish Camp is the most significant indoctrination into Aggie-ism for most students. Except for those soon-to-be freshmen in The Corps.

Q: Are Aggies better people? “Others like at t.u. are weird looking...rude, they have no sense of pride.” “You could trust Aggies with your life.”

-Interview #1

I arrived on the Quadrangle [the military sector of campus] for F.O.W week [Freshman Orientation Week] full of excitement, anticipation, wonderment and fear. I had the same duffle bag I took to Fish Camp a week earlier only this time it was packed with items I was told to pack from a list I got in the mail. The Corps sent notices to bring things such as black shoe polish, blue jeans, white t-shirts, razors, black socks, running shoes, furniture polish, Brasso, a broom and a mop. We were told that is all we would need.

Everyone had been assigned to an “outfit” or a Corps group of cadets ranging from thirty to fifty members. I had chosen the outfit or “company” called F-2 because a neighbor boy down the street from my parents had been in F-2, and that is the only outfit name I had ever heard of. We were assigned rooms or “holes” as we were told it was our “privilege” to call them. Being that “Freshmen Orientation Week” was the week prior to school starting, we had a great deal to learn about how we were expected to behave and what we were expected to know before the upperclassmen arrived. Only a few handpicked cadets called “cadre” were there that week to train us.

And they did. We were up at 0600 learning to shine shoes and were to remain in jeans, white t-shirts and casual shirts most of everyday. It was during this time we were

also allowed to buy books and find out where our classes were going to be and other such school oriented things. By the middle of the week we were issued our uniforms and shoes and got our heads shaved to an eighth of an inch in length. We learned to “pop-to” or snap to attention when anyone other than our new “buddies” spoke to us. And our buddies were not allowed to speak to each other in the hall of the dormitory, only in our “hole” or room, and only with the door shut.

We learned it was not our privilege to look out of windows. And it was not our privilege to speak to anyone in the hall until the door was fully closed and locked, but that it WAS our privilege to pop-to against the wall in the hall and speak loudly to all upperclassmen, starting with the highest rank and then descending. “Howdy Mr. Jones, sir!” and on down the rankings, at the top of our lungs. We were taught how to “whip out” or meet any upperclassman whose name we didn’t know or remember.

We were to “bust ass” or run up to the person we didn’t know, snap out our forearm and hand at a 90 degree angle from our side and loudly state, “Howdy! fish Stanford is my name Sir!” to which a reply would be made and hometowns and majors would be exchanged in a structured, scripted manner. This was a daily routine for my fourteen “fish buddies” as freshmen called each other. Fourteen 18 year-old boys shouting at the top of their lungs and running down the hall every which way in order to meet upperclassmen they didn’t know or remember. And re-meet them, and re-meet them. There were only a few upperclassmen there at this time though. Eleven hundred more were coming in a couple of days. After all, this was only the third day.

Q: What was your first Aggie experience? “It was Air-Out on the 4th night of F.O.W, they had painted faces, the pissheads were yelling in our faces, ‘Easy Come, Easy Go!’”

--interview #2

At the end of the fourth day we had been running around visiting sites on campus and had generally been kept constantly moving. There was not a moment to stop or ponder the events of the day and being dressed by 0630 every morning was taking its toll on us. We had exclaimed to each other how the beer drinking summer was very much over and that we were all “in the Army now.” Each night we had not been allowed to go to sleep until 11:00pm or 11:30 as we were told that was the way it was going to be once school started, so when the time came to climb in bed we did not hesitate. As with each preceding night, we were asleep moments after our heads hit the pillow. 0600 was going to come early.

And it came earlier than expected. Thirty minutes later at midnight all hell broke loose. The band started playing. Eighty big, heavy doors on all four floors of the dormitory were slamming hard against the walls. Yelling and screaming was heard before I could discern what anyone was saying, or even what was going on. While my roommate and I were sitting up in our bunks, our door was forcefully kicked open with a deafening impact and in ran upperclassmen with their faces painted white, like skulls, wielding sabres and dressed in battle fatigues. They were screaming and slamming the doors, “Get up! Get up! Get out! Get your clothes on! Run! Run!” It was a ruckus the likes of which I had never seen, nor have ever since.

Freshmen were frantically trying to put on pants, hopping on one leg and falling down in the hall, while being screamed at inches from their faces, in the darkness. A loud stereo was playing the sounds of helicopter blades whipping the air and we all were

in a terrified, sleep-deprived, frantic stupor. “Get on the wall!” someone screamed, “Get on the wall!” We all found a place for ourselves lined up on the wall in the dark hallway at attention, like we’d been taught. Some of us were in our underwear. One of my new buddies had run down the stairs and never came back. I cannot remember his name. The upperclassmen continued to scream in our faces such that spittle sprayed from their mouths. It was not to be the last time to feel that spray. The commanding officer, a tall man well over 6 feet, lay the cold blade of his sword against each of our necks as he went down the row. His face painted white with black eye sockets stared down at us. He told us that we “were Aggies now.”

Q: What is the most important Aggie aspect? “...The Corps...we’re here in our own little world...not everybody can do it.”

--Interview #11

After those of us who had not gotten fully dressed put on some pants, shoes and a t-shirt we were yelled at to “bust ass” down the stairs and assemble on the Quad. The “Yell Leaders,” upperclassmen who lead Aggie “yells” started us yelling in unison. At about 12:30a.m. seven hundred and fifty freshmen, excited and with blood pumping hard, were told to “hump it” and the yelling began. “The Fightin’ Texas Aggie Cadet Corps, the Twelfth Man, the Spirit of Aggieland, the best damn outfit anywhere!” followed by the wildcatting, “AAAAAAAAAAAAAY!!!” at a deafening roar. A water fight ensued with Cadre sloshing buckets of water on any freshman they could catch. Eventually we were all ushered back up to the fourth floor for an hour or two of eating watermelon with the upperclassmen and exclaiming how terrified we had been. There

was a lot of laughter. And the boy who kept on running? His mother came a few days later to retrieve his things. This initial indoctrination event was called “Air-Out.”

“I’m kinda getting tired of the disciplined life and stuff.”

--interview #10, freshman

Things changed. In a few days a swarm of upperclassmen descended upon the quad and in the dorm. We busted ass to meet and re-meet everyone. Our outfit shared a hallway with our “sister” outfit and we were confused for a while as to which upperclassmen were “ours” and which were not. But no matter, every upperclassman had to be “whipped out” to because after you learned their name, they were to be addressed and popped-to every time a threshold was passed, either by the freshman or the upperclassmen. If an upperclassman was stepping back and forth into his room, then they were “spoken to” every time they crossed the plane of the threshold. Seniors in the hall were due a “hit the wall” popping-to, which was done by standing at attention with one’s back to the wall and then snapping one’s body backwards such that the backs of one’s heels smacked hard against the baseboard. If a freshman was in the hall and an upperclassman exited a room, he was spoken to, but only after those of higher rank were addressed first.

“Speaking” meant that the freshman was to loudly say, “Howdy Mr. Jones, sir!” to whomever he recognized. Upperclassmen spoke back, “Howdy fish Smith” and if they could not remember a freshman’s name they would say, “I’m sorry, I forgot your name.” At this time the freshman would start the “whipping-out” procedure again.

Freshmen were only allowed to be in the hall if they were going somewhere, and had to

walk briskly six inches from the wall on their right side and look back over their shoulder every third step in case an upperclassman exited a room behind you and needed to be spoken to. If the upperclassman went back over his threshold and then re-entered the hall, or went in and came out of the bathroom, he was spoken to again. Only with his full body over the threshold was an upperclassman due addressing. With maybe fifty upperclassmen of varying rank entering and exiting the hallway at any given time, and with fifteen freshmen in my outfit and thirteen in our sister outfit down the hall, this daily event was quite a show. If an upperclassman entered the hall and you did not remember his name, you busted-ass to meet him again. There was no shame in having to meet someone even ten or twenty times before you remembered their name.

Q: What is your most important Aggie aspect? “Getting through the Corps of Cadets and sharing it with friends for life.”

--interview # 16

The real hazing started within a week or so. We were told that we had been taught well and that we had enough time to be “sharper” than we were. This word “sharp” was thrown around a great deal. Every freshman wanted his uniform and his “hole” to be “sharp,” as the alternative meant there was going to be a “crap-out.” Crap-out was the term for hazing but it entailed only the painful part of the term. “Hazing” was regarded as that which fraternities at “t.u.” did to their pledges. This included drinking binges and pranks and general silliness along with punitive hazing. In The Corps, there was plenty of silliness and pranks, but that was just known as “good bull” or fun. The reason being that crap-outs were almost exclusively punitive, and physically

painful, and what other universities called hazing would have included the activities of The Corps eighteen hours a day, and seven days a week for the entire academic year.

There were essentially three kinds of crap-outs. The most common type occurred in the hallway every morning and evening before chow. We would often awake at 0530 to 0545 to begin preparing for morning inspections, which would commence at 0620 when all freshmen were to “fall-out” of their holes and line up at attention at their respective places on the wall of the hallway. We would shine and affix our “brass,” the metal insignia on our uniforms and shine our shoes with spit and polish on a cotton cloth such that from the floor the two florescent light bulb tubes on the ceiling would be distinctly reflected in them. During this time we would also memorize our “campo” or “campusology” which was a list of facts about the memorials on campus and other general facts about A&M like inscriptions on various plaques and the names of the Aggie Congressional Medal of Honor winners. There were thirty-six campo that had to be memorized verbatim. Also, our floors had to be hand waxed with furniture polish and the hole would have to be in order sufficiently to be easily made sharp upon our return from morning chow.

Every week one freshman was designated the “whistle jock” which meant that his job was to be the first sharp fish of the morning and stand against the wall to blow a whistle and announce loudly, “First call for morning chow, fall out for morning chow in three-zero minutes.” At that time all the freshmen would leave their holes and line up on the wall to be inspected by the sophomores who would already be there waiting for us.

At this time the sophomores would begin “scoping us out” or checking our uniforms for the smallest infraction.

Brass placement was measured by the millimeter, arm patches had to have been brushed with the flame of a lighter so as to singe off any fuzz, and no thread that was able to be pinched with fingernails could exist anywhere on a uniform, including inside our shirt pockets or on our buttons. These threads were called “cables” and they had to be singed as well. Our buckles had to be perfectly shined with no hairline scratches and perfectly in line with our zipper seam and up to our shirt placket seam. The shirt had to be pressed and tight and have no “pussies” which were any folds in the fabric where it met the belt and the trousers. There were to be two perfect folds taking up any slack in the shirt, one on each side.

We had to be clean-shaven with non-foul breath and with no tiny head-hairs touching our ears. Nose hair growth was monitored as well. Our shoes were checked for shine and a tar application to the heel and sole had to be freshly applied each morning. The taps on the bottoms of our shoes were checked as it was a “fish privilege” or requirement to wear taps on the heel so that we could be heard in the hallways. We were told to recite campo while these inspections were going on. If there were any infractions in the campo or on our person, we were told to “get down” or “on your face” which meant we “assumed the position” of a “leaning-rest,” which was the push-up position with arms straightened. We then awaited the number of pushups we were told to do. Usually they just said, “push,” so we would count them off “one, sir, two, sir...” If there were several infractions it was likely that the freshman would remain pushing until

it was time to leave for morning chow, leaving a pool of sweat from the freshman's nose on the floor below his face.

The whistle jock would then blow the whistle and call that chow was in two-zero minutes, then one-zero minutes, and then "fall out for morning chow now!" This is when seniors would be emerging from their rooms, buttoning up their shirts in the hallway. At this time all freshmen were to run down the stairs. The din of taps clicking like popcorn popping filled the stairwell until everyone exited the dormitory doors with their arms skyward, yelling "AAAAAAAAAAAAAY!" It was now only 0640 hours.

We would line up where we were supposed to and wait until our commander would call us to attention. This event was known as morning formation. The entire two-thousand member Cadet Corps would be lined up this way in front of their dorms and reveille would be played by a bugler at one end of the Quadrangle. Each battalion, which was a dorm-full of about two-hundred and fifty cadets, had a commander who would call roll to each of his outfits whose commander would shout, "[F-2], all present and accounted for!" Then each major unit which contained three or four battalions would call roll of his battalions to which each battalion commander would shout, "[Fourth] battalion all present and accounted for!" Then, off in the distance we would hear the Cadet Commander of the Corps call roll, to which each of the four major units of about five hundred cadets would bellow, "[First Brigade] all present and accounted for!" Then all two-thousand of us would converge and march in unison down the Quad to the chow hall at the end. Every other week or so, we would have a three-mile outfit run or a battalion run whereby all the members of the group which ran would be ending

their run when the other outfits were lining up for morning formation. On those days we would go to chow in our shorts and t-shirts, and there would be no inspection on the wall.

Upon entering the dining hall we would go to the tables designated for our outfit, wait until all the upperclassmen had seated themselves, and then sit at attention. With a sophomore on each side of each freshman staring straight into the side of the freshman's face, the freshmen would begin, in quick jerky motions, to straighten their plates and flatware in the manner we were taught. If at any moment a sophomore, or "pisshead" as they were called, would make any remark to any one of us, we were all to pop-to at the table while the addressed fish answered in one of the four "fish answers." They were, "Sir, no sir;" "Sir, yes sir," "Sir, no excuse sir," and "Sir, not being informed to the highest degree of accuracy, I hesitate to articulate for fear I may deviate from the true course of rectitude, in short, sir, I am a very dumb fish and do not know, sir." I can still recite this answer in about three and a half seconds, and that was nineteen years ago.

If any fish was spoken to, or more likely yelled at, then all the fish at the table were to pop-to when their buddy popped-to. No fish was permitted to take a bite of food larger than that which could be quickly chewed in three chews and then swallowed, leaving the fish able to almost immediately swallow whatever was in his mouth and answer the pisshead in one of the designated four fish answers. The pissheads would stare directly at the face of the freshman who was sitting at attention and count the number of chews while checking to make sure the freshman's plate and flatware was always perfectly placed. Many breakfasts passed with only a few bites of bread and

maybe one sip of milk ingested while pounds of food were wasted on the table. This disgusted me. The pissheads ate little more themselves, as they were intent on watching our actions and were subject to similar crap-outs by the juniors were any juniors to notice any freshman's infractions go unnoticed. Pissheads were punished harshly if they did not find things for which to punish us. "Shit rolls downhill," was the saying that denoted this bind.

At some point the seniors would leave when they were finished eating, then the juniors, then the sophomores, except for the one who was asked to escort us back to the dorm. There was usually a little less than a minute between the upperclassmen leaving the tables and the sophomore telling us to walk. At this time the sophomore was carefully watched and if he looked away for a moment, a freshman's hands would grab pieces of food off the table and either shove them into their mouths if they "had balls" or into their pockets. Many a hard-boiled egg or napkin-wrapped sausage link made it back to our hole and were shared by my "ol' lady" [roommate] and me. Rainy days requiring rain gear were a godsend in that trench coat styled military raincoats had very large pockets, which could carry the remaining hard-boiled eggs on the table, biscuits, sausages and fruit. If this size of a haul was made then the booty was shared with all the fish upon return. The walk back to the dorm was usually quite leisurely given what we had all just gone through. The sophomore in charge of us was also sort of "off duty" and usually relished not having to be "on our ass" during this four to five minute period of time. We were not allowed to talk to each other, however.

Upon reaching the dorm we were to frantically clean our hole to be inspection ready. This meant the floor was already waxed, and every, I mean EVERY horizontal surface was dusted, including the sloping horizontal curve found on the nape of the neck of the light bulb above the sink. All of the toiletry items on the shelves had to be flush with the edge of the shelf and were in descending order of height from the wall towards the center of the room. The closets were to all have the same style and color of hangers, all perfectly spaced and with the same order of pants, shirtsleeve and long sleeve shirts on them. This was checked such that every fish in the outfit was the same. The Venetian blinds were dusted and closed, as it was not our privilege to look out of windows. The beds were bunk style with bungee cords stretched underneath holding the Corps issue bedspread tight as a drum while keeping its folds perfect on the bed. No freshman or sophomore ever slept under the covers. A sleeping bag was placed on top of the already made bed, slept in, and removed every morning for both of those years. If a particularly important inspection were thought to be taking place the next morning, freshmen and sophomores would sleep on the floor so as not to leave an impression in their bedspread.

The sink was a very important part of a fish's life. The sink had to be wiped dry and clean and the corner of the towel stuck up the spigot such that it would be dry too. When the morning inspector's finger was poked up the spigot, there was to be no moisture on it. Moisture was a "cut." If a hole had too many cuts, the inhabitants and several buddies they would have to choose, would be crapped-out later that day. The pipes beneath the sink had to be dusted and the handles had to be faced the same way.

The sink was a very important part of a fish's life as it was also his urinal. As freshmen were required to be fully dressed in perfect uniform to exit their hole, and with hallway exposure practically inviting some infraction, not to mention metal taps on their heel and toe announcing their movement, any unnecessary trip to the bathroom was actively avoided. Many mornings before fallout one freshman would be brushing his teeth while his roommate would be pissing in the sink. It was a way of life that was gotten used to very quickly and even during the sophomore year it was a hard habit to break. All cadets, whether they are freshmen this current year or former cadets from the class of 1952, have no qualms about urinating in a sink. Believe me.

After breakfast, while the freshmen in their hole would be readjusting their uniforms for class, a sophomore would enter the hole. The door to the hole was always left open when an upperclassman was present, it was the rule. The sophomore would begin to inspect the room and if the freshman did not have to be at an 0800 class, as was shown on his visible schedule, he would be doing pushups or "pushing" for infractions until 0800 hours when all punitive hazing ceased until it could resume again at 1600 hours [4p.m.]. If the infractions were such that insufficient crapping-out would be administered before a freshman's 0800 class, then the fish was told to "come-by" at 1600 hours and "bring a buddy." This would mean a very painful crap-out session in the sophomore's room resulting in cramping that might unable a fish to walk straight for a few minutes, lift his arms or even pick up a pencil because his hands would not close. I will explain those techniques later. At 0800 a fish was either off to class or locking his

door to get as much of an escape as possible, which was sleep. That is what mornings were like. Before 8a.m. Every fucking day for an entire school year.

During the school day, from 0800 to 1600 hours we cadets were much like everyone else. We sat in class but not necessarily together. We walked across campus and hung out in the student center. The only differences being that freshmen notoriously fell asleep in class, and although cadets were permitted to eat lunch in the non-reg dining halls, 98% of us ate on the Quad. Lunch was a beautiful time for a freshman. Starting at 1100 hours the Corps dining hall was divided into two sides. Freshmen ate on one, and upperclassmen ate on the other. This was the only meal that we got to eat leisurely, that we got to talk and eat, and that we actually got to eat. Many freshmen ate the equivalent of at least two meals during lunchtime because dinner was the same deal as breakfast. Although taking food out of the dining hall was strictly forbidden, it was common practice to smuggle some items out in raingear for that night after evening “chow.”

Because all cadets were required to take no classes after 4p.m. unless given special permission, when the clock said 1600 hours it meant that you were back at the dorm. This was Corps time, which was also crap-out time. If the morning crap-out was insufficient time-wise to cover a cadets infractions, or if one of your buddies did something wrong during the day or as he returned to his hole from class, you would find yourself “on your face” in the hallway being stood over and yelled at by a sophomore. At least an hour or so was usually available for this sort of activity, so coming back from class was not looked forward to.

Occasionally one's infractions might warrant a "come-by," which meant the freshman would get to put his books in his hole, get a drink of water and then knock at the door of the upperclassman who gave him the come-by. Usually a freshman was told to bring one or two of his buddies with him to share in the punishment. This was a common practice intended to "unify" us. Another often-used term in The Corps was "fish unity." We were verbally rewarded for displaying it and physically punished for lacking it. An example of fish unity might be that all the fish in the outfit might have the same style, color, number and placement of thumb tacks on their bulletin boards.

Once asked to enter the upperclassman's room for the come-by, fish were told to "get down, and push." After a "class set" or two [our class set was 88 push-ups as we were the "class of 88"] the fish might remain in a "leaning rest" while being lectured about the infraction. A leaning rest was less painful than pushing but after already pushing, one's muscles would begin to give-out. At this time the upperclassman might have one fish hang from a steam pipe traversing the ceiling until he hold on no longer and fell. When the fish fell this meant that the buddy would have to resume pushing, which was becoming very painful at this point. The hanging freshmen would jump back up to hang some more so his buddy could remain in a leaning rest with out pushing. The pushing buddy was at the mercy of the pain threshold of the hanging buddy. When the hanging buddy would fall, the upperclassman would remark that he was "fucking his buddy [over]."

At some point the hanging fish could grip no more and the pushing buddy could push no more. When this would eventually happen the crap-out might change to "pig-

stools.” This meant the buddies would squat with their backs against a wall, their thighs and shins at a ninety degree angle, their arms straight out in front of them, and their hands rapidly opening and closing. Some outfits called this “catching butterflies.” The purpose was to “crap-out” one’s legs such that they could maintain the position no longer, to wear out a different set of arm muscles and achieve a point with the freshman’s hands such that they would no longer open and close. There was also “hang like a grape,” which was to hang from the sturdy towel rod bolted to the wall while the other buddy pushed. Perhaps each time the hanging buddy would lose his grip the pushing buddy would get added twenty push-ups, or twenty repetitions of some other exercise. These decisions were at the discretion of the upper-classman administering the punishment. There were also “clappers” which were push-ups requiring the cadet to push off the floor with such force that he would be able to clap his hands beneath his chest and then catch himself on the way down. There were still other variations to pushing so as to make it more painful. There were also many other “exercises” to punish us. When it was all over, it would be difficult to move, walk, sit, turn one’s doorknob, or hold a pencil. You’d been crapped-out.

It was also common to arrive back at the dorm at 1600 to find all your buddies being crapped out in the hall, at which point one would bust-ass to join them. This might occur because one buddy came back from class with his shirt “bagged out.” This meant it was not tightly tucked into his “suck strap” which was a wide elastic belt that all cadets wear around their crotch and ass to keep their shirt tails tightly pulled down. Often fish would not know what the infraction was until the upperclassmen crapping

them out would tell us. They might be yelling “the reason you’re pushing is because fish Jones was bagged out in the hallway this afternoon!” This put considerable social pressure on all the fish to remain as sharp as possible.

After the crap-out, the freshmen would have some time to begin preparing for evening chow. This was essentially the same preparation as morning chow except the hole was not inspected. Evening chow would entail “evening formation” just like in the morning, and a dining experience just like in the morning.

Upon return to the dorm, freshmen had about thirty minutes to shower and prepare for “C.Q.” or “call-to-quarters” which was the enforced study time all freshmen and sophomores were monitored for every thirty minutes. Because other upperclassman would often shower at this time and there were only ten shower spigots, it was common for two or three freshmen to have to stand under the same spigot unless one became available.

C.Q. or study-time was a joke. One had to be seated at his desk with a book open whenever the junior in charge of this time would open one’s door. This was the only time during the week a freshman could talk freely with his roommate, so that is what usually happened. Either that, or one would lean over the desk with his forehead in the crack of the book and try to sleep. Sleep was light, however, as when the doorknob turned one had to quickly prop up to appear to be reading the book. Often dark red creases down the middle of one’s face was a dead give-away and the junior would remark, “study, don’t sleep,” then leave only to return in about thirty minutes.

At 2300 or 2315 all freshman and sophomore lights had to be out unless a signed pass, to be placed on the door for more study time, was arranged in advance. Showing the senior in charge of scholastics that you had a test the next day would get you the pass. A test in the morning would get one a pass to forgo morning formation and chow, a coveted excuse. Although one would be awakened by all the yelling and crapping-out in the morning, missing formation was a treat. Otherwise, freshmen might put a towel under the crack of the door to block light and use some extra time to prepare the room or their uniform for the next morning's inspection. I well remember dreading going to sleep because the next thing I would be conscious of was another morning. We had been so trained and so fearful of punishment that a loud noise or the phone ringing would prompt the reflex of snapping to attention, even in the dark, and even in bed. But after realizing we just snapped to attention because of a ringing phone or someone's door slamming, we would laugh about it. This is what a common day in the life of a freshman was like.

I have chosen to place Durkheim's criteria for that which constitutes a religion after this personal account of indoctrination into this group that I deem religious in order to provide examples that can be more easily understood in the way that I have described its psychological method. The entire four-year process by which this religion hones its recruits into believers would take far more description than this dissertation will allow, but I claim that what I have included is sufficient to make the comparison.

DURKEHIM'S CRITERIA APPLIED

Durkheim's model requires that the following attributes occur for the qualification of religion:

1.) The recognition of a totem.

A totem is a symbol, which represents other than itself, but may also be viewed as actually that which it represents. Many objects and aspects associated with A&M are used as totems, including the campus itself.

Examples of religious totems, beginning with two totems used in a conventional religion for the purpose of comparison are as follows:

- a.) A plaster cast of the Virgin Mary may be revered itself, as an object to which large or small shrines may be created around, in addition to what it represents.
- b.) Ordinary water out of a faucet that is placed in a particular container for the ritual of Baptism, becomes other than ordinary water. The water itself becomes more than a symbol, it becomes "special," or "holy" water.
- c.) **The man and the statue of the man "E.King Gill,"** placed in the center of the plaza at the entrance to the football stadium at Texas A&M, are both held in high esteem. In 1922 at a football game Mr. Gill, a member of the basketball team,

was called from the stands by the football coach because the team was losing players to injuries. Gill put on a football uniform and stood on the sidelines in case he was needed to play. He was not. However, the preparedness to play if needed forged Mr. Gill into a symbol for Texas A&M. I contend that the man was symbolically martyred by giving up his seat and being willing to give himself to the team. Since that time, not only is the entire student body of over forty- thousand regarded as “The Twelfth Man” in reference to Gill being the “twelfth man” on the eleven man football team, but the entire student body stands in the stadium for the entirety of all home football games. The standing is symbolic of the students’ willingness to play for the team if needed. It is symbolic of a symbol of willingness.

- d.) **The Aggie Bonfire.** This tremendous object was treated as far more than a symbol. This stack of wood upwards of seventy feet high at its last construction, and at one time measured one-hundred and six feet high, was revered not just as a symbol of “the burning desire to beat t.u,” but also became a symbol of the university itself. Cans of its ashes have been sold in bookstores after it was burned each year. Tragically, in 2000 the Aggie Bonfire collapsed before it was set ablaze, killing twelve students who were working on it at the time. The fact that twelve members of “The twelfth Man” were killed added to the symbolic power of that number for Texas A&M. The Bonfire itself was worshipped. Many students took greatly reduced course loads during the fall semesters in

order to spend many hours of the day working on the project. Up until the year of its collapse, females were not allowed within a perimeter that had been staked out around the stack of logs. Specially designated students were given torches with which to light the stack of logs on the night it was to be burned. Singing, chanting, movement in unison, and rousing speeches were given at the nighttime event, which boasted thousands in attendance. For years the burning of the bonfire was also associated with alcohol consumption. To get drunk and “go to Bonfire” was an annual festive event. In the mid-1990’s the alcohol related incidents including minors in possession reached a rate such that alcohol was banned from its ceremony. This annual event overwhelmingly qualified as what Durkheim called “collective effervescence.” Those students in charge of building Bonfire were a very structured organization with a designated hierarchy. The Bonfire workers had their own language at the site. Workers wore “grodes” or clothes worn only for working at an often very muddy site. Females were not allowed within a certain distance of “the stack” as it was being built for months. In the wake of the Bonfire tragedy, a large spontaneous shrine came into being near the site very quickly. Thousands of items such as flowers, teddy bears, candles, poems and notes to the deceased were left along a fencerow. At the base of the nearby flagpole, students left gold class rings and watches. A dissertation could be written on the culture surrounding the Bonfire alone.

- e.) Students and former students are sometimes revered as “Aggies” more than they are as people. A \$3500 Aggie casket with an “ATM” over the deceased’s head

has been featured for sale in the back of an Aggie catalog. Regarding an alumnus who collapsed from a heart attack on the football field during a half time, a letter from a student to the editor of the school newspaper stated: "...had Jernigan not been on that field as an Aggie, I would have had no direct connection with him; hence the phrase, 'I love him just for being an Ag'" (Georgandis 1994).

2.) Belief of a mysterious sacred force coming from the totem.

What is regarded as "The Aggie Spirit" is a sacred force. Aggie spirit is the one necessary feeling a person must have in order to be an Aggie. It is similar at least and the same at most as the feeling of "God" such that Aggies may intertwine the two. The totem, whether a single object associated with A&M, the campus itself, or the ideology of what it is to be an Aggie, symbolizes divinity as well as the clan itself. According to Durkheim, the clan itself as divine is evidenced by self-worship.

To exemplify the nature of Aggie Spirit I have included quotes from interviewees for my study, as well as excerpts from student letters to *The Battalion*:

---- "Aggie spirit is when I look around campus by myself, I get a feeling of pride...happiness for being at the right place, a sense of security, like I'm here for a reason, a spiritual reason, like God put me here for a reason."

---- Aggie spirit is... "Belonging to something that's bigger than yourself, that's special to you and thousands of others."

---- Aggie spirit..."At first I thought it was bullcrap. The bible teaches not to be prideful...to be humble. But now I think about my buddies, the bonfire...we were brainwashed, kinda thing, you know, freshmen. Then we heard Mr. McLean was dead [bonfire victim] and I could feel God's presence.

---- Q: why A&M? "I went to my grandfather's muster...I prayed about it...I felt God told me this is where I should be."

---- A poem sent to The Battalion by a student: "You make the roll call, taps sounding out the horn, tears falling from heaven, another Aggie is born."

The first quote listed below was written by a faculty member in response to complaints regarding an advertisement in *The Battalion* listing over one hundred Christian faculty members calling themselves "Faculty Friends" offering their counseling services to students. The university's interim president's name was on the list. Letters complained as to the ethical considerations concerning the university's many non-Christian students. The university's slogan is "Gig'em Aggies."

---- "...as a Christian myself, I applaud the efforts of my fellow Christians in 'Faculty Friends,' Gig'em God."

---- "As Aggies, we should be above hurting each other with words or actions. God's love is a perfect, unconditional love..."

---- From the Bryan/College Station newspaper The Eagle: "Aggies against Bonfire equals Aggies against God" -- an unnamed student leader.

3.) Small bands come together in euphoric celebrations, which break the dull routine of everyday life.

a.) **Fish Camp.** This event as described in the above account is an annual even indoctrinating new members into the routine yet expressive manner in which more frequent Aggie events are to be experienced.

b.) **Transfer Camp.** This annual event is similar in practice and equal in purpose as Fish Camp, but involves a fewer number of students as its indoctrinates are transfer students from other colleges and universities.

c.) **Yell practice.** This event is what other schools call a “pep rally.” Yell practices are very orchestrated and occur regularly the night before every home football game and two nights before every away game. The three hundred-member band attends and plays known marches and Aggie songs. Band members are allowed to bring dates, who sit with them during the event. Tens of thousands of students, alumni, families and visitors will attend a yell practice before an important game.

Yell practice is lead by male “yell leaders” who lead the group in yell designated by the leaders by using hand and arm signals taught to students at Fish Camp or learned at subsequent yell practices by mimicking those who are already familiar with them. The entire band attends as well and plays known marches and Aggie songs. Band members are allowed to bring dates, who sit with them during the event. Cadets with junior ranking are allowed to assemble on the field with their dates, but are frequently seen doing pushups as instructed

by some senior ranking cadets who are on the field as well. At one point during the event all of the several hundred junior cadets are told to do pushups.

A group body movement occurs during a particular song that involves all attendees placing their arms around each other's shoulders with spread legs such that a swaying from side to side can take place. The visual effect of this movement is that of thousands of students and alumni swaying in unison. A collective effervescence and intimacy is created.

Towards the end of this thirty minute event, after a joke is told, typically at the humorous expense of the opposing team, the lights of the stadium are turned off at which time male students are supposed to kiss their dates or girlfriends. Those who are without such accompaniment often hold an ignited cigarette lighter over their heads. Hundreds of tiny flames are seen around the stadium. After a few minutes, the stadium lights are turned on, a few closing statements are made and the crowd disperses.

- d.) **Football games.** Football games are extremely fan oriented and involved, and more than qualify as euphoric events. The Yell leaders regularly lead yells and songs for the spectators to participate in, and group swaying occurs for a school song again as well. However, this time the entire stadium, which regularly draws over seventy thousand spectators, is involved in the group swaying, creating a mesmerizing effect. The completion of the song and the swaying is marked by the group yelling "Aaay!" The football field is "guarded" on each ten-yard line

by a senior cadet wearing full military cadet regalia which includes jodhpurs, knee-high riding boots with spurs, white gloves, and a wide brimmed hat. At one end is an old U.S. Army howitzer from the Spanish American war, which is wheeled in by horses manned by the sub-group of cadets known as “Parson’s Mounted Cavalry.” The howitzer is fired with a blank charge upon any Aggie scoring. In the early 1980’s, a senior cadet “guard” drew his sabre on the opposing team’s male cheerleader who was doing a cheer over the edge of the field. The incident occurred in front of over fifty thousand fans and made national attention in newspapers with a photograph of a cadet in riding boots chasing a cheerleader with a drawn sabre. The field is regarded as a war memorial and is thusly due guarding. The cadet claimed he was doing his duty. Since that event, sabres are no longer worn by the cadet guards. During the mid-1990’s, the cavalry members, who placed a homemade charge in the howitzer for each firing at a game, made a charge so powerful the still-ignited gun-powder from the blast burned a number of spectators in the stands nearby. Since that event the charges have been officially made and prefabricated.

4.) Elements are divided into the categories of Sacred and Profane.

To Durkheim, that which is ordinary is profane. Little having to do with Texas A&M is regarded as ordinary by Aggies. However, there are many behaviors that would qualify as Durkheimian sacrilege.

The following is designated as sacred at Texas A&M:

- a.) The MSC- Aggies who died in WW2. The university's student center is a memorial to all the Aggies who died in World War Two. A sign at the door instructs all men to remove their hats upon entering. Infractions are readily corrected verbally by any student in the vicinity of the entrance.
- b.) The Memorial trees-Aggies who died in WW1. These trees are planted in a row on campus and have engraved plaques attached to them.
- c.) The Westgate Memorial-Aggies who died in WW1. A second memorial to the Aggies who died in World War One is made of carved granite with the relief of an American flag draped over it.
- d.) Eli L. Whitely Park - Aggie Congressional Medal Of Honor winner. A park adjacent to campus is named in honor of one of the seven Aggie winners of this highest war decoration.
- e.) Fish Fountain - This large fountain was built to memorialize twelve particular cadets, class of 1938, who were killed in World War Two.
- f.) The Corps Plaza - This plaza commemorates all the Aggies who have been killed in the service of their country since World War Two.
- g.) The Eternal Flame - the undying spirit of Texas A&M is symbolized in this roped-off area in the front plaza of the football stadium. It is placed next to Reveille's graves.
- h.) Reveille's graves – five dead mascots, all dogs, are buried in this roped-off area. Before the new entrance to the stadium was built, the gravesite was

placed such that a “view” to the scoreboard could be had by the dead mascots. When the multi-million dollar addition began and it was announced that the graves would have to be moved temporarily and that the “view” would soon no longer exist, an organization of alumni called “The Friends of Reveille” was formed with the intention of stopping the plans as announced.

- i.) The Twelfth Man statue – a statue as described earlier, of E.King Gill, the symbol of “The Twelfth Man,” the student body.
- j.) Lawrence Sullivan Ross statue – Ross was a past A&M president, a Texas governor, a famous Indian fighter and a Confederate general.
- k.) Reveille the mascot - a purebred Collie for whom freshmen cadets stand at attention and must say, “Howdy Miss Reveille, Ma’am” when she passes by. Reveille has one cadet handler, her own bunk bed and rank insignia, and her own chair in the dining hall. She attends classes with her handler and athletic events.
- l.) The Bonfire - a symbol of the desire to beat the University of Texas, otherwise known as t.u. The tradition of the Aggie Bonfire no longer exists as a result of the 1999 tragedy.
- m.) The grass surrounding the student center and university complex center – it is a great infraction to walk on this grass, unless you are a university groundskeeper. Violators are often yelled at.
- n.) The Aggie Band drill field. This drill field located behind the Quadrangle contains ashes of dead band members that have been spread on it by request.

Walking or running on this grass will get you beat up unless you are in the band. I have seen with my own eyes the bloody noses of those who dared to tread.

- o.) The football stadium. Kyle Field is a memorial to dead Aggie soldiers.
- p.) The Aggie Code of Honor. “Aggies don’t lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.” This statement is indicative of the sanctification of the clan and its ideal.
- q.) Traditions in general at A&M. Many traditional behaviors exist at Texas A&M. They are all regarded as sacred at some level of fervor.

The Profane.

As noted earlier, Durkheim’s definition of the profane is merely that which is regarded as ordinary. In the manner in which I am using the term, Durkheim would it “The Sacrilegious.”

- a.) Walking on the student complex grass – the student complex is a designated memorial, therefore the grass surrounding is sacred. To tread on it is a major infraction.
- b.) Being a “Two-percenter” - one who does not have “Aggie Spirit,” a dissenter to the belief system that is Aggieland. Far more than two-percent of the students are not deeply attached to the Aggie Spirit, but their description as merely making up two-percent of the population is a way to magnify their implied insignificance.

- c.) To wear a hat in the student center
- d.) To wear a hat at a football game. At baseball games hats are permissible, however.
- e.) To sit at a football game on the student side. Students are to stand, like E.King Gill did in case he was needed to play, in 1922. The alumni side is not required to stand.
- f.) For a cadet to enter the student center without a uniform on. As a freshman, one Saturday night at two o'clock in the morning I walked into the side door of the student center to check my post office box, without a uniform on. An upperclassman of mine was walking his girlfriend to her dorm and saw me exiting. All of my "fish buddies" and I were severely crapped-out on Monday morning.
- g.) An infraction of the Aggie Code of Honor.
- h.) Saying or doing anything defamatory or critical of A&M and its ideals. To do, or say something of this nature is labeled as "bad bull," and/or will prompt the condescending label "two-percenter."
- i.) Moving the site of the mascot's grave for further stadium construction was referred to by one alumnus as, "...moving the tomb of the unknown soldier out of Arlington National Cemetery." - Bryan/College Station's *The Eagle*.

5.) The function of Religion is the creation, reinforcement and maintenance of social solidarity.

- A&M's society sanctions threats to its solidarity by derogatorily designating those who are either in opposition to anything associated with A&M and its ideals, or who are neutral to them as "two-percenters." This defines the dissenter or neutral individual as an almost insignificant portion of the society, thereby simultaneously lessening the value of the dissenter by associating them with a very small group – a social mechanism by itself – and associating them with a label taught to be a negative one.
- The common phrase at A&M, "Highway 6 runs both ways" is in reference to the desire for those who dissent to the Aggie ways to leave the university.
- Actions that are deemed "good" are called "good bull," actions that are deemed bad, or anti-Aggie in some way are "bad bull." Likewise there are "good Ags" and "bad Ags."

The following are some quotes from students' letters to the editor of *The Battalion*.

- "These so-called 'Ags' need to head back on Highway 6 and go to Austin, they are not needed here."
- "... homosexuals at A&M are bad apples and they are better off being in places that they are more accepted...like Austin."
- Regarding a professor's letter to *The Battalion*, which stated, "...it's amazing that our university continues to encourage events such as Bonfire." A student replied, "I don't care about your marvelous Ph.D. or how many universities you've taught at – why don't you and your highly overrated doctorate go back to a university whose traditions you understand."

Robert Bellah's **Civil Religion** has similar elements as Durkheim's model:

A civil religion is a collective reverence for a nation, nationality or a culture within a larger frame of reference. Examples include social groups and behavioral identifications such as Americanism, Texanism, "The South" The behavior and beliefs

that surround the cultures of America, Texas and “The South” would all qualify as civil religions according to Bellah’s criteria.

Bellah borrowed from Durkheim’s theory and extrapolated his model to American nationalism. But as we see in the following quotation from Durkheim, his ideas can be extrapolated to other nationalities or large societies under a collective identity. My theory further extrapolates elements of these ideas to not only the social psychological mechanisms of any group with idealizations, but to individual psychological mechanisms as well. I contend that the individual who yearns for idealization or who is prone to it, will find it with a group or without. Once idealization occurs, it is certainly fostered and aided in maintenance in a group with like idealizations. Or the individual may be drawn into an idealization through an identity with a group first. Durkheim is less interested in the individual, as is Bellah.

Durkheim’s (1995) examples, ripe for Bellah’s structure of American Civil Religion, states:

There are periods in history when, under the influence of some great collective shock, social interactions have become much more frequent and active. Men look for each other and assemble together more than ever. That general effervescence results which is characteristic of revolutionary or creative epochs. Now this greater activity results in a general stimulation of individual forces. Men see more and differently now than in normal times. Changes are not merely of shades and degrees; men become different. The passions moving them are of such an intensity that they cannot be satisfied except by violent and unrestrained actions, action of superhuman heroism or of bloody barbarism. This is what explains the Crusades, for example, or many of the scenes, either sublime or savage, of the French Revolution. (1912)

BELLAH'S CRITERIA APPLIED

According to Bellah, in order for a social phenomenon to be a **civil religion** it must have the following criteria:

- 1.) **A sense of “spirit.”** An unseen cohesive force that is felt. In a conventional religion this sense of spirit is attributed to the presence of God or gods. The Christian “Holy Spirit” is this sense of spirit. At Texas A&M it is called the “Aggie Spirit” and is referred to frequently. My theory contends that this sensation is an entirely internal emotional sensation that is often attributed to the presence of an external force thereby lending credence to the external force whenever particular, strong emotions are felt.

- 2.) **Civil ceremonies honoring aspects of, or the culture itself.** Ceremonies honoring the dead or ideals and important dates commemorating events qualify as this criteria. Labor Day, Memorial Day, The 4th of July and Cinco de Mayo are all civil ceremonies. At Texas A&M, “Muster” occurs every year on April 21st. In keeping with the military tradition of calling a roll of soldiers who have gathered, or “mustered,” a solemn ceremony takes place in which the names are read aloud of all Aggies, past or present who have died during the year. Someone in the audience will be designated to answer “here” for each name read.

- 3.) **Idealization.**
 This aspect provides criteria for judgment and change. The seriousness and

integrity of idealization will go beyond the scope of religion in general. That “Aggies don’t lie, cheat or steal” is an idealization at Texas A&M. Aggies lie, cheat and steal just like college students at other universities. Police reports are regularly printed in the school newspaper. The most critical factor involving idealizations is the people’s commitment to the idealizations, not the success or failure in fulfilling them. Having covenants or rules is more important than following them. The rules or “covenants” aspect of religion is an element of stabilization stemming from common agreement. Although some importance is given to the adherence to religious rules, as with monitoring and socially sanctioning behavior, the greatest importance lies in the collectivity of belief. To engage in infraction to the rules is merely to make an infraction that is subject to retribution or some form of recompense to the society. But to not believe-in or recognize the rules or covenants as sacred is to not be a member of the society. Membership is more important than adhering to the rules because membership is tantamount to the survival of the group. Not only does a group need membership in order to exist, but membership entails being subject to methods used to enforce the rules of the society.

4.) Shrines and Sacred objects.

Monuments in Washington DC., presidents’ birthplaces, and war memorials are all integral to American Civil Religion. Aggies have many shrines and sacred objects also, as I have listed above.

5.) Exemplifying valued traits.

Valued traits are idealized as elements that uphold the identity of the group.

When an Aggie is found acting in a way such that a valued trait is actualized, such as being particularly friendly, the Aggie is regarded as a “good Ag.” If an Aggie is found acting in a way such that a valued trait is not actualized, such as not refraining from the Aggie Code of Honor, or not being friendly, the Aggie is regarded as a “bad Ag.”

6.) Intolerance of dissidence. Worship of the nation itself, identifying God’s will with the aims of “our kind of people.”

7.) Outrage at dissidence. This aspect is a manifestation of the intensity of intolerance. It may be the result of desecration of objects, ceremonies and/or idealizations that are viewed as sacred.

I find that not only does Bellah’s model of civil religion apply to Texas A&M University, and therefore applies to smaller institutions rather than just America, but that the difference between Durkheim’s model of a religion and Bellah’s model of a civil religion are minimal. Although some differences are obvious in that Durkheim’s model does not infuse the use of God or a god figure in order to lend credence to group’s worship. An idea of a god and/or an idol as a god or a representation is often implemented, but the credence is found in the collective worship, not the object of it.

Bellah infuses the name of God in American Civil Religion as an added sanctity to the already worshipped society and that which it represents and represents it. Durkheim lays the groundwork for a comprehensive sociological model, Bellah extrapolates it to American nationalism, and upon recognition of Bellah's premises, I found his nationalism easily extrapolates to the institution of Texas A&M University. Bellah's model would further extrapolate to nations other than America, and I think the institutional version would extrapolate to other universities who maintained a similar fervor. Regardless, although differences certainly exist between these three models, I contend the functions of the self-idealization as religious maintain as similar structure with similar social and individual emotional outcomes.

CHAPTER V

SOCIOLOGICAL PARALLELS: A WEBERIAN IDEALISM AND SELECTED THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

In order to understand the premise behind Max Weber's thesis that the Calvinist Protestant ethic is responsible for modern-era Western capitalism, or at least its begetting, we must first be familiar with the basis of his assumptions. Weber essentially regards religious or spiritual thought as either "this worldly" or "other worldly." In so stating, he places the ideal of religions as being either within the material world, or the intangible spiritual world. This distinction plays an enormous role in how a society interprets achievement, or direction towards their religious ideal. An ideal embedded in the material world has the appearance of being concrete, and is surrounded by the present. An ideal embedded in the spiritual world has an ethereal nature to it and is only clearly known upon death.

Before I define these terms it is also important for me to describe the power behind such thought. Weber starts this theory at a point of action in the form of a religious philosophy that is taught, believed, implemented, habitually and culturally maintained. Weber considers the roots of capitalism to be *value* based upon religious philosophy and therefore based upon the nature of the mind and its deepest desires/adherences, not factors secondary or tertiary to such desires.

What I regard as an important precursor to Weberian capitalism is the general need in humanity for a sense of control over acquisition. Not only acquisition of *things*

per se, but acquisition of control over events, which may befall an individual. Whether concerns of acquisition are directed primarily towards food or cars, and whether control is practiced over employment environments or the weather patterns, is not significant with regard to the sensation of being without control. These desires for control are general and broad, and qualify as needs for all of humanity. In keeping with psychological theory, I would argue that much of this need for control is as a result of the fear or the realization of being without control. Nonetheless, one's accomplishments, one's material goods, one's moral edicts, one's purpose, one's status in the community, one's status in the cosmos [eyes of a god] and one's control in one's death [in terms of an eschatological belief system] are all sensations bringing with them a sense of fulfillment, thereby promoting interest in them as controlled aspects of life.

This fulfillment is certainly not singularly relegated to the successful thwarting of painful reality, as the preceding list of secondary concerns displays. Although I have previously been speaking of the nature of the ideal and how it manifests itself in religion and how the religious *is* idealism, there exist many auxiliary sub-purposes and sub-fulfillments as well. As I have also previously stated, idealism *is* the religious as well. In so being, the sub-purposes and sub-fulfillments are emotionally driven, but are, in a Weberian vernacular "this worldly" and are incorporated into material, social and individual achievement. The ideal is a mechanism internalized through different methods, but is created and adhered to as an answer to, and/or a conscious or subconscious shield from, painful reality that is the edge of the frozen lake or the lake itself. It has a great range of auxiliary results, however.

Society has within it many possible implementations of idealism. The executive who idealizes being promoted to upper-management by an ideal age, the college student who idealizes graduation in a particular field of study that is idealized, or the teen-ager idealizing the perceived identity of a particular brand of clothing are all using an attachment to an ideal in order to gain something. That something may entail a broad range that does not directly imply painful reality, including such gains as peer admiration or a lifestyle that the achieved ideal promises to deliver. But what is a teenager without a positive peer identity? An executive who gains a sense of Self from his or her career but fails to achieve what exemplifies that career, severely damages his sense of Self. A college student who fails to graduate in his idealized field has lost the desired lifestyle that the desired field was believed to produce.

These negativities surrounding the antithesis of ideal-achievement are painful realities for the actors. Failure to pursue or achieve the ideal raises the questions, “then who am I?” and “then what worth do I have?” These questions can dangerously approach the edge of the frozen lake. Likewise, when through whatever process the individual faces mortality, ideals will once again be used to divert further angst, or the beginnings of it. Although I have mentioned this mechanism throughout this work, I am reiterating it as this chapter is one of what may seem to be ideals once-removed. Being so, it is easy to be confused as to the significance of idealization when the case at hand may be seemingly as insignificant and distant from the depths of painful introspection and eschatology as a teen-ager idealizing a brand of blue jeans. But I contend that my model still maintains itself.

What Durkheim called “anomie,” or disconnectedness, the lack of self-identity mentioned above, deep emotional pain that may lead to both, and fear of death itself, are all forces that drive the need for idealism. The ideal provides and *denies* when needed, in the case of conventional religion, and provides and *diverts* in the case of unconventional religion. However, there are many other by-products of idealism as conventional or unconventional religion. This human need for a sense of control in areas where there is sporadic control or no control at all, such as in the case of acquisition, creates a vacuum in the human psyche for that which will provide this sense. Belief in some control is as internally powerful as control itself, and arguably more so, as *belief* can mend itself when damaged whereas logical or empirical evidences of loss of control are more deeply devastating than the actual events displaying such loss. Given this perspective on belief in ability to have control, the Calvinistic interpretation of the supernatural as a cause of capitalistic action satisfies two desires, control over one’s fate and providing an assumption of a particular positive fate.

Calvinist philosophy, as introduced in the sixteenth-century states that God, being in control of the universe, eternal life, and being omniscient, already knows which individuals will spend eternity in Heaven or Hell upon their worldly demise. This knowledge is of course logically deterministic. If an omniscient being knows one’s fate, then necessarily that fate must befall the individual. This is where the “this worldly” belief comes into play. Based upon the belief in the afterlife/Heaven/Hell, which entails a fear of unpleasantness in Hell and ultimate pleasure in Heaven, a desire is produced to go to Heaven upon earthly death, followed by the desire to know if this is the fate that

will befall the individual. Because Calvinism taught that there is no way to know which fate awaits the individual and that there is nothing one can do to change this fate, some clue, any clue, to which side of the “fence” one will eventually find themselves becomes the greatest pacifying force to this fear and desire surrounding one’s fate.

It is at this point the Protestant ethic comes into play. The ethic of working hard, saving money, reinvesting profits, living a modest life amidst the accumulation of wealth, and the lack of importance in leisure were all taught as being Godly virtues. The idea of a “calling,” a vocation, a purpose intended for the individual by God, was born. The clue to the fate of an individual was found in one’s ability to adhere to this ethic. An individual, who lived in accordance with this ethic, was likely to generate wealth, which demonstrated that he was “blessed.” If one’s life is clean and modest as a result of this ethic, then one can safely assume that one is on God’s list of those going to Heaven. The *evidence* for salvation is found in the way life is lived, not as a *cause* of the way life is lived. In other words, the created ideal manifests itself retroactively in the manner in which the ideal is pursued.

There is a backwardness in the logic to this belief system that allows a believer to actually have an illusory sense of control of his fate. One can adhere to the ethic and then believe that one’s ability to adhere to the ethic, and reap its rewards, is an indication of which fate awaits them. Logically, of course, the rewards are an obvious effect of the ethic, but none the less it is the sense of control of one’s fate [subconsciously, as it is taught one has *no* control of one’s fate] that drives the ethic in the individual and provides the basis of a capitalistic culture, based upon fear of that which is “other

worldly,” but occurring in a culture that is materially obsessed with that which is very much “this worldly,” or is material gain.

In contrast to this perspective of Protestantism providing an ethic leading to capitalism, Weber saw the “traditional” cultures’ economic ethic regarding work as an evil means with which to provide an end. Only enough money is needed to make it through another day is the work ethic in the case of traditional societies. Weber had disdain for traditional cultures that did not share in the “modern” view of life, religion and purpose in living. He describes traditional cultures as viewing work as merely another aspect of life. That seeing work in this manner would lead those given piecework, for instance, to work even less thereby achieving the minimum amount of work necessary to meet one’s daily requirement, leaving more time for leisure.

Now, having said this about Weber’s connection between Protestantism and capitalism let me also say that I agree with him in that *idealistic values*, more than other factors, are responsible for the economics of a society. Of course, economic structural changes are important in this regard. Of course, credit and advertising play an enormous role in mass consumption, and of course structural factors that increase consumer spending do as well. They all play important roles. In that sense and in similarity to Enzo Ferrari’s famous quote that “All Ferraris are red,” I would like to say, “All theorists are correct,” as I find some aspect of the theories covered in this paper to match my own, as elements, but not as broadly in scope.

However, the point of contention, for me anyway, is which theorist is more correct, and who is less correct in stating which factors they think are more important

than others. Societal values, as an idealistic belief system – or perhaps lack thereof - is most responsible for the economic structure of a society, at least for the degrees of capitalism. I regard cultures to be inextricably intertwined with idealistic belief systems. For purpose of clarification I will say the idealistic belief system came first, before an economic system, but it does not really matter as they feed off of each other. The deepest aspect of a culture is its belief system and belief systems generally have a conventionally religious tone or are based on a conventional religious philosophy at some retrospective point, such as Weber's Calvinistic Protestantism being the progenitor of American capitalistic materialism. As an idealistic belief system alters somewhat in a society, the culture and the economics will alter accordingly. The reciprocal would be true as well.

As I mentioned earlier, the reason behind this conviction is that belief systems hold the greatest meaning in individuals' lives, second perhaps to food, but not always. It is the belief in what is important in life that determines how an individual, or a society of these individuals, will approach things economic, emotional, rational, familial...etc. Although there may be individuals who see differently how the belief system should be manifested, it is still the ideal of the belief system that drives their manner. Perhaps the drive may be a neurotic repulsion to an internalized belief system, but it will still be some manifestation of the belief system. I also realize this is a rather safe statement for me to make, as it would be impossible to disprove.

For instance, in cultures that have been more traditional but that have since become more capitalistic, such as numerous cultures about the world, I would argue that

this occurrence is influenced by another culture with a different belief system. In many cases that other culture is American capitalism as imperialism. The outside culture leaks into the traditional culture and attacks the existent belief system. Some Islamic states certainly regard this to be the case with American goods and symbols of status. Arguably, the rise in consumption and its concurrent release of Puritanical frugality in America has not just coincided with a drop in general religiosity [measured in church attendance], but I think is essentially *caused* by it.

The Protestant “work,work,work” of America has evolved from one of “a method to determine one’s fate” to “that’s the way we do it [habit]” to “work harder to get more material goods and thwart foreclosure on the house we can’t afford.” Ironically, this drive for materialism as a result of Weber’s iron cage also creates a need for conventional religious ideals. Calvinistic ideology created American, rationalistic capitalism, which created materialism, which created shallow emotionality, which creates the need for capitalistic, materialistic, highly idealistic, shallow Protestantism, which is emergent in the form of Ritzerian McDonaldized fundamentalism, which we will discuss later. The local church needs a larger television production and a new gymnasium. In the cases of mass fundamentalist crusades, “churches” need new satellites for their multi-national broadcast, compounds with theme parks, and the evangelists live in multi-million dollar mansions. With church, and a conventionally religious ideal or not, American culture still demands materialism to fulfill the cultural need to fill the anomic voids the iron caged culture creates.

The preceding example of perceived needs could of course be seen as a fuel of capitalism, but I still think the root of what has happened to Weber's original Protestant ideal is in the changing of the individual's/culture's belief system. Those who prey on the consumer - the advertisers, the manufacturers - are those who promote the secular ideal, the unconventional ideal, of "Get everything you can, and have fun with it!" such that it becomes the new cultural idealistic belief system. Instead of living in a way that is directly or indirectly connected to a concept of a god, lifestyle is replaced with the absence of the religious concept's mention, and the implication of that absence through lack of regard for conventional spirituality. This culture of consumption implies that such spirituality will get you nothing, and is also "closed-minded." I regard this as a natural, cyclical occurrence in a society. In my agreement with the theory of Piterim Sorokin, society is founded on strict philosophical guidelines, then revolutions occur, society liberalizes, traditionalism erodes, and then much like the surge of religious fundamentalism in America and the Middle East, traditionalism re-emerges either in pockets or as a result of a fall or radical revolution. Capitalism remains in the West, is borrowed by the East, but in both cases becomes fueled by other than its original progenitor.

CAMPBELL: ROMANTICISM

As a point of juxtaposition to Weber's version, but still in keeping with my own, theorist Colin Campbell sees the root of modern capitalism as being embedded in

eighteenth century Romanticism. The manner in which Campbell's (1987) theory is *not* in contrast with Weber is that the economic structure in question is based on a value system, a system of desires, or quite simply that which is going on in peoples' heads collectively as opposed to physical or other structural factors. There are several points of contention between the two theories, however. Campbell sees advertising and romancing the consumer into purchasing a product as the cause of the American version of consumerism, which drives the American version of capitalism. Questions arise however, regarding whether this consumerism existed prior to industrialization and Romanticism, thereby coexisting with the Puritan ethic, or is in direct opposition to the Puritan ethic. Regardless as to whether a romantic consumer ethic was the driving capitalistic force, or the Protestant ethic, or their concurrence, these two modes of thought overturn the assumption that rationality, and not idealism, is the prevailing force in capitalism.

Campbell also questions whether the element of prejudice in social science that dismisses factors emotional, or what I regard as inherently human – biological, cultural, or however one wishes to categorize – as being unworthy of study. I find this questioning to be ridiculous yet understandable. On the one hand, questions regarding what is innate in humanity, biological, evolutionarily and its cultural implications are very difficult to prove, appear to prove, or disprove. On the other hand, these are some of the last “mysteries” in conjunction with the study of humanity, and whatever they may be, can be shown as arguably significant factors. In the case of my theory, these factors are fundamental and necessary.

What we call feelings or emotionality can be shown to be quite easily manipulated through the influence of outside factors, so it is the outside factors that are studied. Nonetheless, it is obvious that there is something going on in the individual and the society, that is manipulatable, and it is still that something in and of itself that drives the human to drive the economic structure. I think conventional religion is a manifestation of this something, as well as romanticism and American consumerism in the case for the American culture. Perhaps they can be reduced to the most basic drives for purpose, acceptance, and self-reassurance. And perhaps those psychological/emotional factors are innate. The anthropologist in me would speculate that those factors naturally selected to create tighter social groups, which are more effective survival mechanisms than more relaxed ones.

What Weber sees as a need to please a god/adhere to an ideal, or the belief in the need to do so, is based upon some sense of satisfaction below the level of intensity of the frozen lake. Campbell discusses at length the nature and cause of satisfaction and its differences to pleasure. He regards satisfaction as a result of that which is reality only. Pleasure, though, can very much be derived from that which is illusory or delusional. I would claim that the satisfaction gained by the Puritans and those who follow the Protestant ethic for purely or at least largely religious reasons is a pleasure from assuaged fear that is based on a delusion of an after-death salvation. However, it is the quite real, physical accumulation of tangible wealth, currency or goods that are arguably providing the satisfaction. This occurs both in the sense of the financial security wealth

provides, but also in the belief that such wealth is bestowed upon those who have been given salvation.

In simplest terms, for Campbell, the satisfaction comes from the reality of tangible wealth in the two ways mentioned above, not from a salvation of the frozen lake. In keeping with Campbell's definition of what causes pleasure - the romantic notions provided through advertising, the illusion of "keeping up with the Joneses" and what I call the neurotic pleasure of accumulation as a method of diverting from the frozen lake and its edge - the consumerism of the Romantic is very much delusional. One *could* argue that this consumerism is based on reality - real things - but I think the pleasure, although unstable, is actually based on consumer items briefly relieving social and personal insecurities - the edges of the frozen lake. So the consumerism continues and escalates, ever attempting to squelch such insecurities, but ultimately failing to do so. Unconventional religion ultimately ever fails to assuage that which conventional religion simply ever denies.

I think the primary role that Protestantism plays in Campbell's Romantic Consumerism is that it is still what Weber calls a "this worldly" culture. The fears, I think, of not being on a god's "list of saved," for consumerism that is, is long-gone. The asceticism associated with the Puritans and Protestant ethic is for the most part long-gone also [perhaps still showing up occasionally in the older generations]. A hedonism has replaced it. This hedonism, a passion, may be as a result, or even a rebellion to the age of enlightenment. Rationality, particularly newly emerging rationality, has the power to draw the mystery and deepest "salvations" out of life. A rebellion would have

been in order to create a balance with this period of time, perhaps it occurred, and perhaps it remained.

My own theory entails a combination of these two. I see how the Puritans and the Protestant ethic, driven by a godly fear could create and develop a culture and an economy. Work hard, save, and buy things, but do not enjoy them much. Put excess capital back into business. Accept your job as a “calling” and maintain it as a glorification of the creator/ideal. This is a good solid root for a capitalistic society. However, the religious aspect of this behavior has waned in this society. But the habit remains and draws in other factors that continue to fuel it. Some of these factors may be physical like the industrial revolution, or some inventions like the automobile, and the development of department stores, but I think for the most part that good or bad, irrationality drives the human. David Hume once wrote that reason is the slave of the passions, which still seems to be appropriate.

This irrationality is such that it will find something on which to cling, even if it is the need for, and the temporary pleasure from, achieving or maintaining a social status through consumer goods. This is still existent, but merely changes forms. It may range from jogging garb, basketball shoes and purses, to sport utility vehicles capable of negotiating terrain on which the consumer will never set foot. In this endeavor, this form of consumerism as religiosity, the view of the frozen lake is blurred at least for a while. In addition to the traditional ideal of “work, work, work,” we have added the ideal of “buy, buy, buy.” The culture will tell you why and what to purchase. In this way the society beckons prospective religious recruits to be saved, to “become one of

us.” So, we who purchase this grand illusion buy, buy, buy to keep this illusion of salvation alive.

RITZER: RATIONALITY AS MCDONALDIZATION

Weber gave us the idea and the groundwork for the iron cage of rationality, but George Ritzer, in *The McDonaldization of Society* (1996) has given us the iron cage manifest in the most prominent American unconventional religion, consumerism. Ritzer’s “McDonaldization” is the hyper-efficient, unemotional, completely rational, mechanical nature of the way society is moving. McDonald’s is his metaphor, his symbol for this idea. He borrows this concept from Weber, but he differs in the sense that Weber implied that a mechanized, mechanizing “iron cage” society would perhaps continue until “the last ton of fossil fuel has burnt to ashes.” Ritzer, on the other hand, is unconcerned about Weber’s pessimistic outlook, because Ritzer has his own. He suspects this manner of rationalized life will take on a life itself, it will exist and control society irrespective of Weber’s allusion to the future self-destruction of modern-age industrialization. It is the pure rationality of the McDonaldized system that he fears, the impersonal, inhuman nature to it that has the capability to completely take over our lives. This fear is reminiscent of often repeated references to the threat of computers taking over the world. To Ritzer, that which is the essence of computers - pure rationality - is this “McDonald’s” element in society. Given time and the direction he says it is taking,

this computer-nature, this brand of iron cage, is what can completely entrap society and restrict it from control of itself.

It is difficult to see how an element of society could simply take the reins and control society with “rational abandon” as I paradoxically interpret this development. It seems that were an aspect of society to exist in such a way that society did not approve, society would then take measures to control or eliminate it. This event occurs in numerous other aspects of society. If crime rates climb too high in a particular society, methods are implemented to quell it. If the economy is rising too fast or sinking, the government has ways of loosening and tightening money in order to maintain economic stability. There are many other examples as well, yet society continues to enjoy the ride.

However, such as in the case of too much sex and/or violence on television for entertainment purposes, and in the media as news, the society may complain, but the truth remains that the ratings rise. It is easy to see that the society actually desires these elements and promotes them itself, although perhaps in the manner of addiction. McDonalization takes this scenario a step further, and is loved by the society with little resistance or the “lip service” of complaints about sex and violence. Society has great affection for McDonald’s[ization], as we have come to know what to expect from a McDonaldized service every time. Business loves McDonalization as well. Businesses that have become ever mechanized know that profits are going to rise as each mechanized process is implemented. The more rational the business method becomes, the higher the profit.

Ritzer provides three factors that he claims are the driving forces behind our society's affection for McDonaldization. The first is material interests. Money. The very nature of McDonaldization is rationality, rationality in the Western sense of carefully scrutinized numbers from which greater efficiency is ultimately derived. This rationality, sans emotional element, is the iron cage of both Weber and Marx, at least as I interpreted them.

McDonald's itself is a bastion of efficiency, predictability and a nonhuman mechanization. Of course it takes humans to operate a McDonald's restaurant, but a mechanical, assembly-line production is the method of operation. This process is certainly not to the point whereby robots are operating the restaurant, but the people who do so are automated in numerous ways such as to increase efficiency. Schedules of activities are carefully maintained, cordless customer communication devices are worn to allow for a greater range of working ability, and dual drive-through windows are available to split the action of paying for the goods, from receiving them. This method is efficient for business. It lowers cost, increases production, creates a predictable ease of operation and raises profits. And this is what we want, is it not? Ritzer goes on to say that even non-profit organizations favor this more efficient manner of business because it enables them to lower costs as well, increasing their scope and abilities to spend money in areas they wish to do so.

The second reason for McDonaldization's popularity is what Ritzer (1996) calls "McDonaldization for its own sake" (145). What this means is that people may value all the aspects of this method designed to increase profits, the number one reason for

embracing McDonaldization, but value them because they have simply come to value them, regardless of the cost or profitability. Predictability has a value of its own, the nature of not having to prepare or deal with change. Efficiency may be held in high regard simply because it is quicker, even if it may cost more.

In addition, the McDonald's restaurant corporation has spent a great deal of time, money and effort to become a national institution and create customer loyalty. A familiarity with McDonald's and the use of the "Happy Meal", a happy clown, philanthropic endeavors and bright colors create a pleasant atmosphere and aura such that loyalty, an emotional attachment, to McDonald's is made. McDonald's becomes an old friend whose income has no bearing on the attachment whatsoever. This attachment, not unlike truly personal ones, brings with it the ease of overlooking the disadvantages of the object of attachment, McDonaldization, and McDonald's itself. In all the cases above where I mentioned McDonald's or McDonaldization, the two terms are almost synonymous with each other. Even in cases specific to the actual restaurant itself, by changing a few intricacies, we then have Exxon stations or H&R Block or even Planned Parenthood and "McHealthcare" facilities on the street corner.

The third reason for the popularity of McDonald's and McDonaldization is the manner in which society has changed and is changing. For instance, at a time when women were far more regularly at home cooking meals, they are now working and do not have any more time to cook a family meal than does the "man of the house." In fact, they may very well have less, as is often the case when most or all of the childcare or care of the childcare falls upon the mother's shoulders. Not to mention cases whereby

there is a single parent. Increased time efficiency in this ever-evolving society of time constraints is valued a great deal.

Examples of McDonaldization as an aid to modern society abound. We have become such an automotive society that numerous businesses have a drive-through window. Banks, drugstores, cleaners, photo labs, and the list goes on and on. In addition to the mechanical methods and technologies these businesses implement, they also create the need for, and the fruition of new technological advancements such as drink dispensers, supermarket scanning and do-it-yourself credit/debit machines. What started with scientific methods of management and assembly line technologies has evolved into automated bank teller machines and automated voice operators that can understand spoken words. But for the purposes of this chapter, we have now come full circle with the creation, implementation and proliferation of the iron cage.

RELIGION AS A CONSUMER GOOD

McReligion. This term is in obvious reference to Ritzer's account of the "McDonaldization of society" as a quick, predictable, controlled and efficient way to experience life, removed from depth, internality and connection. Although this question of religious affiliation as a consumer good does not necessarily match Ritzer's view of society's rational direction with regard to a wide range of entities, I will start with how I think it does.

If we are speaking of the switching of denominations in American culture then we are speaking of the ability to make choices. This constitutes a concept within the realm of what it is to be consumer good. The ability to make choices entails two very important features in a dichotomous structure. There is the more obvious aspect that is an availability of goods from which to choose - or whatever is acting as a good - but also the personal or societal psychological ability to actualize a choice. A wide range of choices may be readily available, but unless the consumer - or whatever is acting as a consumer - has the disposition to make a choice, to change the current relationship with or without a good in an exchange with something different, we are without a situation that entails choice.

Ritzer claims that society is ever moving towards what he sees as a fast-food culture. This is described as a culture that is removed or being removed from more personal action in day-to-day activity, which of course includes consumerism. This removal of the personal is replaced by the rational, the mechanistic and calculable. I am reminded of the paragraph above whereby Weber more or less predicts a McDonaldization with an industrialism and a matching economy that in continuing to consume society has put us in an "iron cage" of rationality that replaces interaction with material goods and changes the style of life to that of a machine. Ritzer takes this baton from Weber and drives it up to the pay window. And then on to the receiving window where he receives a bag of food and two .35oz. condiment packages.

America is not only a culture with an overwhelming number of choices and the ability to make those choices, but also a culture drooling with the desire for even more

choices and the opportunities to make them. We can give a number of broad reasons down to very specific ones as to why America has such an enormous supply of various goods, including the reasons associated with the desire for them [another infinite reflection]. But as this question pertains to McDonaldization, we can take a micro or a macro perspective. We can view religious choices as a McDonald's whereby someone can stare at the menu of denominations for a few moments, out of the way of other customers, while wondering what exactly will satisfy their spiritual hunger. They are not really certain perhaps, they do not really like the McMainstream [fried fish, buttered loaf, slice of scripture] or the McFundamentalism [spicy, but too much dogma dressing] yet they still hunger for something to make the pangs go away.

OR, we can see the entire McDonaldized culture, a consumer smorgasbord with an entire table devoted only to many varieties of religion. Both will work, but the latter puts religious choice in the context of a consumer good just like everything else. From this standpoint religion takes on a very dry role as something regarded as necessary as anything else. A good pair of running shoes, a nice car, a religious identity and a healthy cereal the kids will eat are all parts of what American life is supposed to be. But the old shoes are out of style, we can afford a better car now, sometimes life needs a spiritual boost, and many cereals are nothing but sugar.

SIMMEL'S MISER AND SPENDTHRIFT: TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

Simmel (1921) describes the miser as one who "...finds bliss in the sheer possession of money, without proceeding to the acquisition and enjoyment of particular objects." The spendthrift however, who shares similarity with the miser, enjoys possession in two steps. "...first, the possession of money, and second, the expenditure of money for the desired object." Simmel regards the miser as being more pure in his need for possession, and I agree. He says the purity of the miser is an aesthetic element in the miser's life. It is an ultimate control over the possession of money without the whimsy or possible loss of the concrete that which money affords. I see this purity as well, but as more of an artificial fulfillment of the miser's sense of self. The actual money itself is an ideal.

The miser and the spendthrift are empty, anomic. To say this is to say that these dispositions hold within them an empty vessel. It is a vacuum in which an emotional element is nonexistent or unknown. Unaware of this once-born, second category void, the miser provides himself a sense of power over the acquisition of this emotional representation. The acquisition of money feels good, as it provides a filler, a diversion and a satisfaction for the frustration subconsciously felt by an inability to acquire the needed emotional fulfillment. The money becomes, and future acquisition of money represents so strongly that emotional element, and its accumulation, that the possessions the money could bring to the miser are insignificant. Therein lies the purity with this disposition.

The miser already knows that the concrete possessions are merely things, passing, short-lived in their ability to fulfill, and in addition the possessions are recognized as merely representations of the money it took to buy them. Moreover, the possession represents a *loss* of the money, the primary, and only source of this artificial fulfillment of the emotional void. To use the money to buy things is to not have his cake and eat it too. To hoard the money and not spend it is to simply *have* the cake, which is all the miser wants and feels he needs. To eat the cake is unnecessary for the miser who is also aware of the emptiness found in concrete objects. Ironically, and obviously the money, as ideal, is not any more fulfilling than the objects it can buy. But in the idealization of currency, the miser needs something to devalue. That devaluation is directed towards the acquisition of objects that simultaneously diminishes the miser's ideal.

It is easy enough to categorize money as object as well, as it is concrete. However, to the miser, the money is not concrete, it is representation, an ideal, a symbol of itself which is pure accumulation and acquisition. The miser himself determines subconsciously which emotional void of which the money is in place. The money will be security, the money will be self-worth, the money will be my friend, the money is power. If these representations can be maintained the miser will never tire of his ideal or become aware of its failure in ability to assuage. The money *is* power to the miser, the money *is* love, it loves him back through its existence and accumulation. And there is no need for outside societal approval as the insecurity is fulfilled by the money itself. A sense of societal approval may exist within the miser, however.

Simmel pays close attention to the aesthetic nature of a miserly attraction to money. Money is a pure form of possession of objects. It is representative of what it could yield. He writes:

[the characteristic is] satisfaction in the complete possession of a potentiality with no thought whatsoever about its realization. At the same time, it exemplifies an attraction akin to the aesthetic, the mastery of both the pure form and the ideal of objects or of behavior, in respect to which every step toward reality - with its unavoidable obstacles, setbacks, and frustrations – could only be a deterioration, and would necessarily constrain the feeling that objects are potentially absolutely to be mastered. (1921: 180)

In this sense miserliness not only is a pure form, an ideal, but also could be seen as a cowardly attitude toward the weakness afforded by the possession of objects. Not only is the ideal an aesthetic, but also the admiration and accumulation of money for its own sake is similar to Freud's take on the making of art as a sublimation of sexual desire.

The aesthetic is appreciated as a representation, an expression, but a safe expression free from disappointment. Free indeed, but the aesthetic in this way is also a creation stemming from a void, an absence of a reality of which it represents. Like all ideals, they are pure, and a beauty exists with this purity. However, like all ideals by definition, they are devoid of realization, of reality. The beauty exists only in the mind of the account holder. Although money is a concrete object, as mentioned earlier, it serves as an ideal for itself as well as that for which it could be exchanged, but is not.

It is with Simmel's comments on the spendthrift that similarities are found with Veblen's comments on the leisure class. Spendthrift-ness is invoked as a pleasure from wastefulness. The spendthrift holds money almost as importantly as the miser, but

where the miser stops at his appreciation for money, the spendthrift needs the money's expenditure in order to derive a sensation of fulfillment. The money has value not of itself, but in its spending. The objects for which the money represents are temporary ideals, and the accumulation of object is the strived-for ideal. This ideal can never be reached. The spendthrift "becomes indifferent to the object once he possesses it...enjoyment of it is marred by the curse of restlessness and transience." Like the miser, the spendthrift is never fulfilled by his accumulation.

This idea that man is condemned to always desire *more* is in this never ending, never fulfilling desire that the Buddhists find evil. This desire is neurosis for, and the fuel that drives the attempt to assuage unfulfilled emotionality – the edge of the frozen lake. This unfulfilled emotionality may also be that which is unattainable as in the philosophical unanswerable questions about existence and finality of mortality – the frozen lake itself. This void exists in all men, but perhaps more so in those with less emotional attachment and grounding. Emotional attachment to other persons will give much volume to this void.

The miser is a step behind, or in front of the spendthrift in this false sense of possession of oneself and what will fill the void, depending upon how one looks at it, but both find an artificial anticipatory fulfillment in accumulation as ideal. To stop this accumulation or to realize the lack of fulfillment in the accumulation of money or objects would be to approach the edge of the frozen lake, to become twice-born. It would thereby force the direction towards true self-actualization, as it would be to kill an

internalized hope, a mirage, a delusional ideal that fulfillment is placed just at the end of the rainbow, if only they could just reach it...

VEBLLEN: ON DEVOTION

The French philosopher Blaise Pascal once wrote that the only viable reason to believe in [the Christian] God was a logical one based upon a bet one made given the conditions of belief or non-belief in the deity. Pascal's Wager, as it came to be called, is regularly displayed in a graphic form showing that knowledge of God's existence is unknown, but the best bet a person could make was to believe in God's existence because it yielded the best outcome for the bettor. Later, the American philosopher William James exclaimed that were he God, he would take great pleasure in condemning to Hell those who believed in Him for such self-serving reasons.

In *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, in his chapter on religious devotion, Veblen (1967) describes the propensity for the betting man to believe in the supernatural as a means to understand and influence the outcomes in games of chance. I described Pascal's Wager in order to show this connection between betting and religious devotion, specifically displaying devotion as a bet itself, but I think the usefulness of my description ends there, as a distinct difference between these two perspectives exists. Veblen sees the betting man as having the same disposition as one who is prone to religious devotion, the explanation that they see an animistic, spiritual connection between outcomes and some non-physical element as having influence on those outcomes. Pascal, in contrast, claims that believing would simply be a good bet to place

because believing may yield a positive outcome but will not yield much of a negative one if incorrect. This is a distinct difference, but nonetheless displays the human draw towards unknowability, mystery and a desire to create an influence over it. Prayer, in the practice of conventional religions, is a manifestation of this desire to influence an unknowable element as well.

Although the desire to influence some control of events through a deity manifests itself in prayer, gifts and some form of sacrifice, there is evidence for simply the desire for mystery and the supernatural. I consider this aspect of humanity to be a need for a supreme ideal that remains safely unknown. Once again, the epitome of perfection, power, mystery, control and many other aspects of idealization are found in deities, supernatural ideals, idols and that which the idols represent.

In the far Western United States, for example, conventional church membership is found to be relatively low, but cult membership is very high. Sociological data exemplifying this effect exists as early as the 1890's (Stark and Bainbridge 1997). Similarly, the repression of conventional religious practices in Soviet Russia led to an increase in unconventional belief in the supernatural. A study found that of the residents of the fifteen largest cities in Russia, who had passed through the best schools available to them, two-thirds believed in "the evil eye," almost half believed in UFO's, and more than half believed in astrology (Voroontsova and Filatov 1994).

Veblen also mentions that a great deal of religious devotion surrounds sporting events and the athletes who engage in them. In keeping with his theme of anthropomorphism as a primary component in this observation, it seems to be the nature

of the athlete and those who are involved in athletic events, be they participants or spectators, to be overly concerned with the power of the human body. This is a worship of prowess if you will, and a barbarian inclination towards great interest in the outcome of athletic contests.

It seems to me that if one were to worship or at least have great interest in that which involves power of the human body, and power or victory in general, they would also be interested in, or worship, that which would be seen to have power over the powerful. A deity being the most powerful master of all, is metaphorically the fastest runner, the strongest man, the winner, the victor and champion. This is worship of the ideal of power. Not only is this a barbarian temperament, according to Veblen, but he also likens it to the lower classes' need for a reverence to a higher class, as servants to a master. I recall having it explained to me by a history professor that the English term "Lord" for a supreme deity comes directly from the use of that word to denote a landowner or member of the aristocracy by those beneath him. To have a master is to be a slave, to have a lord is to be a serf or servant, and to have a god is to be subject to it.

Veblen also draws connection between athleticism and religious devotion in the animistic sense of an athletic event - the emotional excitement and athleticism as a means of grace – presumably due to the pain and discipline involved in training and playing, and as a method of proselytizing for the team. In this sense, sacrifice enters the religiosity surrounding athletic achievement. However, I wonder just how much unthinking devotion may have to do with simply the stereotypical depiction of athletes as being a generally unintellectual group. If one is not prone to question an intellectual

element of a belief then the belief is that much safer from deconstruction. Behavior is safe from scrutiny as well. Churches that outwardly denounce gambling may also hold raffles and bingo games. Hypocrisy abounds, which is no surprise. Like idealization yields devaluation, attempting to actualize idealization produces hypocrisy. Pascal's Wager is apparently more indicative of the religious temperament than Pascal logically determined.

Veblen regards the best mindset for modern life and a peaceable, industrial community to be the mindset that is matter-of-fact and that recognizes material facts as simply that. He states that in order for the world to achieve high economic efficiency, it must be seen by the mind of a quantitative, dispassionate public. Veblen suggests that religious devotion is a leftover propensity from an earlier stage of life as an indication of spiritual [emotional] arrest at that time. This sounds a great deal like a Freudian model of religious devotion as a neurosis stemming from arrested development of a childhood stage. In fact, it is parallel to this statement. Veblen also states that in societies whereby the economic structure is one of persons gaining their identity through subservience and dominance, and societies whereby the entire population is inclined towards religious devotion, a devout individual is not considered an anomaly. However, in contrast to more industrialized, less traditionalistic societies, this devout individual could be said to be maintaining an atavistic trait.

Another parallel is noticed in the similarity of treatment of a deity as deserved of conspicuous waste, and the treatment of a chieftain or patriarch in a barbarian culture. A house of worship is laden with conspicuous consumption, lavish accoutrements and

architecture, much like the home of a nobleman or lord. In addition, the followers must appear in a manner showing no necessity of labor [Sunday attire]. This is similar to someone wearing their very best attire to meet a dignitary or the like. I also make a connection between the robes of the clergy compared to even the best of the congregation. Velvet, gold accoutrements, special hats...adorn those at the top of the hierarchy in the religious society, particularly the more traditionalistic conventional religions. Conspicuous waste abounds. Clergy certainly represent a leisure class of individual, not as an effect of wealth, but in the sense of being at the top of a social hierarchy.

Veblen does not delve into religious devotion in conjunction with the leisure class per se, but does regard fervent devotion to be a signifier of a lower class. Religious devotion exists among the leisure class as well, but it is of a predatory, albeit much less charismatic and conservative, nature. This exemplifies Veblen's stance that for economic efficiency, individuals are best suited if they are of a less animistic, more dispassionate temperament. The wealthy members of the leisure class are kept in their class by their wealth and a subsequent vigil of it, regardless of their attempts to appear economically unconcerned. This type of individual is more of the matter-of-fact type and more in control of their emotionality that would lead one to be devoutly religious. In addition, the leisure class culture itself holds a more reserved, in-control attitude about life, leaving childish passion and superstitious behavior to those who are forced to be concerned about such things in order to find relief from particular cares less prevalent in the leisure class.

In addition to Veblen's observances, I also regard the wealth of the leisure class to carry with it a sophistication, a formal education and a cosmopolitan nature to it that precludes what is otherwise seen as the superstitious antics of the lower, less educated, less culturally aware class. With education, questions and awareness outside of one's culture do not lend themselves well to the belief systems of the lower classes. I think this particular distinction is not only a matter of class distinction and identity, although it may be somewhat, but I also think it may quite simply be a matter of broader education, knowledge and the adherence to superstition that such knowledge often precludes.

In reference to the nature of being devout, according to Veblen, I have found elements that match my stance on religion as idealism. Veblen has associated both an athletic and a gambling temperament with superstition and devotion, as well as associating conspicuous consumption and a master/slave relationship with religious devotion. Athletes and athletic events are not only of a superstitious proclivity, but are associated with gambling, which also has a superstitious nature. Regarding the master/slave hierarchy, the entity playing the role of master either engages in conspicuous consumption or has it *engaged upon* him. Whether the case may be of a clergyman, chieftain, lord or Lord God, a conspicuous consumption or a lavish display of waste, is present.

Within the context of my theory, these elements associated with devotion of which Veblen writes: athleticism, sporting events, dichotomous hierarchy, are either ideals themselves or representations of ideals. We have discussed the idealism surrounding athleticism and its events as displays of sacrifice, power, prowess,

winning/domination [from the Latin, *dominari* “to rule,” with *dominus* meaning “lord”], grace and proselytizing, which are all very common and significant themes in conventional religions that I regard as ideals. In addition, the dichotomous hierarchy that is master/slave or lord/serf not only contains the ideals of wealth, power and dominance, but contain within them the devaluation, the antithesis that is a necessary aspect of idealism as noted in chapter two. Without slaves there is no master, without serfs there is no lord, without Hell there is no Heaven, without devaluation there is no ideal and without failing humans there is no God. To ensure a need for the proffered ideal, the conventional theistic religions teach devaluation of self as being resultant prior to even birth. You are damned before you are even born.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION: APPLICATION AND ORIGINATION

Let me say that I am very aware that the nature of this dissertation is broadly scoped and entails some ex post facto determinations. My theory of idealism as religion/religion as idealism is one of an intellectual kind that plunges headlong into the depths of the unknown in order to back out of it and create an order with presuppositions, suppositions, assumptions, insights, intuitions and abstractions. So, given that this topic is centered on a deeply intellectual and emotional awareness of life, death, hope, fallacy, myth and reality, we can easily find ourselves miles below the surface in cold, black water. This, however, was not my intention, but is nonetheless the nature of the business at hand; that is the business that involves an unrelenting questioning spawned by an unyielding lust for understanding the nature of what it is to be human. To understand has been my own ideal.

It is at this point it is appropriate to include a disclaimer to the coldness with which the black water of this dissertation has been written. The questioning that spurred this topic was unrelenting indeed, carrying with it not only dark speculations but the desire to explain the nature of this action I deem to be idealism as it pertains to a broadly defined description of religiosity. The tone of this dissertation has been one of fear, diversion, thwarting, denial and escapism of painful awareness in an effort to draw a parallel between the idealism of what I call conventional religion and the idealism that would otherwise be called something other than unconventional religion. The term

“religion” was used and bifurcated instead of dividing the term “idealism” because I wanted to focus on the level of sanctity of the ideal and the use of the idealism as a salvation for its adherents. However, this tone and the terms fostering it are not the only aspect of idealism worth mentioning. There also exists a brightly lit aspect of this very powerful human attribute.

A great deal of the power stemming from the drive to adhere to an ideal manifests itself in ways that are regarded as not only positive for the society but positive for the individual as well. I would argue that many of humankind’s greatest accomplishments, not to mention tremendous accomplishments of, to, and for individuals have been as a result of the idealism of which I have written. I have written this dissertation from the perspective of what I see as the mechanics of the mind manifesting itself in drives to the extreme - drives manifesting themselves in an idealistic fashion that I have deemed conventionally religious and unconventionally religious. In addition to the manifestations of idealism on society and the individual is the more Durkheimian perspective that common ideals, goals, rituals and totems are paramount to the social solidarity, integration and elimination of anomie in society. These are positive manifestations as well.

The birth and maintenance of many societies throughout the history of humanity have been through what I regard as conventionally religious idealism. Arguably, the birth of much of Western traditional culture has been as a direct influence of Judeo-Christian ideals. This is the case with other cultures around the world as well. Many of the world’s greatest architectural and artistic achievements, from the Pyramids of Giza

and the Sistine Chapel to the Taj Mahal, the temples of ancient Greece and the World Trade Towers have been as a result of conventional and unconventional religious idealism. The placement of Carnegie Libraries in many towns across America was the result of the accumulation of tremendous wealth gained by the “robber baron” Andrew Carnegie. The list goes on.

With regard to the sense of community, identity and solidarity afforded by both conventional and unconventional idealism, the list goes on as well. The idealism of which I speak is often the primary identification of individuals the world over. To be Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, or many other conventionally religious identifications is of utmost importance in the social structure and cohesion of families and communities at least, and nations and regions at most. A similar identity and cohesion can be afforded through association with unconventional religiosity as well. One only need to experience a roomful of wealth-driven salesmen at a convention speech given by a motivational speaker to make a connection between its collective effervescence and that of a charismatic church service. In both cases the group is strengthened, the individuals given a sense of belonging and integration, and achievements are made more possible.

This theory carries with it a range of utility that allows it to be extrapolated to many aspects of individual and social life. Rather than beginning with observations of those social practices conventionally regarded as religion in order to find common elements, this theory begins on the other end of the spectrum that allows an emotional drive, common to all, to be the emotional matrix that begins a circuit of idealistic internalization and behavior. From this perspective, the beginning and the end of the

circuit of idealism are found at the same point. The assumption that describes this point of arrival/departure is that of the frozen lake and its edge.

This circuitous perspective enables those who wish to understand a driving force in the mind of the individual or society, to be able to divide behavior and the drive for it into either the category of being conventionally or unconventionally religious. By doing so, this theory not only becomes useful in determining a predictable pattern of behavior, but also in determining the elements that are driving it.

For instance, William James divided the psycho-emotional state of being, regarding conventional religion, into two categories. Both categories explain and predict the manner in which the individual will behave, in a broad sense, based upon a perception of reality. The once-born person is unmoved, calm and emotionally unfettered, but the twice-born is a neurotic mess of awareness as well as mental and emotional experiences. It is this second category that James is most interested in, as it is a teeming emotional petri dish of personal religious experiences waiting to occur. I have expanded these categories into sub-categories in order to create a broader scope of inclusion.

Being that my theory presupposes the absence of supernaturalism, my interpretation of these experiences is that such experiences are personal, emotional experiences engaged in by the mind in order to release itself from the perspective of life that is one of the frozen lake or its edge. What follows from this theory is that if an individual is having a religious experience, it can be assumed that he or she is either at a point face-to-face with the frozen lake or its edge, and therefore desperate to escape its

grasp, or has already crossed into the category of twice-born and is desperate to escape its emotional ramifications.

If this theory is used as a template to explain such personal experiences it can be assumed that an individual who is describing a personal religious experience is not experiencing some force found outside of the mind, but is instead experiencing his own mind entering a delusional, defensive state in order to thwart painful reality or that which threatens to make it known. It is in this sense that Marx regarded conventional religious belief as an “opiate.”

In keeping with Marx’s allusion to opiates as being known progenitors of delusion, the conventionally religious practice of Rastafarianism found in the Caribbean and parts of Africa considers the effects of ingested marijuana to be an open door to the experience of “Jah” or God. Painful realities of life, fear, and questions leading to them are thwarted by the use of a drug. In Jamaican patois, the word for marijuana is “ganja,” meaning “gone to Jah,” “Jah” being a word taken from “Jehovah,” meaning “God.” When a Rastafarian is under the influence of this drug, he has “gone to God.” The euphoric sensation that follows is attributed to the experience of the supernatural, not solely the effect of the chemical found in marijuana and its effects on the brain. When the effects of the drug wear off, the user is once again faced with reality. This link of the drug to euphoric experience or awareness of a spiritual realm creates an idealism surrounding the drug and its use. In fact, the use of the drug is central to the religion of Rastafarianism, as are other chemical substances for some other religions around the world.

The same is true for conventional religion in that the opiate is an internalized self-delusion. An emotional sensation follows the delusion that is not only euphoric, but attributed to the experience of the supernatural realm, God, or an even more specific experience such as the love, or security of a particular aspect of the god such as Jesus for Protestant fundamentalists, or a desire to kill “infidels” as is the case with Muslim fundamentalist terrorists. Similarly, an emotional desire or attachment to an endeavor, in some Christian beliefs, is considered a *vocation*, or a “calling” from God. In all of these cases, a positive emotional experience is not only attributed to a supernatural entity or realm, but is also regarded as a proof of it.

The examples above, as is James’ interest in the religious experience, are of this emotional effect on the mind of the individual. But not only can society play an enormous role in maintaining and/or directing these emotional sensations and the idealizations that follow from them, society can also create them. This is the aspect of my theory of which Durkheim speaks. For Durkheim, the society itself, through collective effervescence, identification and sanctions, creates an emotional sensation that entails a euphoria brought upon by the society as supernatural, as a god. Society is then worshipping itself, individuals are worshipping the society, and individuals are worshipping themselves as well, through their own euphoric internal sensations.

This theory as template can not only make fair assumptions about an individual who is idealizing in a deeply conventionally religious conviction, but can also be used to make fair assumptions about individuals who idealize what I call unconventionally religious convictions. This is where the use of materials, actions and beliefs such as

forms of wealth, sex/revelry, and some level of achievement are used in a very similar manner as that of the conventional religion. I say “similar” because as mentioned in chapter two, unconventional religiosity may be able to successfully thwart the edge of the frozen lake – painful realities – but it does not have the ability to thwart or deny the frozen lake itself, mortality as final.

It is important to make clear that when I speak of an unconventionally religious ideal, which includes my examples of wealth, sex, power, an achievement or even a brand name good, I am not referring to a mere identification or affinity for such objects, activities, principles or endeavors. We all have affinities. The term “ideal,” as I have used it, refers to the object of the affinity as having been given a special significance well outside of the realm of “affinity.” Few of us would refuse the gift of a Rolls Royce automobile, free of obligation, if only to immediately sell it for its worth in currency. But to direct one’s life and occupation such that at some distant time a Rolls Royce could be purchased, is to idealize the automobile.

I might also suggest that the automobile is only a tangible, but internalized symbol of what the purchaser actually idealizes, that of a perceived admiration/love from others. That level of desperation for admiration is likely a manifestation of some specific dearth of admiration found earlier in the individual’s life. Fervor for the eventual acquisition of the automobile is a result of the level of desire for the eventual perceived admiration. Purpose and direction has now been created. This object as ideal has been internalized by the individual in order to escape deep pain of the original, and

actual, dearth of admiration/love. This painful reality of the original dearth is the edge of the frozen lake.

Achieving the automobile and that which it is expected to produce is the ideal of the practices entailed in this version of an unconventional religion. Although the achievement of the automobile does not carry with it the promise of a euphoric eternal consciousness, it does carry with it a believed earthly euphoria and the diversion of a painful reality. Although this difference is significant, I contend the use of the ideal in this arena, regarding awareness of painful reality, is as the use of the ideal in the conventionally religious arena.

We can, of course, replace the Rolls Royce with any number of commonly internalized ideals, including principles. Merely having some desire to own a Rolls Royce, still entailing the allotment of money for it and all that may go into that, for any number of reasons, is to simply have ownership of the automobile as a *goal*. My definition of *the ideal* carries with it great passion, great purpose, and a promise of a great payoff upon achievement. To have an object, endeavor or principle as a goal, is to desire, but to desire without the deep and special attributes given to the object by the one who *idealizes* it.

So, regarding the individual, we have a template that is applicable to much of that which some individuals are passionately driven to achieve. If it is determined that the individual is indeed idealizing an object or achievement, it is a safe prediction that, given the gravity of that which the ideal is internally representing – an intense desire to avoid pain – the individual will stop at little, or even perhaps nothing, in order to

actualize the ideal. The individual will avoid, if at all possible, the painful reality awaiting him if the ideal is not actualized. The ideal is characterized by a very powerful drive that is - in psychological terms - obsessive.

I have explained how the ideal in the unconventional sense manifests itself, but the ideal in the conventionally religious sense manifests itself in a similar manner. As stated in the preceding chapters, the conventionally religious ideal is centered on the prospect of eternal life, avoidance of the frozen lake. As with unconventional religiosity, many other aspects are carried by this idealization. Many of these aspects are social and in keeping with a Durkheimian model. Social acceptance, identity, belonging, purpose, direction, symbols, and a basis for both a legal justice as well as a sense for supernatural one are all parts of the conventionally religious ideal.

An individual may have an identity with a convention religion, and much of what that identity entails socially, but without the fervor and passion of the conventionally religious ideal that is of the twice-born category. In colloquial terms, the twice-born conventionally religious are “born again” fundamentalists. Those who merely identify with the conventional religion, even with regular church attendance, but without the passion, are those who the fundamentalists may regard as not being “real” believers. The ideal in these cases are the God or gods that are worshipped. They are ideals of perfection, as is the behavior promoted by the conventional religion.

In the case of Christianity, in order to remove any possibility of the ideal behavior being achieved, an innate imperfection of all members is internalized. In this way, the member must continually be trying to achieve the ideal. As is the nature of

conventional religion, denominations exist which have variations of interpretations on the nature of the ideals and the nature of reaching or approximating them. As is the nature of unconventional religion, or perhaps even more powerfully so, a conventionally religious idealizer may stop at little, or even nothing, that stands in the way of the belief in the ideal. This is how an individual can stare into the sockets of a nine hundred thousand year old human skull, as confirmed by several scientific techniques and accepted by the world's scientific community, yet believe science is an atheist conspiracy because his own conventional religion's ideal, with no evidence whatsoever, contends that the earth is less than ten thousand years old. Idealistic belief will often win over scientific explanations as the ideal has at stake great pain, and the fear of its emotional awareness.

The highest ideal in conventional religion is a euphoric eternal existence, which unlike the ideals of the unconventionally religious, can never be shown to be untrue. But the individual, who after lifelong effort, finally achieves the ideal of ownership of the Rolls Royce, stands to discover that the very same emotional angst driving him to purchase the automobile will still exist even as he drives down the street in his new car. This may take some time, as the euphoria of ideal-achieved will likely be actualized, but it will wane and perhaps even vanish at some point, as ideals are not real. Perhaps he needed two Rolls Royces instead.

We have come to understand the ideal as manifest in the individual, but to understand it at the societal level one only needs to extrapolate the premises to the individual organism that is a society. The same mechanisms that function at the

individual level also function at the societal level. In much the same way that religious ideals, whether conventional or unconventional, manifest themselves in the personality and identity of the individual, they manifest themselves in the “personality” of a society.

Because of my familiarity with American culture, I shall use it as an example, but my theory is intended as a template for any human society. This theory, as applicable to society, can in much the same way as it is applicable to the individual, make predictions as to societal behavior. To understand the ideal of a society is to understand what drives it, how it is driven, and how rationalizations for blatant contradictions are made. The ideal knows only its own logic. For instance, American society has as an ideal, as rooted in a puritanical origination, a social disdain for nudity. Yet American society also has an insatiable appetite for pornography. A psychological explanation would hold that because of the culture’s repression of sexuality, the repressed urge must express itself in other ways. These ways are many, but certainly one way is to hypocritically consume pornography, but be appalled by even muted nudity on television.

One of American society’s ideals is that children should not be exposed to nudity or sexuality, yet pregnancy rates among young teenagers are higher than other societies with less stringent guidelines for such exposure. Numerous other contradictions are evident, but with the understanding of the myriad of ideals that are American society, the contradictions seem no more logical, but understandable.

Likewise, in a recent battle over a monument in Alabama, the ideals of not only the magistrate, but many members of that culture, were made evident in the supreme

attempt to disobey the federal law regarding church and state. The monument not only was a representation of a conventionally religious ideal, but became an ideal itself. The item in question was a depiction of the Ten Commandments carved into granite. These ancient laws, as ideals, were touted as the foundation of the laws of Alabama. But with only a quick glance at the actual writings on the monument it is easy to see that the monument, and the laws, are only idealic representations - symbols - of the popular identification with Christianity, having nothing at all to do with the laws of Alabama, nothing.

Action is the only answer for enforcing the law in the face of such idealism. Rational explanation is entirely futile, as this ideal being shown to be merely thus would leave the door wide open for other realities, painful ones, to emerge among the idealizers. They will fight very hard to avoid this realization. If we actually take a look at the Ten Commandments we can see how clearly the driving force for their display is an utterly idealic one.

The first commandment states that there shall be no other gods before God. But freedom to worship whatever god one wishes is a law in Alabama, as dictated by the U.S. Constitution. The second has to do with graven images, which possession of is not only legal in Alabama, but which arguably and ironically is the monument itself. The third regards taking the name of the lord in vain, but swearing is not illegal in Alabama. The fourth is concerned with the Sabbath day, which at the time of writing was Saturday. Regardless, no law in Alabama prohibits work on Saturday or Sunday. And the context of the time of the commandments writing this was a capital offense. The fifth regards

honoring parents, but not only does Alabama not legally require this honor, but it rightly prosecutes child abusive parents. Certainly honor is not even suggested in these cases. The sixth regards killing. The state of Alabama not only permits abortions, but has a death penalty as well. The seventh regards adultery, and attaches to it the death penalty. Adultery is grounds for divorce, but little else legally. The commandments do not mention rape, however, which is illegal in Alabama. The eighth regards stealing, but this is law in almost all societies, having nothing to do with Alabama or the U.S. or even The West as having initiated it. The ninth regards bearing false witness, but there is no law against lying in Alabama, outside of the court system, that is. The tenth regards coveting, which is a major basis for consumerism, and certainly for the Alabama advertising industry. There is no law against coveting in Alabama.

I went through this list for the purpose of displaying just how the attachment to an ideal can at least greatly influence perception of any objective reality, and at most completely disregard it. The gravity of this nature of idealism at its sociological level is not only astounding, but applicable and of a predictable character. The magistrate involved was not mentally ill, uneducated, or unintelligent, at least in the way society defines those terms. But he had internalized an ideal, as had a large portion of the populace.

I might also be so bold as to consider idealization in the two forms in which I have described in this dissertation, as a mild, socially acceptable illusion. Although this contention is stronger for conventional religiosity than unconventional religiosity, the latter could still apply. It is mild in the sense that an idealizing individual can otherwise

go about his or her life in a sane and functioning manner. As can a society. It is socially acceptable in that society understands, or wants to understand, the nature of religious idealism as a generally positive one, whether as an element of social control, politically or otherwise, as an element of emotional satisfaction, and therefore as an element that the individuals of the society will fight and possibly die for. It is illusory in that it is in conflict with the reality that exists outside of the individual's, or society's mind. As mentioned earlier, Hume contends that reason is a slave to passion. And although passion may not entail an idealism, idealism entails passion.

So, from where did this theory emerge? My research of the last ten years is in this dissertation. Study has been one of experience and process, the internal and the external, the official and the unofficial. This schooling has been an intricate survey of a fight, a fight entailing kicking, screaming and slipping all the way to the center of the frozen lake. Pounding at its edge with clenched, bloody fists only to slide onto its surface unavailed by frantic, futile efforts to grip onto the very edge previously fought against, is to extrapolate the experience to others and ultimately to all of humanity. Academia has not been a collegiate battle of courses, term papers, degree plans and grades but a vicious battle of what meaning they provided.

Concurrently questioning my experiences, listening to the experiences of others and acquiring theoretical perspectives of how experience is manifest and common, led to the basis of my thoughts on reality, painful reality, its emotional manifestations if made aware and its emotional manifestations if unaware or *made* unaware. To my surprise, I

read a description written by William James that paralleled my own metaphor of humanity as a cockroach in the bottom of a burning cardboard carton.

Since the sixth grade when a solitary moment found me talking to God on the grounds of the fundamentalist elementary school I attended, I have had much wonder. “If you exist,” I said, “you must know my thoughts of your not making much sense to me, whether I push those thoughts to the back of my head or not. If you made my brain, and this is how it works, then I am sorry if that offends you, but surely you understand that.” With our new understanding of each other, the fears I were taught at school dissipated, leaving me with a freedom I have cursed many times over the years, but have come to embrace. It is the freedom of Sartre.

In retrospect, that was the moment I became the master of myself with regard to religion, and therefore became the imperfect god of myself. This is a formidable task to be sure, as it entails the blind leading the blind amongst a society of individuals all too willing to guide. And like a blindness entails, a loneliness ensues. To finally read of thinkers the world over whom also shared this task, albeit perhaps more adeptly, was to share experience of this nature for the first time.

As stated in the first paragraph of this dissertation, my theory does not involve neurology. I am not a neurologist. The *mechanics of the brain* that create mind are not only essentially foreign to me, but also less interesting to me than what the *mechanics of the mind* can create. My theory also does not involve the field of astrophysics up to the point at which it becomes philosophy. I do not have any idea what caused the scientific explanations of our material reality, or if a cause was even necessary. I cannot explain a

void in which a void exists, or what are the properties of an existent void. Mathematical equations begin to blur at these points where the philosophical assumes it place. And these are questions I have learned to live with and assume will never know.

Like we will never know what goes on in the mind of a Persian show-cat, we have to come to accept unknowability. But we may still find the cat to be beautiful. We can see the owner as an idealizer of a *felis domesticus* covered with cilia that reflect blue-gray light onto our foveae, or we can see the owner as a fellow being, not much unlike ourselves, but who cares greatly for her cat and how it is publicly involved. In this range of truths the frozen lake traps us, but we are freed by it as well.

The interpretations of Marx I have included are less those of one of the greatest minds of humanity and more those of one with a fire in his mind. He is one of us, one who shares this human plight that promotes much activity, but devised methods to make it a more pleasant one, a method of fairness, an understanding of reality. Those were his outward intentions anyway. How intentions manifest is an entirely different case of inquiry; the viability and subconscious drives of his method is arguable, of course. I have offered my explanation for their apparent failure to function as well as my theoretical explanation as to his method of his method. That is my case with Marx and his communist ideology.

My interpretations of Durkheim are less interpretative and more extrapolative. As is the case with Bellah, in the manner I have mentioned him in this work. Weber and Veblen have found themselves in this piece as examples of my theory and how it manifests itself in the thought process and behavior of the individual, extrapolated to a

particular society. Like Marx, but unlike Durkheim and Bellah, I have tried to show their theories cast in a light from my own. Durkheim is interested in an aspect of humanity in general.

Bellah writes of American Civil Religion, but his theory so well pertains to nationalities in general that I simply regard it to do so. Weber and Veblen, as I have incorporated them, are concerned with the particular subcultures that are Calvinist Protestants, and the leisure class. Campbell makes an interesting juxtaposition to Weber, as does Ritzer as an extrapolation to American consumerism. I found Simmel's writing to be the most readable, or perhaps the most easily digestible. His analyses of personality types and aspects of culture jumped out most agreeably. But I have rather enjoyed putting *all* these theorists together in the way they fell together. Although differences between them abound, the commonalities between them, or once-removed by way of this theory, has been not only enlightening, and providing of intellectual exercise, but a little startling as well.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this conclusion, understanding has been my own ideal, providing a driving lust for knowledge and experience with the promise of dousing the fire in my own mind and the fire that nearly engulfed my body. But for my own purposes, I have achieved the mark of millionaire and received an Academy Award.

And unlike the cases whereby one continues to strive for more, I have finished. The ideal has vanished, but a different person stands in the same place. And like the cases whereby one realizes the boundless void of idealism, I have also begun. To take what I *do* know, what I *do* understand, what I *don't* fear, what *doesn't* bind me, and then

to put it all together in concept, endeavor, concrete form and the promise of a shared experience with both myself and fellow humanity, has replaced my ideal with a *goal*. I am now free, therefore to invent - that is to say create.

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