# 3

## SOCIALIZATION AND RACISM: THE WHITE EXPERIENCE

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One of the first researchers to lament the paucity of studies on the effects of racism on the white majority was Clark (1955). Given the absence of data on this problem, he suggested that we make use of "the available findings as a basis for further research into the likely effects of discrimination on the personality of members of the dominant or privileged group." Young (1969: 87) said essentially the same thing, in a voice that reflected the atmosphere of urgency during the late 1960s, when he stated that "perhaps sociologists will oblige us by dropping their preoccupation with the alleged pathologies of black America and study the very real, corroding sickness of white America."

Despite the urgings of Clark and Young, we have not yet made a dent in this area. This chapter uses what little information is available to analyze the consequences of racism for white children and the white population. It relies mainly, though not exclusively, on autobiographical writings. I am aware of the problems of using autobiographical accounts, but believe that recollections of personal odysseys provide us with an especially vivid view of the peculiarities of race mirrored in the accounts of those who have sought to explain its impact on them. I also believe that information from any and all sources must be exploited if we are to foster breakthroughs of comprehension in areas as obviously undeveloped as this.

## RACISM AND SOCIETY

The socialization of children is designed to inculcate values, traditions, ıdards, and codes of behavior. It tells the child what "mommy and daddy like or don't like" and what is "good" and what is "bad." The major question posed in this chapter is this: What happens to families and children, and the white population in general, when an ideology of racial supremacy becomes a main socializing motif in person-to-person and group-to-group interaction in multiracial and multicultural societies?

In order to understand the dynamics and the impact of racism, we must view it as a faith—and, for the American society, a permanent belief system rather than a transient apparition. Its longevity has been tried and tested. It now occupies a place in the American value pantheon alongside such concepts as democracy and liberty, though one would ordinarily view this combination as contradictory.

Important in any assessment of racism in the United States is the degree to which it fills the interstices of the society. Historic legal restraints to social equality, and the ensuing encapsulation of Blacks as "social" as well as "biological" beings, meant that early in the American experience the stage was set to look at the possible impact of racism on the majority. Any evaluation of the impact of racism on Whites must consider the economics of slavery and Jim Crowism (materialism), as well as the ideology and ethos of racism (idealism), and combinations of the two. Racism is diffused and generalized throughout the American society. It both helps to shape and is shaped by social institutions. Obviously Afro-Americans and other racial groups have been negatively affected by racism, but the effects of racism for Whites may well be no less devastating and debilitating, both individually and institutionally.

People engage in racist behavior because they are reasonably sure that there is support for it within their society. In the second section of this chapter I will discuss how racism (1) supports irrationality, (2) inhibits intellectual growth, and (3) negates democracy. I shall emphasize again ı again the degree to which racism not only distorts the personal vision . the individual White, but likewise distorts a larger collective vision. As autobiographical sketches on race and racism show, the almost complete immersion of individuals in a social network of racism makes it difficult for any White to avoid its influence.

### THE FAMILY AND EARLY RACIAL EDUCATION—THE RITES OF PASSAGE

> From the time little Southern (white) children take their first step they learn their ritual, for Southern tradition leads them through its intricate movements. . . . These ceremonials in honor of white supremacy, performed from babyhood, slip from the conscious mind down deep into muscles and glands and become difficult to tear out. . . . Southern tradition taught well: we learned our way of life by doing. You never considered arguing with the teacher, because you could never see her. You only felt the iron grip of her hand and knew you must go where all the other children were going. And you learned never, never, to get out of step [Smith, 1961: 96].



Given the importance of the family in the life cycles of individuals, it is informative to view the process by which negative racial values and attitudes become manifest there. A dissection of the *process* by which families teach children the "proper" racial behavior highlights the degree to which group antagonisms, rather than being "natural" and "normal," are, to the contrary, taught by parents and relatives.

According to Clark (1955: 25-26), children's attitudes toward Blacks are determined chiefly "not by contact with Negroes but by contacts with the prevailing attitudes toward Negroes." Clark concludes that it is the *idea* of Blacks, rather than any particular characteristics of Blacks, that evokes hostility toward them. He adds that American parents "rarely . . . deliberately teach their children to hate members of another racial . . . group," but racist views are transferred in "subtle and sometimes unconscious ways." Finally, Clark asserts that the process by which racial intolerance is transmitted from parents to children "is frequently forgotten by parents." But if Clark is correct about parents forgetting the racial rituals they force upon their children, the testimonies of their children reveal that they (the children) often have not forgotten.

### EFFECTS OF RACISM ON WHITE CHILDREN

I wish now to explore autobiographical sources to illustrate four effects of racist socialization on white children: (1) ignorance of other people; (2) development of a double social psychological consciousness; (3) group conformity; and (4) moral confusion and social ambivalence.

*Ignorance of other people.* Many years ago the sociologist W.E.B. DuBois (Dennis, 1979) used such words as "behind the veil," "looking out from a dark cave," and "entombed souls" to describe the effects of segregation on Blacks. These same terms apply equally well to the white population. One of the myths governing racial inequality in American society is the idea that Whites "know" Blacks. But, as we noted, Clark maintains that Whites "know" and understand an "idea" of the Black. They themselves have carefully constructed and nurtured this idea—or these ideas. Hence, they have felt little need to critically analyze assumptions about Blacks—"the answers were already in."

DuBois's (1966) proposal to negate the ideas commonly held by Whites ›ut Blacks constituted the core of his proposal to launch a systematic ly of black life.

Speaking of his childhood, Canzoneri (1965) said that after being schooled in the mythology of race, Whites were sure that they had the inside dope on Blacks and their place in the society. As Canzoneri described it: "Nobody had to say so, everybody *knew* it, and accepted it" (italics added). "*Knowing*" Blacks thus displaced any search to understand the complexities of black life. It allowed Whites to simply *fill in the blanks* about Blacks.

Boyle (1962: 30) wrote of what she and her young peers "knew" of Blacks: "Their virtues as well as their faults were fixed and exaggerated in my mind. Blacks were artistic and creative, content in hardship and ill fortune, loyal, faithful, and warm." Zinn (1964) expressed a similar sentiment when he indicated that his "knowledge" of Blacks was the knowledge passed on to him by his grandmother. Had he been asked, he said, to expound about Blacks, he would "probably have quoted verbatim remarks about the 'niggers' made by my grandmother."

Ovington (1947) gave us yet another example of the blindness that racism fosters in white children. Citing her experience as a settlement worker in New York City, she described taking fifteen boys representing eight nationalities on a park tour where a black woman sat and talked. "Suddenly, as at a signal every boy jumped on his feet and yelled, 'Nigger, Nigger, Nigger!' " She does not attribute this behavior to the racism of the boys, but rather to the fact that "their yelling was a ritual that they had learned."

Finally, Smith (1961) wrote of the lies about skin color and culture that "nice" white people propagated, lies calculated to sow fear and deepen ignorance about Blacks by young Whites. But the lies were also intended to be building blocks in the construction of a self-sustaining racial mythology that would be a constant reminder to Whites of their "superiority" ›d to Blacks of their "inferiority." As Whites reveal the processes by ›ich they *overcame* their ignorance, one sees them moving from "knowing" Blacks to knowing Blacks, from deracialization to reracialization, toward a more "objective" approach to race with a clearer understanding of the role of race and culture in society. Halsey (1946) analyzed this ignorance that is the child of racism, and she also dissected one of the consequences of it: Racism deprives Whites of getting to know Blacks and further increases their ignorance of the many-sidedness of the black population that would move Whites beyond racial stereotypes. Halsey, and later Clark (1955: 121), contended that the interdependency of people



and the variety of religious and social systems in the world make it not only stupid, but dangerous for ignorance of other races and cultures to exist.

*The double social and psychological consciousness.* One of the first to raise the question of a potential psychological and sociological duality resulting from racial divisiveness in the United States was W.E.B. DuBois (Dennis and Henderson, 1980; Dennis, 1977a, 1977b). In his now familiar concept of the double conscious, he was referring to this duality as it confronts Blacks, but the term is appropriate to intraracial as well as interracial references (Dennis and Henderson, 1980). Myrdal (1962) speaks to the same duality with his thesis of the American "dilemma"; later Merton (1976) posed similar ideas under the rubric of "sociological ambivalence." What DuBois, Myrdal, and Merton are talking about is an indeterminacy and fluctuation people manifest toward themselves, others, and social values.

Smith (1961: 27) writes of this duality with such poignancy that her description of it deserves to be quoted at length:

> The mother who taught me what I know of tenderness and love and compassion taught me also the bleak rituals of keeping Negroes in their "place." The father who, . . . reminding me that "all men are brothers," trained me in the steel-rigid decorums I must demand of every colored male. They who so gravely taught me to split my body from my mind and both from my "soul" taught me also to split my conscience from my acts and Christianity from Southern tradition.

Since children must be taught to hate and fear others, the process of driving white children into racial conformity must be at least partially attributable to parental socializers. Contrary to his own assumption that racial training is haphazard, Clark (1955) quotes a study by Horowitz in which a group of Southern white children told Horowitz that they were punished most often by their parents when they played with black children who lived in their neighborhood. And Hyman (1969) quotes a study by Valien to the effect that parents do in fact attempt to guide their children in matters of race.

Boyle (1962) writes at length about the impact of racist education on her own social and psychological development. Writing of the joys she had experienced from playing with black youngsters and the moment when she was asked to give up those friendships, she lamented the fact that "all that had been best in my life was branded WRONG. It was RIGHT to do what I dimly sensed was contrary to the laws of love and loyalty." It is this splitting of the mind and of the individual's social existence by parental desires to create a racial environment to force children into a bewildering world of their own alleged racial superiority that often confuses the

children who are obliged to go through the ritual. Boyle (1962: 22) shares her reaction to her own racial "coming of age":

> I remember running into the house heartsick after snubbing the advances of a child of whom I was particularly fond. He had skipped up to me, suggesting that I come along on some small adventure. . . . Crushing back my desire both for his company and for fun, I answered stiffly, "No, I can't." Then I added with proper Southern-lady courtesy, "How are you?" My mother had watched the exchange . . . she said, "Mother saw and heard everything. That was a good girl." A strange combination of depression and pride swept me. I was a GOOD GIRL. But, oh, what had I *done*!

The social and psychic split is evident in this scene. One sees the compartmentalization of many "selves," for the solution was to reach an accommodation between the racial contradictions that existed within the society and the individual's response to those contributions. Boyle (1962: 29) describes the process that went on within herself: "When my training period, 'racial indoctrination,' was over, I was as close to a typical Southern lady as anyone. . . . My mind had many partitions and my heart many levels. I was a mixture of high idealism and contradictory practice, of rigid snobbery and genuine human warmth."

Myrdal has suggested that people learn to adjust to a lack of correspondence between deed and creed. There comes a time when there is no longer a dilemma because the creed-deed discrepancy has been placed on the back burner for so long that it is no longer a social or personal issue to be dealt with or confronted by most people. However, as the recollections above suggest, the early stages of racial indoctrination can be traumatic for children who are taught to love everyone, but not Blacks, or to respect older people, but not older Blacks. This final quote by Smith (1961: 29) again points to the depth of the personal and social duality:

> From the day I was born, I began to learn my lesson. . . . I learned it is possible to be a Christian and a white southerner simultaneously; to be a gentlewoman and an arrogant callous creature in the same moment. . . . I learned to believe in freedom, to glow when the word democracy was used, and to practice slavery from morning to night. I learned it . . . by closing door after door until one's mind and heart and conscience are blocked off from each other and from reality.

*Group conformity.* Reference group and role theories have been presented by social scientists as explanations of the determinants of behavior (Warner and Dennis, 1970; Dennis, 1979). They describe the expectations



generated by the group and the degree to which individuals look to the group for support. These expectations are often accompanied by community pressures on individuals to conform to prevailing social norms. In no other sector of American life has the pressure to conform been greater than it has been in matters of race. In matters of race, America has been a "closed society." It has sought to keep tight control over the ideology presented to its young; and its young learn early that racial conformity is required and expected. Those brought up under the racial etiquette of "white superiority–black inferiority are either sympathetic to it or are impressed by the healthy wisdom of not rocking the boat" (Silver, 1964). It is virtually impossible for the young white child to escape the pressures to conform to the racial etiquette. How a young white girl raised to expect deference from Blacks reacted to the growing familiarity of a young black college student who worked as a domestic worker in the author's home is shown in the following passage.

> One day as we talked she suddenly called me Patty instead of Miss Patton. I felt my entire interior congeal. A Negro had failed to call me Miss! . . . I said nothing to her at the time but my sleep was tormented by a frighteningly dark and ugly cloud of guilt. I felt trapped. . . . She must suffer because I had permitted familiarity. . . . Tinglingly, heavily, my heart sank down. I straightened my back and faced her. Evelyn . . . you mustn't call me that [Patty] people might not understand [Boyle, 1962: 40].

Smith's (1961) ideas about racial rites of passage bear on this discussion, for we must ultimately view the ideology of white supremacy as a belief system like any other "ism" and not simply as a rationale to exploit the black, brown, or red population. Her remarks suggest that the idea of racism, and the public ceremonies that pay homage to it, "performed from babyhood, slip from the conscious mind down deep into muscles and glands and become difficult to tear out."

The young are no more immune from the pressure to conform than their parents and elders. Note the actions of the youngsters in Ovington's autobiography or the account by the Rosens (1962) of a seven-year-old Deerfield, Illinois, boy who, after having heard his young friends discuss the fact that a black family had moved into the neighborhood, ran yelling to his mother, crying, "Niggers are moving here! And we're going to get rid of 'em!" This story recalls another part of Smith's commentary on the process by which children learn the rituals of racism: "You only felt the iron grip of her [Southern Tradition] hand *and knew you must go where all the other children were going. And you learned never, never, to get out of step*" (italics added).

Evident in the adult effort to force racist values on children is the portrayal of Blacks as collectively abominable. The ceremonial cycle of ism repeats itself over and over as the child becomes the adult and his her memory conjures up all the early indoctrination (Boyle, 1962: 13): "that blacks cannot be trusted, smell bad, carry diseases, were repulsive, and dangerous." Once certain concepts and people are coupled, despite all evidence to the contrary, the relationship tends to stick. As Boyle states it: "Ignorant-Negro was practically one word. Ignorance was a racial trait." It is little wonder, then, that white children and youth carry their racial ignorance and social fears into adulthood and pass them on to their own children, thus completing the generational cycle. White adults' efforts to force conformity upon young Whites eventually restricts the world view of the young and hinders their search for "truth." It also encourages Whites to view Blacks only as abstractions, "the Blacks," and impersonal, "they"; it is easy to dismiss the abstract and the impersonal as being of no importance to one's own existence.

*Moral ambivalence.* Moral ambivalence refers to the moral dilemmas that result from divergent norms and values that pull individuals and groups in contradictory directions. Examples of the contradictory values that create moral ambivalence in the young are these:

(1) the desire to be a Christian versus the desire to be a traditional white Southerner;
(2) the belief in freedom and democracy versus the belief in racial inequality;
(3) the desire to show love and compassion versus the desire to keep Blacks in their place at all costs;
(4) the belief in the Southern tradition of respect for the old versus the belief that older Blacks are not worthy of the highest respect;
(5) the belief that each person should be treated according to his or her individual merits versus the belief that Blacks should be evaluated as a group without regard to individual merits and talents.

Autobiographical accounts by white authors of their socialization into erican racial mores provide us with ample evidence of the con- adictory moral values that are inherent in a society in which race is an important social determinant on one hand, and in which legalistic ideals, on the other hand, tend to support nonracist orientations. Evident in examples of moral ambivalence is the anxiety and frustration that permeate the lives of young Whites confronted with these crisscrossing values. One part of them demands loyalty to a "universal community of values" and another to a "particularistic white brotherhood." The problem is unsolvable without the complete disappearance of racism from the American society.



What authors Smith, Canzoneri, Silver, Zinn, and Boyle articulate is the desire by the young to understand the ideology that is shaping their racial and group identity. They feel the pangs of guilt or moral outrage, yet they remain trapped as youngsters in a world they did not make, a world in which it was expected that they would follow the orders of their parents without question. When Lillian Smith questioned her mother's assertion that she could not play with a young black girl, her mother answered with a typical non sequitur designed to end such inquiries: Smith—"I don't understand."; Mother—"You're too young to understand. And don't ask me again, ever again, about this."

Dabbs (1962), too, speaks of the explanations and whippings he received from his father when the latter insisted that the young James address Whites with "Sir" and "Ma'am" and Blacks with "uncle" and "aunt." He recalls having infuriated his father during one of those race "lessons" with the comment: "But he's a man, isn't he?"

## OTHER SPECIFIC EFFECTS OF RACISM

Continuing to focus on the impact of racism on Whites, as revealed in autobiographical writings, I now shift from an emphasis on white children to the impact of racism on the white population in general. I shall review three specific implications of racism for the white population: (1) it engenders irrationality; (2) it inhibits intellectual growth; and (3) it negates democracy.

*Irrationality.* Clark's suggestion that it is the *idea* of Blacks rather than the specific behavioral attributes of Blacks that generate white hostility, and Smith's observation that this idea has slipped from consciousness and has become embedded into the white population's "muscles and glands," bears noting again. It means that we cannot readily probe white hostility from a traditionally logical or rational vantage point. In their analyses of the emergence of Nazi ideology in Germany, both Reich (1970) and Alexander (1942) center the ideological currents of Nazism in the psychic structure of the German masses. In an observation that has relevance for our analysis of race in America, Reich (1970: 18) notes that

> the basic traits of the character structures corresponding to a definite historical situation are formed in early childhood, and are far more conservative than the forces of technical production. It

> results from this that, as time goes on, the psychic structures lag behind the rapid changes of the social conditions from which they derived, and later come into conflict with new forms of life.

Reich's analysis helps us understand why it is difficult to change ideological orientations after certain values have been ingrained. It is this that explains resistance to change lingering within a population long after any initial reason for hostility has vanished. The irrationality sinks deep and becomes, in Reich's term, a part of the character structures of individuals. The difficulty of uprooting decades of racial indoctrination was expressed by Boyle (1962), who said that she had a constant struggle with those deeply entrenched *ideas* she had been taught about Blacks long after her outer habits had ceased to be segregationist. The problem is how to bridge the gap between the mythic and the rational.

It is obvious that Whites suffer and pay a price for this irrational response to race. Halsey (1946: 41) sees this suffering as the result of "a mounting sense of suffocation because blacks refuse to recognize their place. . . . Any sense of 'progress' for blacks is to give whites with racist feelings [the idea] that the world is becoming unhinged and that a new unbearable world is on the horizon." Some of this "suffering" is seen in Griffin's (1961: 53) account of the irrationality of the white response to Blacks when he darkened his skin and posed as a Black:

> I walked up to the ticket counter. When the lady ticket-seller saw me, her otherwise attractive face turned sour, violently so. . . . "What do you want?" she snapped. She answered rudely and glared at me with such loathing I knew I was receiving what the Negroes call "the hate stare." . . . She reappeared to hurl my change and the ticket on the counter with such force most of it fell on the floor at my feet. I was truly dumbfounded. . . . Her performance was so venomous . . . you feel lost, sick at heart before such unmasked hatred . . . you see a kind of insanity, something so obscene . . . *I felt like saying: "What in God's name are you doing to yourself?"*

White Americans have been fed such a heavy dose of legends, fantasies, and myths about Blacks that even individuals who pride themselves on applying logic and reason to all aspects of their lives are quite willing to forgo them in matters of race. To seek to understand the irrational response to race is to delve into a subterranean world that transposes logic and turns it on its head.

Griffin's question—"What in God's name are you doing to yourself?"—speaks to the dehumanization of the white majority, which is evident, too, in "the jeers, the profane shouts, and the sullen bitter undertones" when a



black family integrates a neighborhood in Chicago (Johnson, 1965), and in the reaction when a Black integrates Ole Miss (Silver, 1964: vii): "The pounding of the bricks on the cars and the screams, 'We'll kill the bastards'—plus shrill cries of filth and obscenity, proved that eighteen and nineteen year-old students have suddenly been turned into wild animals." Another description of the Ole Miss disturbance has been given by Canzoneri (1965: 147): "They [the coeds] did not act like young ladies. They literally stood around James Meredith and shouted 'Nigger' like common Northern slum-bred viragos. . . . I wanted by some means to discredit the television pictures. . . . Those nice girls just wouldn't act that way." Some whites looked at this collective irrationality of the white population and equated the condition to an insane asylum. As Evans Harrington (Canzoneri, 1965) noted: "Our way of life is based on keeping the Negro downtrodden. . . . This is where the psychic damage to our state appears. . . . How much shock, shame, and dismay can we whites endure without turning the state into a psychiatric ward."

Further evidence of how racism evokes irrational responses from Whites is provided by Cohn (1948: 40). He writes of a white physician in the Delta who regularly assisted black patients, often without pay: "But whenever a black was accused of raping a white woman or killing a white man, the soft-spoken doctor would assist the lynching mob."

What seems clear is that the irrationality of the white response to the *idea* of Blacks goes deeper than simply the attempt by Whites to rationalize their power over Blacks. It is as if the psyche of the white population, after feeding so long on the mythology of white supremacy, cannot tolerate the psychic void that would inevitably ensue if Blacks were released from their mythic position. Thus, the ideology of black inferiority persists in the psyche of the white population despite studies and empirical findings that refute these myths.

Young (1969: 86) speaks to the ideological structure of racism in the psyche of white Americans when he says that the task of American social scientists is to find out "why so many whites are psychologically dependent on identifying with a privileged caste system, even when they reap no economic benefits from it themselves." A similar thought was expressed by DuBois (1940: 6), who was to lament the fact that he only came to appreciate the psychology of racism late in his academic life:

> I saw that the color bar could not be broken by a series of brilliant assaults. Secondly, I saw defending this bar not simply ignorance and ill will; these to be sure; but also *certain more powerful motives less open to reason or appeal.* There were economic motives, urges to build wealth on the backs of black slaves and colored serfs; *there*

*followed those unconscious acts and irrational reactions, unpierced by reason, whose current form depended on the long history of elation and contact between thought and idea* [italics added].

*Inhibition of intellectual growth.* This particular consequence of racism is a counterpart to irrationality. Racism not only stalls and kills growth for individual Whites, but also for entire nations. Myrdal summed up the costs racism has brought to the American society when he said that "the intellectual energy spent on the Negro problem in America should, if concentrated in a single direction, have moved mountains." But liberating minds from racism will prove impossible if the logic of one columnist who opposed college integration prevails: "We didn't send our children to college to hear both sides; we sent them to learn what is right." It is this desire to close the mind and seek the shelter of the narrowest of spheres that debilitates and allows racism to feed upon its already closed intellectual world. Thus, the mental poverty that results from racism must inevitably create minds that are nonreflective, minds that, indeed, fear reflection. Racists may perceive the scars they place upon the black population, even sometimes with pleasure, but they do not view themselves as emotionally disfigured and intellectually stunted by their racial arrogance. They may not see the damage their racism inflicts upon the very things they claim to uphold. Thus, though many Southerners claimed to be resisting Blacks in order to help the South, the results of their fight to exclude Blacks were basically negative. One can state a case to explain the educational and economic poverty of the South, for example, by looking at the monumental efforts most Southern states expended trying to prohibit black advances (Dennis and Sartain, 1980). Conversely, much of the energy of the black population has likewise been diverted toward fighting for greater economic, educational, and political rights.

Smith's comment that white supremacy grips and clings to the psyche of white children with tenacity and continues on into adulthood, accounts for what Silver sees as the basic immaturity of the white population and e inability of Whites "to grow up, to accept the judgements of civiliza- n." The ability to accept change and "the judgement of civilization" would mean tearing the white population away from a past many Whites would like to see as frozen and suspended in time. And because so many Whites see the racial hierarchy as fixed and permanent, they are unable to understand the strivings and frustrations of Blacks, since almost all institutions within the white world tend to support the prevailing racial configuration. This is why it proved necessary to focus on changing the *behavior* of Whites rather than their *attitudes* during the litigations in the 1950s and



1960s (Warner and Dennis, 1970). The logic of stressing a change in behavior over a change in attitude was that racism was so deeply lodged in the white mind that forcing Whites to behave toward Blacks in nondiscriminatory ways would be easier than trying to change white attitudes, beliefs, and emotional responses to Blacks.

*Negation of democracy.* The white response to democracy in America has been to limit its extension to the black population; the black response has been to interpret the idea of democracy and the constitution in its widest sense to support the political, social, and economic aspirations of Blacks. When Myrdal wrote his highly acclaimed critique of American democracy, he was following a tradition already set in motion by, among others, William Highland Garnett, Sojourner Truth, Martin Delaney, and Frederick Douglass. What these activists and thinkers sought was a democratic order that would eliminate class and sex, as well as racial oppression.

The repudiation of democracy by Whites (for Blacks at least), and their cheating and hedging to insure that the white population enjoys an edge in the political, social, and economic marketplace, is seen everywhere in the United States. Racism prompts rejection of the idea of fair play and the sense of justice, themes that are important to the very survival of a democracy. The responsibility of one citizen toward another or one group toward another, if seen in a categorical laissez-faire manner, may come down to "no one owes anything to anybody. Each pot has to sit on its own bottom in the economic and social marketplace." Fine. But why then must the spirit of this credo be broken by denying one group access to valued goods and positions? Democracy, as Brown (1949) explains, depends upon the interdependency of individuals and groups. White society would perhaps feel a keener sense of the consequences of the negation of democracy if it understood, as DuBois suggested, that the antidemocrat is a menace to his neighbor and the entire society.

What is to be done when the entire body politic takes the stance of the antidemocrat? The frustration of this condition was brought home to Smith (1961: 52) by a young white girl after a summer retreat in which racial justice and democracy were discussed:

> you have made us want to be good. . . . you've talked of love . . . human rights . . . bridging chasms between people. . . . when I go back to my town, how can I live these ideals! Tell me, if you can—but you can't! That's what I have realized.

What the young girl asked was, "Where can I go to begin the quest to break down racial barriers?" Silver (1964: 15) explained that there were

few places one could go that were not already infected with racism. As he explained it:

> Racism has created an institutional support network. Every law-making body and every law enforcing agency is completely in the hands of whites who are faithful to the orthodoxy. The white man is educated to believe in his superiority . . . the civic and service clubs, the educated institutions, the churches, the business and labor organizations, the patriotic, social, and professional fraternities—all individuals who would advance themselves in any of these are oriented from infancy in the direction of loyalty to the accepted [racial] code.

This network of racism forms a chain, both physical and psychological, around the neck of social democracy. It holds it captive to group emotions and the irrationalities of short-term rather than long-term advantages. Booker T. Washington (1911) said it long ago and present critics of racial oppression agree: It is a grave mistake for the vast majority of Whites to assume that they can remain free and enjoy democracy while they are denying it to Blacks. The antidemocrat not only wants to ensure that Blacks do not enjoy certain rights, he also wants to ensure that no White is free to question or challenge this denial. The statement in the Kerner Commission Report (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968) that the nation was moving toward two permanently separated societies, one black, the other white, is still true more than ten years later—and for the same reason. The antidemocratic thrust has scarcely abated; the network of racism continues to thrive.

## CONCLUSION

The evidence presented here supports the contention that we can scarcely speak of a "happy racist." From the early years of indoctrination by parents on, one finds racists backed against the wall, angry and afraid, bursting with rage at the very thought that their racial views might shift. I am now more convinced than ever of the need to probe the roots of the irrational, to ascertain the *process* by which myths, legends, and fantasies become embedded in the psyche as "ideological imperatives" that seemingly resist all efforts to dislodge them. Such an approach might be viewed as a complement of materialist approaches to analysis of the ways one's position within a social structure permits or disallows the entrenchment of certain values within the psyche. Now may be the time to consider DuBois's racial studies in reverse: Instead of organizing a hundred years of



study to systematically analyze black life and the black world, as DuBois suggested, perhaps we should commit ourselves to a systematic study of the psychological, ideological, and material reasons that Whites accept the mythology of white supremacy and deny Blacks equal opportunity to participate in the American society.