

**The rich get richer: Social evolutionary thinking in the operation of
redistribution programs**

by

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis is not the typical work that one might expect to be created within a department of sociology at a research one institution. I give this warning now as a respectful request to look elsewhere if “typical” sociological analysis is desired. Contemporary American mainstream sociological endeavors are often both atheoretical and ahistorical, and as such often lacking the innovation that ought to accompany the study of social relationships. Theory driven approaches, it is commonly believed, must be sacrificed in the name of more *valid* and *reliable* quantitative techniques. Further, numbers-based data is often believed to offer something approaching “value-free” research.¹ The number is largely universal, and not subject to the same subjective attacks as the written word. In the attempt to avoid attack, the number has replaced imaginative judgment.

Numbers have their place in sociological research, but this place is much more limited than the pages of mainstream sociological journals would suggest. What can a number, even aptly interpreted, accomplish? It can tell you what did happen, but little more. On occasion this “accomplishment” is enough to address the research question under review, but often such an ex post-facto review is treated with more aspiration and enthusiasm than is reasonably warranted. Why trade a number representing a glimpse of the past with a qualitative or theoretical approach to sociology that is often more inventive and

¹ Max Weber is often attributed as endorsing the idea of “value free” research. Actually a closer, less superficial, reading of Weber’s work reveals that Weber himself was quite skeptical as to the ability of removing subjectivity from the domain of academic (sociological) research.

imaginative?² Where has the imagination of sociology gone?

I am unsure of *where* the imagination has gone, but one reason suggests *why* it has gone. The worst action that one can take, provided they are not wearing a black robe and holding a gavel, is to judge. Judgment, if a secular religion is said to exist, is the venial sin of contemporary America. We are so afraid to judge others with our “subjective” conclusions, that instead cold, impersonal numbers are used as a way of avoiding such an insensitive and subjective fate. Judgments must be rendered carefully and with much consideration, but if social advancement is to occur they must be rendered. Furthermore, making a judgment might well mean that you will be called to defend it, and this defense might prove difficult or worse uncomfortable. Judgment likely leads to conflict, and sadly many professional sociologists would rather evaluate and be left alone than judge and defend their stance. To avoid judgment is to choose ease, but if sociologists refuse to address the difficult –or the fundamental, as I will later discuss- the discipline will fall to those that are less squeamish about rendering judgment. Judgment is understandably feared because it might lead to being “wrong,” but when judgment itself is treated as wrong sociologists are condemning themselves to a far worse fate than potentially being considered wrong. Where there is no judgment there is no debate, and any intellectual discipline withers when confronted with this proposition. As you read this thesis I invite you to evaluate the ideas therein, and by all

² In no way am I suggesting the elimination of quantitative endeavors in sociological research. I am, however, concerned about why an ever-increasing theme of mainstream sociologists is to label the number good and the thoughtful sentence as bad, or worse insignificant. Actually, most serious sociological methodologists argue that the best research blends a heavy dose of quantitative and qualitative approaches.

means please judge them. If you do not my effort and your time will have meant nothing.

The Social and Political Dynamics of Wealth Accumulation

“What I want to see above all else is that this country remain a country where someone can always get rich.” This telling sentiment offered by former President Ronald Reagan might correspond well with certain economically driven ideological conceptions of the “American Dream.”³ Many notable social and political thinkers, however, have warned about the insurgence of potentially destructive (socially disorganizing) forces within a social order endorsing an economic system placing the material wealth of a sociopolitical community in the hands of a few. Writing in 1625, during the birth of the Enlightenment, Francis Bacon forewarned that if getting *rich* was a goal to be realized by only a few, which has represented the American experience both before and after the legacy of Former President Reagan,⁴ an undesirable social structure could emerge. As Bacon (1625) argued,

Above all things, good policy is to be used that the treasure and monies in a state be not gathered in the hands of a few. For otherwise a state may have great stock and yet starve. Money is like muck not good unless it be spread.

In addition, William Graham Sumner an influential late nineteenth and early twentieth century American sociologist argued a similar point. Sumner (1909:3) maintained,

The tendency of “a rapid accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few” is the subject which, with increasing insistency, occupies the chief attention of the American people. Already huge accumulations of property by corporate consolidations, accumulations such as the world has never seen, are subject to single control... In such a situation it does not take the public long to discover that monopoly and duress are identical – customers must deal with you or go without – and that is what gives value to monopoly.

³ The “American Dream” of prosperity is usually invoked as an appeal “to all.” It is fair to ask, however, whether the “someone” in Reagan’s commentary can actually represent all, or if the “someone” is (must be) limited by number in some specific economic or social fashion.

⁴ According to the survey of consumer finances, a joint undertaking between the Federal Reserve and the I.R.S., in 1995 the lower 90% of the population held 37% of all assets while the upper 10% held the additional 62%. Further, the top one half of one percent of the population held a quarter of all assets.

Sumner continues his line of thought by arguing that government regulations must be used to tame the “concentration of wealth,” or consequently democratic rule will denigrate into plutocracy.⁵ Granting that Bacon and Sumner’s views are at least somewhat informative, it follows that the “spread” of monies within a social system *must* involve some sort of *organized* redistributive effort.⁶ Absent a benevolent other-oriented population, someone or something –the sociopolitical mechanism (government) - must either play the role of Robin Hood, or collectively persuade the general community that actively playing this role leads to a worse as opposed to better economic and social environment. Moreover, the manner in which contemporary Americans view the role of Bacon’s Robin Hood has the potential to be affected by the way in which they collectively understand social change, direction, and end – social evolutionary arguments.⁷

Bacon and Sumner were not the only intellectuals to question the social costs of wealth (or more precisely the magnitude of consequences that could result when riches are ill distributed). In fact, James Madison – one of the primary authors of the Federalist Papers- also shared a skepticism regarding the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few. Madison (1900: 86) maintained,

⁵ Sumner’s essay, “On the Concentration of Wealth” is reprinted in Bruce Curtis’s article *William Graham Sumner “On the Concentration of Wealth,”* The Journal of American History, Vol.55 (Mar., 1960), 823-832. Curtis argues that much of the opinion of Sumner as a rabid supporter of government non-intervention is misplaced. Actually, Sumner maintained that the government, if it is to support democratic objectives, must ensure that a “concentration of wealth” does not become so pronounced as to bring instability into the sociopolitical community. Sumner was, however, a staunch supporter of the “middle class,” and he used this position to justify much of his unfavorable attitudes toward the class redistribution of wealth to alleviate poverty.

⁶ Organized in this sense might mean either deliberate (governmental) action, or organized around a model of the “marketplace” that functions best when deliberate governmental action is avoided.

⁷ Often times this social evolutionary understanding is not always viewed as such, but the inability to properly label a sentiment does little to reduce its force.

The great objectives should be to combat the evil (potential within a political system): One, by establishing political equality among all. Two, by withholding unnecessary opportunities from the few to increase the inequality of property by an immoderate, and especially unmerited, accumulation of riches.

Indeed, Madison foresaw a faction of wealthy property owners as providing one of the greatest challenges to the future social and political success of the newly formed American republic.⁸ One of Madison's primary concerns with the health of a young America was that its citizens be inoculated with the opportunity to form and join *meaningful* political associations.⁹ For Madison, a sociopolitical faction of wealth and property was the greatest challenge confronting the meaning and reason underpinning most beneficial sociopolitical associations. As Madison might have asked, what can a sociopolitical association possibly accomplish if it is to compete with a mega-faction controlling most of the property and wealth of a community? The implications of a negative response to this question go well beyond the disappointment of a single (political) association. Instead, more than any other factor, America's "founding fathers" murmured the potential destruction of the democratic Federalism, which Madison and others held as the unwavering ideal of the emerging notion of American democratic pluralism. It is inaccurate to maintain that the foundations of America were built upon the pillars of greedy aspirations; economic pillars perhaps, but greed and the hoarding of wealth was to be feared, not applauded.¹⁰

⁸ See *Federalist Papers* #10

⁹ Alexis de Tocqueville writing in *Democracy in America* would place a similar importance upon political associations. For instance, in *Democracy* Tocqueville (1969: 192) argued, "An association may be formed for the purpose of discussion, but everybody's mind is preoccupied with the thought of impending action. An association is an army, talk is needed to count numbers and build up courage, but after that they march against the enemy."

¹⁰ This is not to say, of course, that the American founders were not economic animals, they certainly were as brilliantly illustrated by Charles Beard's *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* (New York, 1913). Nonetheless they realized that individualistic self-interested aspirations of riches had to, in some way, be tamed if democracy was to be successful.

Whereas Reagan valued the prospect of Americans becoming rich and getting richer, Madison entertained the notion that when a few in society become grossly rich then the many will, by extension, lose the opportunity to match, or politically compete with, such a social – wealth based- status. Perhaps Madison took his cue from the British Enlightenment thinker John Locke who maintained that it might well be foolish to advocate a viable social structure in which “everyone can get rich.” As Locke (1676) maintained,

Whenever either the desire or the need of property increases among men, (and) there is no extension, then and there, of the world’s limits. ... It is impossible for anyone to grow rich except at the expense of someone else.

Locke’s pragmatic, zero-sum, approach to understanding the accumulation of wealth suggests a social policy such as that offered by Reagan, if equally applied to all, might well result in the socially destructive faction of which Madison warned. If the accumulation of wealth is necessarily a finite endeavor, it stands to reason that the question, “Who Deserves What” is also subject to certain *natural* bounds.¹¹ Thus, the thinker (reformer) concerned with the class redistribution of wealth need only argue these bounds should be considered and dealt with by a sociopolitical community. A second mode of argument, however, categorically denies that a sociopolitical community ought to, in any way, interfere (redistribute wealth from one class to another) with Locke’s notion of “bounded wealth.” It is of little contention that the gross “concentration of wealth” challenges the dual American ideals of political liberty and social stability. The question then becomes, now what? What began with the observation that the “concentration of wealth” is generally not supportive of

¹¹ In other words, it is untenable to suggest that everyone deserves everything. Further, if everyone cannot deserve everything then it must be “decided” in some fashion “Who Deserves What.”

current American democratic social stability will continue in the attempt of this thesis to bring together dueling parties who have very different ways of addressing this concern.

Fundamental (Foundational) Social Question(s)

Reagan's supposition concerning the dream of an "opportunity of riches (for all)" and the cautious warnings of a nightmarish cessation of the dream are positions trapped within a much larger, and indeed, fundamentally important sociological question. However, with so many potentially *valuable* sociological questions, how can the sociologist separate the interesting and important questions from the fundamental? After all, the contemporary sociologist has an opportunity to examine a plethora of social phenomena ranging from homelessness and inequality to complex organizations. This plethora of topics, rapidly growing in number, should not serve as a barrier to the study or minimization of appreciation towards *fundamental* social questions. What represents a fair and clear criterion for the establishment of a fundamental, as opposed to a merely important or interesting, social question?

In order to identify a "fundamental" social question, only one of which is to be explicitly explored in this thesis, one need but adhere to one maxim; it is one whose elimination would render social structures, regardless of culture, time, or history, incomprehensible. In other words, a fundamental social question is fundamental because its understanding is *necessary* to a critique and analysis of *any* complex social structure. When sociologists discover which social questions *must* be addressed they are well on the way to formulating an understanding of the fundamental, as opposed merely to the interesting or important, aspect(s) of sociology. In many ways "fundamental social questions" are chasing the grand social question originally formulated by seventeenth century thinker Thomas

Hobbes, when he asked, “How is social order possible?” Sociologists can quickly arrive at the *fundamental* by asking the antithesis of the Hobbesian question, that is, “What would make social order impossible?” or more precisely, what factor removed would make social “comprehension” impossible.¹² One likely answer is, a social order that does not, in some way, *decide* “Who Deserves What.” Sociology, since its inception, has been inundated with foundationalist appeals; attempts to discover (social) universal *truths*, *i.e.*, laws of human social behavior. These attempts are, similar to the fundamental question proposed in this thesis, efforts to establish the fundamental by designating what *must* take place within any social structure regardless of culture, time, or history. Foundationalist attempts have, however, been subject to an increasing amount of scrutiny. As Stephen Turner (1992:101) observed, “Richard Rorty’s *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979) showed that Heidegger, Dewey, and Wittgenstein had each been groping toward a rejection of “foundationalism,” the attempt to find some sort of grounding for our ultimate presuppositions.” The distinction between traditional foundational approaches, and what this thesis seeks to employ as a fundamental social concern is one between the causes (questions) and effects (answers) of social life. Do social *truths* exist? Yes, but not in the answers or effects; they exist instead within the realm of unavoidable social questions. The question “Who Deserves What” is *not* socially constructed; instead it is a question that *every* social order must somehow *address*.¹³ It is not a question *we* have the option to choose or

¹² It seems easier to abstract by taking what we are given and asking ourselves what we could not do without, rather than building a position from nothing and asking what is necessary to maintain our imaginative properties.

¹³ The claim of the post-modernist that objective social truth does not exist in *any* capacity is inaccurate. Truth does exist, but it is a truth to be found in the questions that sociopolitical communities must address, as opposed to the countless ways in which these questions might be answered.

create. Individuals and social groups within *every* social order may use time, culture, history, or reason to answer this question in their specific (subjective) way, but they may *not* negate the question. The question “Who Deserves What” is foundational and fundamental, thus it may not be negated by *any* social order. Given the likelihood of countless contextual cultural, historical, and temporal appeals to the question, however, it will be necessarily addressed as a subjectively socially constructed undertaking. Despite the important, yet ill-examined, distinction between “cause foundationalism” and “effect foundationalism” the attempt to mystically discover the latter continues to plague social theory, as well as preventing a proper treatment of the former.

Why has sociology been unable to deliver its Isaac Newton, *i.e.* a thinker able to offer predictive *laws* of social organization or behavior that are able to stand the scrutiny of culture, history, and time? The answer appears to be that the genius which Newton provided to understandings of the physical world were directed towards inanimate unwilled objects, thus making possible the establishment of universal *physical* laws. If a billiard ball is hit at the proper speed and angle it *must* go in the designated direction. Scientific laws of behavior govern objects that lack choice, emotion, or ambition; and with such objects Newton established “effect foundationalism,” *i.e.*, he could with the proper information predict with absolute certainty the effects of an object’s action. The traits of people, however, as willed, moral, political, and social agents cannot be likened to the predictive qualities of inanimate objects because the diverse properties of human thought and action make such prediction

extremely unlikely.¹⁴ Social scientists are misguided in their search for foundationalism in the “effects” of social action; such attempts drastically miscalculate the complex nature of human social endeavors. If sociology is to find its Newton, it will not, and cannot, have identical concerns with the seventeenth century genius. A sociological search for universal *social* laws must look for the questions or causes underpinning subsequent collective actions or manifestations. Foundationalism need not involve the effects of a manifestation.

“Modern social theorists from Hobbes to the present have employed foundationalist appeals” (Turner pp: 101). Nonetheless, as Turner continued,

But all these arguments have been inconclusive. Each step in the argument proceeds as though, by raising the matter in theoretical dispute to the next level of abstraction to the level of criteria for theory-choice, we will arrive at an unequivocal victory for one of the solutions to the problem under dispute. But what occurs is something different: at each level there prove to be a variety of possible criteria. And when we try to resolve the conflict between them by going to the next level of abstraction, that is, to construct criteria of adequacy for these answers, we find the same thing.

Turner (1992: 101-2) cumulates this line of thought with the rejection of foundationalism by stating,

I will simply assume the rejection of foundationalism and concern myself with a problem that comes into view only once we separate out foundationalism from some of the issues with which foundationalism appeals are usually entangled.

He is accurate, in that, the quest to find instances or principles of “effect foundationalism” are futile, and such attempts should be abandoned. This abandonment, however, should be viewed as an opportunity that allows for a better appreciation of what foundationalism, properly understood, can offer social thought. Foundational *social causes*, questions that

¹⁴ B.F. Skinner and other behavioral psychologists argued the opposite point; that is, given the proper stimuli the response of the organism (human included) can be almost completely predicted. The difficulty with this view is that it works only so well as people do not figure out the game is “rigged.” Thus behaviorism works very well on animals and small children, but exceedingly less well as humans develop the capacity to become frustrated and rebel against the “game.” Of course this critique of behaviorism depends upon people figuring out that the condition under review is a “managed situation.”

must be socially addressed, do exist.¹⁵ It is within the foundational causes of various subjective answers to “Who Deserves What” that the sociologically fundamental nature of the question takes shape.

Social experience is different from individual experience in at least one fundamental way; where a social experience exists, the community must determine the means by which resources are to be allocated. The person living alone –on a deserted island- is not worried as to how fruit or fish might be shared, but if someone is to join this person, the matter of sharing (allocating) resources *will* be decided in some fashion. As George Simmel reminds, however, even on a deserted island the number of individuals within a social group might have an effect on how the group decides “Who Deserves What.” Simmel maintained that in dyads, two person groups that constitute the elementary form of social interaction and exchange, reciprocity occurs immediately. If another joins the group, however, and a triad is formed, then the same reciprocity that would have immediately occurred within the dyad might either be postponed or never occur at all. This distinction between groups with two and three members illustrates how complicated the answer to “Who Deserves What” can become.

All societies, regardless of their complexity or ideological dispositions, must determine in some manner how resources are to be allocated,¹⁶ however, this stringent

¹⁵ I gave this line of reasoning considerable thought, whereby I tried to think of examples in which social order would not have to address the question of “Who Deserves What.” I could think of none. In fact, the only possible challenge to the notion of “cause foundationalism” by means of the question “Who Deserves What” came from Sine Anahita, a graduate student colleague of mine. Ms. Ananita suggested that in some (feminist) utopian novels the question of “Who Deserves What” had worked itself out, and accordingly was no longer fundamental to the social order under review. I agreed with this sentiment, but short of utopia neither of us could find viable challenge to the notion. Further, given this example of a utopian social order the question “Who Deserves What” has not become negated, it has instead endured the process of unanimous consent.

¹⁶ As a student of social theory I invoke the word “all” with caution. In addition, this caution should serve as a reminder that fundamental questions are few in number.

economic definition, although accurate, is in need of sociological elaboration. Material resources *must* be allocated in some fashion; however, the system for this distribution is *necessarily* based upon a *shared social consensus* addressing the question, “Who Deserves What.”¹⁷ Regardless of whether a social system, or social thinker, adheres to a Hegelian dialectic instigated when a “slave” afraid to risk his life succumbs to a “master” who shares no such fear,¹⁸ or a Lockean vision of a sociopolitical community seeking to guarantee natural rights –largely understood as life, liberty, and property- the result is the same; an *understanding* must be formulated among members of society as to “Who Deserves What.”¹⁹ The term *deserves* is often associated with a moral sentiment, but this alone does not lend itself to a fair sociological reading of the term *deserves*. One deserves, in a social sense, what is socially designated, no more no less. Whether this designation is considered “good” or “bad” during an ex-post facto review of history misses the point. For the social designation of allocation to occur in the original instance, it stands to reason that the community making the determination already considered and settled the question “Who Deserves What.” Consider for instance, the resource allocation that must accompany illicit social behavior. In Plato’s *Republic*, Socrates explained that even a band of thieves must establish some criteria by which to divide the booty from a robbery. Even social behaviors that many would consider immoral must have established functional principles of *justice*, or

¹⁷ I do not mean to settle the debate surrounding objective reality versus social construction brought into conflict by Plato 2300 years ago with his *Allegory of the Cave*; however it suffices to say that as matters of resource allocation are manifested into specific acts it is difficult to interpret the matter in a way different from social construction.

¹⁸ It is this struggle for recognition that constitutes the basis of Hegel’s social philosophy.

¹⁹ Of course, these “understandings” are grossly different in application, but all social applications result from this process of “understanding,” *i.e.*, ideological assumptions.

likely the behavior would perish from lack of governing consensus.²⁰ Decisions of allocation may be made with insightfully inspired inclusive social deliberation or with the mass hysteria of an angry mob, but in either case a decision regarding “Who Deserves What” will result.

Resource allocation *can*, consistent with adherence to designated principles of justice, become manifest into a moral experience, but it *will* nonetheless represent a social experience. While moral and social concerns are often interwoven it is important, as much as possible, to distinguish these concerns. Nonetheless, as Hayek (1958: 238) reminded the demarcation between the concepts “social” and “moral” might be in many ways false.

An interesting symptom of the growing influence of this rationalist conception is the progressive substitution, in all languages known to me, of the word “social” for the word “moral” or simply “good.” ... What is meant when people speak of a “social conscience” as against merely a “conscience” seems to be an awareness of the particular effects of our actions on other people, an endeavor to be guided in conduct not merely by traditional rules but by explicit consideration of the particular consequences of the action in question.

Simply examining the allocation of resources within a social structure –the study of economics- is necessary to understand the rudimentary aspects of social order, but it is not unilaterally sufficient to explore the Hobbsian question (or the antithesis proposed in this thesis) “how is social order impossible.” In order to fulfill both the sufficient and necessary requirements of the (fundamental) Hobbsian question, in conjunction with the allocation of material resources, it is important to examine both the general idea “Who Deserves What,” as well as the underlying arguments used to endorse the major competing “understanding” of

²⁰ The old adage, “there is no honor among thieves” is interesting in this context. Regardless, of the truth-value of this adage it would make no sense from a purely perceptual standpoint. If thieves really believed that no level of honor existed then it would be hard to envision “team robberies.” Double-crosses, of course, occur, but they do not occur all the time. More importantly they are not assumed to *necessarily* occur.

“Who Deserves What” within twenty-first century American culture.

Statement of the Problem

Realizing the fundamental importance of addressing “Who Deserves What,” it is important that the question be reviewed in a clear, oppositionally stated, and theoretically driven manner. To be *clear*, this thesis is concerned with “Who Deserves What” within the context of class based material redistribution programs. Often, this is simplified into the term *welfare*, which is a misleading term because it might in addition to AFDC,²¹ suggest *agricultural* or even *corporate* subsidies. If this thesis is reduced to an idea of welfare it must mean “poverty welfare,”²² *i.e.*, money directly re-distributed from the upper socioeconomic classes to the lower socioeconomic classes, with the primary *intent* of alleviating poverty. Discussions of transferring wealth from one social class to another present the important conceptualization “problem” relating to how social class is to be defined. It seems inaccurate to simply revert back to the typical classification options of lower, middle, and upper, to describe social class in America. Class, indeed, could be viewed with this barrage of the “typical three,” but this means of classification is not necessarily the *best* means of conceptualization. Thorstein Veblen, for instance, argued that social class is nothing more than the dichotomous breakdown between the “industrious” and the “leisurely.” With the many different ways in which class might be conceptualized, it seems, given the breath of this thesis that to accept any “label” of social class would be

²¹ AFDC is an acronym for Aid to Families with Dependent Children. While the general idea of AFDC persists, since 1996 it technically has been replaced by the TANF federal-to-state “block grant” welfare reform measures. The most impacting change associated with this replacement was the provision in the 1996 legislation that a five-year time limit would be placed upon recipients of AFDC style provisions. While some beneficiaries have seen their welfare benefits “expire” other states have invoked legislation essentially assuring that this expiration could not take place if the recipient is below the poverty line.

²² A graduate student colleague, Sue Seedorf-Keninger, brought this term to my attention.

overly narrow and self-defeating. This varied approach to social class, however, is not meant to suggest that *nothing* can be said of class. Actually, if anything conclusive can be said of class, it would be that it is a taboo topic for most Americans. Paul Fussell clearly described both the ambiguity and “taboo status” of social class in contemporary America. As Fussell (1983: 1) argued,

Although most Americans sense that they live within an extremely complicated system of social classes and suspect that much of what is thought and done here is prompted by considerations of status, the subject has remained murky. And always touchy. You can outrage people today simply by mentioning social class, very much the same way, sipping tea among the aspidistras a century ago, you could silence a party by adverting too openly to sex. When, recently, asked what I am writing, I have answered, “A book about social class in America,” people tend first to straighten their ties and sneak a glance at their cuffs to see how far frayed has advanced there. Then, a few minutes later, they silently get up and walk away. It is not just that I am feared as a class spy. It is as if I had said, “I am working on a book urging the death of baby whales using the dead bodies of baby seals.

Whatever might be said to describe the transfer of wealth among social classes –in the context of alleviating poverty- one term would be conspicuously absent from the list - comfortable. If parts of this thesis are uncomfortable to read because they tread too closely to lines drawn by our petrified and often erroneous conceptions of social class and deservedness, then all the better.

Surrounding this notion of “poverty welfare,” within twenty-first century American culture, are two *oppositionally* situated ideal types²³ (characters), the contrarian and the interventionist. The contrarian, as an ideal type, argues that a sociopolitical community has no business implementing any type of “poverty welfare,” while the ideal type interventionist makes the opposite claim, that is, to some designated degree, a sociopolitical community has the *obligation* to decide “Who Deserves What” through an implementation of “poverty

²³ This idea of *ideal types* is taken from Max Weber who used this theoretical conception to distinguish between different types of authority, *i.e.* charismatic, traditional, and legal-rational. Weber also used the idea of an ideal type to better understand bureaucratic organizational structure. Similar to Weber, I am not using the notion of ideal types to signify any *idealistic* notion, only to suggest that the ideal types of interventionist and the contrarian serve as models that can help understand their larger social importance.

welfare.”²⁴ The challenge, or difficulty, with a review of these ideal types is not their identification –they find themselves manifested into contemporary American culture at an astonishing level. Instead, the challenge is finding a means by which these types can carry on a meaningful discourse with each other that does not denigrate into a moralistic shouting match. It is doubtful that morality can, or should, be completely removed from an analysis of “Who Deserves What,” however, morality can be guided into, as opposed to around, a discourse of poverty welfare. As it will be expanded throughout this thesis, the bridge by which to *begin* this discourse must emphasize social evolutionary arguments.

Primary Objectives

This thesis has two goals. The first and primarily goal is to demonstrate that social evolutionary arguments often provide, explicitly or implicitly, the logical justifications associated with deciding “Who Deserves What” in the context of poverty welfare. These arguments are often considered to be powerful because of their prophetically *natural* or *deterministic* implications.²⁵ This influence is further observable when it is noted that, as opposed to dismissing evolutionary arguments, both the contrarian and the interventionist have opted to offer their own evolutionary interpretation and analysis as opposed to meeting the challenge with flip indignation. The second goal is to present a brief evolutionism *of*

²⁴ I do not mean to set-up a “strawman argument” by allowing the ideal type of the interventionist to have the latitude of endorsing “any” degree of compulsory poverty welfare. Certainly different interventionists might have very different ideas about the extent to which poverty welfare should take place; however for the purpose of parsimony it seems best to allow the ideal type of the interventionist to possess a wide latitude of interpretation. Remember, these characters are ideal types; their real social manifestation is almost never an “all or nothing” endeavor.

²⁵ The only comparable historical notion is that of religious or supernatural intervention. Irrespective of truth-value, however, evolutionary theory and other aspects of modern science have taken over in prophetic appeal where religion has expired.

American poverty welfare, and in conjunction incorporate data from American state governments designed to present the *best* representations of the contrarian and interventionist. This analysis of state data regarding poverty welfare will span from 1958-2001.²⁶ It will be demonstrated that social evolutionary arguments, through general influence on culture and specific influence on policy makers, broadly correspond to the sociopolitical policies that make a significant difference in people's social and economic lives.

Research (Thought) Question

The general research question examined in this thesis is as follows: *How have social evolutionary and naturalistic arguments significantly affected the way in which the fundamental social question, "Who Deserves What" becomes settled in contemporary America?* While this statement is rather broad, the use of empirical quantitative data –the analysis of state welfare policy between 1958 and 2001 should be a useful guide in accurately demonstrating certain dimensions of the above question. The nature of this thesis is exploratory as opposed to explanatory. The work here cannot offer "complete" explanations as to *why* American policies towards poverty welfare exist in their current form; however, through the course of the arguments presented, the issue of "Who Deserves What" will be explored with a type of analysis that is unfortunately often neglected –social evolutionary and naturalistic arguments. Empirical quantitative data is invaluable in relation with an ex-post facto review of *what* occurred; however, a strictly quantitative

²⁶ The use of the latter half of the twentieth century as the time period under review was selected for a number of reasons. First, it is important to review state policy after evolutionary arguments gained their mass Darwinian appeal. Second, by starting the analysis significantly after Darwin's evolutionary treatise, *The Origin of the Species by Means of natural Selection*, should allow for any novelty of the idea to have worn away. Last, examining the most recent forty-three years should demonstrate the current relevance and importance of addressing "Who Deserves What." Also, the accuracy of statewide transfer payments, *i.e.*, poverty welfare, data as aggregated and reported by the federal government is decades, typically not centuries, in the making.

methodological approach simply cannot unilaterally address the important “properties of thought” that allowed such a situation under review to manifest in a particular –usually ideologically driven- manner. Thus, if fundamental social questions are to be properly examined in their totality (or as much totality as possible), the *numbers* explaining the outcomes of such questions are often tertiary to the process in which these questions, *i.e.*, “Who Deserves What,” spawn, develop, and evolve toward social consensus. Quantitative analysis is an important part of sociology that should not be neglected from theoretical considerations; however, numbers can only tell a researcher, at best, what concepts have been quantified and how much quantification has taken place, they can never offer an explanation as to *why* concepts “fit” into the “boxes” of quantification to begin with. Thus without blending sociological thought and theory with both qualitative and quantitative research the researcher will likely neglect that which they have abandoned.

There exists a significant relationship between the general social consensus surrounding the appreciation of either the arguments presented by the contrarian or interventionist and the policy implementation of such ideas.²⁷ The force of this thesis can be fully realized only after clarifying the meaning and importance of social evolutionary theory as well as noting the best argument, consistent with social evolutionary theory, presented by the contrarian and the interventionist. Further, before dueling ideal types can be presented in

²⁷ Taken in the context of a liberal democracy this hypothesis should not seem very controversial. The notion that people get through policy what is most popular, so long as no violation of civil liberties occurs to another citizen, seems to be a primary tenement of a liberal democracy. However, in this case things are more “invisible.” Likewise, the vast majority of people usually indirectly apply social evolutionary arguments. It is almost ridiculous to suggest that when the secretary of a congressperson answers the phone the voice of the constituent would likely say, “could you please inform congressperson x that due to my Darwinian interpretation of evolution compels me to encourage a no vote on the next social welfare bill.” In this way my hypothesis is more contentious than it might first appear.

their most favorable light, a general background in (social) evolutionary thought must be properly examined.

The Contrarian

Deciding “Who Deserves What” is sometimes so abrasive that the confronted parties (either theorists or policy makers) will invoke a skeptical or contrarian position, and thus address the question on the grounds that they do not make, nor should they make, decisions that *determine* “Who Deserves What.” Instead, they merely pursue ideas or advocate policies, which better enable individuals (and the marketplace) to “settle matters on their own terms.”²⁸ The contrarian’s deference to a classical liberal interpretation of individualism and the unquestionable effectiveness of the economic marketplace remains an intentional, yet inactive, approach to deciding “Who Deserves What.” Thus, the *contrarian* (classical *liberal*) is not cloaked in the mystic of a responsible actor, but instead as a bearer of individual responsibility (after all, any intervening actions they –the contrarian- might take would only serve to unjustly remove responsibility from individuals as well as the economic marketplace.) Consistent with this stance, “Who Deserves What” is not to be *decided* by anyone (unless one is willing to consider Adam Smith’s notion of the *invisible hand* as anyone). Alternatively, the question is embarked upon between the combined forces of individual actors within a social system and the natural and artificial processes that dictate social, political, and economic interaction among individuals within the social system, *the marketplace*.

²⁸ The contrarian is labeled as such because the holder of such a position is not receptive to the idea that a political and social community can and/or should participate in the allocation of material resources as a means to alleviate poverty welfare.

Interference with the market mechanism, *i.e.* redistributing monies from the upper to the lower social classes, would result in more powerful, not reduced, forms of injustice. As contemporary American economist Milton Friedman argued, the contrarian is not neglecting social responsibility, instead they are helping to ensure that the social structure in question remains free from political tyrants. As Friedman (1979: xvii) specifically stated, "... the free market provides an offset to whatever concentration of political power may arise. The combination of economic and political *power* in the same hands is a sure recipe for tyranny." Friedman suggested that the job of *politics* is to be trusted to the people, while the job of *material distribution* is a matter to be settled by the marketplace. How can people *meaningfully* "do" politics without addressing the matter of resource allocation, and by addressing this concern how can a sociopolitical community avoid deciding "Who Deserves What."²⁹ This critique presents the greatest challenge to a contrarian position. Accordingly, it is the contrarian's use of social evolutionary theory, which attempts to undermine this formidable challenge.

The Interventionist

The "contrarian," on the other hand, does not monopolize the landscape of ideas surrounding the fundamental social question. The "interventionist," or modern *liberal*, represents the theorist or policy maker who decides to actively address the quandary of sorting through "Who Deserves What." The active approach of the interventionist can be

²⁹ Friedman's position seems to implicitly speak to the question of, what is government. If the claim is, as former President Reagan made, that "government is a necessary evil" then as people have no interest in believing they are *evil*, government becomes something else or "them." However, the idea of "government" based upon an American model has never been meant to represent "them," it was always meant to be understood as "us." The sovereign authority of America does lie in the hands of the President, Congress, or the twelve members of the Supreme Court, instead it is held be "the people." By considering government be a necessary evil, in at least an American tradition, the logical extension is that people are the necessary *evil*. The making of government as "them" is exactly the type of scenario that James Madison feared most.

described in the following manner: for some reason (insert choice of variable here) the status quo is operating in a manner, which is ultimately undesirable to the future success of the social structure in question. Likewise, the folly of human history begs the policy maker and social theorist alike, to *actively* sort through and decide “Who Deserves What.” A “wrong” has been committed, by either natural or artificial sources, and it is the responsibility and obligation of policy makers, acting out their proper roles in the sociopolitical community, to actively vindicate the question “Who Deserves What” by means of endorsing some magnitude of poverty welfare. For whatever modern liberalism is, it is skeptical of how “history’s gifts” have been allocated; so skeptical in fact that intervention must be used to re-distribute these “historical gifts.” It is a misunderstanding to suggest that the contrarian judges, using some traditional mechanism such as religion, while the interventionist takes a step away and has only to offer a nonjudgmental free flowing approach. The interventionist can act only *after* history has rendered its judgment. Speaking passionately about the impact of history on the experience of Black Americans, for example, former President Lyndon Johnson remarked,

Freedom is not enough. You do not wipe away centuries of scars by saying: Now, you are free to go where you want, do as you desire, and choose the leaders you please. You do not take a man who for years has been hobbled by chains, liberate him, bring him to the starting line of a race, saying, “you are free to compete with all others.” And still believe you have completely fair. Thus it is not enough to open the gates of opportunity.³⁰

Why Social Evolutionary Theory

A quick review of oppositionally stated ideal types reveals the antagonistic nature of these characters, *seemingly* entrenched within a battle of stagnating conservatism or

³⁰ June 1965, Address, Howard University

meddling liberalism. Thus, given the ideological gap among characters, it becomes difficult to bring about a mutually amenable criterion, or mode of examination by which to establish an “equal analytical footing” that would be useful in creating a starting point for discourse. It might seem that any proposed criteria of examination would be seen by the opposition as a means to “rig the discourse” in favor of the type that made the suggestion. Like two children fighting over the “bigger” half of a cookie, both the contrarian and interventionist are skeptical as to any mechanism of fairness that the other suggests. What could represent a criterion, undertaken in a contemporary American context, which would allow each singular type to bring their specific discourse with roughly “equal analytical footing?” For a number of reasons, social evolutionary theory represents the best chance that such a necessary introductory step in the discourse of “Who Deserves What” will commence.

First, decisions regarding “poverty welfare” are necessarily prophetic in nature. The decision to endorse or reject the notion of “poverty welfare” is intermingled with one’s conception of how these decisions will ultimately “turn out.” When a sociopolitical community makes, or fails to make, social policy it is in turn predicting, and in some cases affecting, the future. In a similar fashion, social evolutionary theory analogously uses history to formulate an understanding of the present as a way to offer more accurate insight into the future. This common theme associated with most social evolutionary theory, of a historical interpretation guiding future possibilities seems to be something the contrarian and the interventionist can both agree is potentially useful. Part of this agreement is consistent with a general deference to the idea of evolutionism. As Hofstadter (1992: 3) argued, “Many scientific theories affect ways of living more profoundly than evolution did; but none had a greater impact on ways of thinking and believing.” Of course, these “historical

understandings” will be different, but the discourse between types must begin somewhere, and this –grounding in social evolutionary theory- seems to be as good a place as any other.

The sheer force and prevalence of social evolutionism in its connection with American culture is difficult to quantify. A number of sources, however, tend to suggest that the influence of evolutionary thinking towards social thought was (and to a lesser extent today is) tremendous. Max Fisch, while discussing evolution in American philosophy demonstrates the acceptance and development of the idea. As Fisch (1947: 357) argued,

In the middle period of the century of American thought with which our symposium is concerned (the nineteenth century), there was one idea which so far overshadowed all others that we may fairly confine our attention to it. That idea was evolution. Like the ideas of earlier periods, it was imported, and imported chiefly from Britain... American thinkers were from the start acknowledged through junior partners in shaping, criticizing, and conforming the idea in its biological and other applications, and they have led the way in working out the logic of evolutionary theory and the theory of evolutionary logic.

Mark Granovetter, writing 32 years after Fisch, supports the contention that evolutionism has played a major and sustainable role in the development of social theory. As Granovetter (1979: 489) maintained,

The idea of Evolutionism is one of the most durable in the history of social theory. Implicit in theories of social evolution are a number of assumptions. One of these is that the most important cause of social change lies in the necessity for societies to adapt to their surrounding physical and/or social environments. Because the range of “problems” posed by these environments is so broad, and so many different “solutions” to them can be imagined, evolutionary theory is embraced by those with highly different orientations.

Charles Darwin (1871: 142) himself would write about the unique way in which his theory of evolution applied to American character:

There is apparently much truth in the belief that the wonderful progress of the United States, as well as the character of the people, are the results of natural selection; for the more energetic, restless, and courageous men from all parts of Europe have emigrated during the last ten or twelve generations to that great country, and have there succeed best (Hofstadter).

Given the vast magnitude and numerous avenues that social evolutionary arguments might take, both the contrarian and the interventionist can use different understandings of social

evolutionism in order to talk with each other about poverty welfare, while still using similar *language* and *criteria*. Perhaps, a *fusion* of the two characters is not likely to happen, but at least the process of forming an understanding between seemingly antagonistic viewpoints can begin.

Aside from the analogous relationship between the predictive aspect of social evolutionary theory and social policy as a means to find a starting place of “equal analytical footing,” another concern arises, this time from the “temporal acceptability of adequate justification.” The time and place of any particular argument will determine the degree of *rationality* of the method used to advance the argument.³¹ For instance, in an aristocratic social structure, ruled largely by the interactions among a group of wealthy land owning lords and an absolute monarch with “divine right,” a consideration of “Who Deserves What” is a settled, and largely unapproachable, question. However, with the historically recent advent of classical liberal thought and more contemporary notion of modern liberalism, further encouraging notions of political and social equality, the question of “Who Deserves What” has become –as a result of a breakdown in social consensus- an unsettled matter while, at the same time, retaining its fundamental status.³² Matters of “Who Deserves What” become less approachable and likewise less rationally “troublesome” when “domain assumptions” of blatant inequities standing for thousands of years, and articulated by thinkers as respectable as Aristotle, are taken as unquestionably axiomatic.

³¹ This sentiment is taken from the notion of historicism offered by Rousseau, and then significantly expanded by Hegel.

³² The question of “Who Deserves What” has always been fundamental, but this is not to say that the question has always been “approachable.”

Aristotle's arguments spelled out in Book One, Chapter Five, of *Politics* entitled *Slavery According to Nature* clearly offered a very different notion of human nature than would be acceptable in a modern climate of *equality* and *political rights*. As Aristotle (1991: 563) argued,

To rule and to be ruled are not only necessary but beneficial. For immediately after birth some are marked out to be ruled but others to rule. ... It is evident, then, that it is by nature that some men are slaves but others are freemen, and that it is just and to the benefit of the former to serve the latter.

These sentiments would mean little more than nonrational arguments within a present-day American sociopolitical temporal context. These “nonrational ramblings,” however, were indeed quite rational before the Renaissance. Then Enlightenment thought began to shape social consensus, moving away from naturalistic limitations and towards the promise of perfectible human agents.³³ Agents, whom Locke argued, are entitled to the recognition of equally assigned God given *natural* rights. The best example of Locke's deviation from the naturalistic assumptions of Aristotelian sociopolitical thought can be seen in chapter two section six of the *Second Treatise of Government*. As Locke (1997: 219) maintained,

And being furnished with like faculties, sharing all in one community of nature, there cannot be supposed any such subordination among us, that may authorize us to destroy another, as if we were made for another's use, as the inferior ranks of creatures are for ours. Every one, as he is *bounded to preserve himself*, and not to quit his station willfully, so by the like reason, when his own preservation comes not in competition, ought he, as much as he can, *to preserve the rest of mankind*, and may not, unless it be to do justice to an offender, take away or impair the life, or what tends to the preservation of life, the liberty, health, limb, or goods of another.

This passage constitutes much of the *rational* modern basis for the rejection of *natural* slavery and the acceptance of natural rights.

³³ It would be a rebellion against the Enlightenment ideal of “perfectible” human agents which inspired Thomas Malthus to develop his Darwinian inspiring proclamation that population increases arithmetically while food increases geometrically. Thus by constricting people within this notion of “bounded ecology,” Malthus greatly challenged the perfectible fate of the human animal.

Those who adhere to traditional religious sources, aristocratic reasoning, and unbridled selfishness are increasingly less able to build a *rational* social consensus capable of exploring “Who Deserves What.”³⁴ With increased liberalism, notions of political and social equality, and education, people exceedingly demand more logical and scientific forms of justification than they have in past times; often this craving finds itself feeding on the bread of social evolutionary arguments, perhaps because it provides an *aura* of scientific respectability. This is certainly a condition of the times, but it is this condition of temporal acceptability that creates the justification for the use of social evolutionary arguments as a means by which to evaluate fundamental social questions. Perhaps in a hundred years time, or less, evolutionary arguments will lose their *aura* of scientific respectability and signify a new form of nonrational thought. Until that time, however, the proper course of action for the sociologist is to show deference to history, while simultaneously fueling the flames that ignite a sense of contemporary rationality.

³⁴ As can be seen by changing attitudes towards people and their worth, social construction and likewise rationality are far removed from any static notion.

CHAPTER 2. THE BUILDING OF SOCIAL EVOLUTIONARY ARGUMENTS

Theory or Thought

Given that social evolutionary arguments, and by extension a review of “Who Deserves What,” are inescapably associated with Charles Darwin’s, and Alfred Russell Wallace’s³⁵ now famous “*theory of evolution*”³⁶ –as explained through the mechanism of natural selection- it is important to distinguish between what is meant by theory, and conversely what is meant by thought. The term theory is often misapplied as synonymous with the expression of *any* idea. Theory is, however, subject to greater constraints than the mere expression of an idea. As Issak (1985:167) explained, “A theory’s major function is ... to explain singular facts and occurrences, but perhaps more importantly to explain empirical generalizations.” Issak continued by stating that, “Theories also have two other functions: “to organize, systematize, and coordinate existing knowledge in the field” and to “predict an empirical generalization – predict what a particular relationship holds.” Even if partial elements from Issak’s understanding of theory are negated, theory is much more than the mere expression of an idea. For instance, one might suggest that human beings behave, as

³⁵ Wallace, while receiving much less recognition than Darwin, is credited with independently discovering the theory of natural selection.

³⁶ This association is not completely warranted. Comte, Hegel, and Spencer, for instance, all developed social evolutionary arguments before the publication of Darwin’s famous treatise *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*. Accordingly, while in a contemporary sense biological and social evolution have undergone a blending of sorts, it would be a mistake to assume the two evolutionary notions are intrinsically related. Thus, evolutionary arguments were very influential for sociological thought well before Darwin’s seminal work. Alternatively, Marx, Veblen, Taylor, Pareto, and Sumner are probably the best examples of social theorists who were, in very different ways, most influenced by Darwinian evolutionary theory.

Hobbes maintained, “like wolves toward one another,”³⁷ but it would take much greater development of this thought to constitute the development of theory. One could, however, incorporate a particular theory to arrive at this Hobbesian thought, presumably in order to bolster the credibility of the thought. Thoughts that can find “theoretical support” are almost always more impressive and meaningful than those which cannot. Social theory and social philosophy can be roughly distinguished by noting the latter is largely concerned with creating a system of “what ought to be,” while social theory offers a conceptual image of “what is.” In writing about the demarcation between social theory and philosophy, Timasheff and Theodorson (1976: 5) made the observation that,

From the ultimate principles of total reality so established, philosophers can draw certain postulates and axioms and then use them to reinterpret the particular classes of objects that they distinguish in the observed facts. Thus, whereas sociologists explain society in terms of facts observed in society and, eventually, in related fields of empiric knowledge, social philosophers explain society in terms of the explanations they give to total reality. They can speak of first causes, supreme values, and ultimate ends; sociologists are not entitled to do so.

Therefore, (sociological) theory is not a normative endeavor, but instead a task largely concerned with matching abstract thoughts to *reality*.³⁸

Likewise, the use of evolutionary arguments often generates a type of “theoretical piggy backing.” This occurs when a theory, such as social evolutionism, is used to give greater credence to a particular angle of vision on the social world. Auguste Comte, who coined the term sociology, demonstrated how sociology as a “science of society” could be understood and administered as a type of predictive *social physics*. Alex Callinicos (1999: 65-6) clearly stated the “scientific order” by which Comte assigned sociology its value,

³⁷ Erasmus Darwin, Charles Darwin’s grandfather, offers a similar commentary in 1803 as he wrote that “eat or be eaten” is the “first law” of nature.

³⁸ Social theories are not, are their face, true or false. They are, instead, tools of analysis.

The sciences constitute a definite order – what he (Comte) calls an “encycopedic series” – starting with the most abstract and complex, and proceeding according to the greatest specificity and complexity of each successive discipline: thus the “six fundamental sciences” are mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, physiology, and “social physics” or sociology.

Comte was, however, able to legitimize his affirmative thought of a highly scientifically regimented social order only by appealing to the larger notion of evolutionary theory. As such, he argued that because society, in tangent with the human mind, is destined to evolve from a theological to a metaphysical and finally to a positivistic state; the end result would be, by *logical* extension, the ability to scientifically address existing undesirable social conditions (problems). With an appeal to “social physics” Comte wrote, well before Darwin, of “the obvious necessity to founding sociology upon the whole of biology (Hofstadter 1992: 67). For Comte, along with many other political and social thinkers of the Enlightenment era who were profoundly influenced by the powerful promise of Newtonian *science*, “social problems” were simply the result of not being able to adequately and/or accurately apply *science* to social action in a predictive manner.

Comte’s adherence to a “science of society” was accepted as *credible* only after it was woven into a broader evolutionary theoretical model.³⁹ Without Comte’s ability to blend evolutionism with social thought, it is possible that the development of sociology would have been pushed back an indeterminable amount of time. It cannot be neglected that significant social changes brought upon by the Industrial Revolution played a major role in the manifestation of sociological development. Social changes alone, however, are unable to explain why sociology came to be viewed as something different from the much older and more

³⁹ Interestingly, Comte’s reliance upon evolutionary theory took place nearly half a century before Darwin’s groundbreaking notion explained natural selection as the likely mechanism driving *biological* evolution.

traditional notion of social philosophy. The proper answer to this quandary seems to be that sociology was “invented,” as Comte noted in *The Course of Positive Philosophy*, not as philosophy per se, but instead as “positivistic (scientific) social physics.”

Returning again to the Hobbesian proposition that “human beings are like wolves towards one another”; this might seem like a simple, undocumented, and unsubstantiated, statement about the elusive understanding of “human nature,” but it could actually represent much more. For instance, classical theorists other than Hobbes might have advanced this thought with the descriptive mechanism of *competitive* natural selection as the guiding force of behavior. Based upon this line of reasoning, it could be argued that “human beings act like wolves toward one another,” because of their sense of survival, their inclination toward selecting themselves at the expense of the other, dictates that they *must* behave like the wolf. If people *must* socially behave in a certain evolutionarily driven manner, then the aspirations of Comte’s “social physics” seem much more likely to be measured and evaluated.⁴⁰ The Hobbesian wolf becomes the agent of a powerful metaphor, the strength of which depends largely upon the collaboration between thought and theory. The same wording in two different sentences can express the same thought, however, in one sense the expression comes about as an effort to speculate about human nature, and in another human nature may be explained as part of a larger evolutionary model.

As will be discussed in detail later, in the discussion of the contrarian character, Herbert Spencer who masterfully employed the use of social evolutionary theory as a bridge to advance his thoughts regarding “Who Deserves What” commonly and purposely

⁴⁰ Depending upon ones theoretical orientation the crux of this *problem* might be considered one of “free will.”

intermingled social and moral concerns. Jonathan Turner advanced the argument that Spencer's social evolutionary synthesis is, and ought to be treated as, distinct from Spencer's thoughts regarding "Who Deserves What." Turner (1985:7) argued,

At a time when social theorists genuflect at the sacred works of St. Marx, St. Durkheim, and St. Weber, we spit on the grave of Spencer because he held a moral philosophy repugnant to the political biases of many contemporary theorists. ... One finds far less moralizing in Spencer's sociology than that of either Durkheim or Marx; and yet we continue to ignore Spencer.

Turner is saying that when thought and theory are meshed, the true value of Spencer's work is often neglected because of his contrarian stance. (Accordingly, so Turner might suggest, the thesis of this work will only further denigrate the work of Spencer and other evolutionary sociologists.) Thus sociologists, in order to fully appreciate the valuable contributions of Spencer, should focus on theory or thought, but not both simultaneously if they wish too fully "appreciate" Spencer. While Turner's argument is well taken, it is important to consider that expressions of theory are made "real" through the piggybacking thoughts that flow, according to the theorist, from the theory. After all, Spencer himself took many opportunities (*Social Statistics, Principles of Sociology, Man Versus the State*) to explain why his philosophical evolutionary synthesis led logically to a contrarian position. Turner is suggesting that sociologists mount the horse (thinker) with a saddle (theory) and send it off with no rider, *i.e.*, absent a mechanism by which to apply theory. Conversely, the social thinkers to be discussed in this thesis, to varying degrees, are placing the saddle on the horse

precisely so that they may send it off with their thoughts and ideologies.⁴¹ Their ideologies are most powerful when presented in the form of thought trickling from the brow of theory, particularly when the theory in question is as encompassing and influential as “the theory of evolution.”

Noticing the distinction yet linkage between theory and thought is a constant reminder to understand and respect the differences between the two while simultaneously confronting the challenge of unlocking the interplay that gives each of these powerful conceptions their respective force. There is an inherent symbiotic relationship between thought and theory, in that neither would typically have the ability to shape social consensus without the other. It is, therefore, important to realize that, strictly speaking, theory can be rightfully defined using the restrictions and constraints that Issak advocates. Nonetheless, if these factors are to hold meaning outside an intellectual debate it is imperative that scholars evaluate the “outcomes” (thoughts), which those advocating the theory under review regard as logical or beneficial extensions. Therefore, when the discussions of Spencerian attitudes towards “Who Deserves What” arise, they are not an assault on his larger theory of social evolution, but rather an integral part of, or practical extensions of, his broader social evolutionism.⁴²

⁴¹ The question must be asked of those who wish to separate theory and thought, where do theories come from, if not from thought? More importantly, while notions of motivation are often overly relied upon in sociological and psychological analysis, it should be noted that the purpose or rationale associated with “theory building” would become noticeably lacking if thought were either excluded from the process or rejected as an irrelevant byproduct. The drive to do exactly this within sociology appears to be the result of the rejection of subjective and quest for objectivity. Without falling too deeply in this important sociological debate, I can only add that objectivity –if it existed- was, in its original instance, likely established using some subjective set of criterion. From subjective agreement objectivity becomes a possibility.

⁴² I use Spencer as a case example. The debate surrounding the *proper* use of work can be applied towards most every thinker to be included in this thesis.

The Origins of Linear Time

For evolutionism to have the scientific meaning often associated with the term, time must be understood in a linear, or at least directional, way.⁴³ For most of human history, punctuated by the legacy of ancient Greece, time and history have been understood as a cyclical rather than a linear process. As Fukuyama (1992:56) noted,

Aristotle did not assume the continuity of history. That is, he believed that the cycle of regimes was embedded in a larger natural cycle whereby cataclysms like floods would periodically eliminate not only existing human societies, but all memory of them as well, forcing men to start the historical process over again from the beginning. In the Greek view, history thus is not secular but cyclical.

It is conceivable that one might, to take a cue from Aristotle, develop a theory of evolution in accordance with a cyclical interpretation of time and history that would look different, and possess different implications, than the understanding of evolutionary theory (natural selection hypothesis) today. It is, nonetheless, doubtful that such a theory would correspond with either a Popperian or Kuhnian notion of *science*.⁴⁴

Two forces paved the way for a contemporary notion of time as a linear construct: (1) the advent and spread of Christianity, and (2) the development and Enlightenment treatment of Sir. Isaac Newton's physics. For Christianity to have an intelligible interpretation—a notion that was a concern during the Middle Ages when The Church was the largest political body in the world—of God as Man's creator and final redeemer time must have a beginning

⁴³ Stephen Gould warns against understanding progress resulting from evolution to signify "better." Instead, Gould maintains that it is best to think of "progress" in evolution as directional.

⁴⁴ Karl Popper, in *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1961), advances the argument that scientific discovery ought to be likened with falsification. If an idea cannot be falsified then science cannot, according to Popper, occur. The mission of the scientist, therefore, is not to demonstrate why they are correct, but to constantly strive at proving himself or herself wrong. Only after all reasonable attempts at falsification have failed can scientific improvement occur. Not surprisingly, Popper was very skeptical at the prospect of evolutionism's scientific legitimacy. Alternatively, Thomas Kuhn, in *The Structure of Scientific Reduction* (1970), argued that science should be thought to occur when enough specific cases begin to challenge the present *scientific* status quo. For Kuhn, science occurs as a socially negotiated process wherein scientific change occurs when existing beliefs unable to stand scrutiny lose the ability to maintain scientific appeal. Thus, new science replaces older scientific models largely because of social (scientific) consensus.

(creation) and an end (apocalypse), and therefore must be understood as linear. Regardless of whether Christianity is understood as an individual quest for the salvation of one's soul, or the universal struggle for human equality and redemption, a linear understanding of time must persist.⁴⁵ In either conception of Christianity, a clearly presented telos (final point) marks the perceived *outcome*⁴⁶ of spiritual devotion.⁴⁷ Many of Christianity's essential teachings, in particular the resurrection and reemergence of Jesus as a Christ, logically revolve around the conception of linear time.

Taking this cue, the intellectually influential Saints Augustine and Aquinas devoted much of their writings to justify not only the existence and nature of God, but linear time as well. The socially formed consensus endorsing linear time was born of a search for theological consistency. If one is to be Christian, or live in a political environment dominated by Christianity, a simultaneous appreciation of linear time becomes axiomatic – truth is formed by necessity, by consistency of belief. Ironically, it would be Enlightenment thinkers, *e.g.* Newton, who utilized the Christian imposition of linear time as the means by which to form the ideas that served as valuable and essential, precursor to the evolutionary works of Charles Darwin. In this way it was the critical notion of linear time, developed and maintained by The Church, that eventually lent credibility to the scientific, time inspired, evolutionary arguments advanced by Darwin, whose evolutionary theory would need more than linear time; it would need a new type of physics, Newtonian physics.

⁴⁵ This dichotomous treatment of Christianity is not to suggest that other rationales for belief do not persist, only that most of these rationales can generally fall into one of the two categories.

⁴⁶ Purpose seems to be too personal a word here.

⁴⁷ Not all religious faiths must articulate a linear notion of time. For instance, Hinduism with its emphasis on reincarnation might well consistently advocate a cyclical understanding of time. However, given the dreadful state of affairs during the Middle Ages (*See William Manchester's "A Word Lit Only by Fire" esp. pp4-25*) it made much more sense "religiopolitically" speaking to advocate salvation in a "better place" as opposed to "coming back" to this world as another being.

Newtonian Physics

Aside from the pragmatically inspired theological movement towards a sense of time that looked more like a line than a circle, a second, quite different force would lead to a similar understanding. Aristotle, and the development of his *Physics* that went largely unchallenged for more than a millennium, understood circular motion as both objectively real and *natural*. Further, Aristotle's naturalistic views toward tautological (circular) reasoning and teleological (ends-based) reasoning would not be understood in the same negatively attributed sense that these types of reasoning would incur today, *i.e.*, as illegitimate. For Aristotle, every living thing had a purpose (telos), and it was only natural and good to pursue that purpose.⁴⁸ This circular naturalistic approach to time and science would come to a halt as serendipity struck Sir. Isaac Newton, *i.e.*, in the form of an apple that fell from a tree.

The Newtonian scientific model differed from the Aristotelian model in that it was based upon a linear interpretation of time and space. Consistent with the Newtonian scientific model, inertia and gravity act to direct the body away from its *natural* tendency towards *straight-line motion*. It would be this straight-line notion as synonymous with a naturally good quality that would encourage 1) nature as a good, and 2) the emergence of laissez faire economic theory. As Callinicos (1999: 16) articulated when referencing the manner in which Newton's physical laws were applied to the human condition,

⁴⁸According to Aristotle the purpose of the human was to reach *eudimonia*. This Greek word does not have a good translation in English, but is often cited as a type of human flourishing or happiness. The idea is comparable to Abraham Mazlow's psychological notion of self-actualization.

The *philosophes* commonly identified a natural course of events to which things would tend unless interfered with. In doing so, they were undoubtedly influenced by the principle of inertia in physics formulated by Galileo and Newton, according to which a body tends to move in a given direction unless acted on by another body. But they gave natural a normal connotation, so that the natural course of events was also the right course. Thus Francois Quesnay, one of the French school of Psysiocrat economists, offered the following definition of a natural physical law: *the regular course of all physical events in the natural order which is self-evidently the most advantageous to the human race.*” Apparently enough it was Quesnay who coined the slogan of free-market economics: laissez faire, laissez-passer.

For Newton, this simple natural process suggested that a type of equilibrium was being restored between the inertial motion of the body and the force of gravity. In this interpretation, objects travel in a straight line, and continue to do so, until a force (gravity) alters the motion. The contrasts between the Aristotelian and Newtonian scientific models are so great that for purposes of this thesis the differences are as distinct as that between a circle and a line. Whereas Aristotle understood that science and time traveled in a synchronized naturalistic ends-based circular direction, Newton viewed them as analogous to what happens when an object “veers from its straight-line tangent” and is brought back into the fray by some external source -gravity.

At the height of the Enlightenment,⁴⁹ Adam Smith, Thomas Multhus, and a new brand of political economists, *e.g.* Ricardo and Martineau, would offer an analogy of the object (as the individual) and the external force, which keep this object from “going off on a

⁴⁹ As of this point the question might arise, why so much talk of the “Enlightenment” and Western historical concerns? The answer to this has very little to do with ethnocentrism, and is generally because of the influence associated with Western civilization – the Enlightenment in particular – towards historical and contemporary American attitudes towards “Who Deserves What.” Even the postmodernist Michel Foucault in his article “*What is Enlightenment*,” argues it is simply wrong to argue that someone is “for or against” the Enlightenment. Foucault, instead, maintains that, “the Enlightenment is a set of political, economic, social, institutional, and cultural events on which we still depend in large part, constitutes a privileged domain for analysis. I also think that as an enterprise for linking the progress of truth and the history of liberty in a bond of direct relation, it formulated a philosophical question that remains for us to consider.”

tangent” (as the marketplace).⁵⁰ Armed with a new understanding of both time and science, the beginning of a social evolutionary argument concerned with “Who Deserves What” began to take form. The interpretation of social action as analogous with the “theory of evolution,” would mold this (social evolutionism) to levels of respectability that continue to affect the direction of American social redistribution policies.⁵¹

History as an Evolutionary Metaphor

While generally most people have come to understand time in somewhat of a linear fashion, such a consensus does not surround a general notion of human history. In the concluding pages of the *Origin of the Species*, Darwin (1859:458) commented, “Light will be thrown on the origin of Man and his history, (Dickens, pp. 13)” thus, noting a direct link between human evolution and human history. Since 1859, however, the time of Darwin’s prediction (social) evolutionary theory has been unable to form a consensus around any particular conception of human history.⁵² Instead, notions of human history are often surrounded with a particular *interpretation* of evolutionary theory. Darwin was correct to suspect that his notion of evolutionary theory would illuminate the possibilities surrounding an understanding of human history. Nonetheless, he would probably not have suspected that his approach would have generated so many different angles of vision on theory, evolution, or history. His paradigm shifting work did not, and probably could not, have ended the

⁵⁰ If Newton’s gravity could be such a powerful invisible force acting on natural objects then the same could, arguably, hold true for social objects (people) with regard to Adam Smith’s market mechanism of the invisible hand.

⁵¹ See Alexander Rosenberg’s *Darwinism in Philosophy, Social Science, and Policy* (2000).

⁵² The knowledge base surrounding human history has certainly been tremendously increased since Darwin’s prophetic statement; however, this increased knowledge has not manifested itself into a more holistic conception regarding what human history is to mean.

debate surrounding the relationship between human history and (social) evolutionism.

Rather, it precipitated an ongoing discourse.

For instance, if history is treated metaphorically it may be viewed as either a pendulum or a finishing line (with a wide array of ideas on a continuum between these two extremes). If history is viewed as a pendulum, then social evolutionary development and progress might occur, but this occurrence is subject to peaks and valleys in much the same way that Talcott Parsons viewed social systems, in a state of moving equilibrium. Once a peak towards one end of the spectrum occurs, the entire –historical- process reproduces itself in the opposite direction. Thus, when history is a pendulum, social development and change (evolutionism) is equally certain to advance and decline in a more or less cyclical fashion. Aside from the Ancient Greeks (without whom the influence of either Christianity or Newtonian Physics were quite satisfied with viewing time and history as a cyclical process of change and catastrophe) Spencer, under the influence of Victorian English culture, likewise shared the view of history as analogous to a pendulum.

Spencer viewed the evolutionary processes governing the universe, including the social order, as a systems process involving: aggregation or evolution, differentiation and integration of elements, a state of equilibrium, and finally dissolution. Thus, the breakdown (dissolution) of an evolutionary trend is necessarily built into the process. As Spencer (1880: 414) explained, there is

a process toward equilibrium. That universal co-existence of antagonistic forces which, as we before saw, necessitates the universality of rhythm, and which, as we before saw, necessitates decomposition of every force into divergent forces, at the same time necessitates the ultimate establishment of a balance. Every motion being a motion under resistance is continually suffering deductions, and these unceasing deductions finally result in the cessation of motion.

If Spencer's general evolutionary view is applied to analyze human history, the implication is that it would be inaccurate to conclude that social evolution could or would ultimately suggest an *end* of history. While it might be possible to objectively evaluate the evolutionary trajectories of various sociopolitical systems, in terms of desirability and survivability it would be a mistake to imagine that *any* evolutionary trajectory was immune from eventual balance and dissolution. There can be no finish line, in history or elsewhere, if the processes governing advancement are inherently devised so that a pendulum-like equilibrium *must* occur.⁵³

Conversely, history could be viewed as a journey toward a finishing line, with no cyclical movements, just the elation of the runners as they break the tape of history's finish line. If social evolutionism is to break through that line, as opposed to reworking itself through a process of "endless swing," however, it must be asked: what does this line represent? Georg Hegel and Karl Marx, both extremely influential social evolutionary thinkers, made lasting contributions to the idea that human history –and human potentiality in the case of Marx- represents a manifestation of social evolutionism that dashes through the tape of the finishing line with no extenuating need to rerun the grueling event. *Something* causes social evolution to shed an unalterable and permanent end to human history, but what *something* could possibly put an end to human history?⁵⁴

Writing in *Introduction to the Philosophy of History* Hegel, (1832) elaborates his argument that, "The history of the world is none other than the progress of the consciousness

⁵³ For this reason Spencer often used the word equilibration to describe what most evolutionary biologists referred to as adaptation.

⁵⁴ The end of history does imply the end of human action and achievement, only that all fundamental sociopolitical questions have found their answers, and that these answers cannot be improved upon in any meaningful way.

of freedom.” For Hegel, a universal spirit (*guist*) directs history towards the emancipation of human freedom. It does so first by way of the *family*, then by the formation of *civil society*. Finally the dialectic riddle of human freedom finds its answer within the creation of the *state*. The inherent problems (contradictions) with both the family and civil society become resolved for Hegel only after human history has evolved to the level of the *state*. Only in a liberal state could human consciousness and freedom reach an end that could, for Hegel, possibly signify the “end of history.” Indeed, after the Battle of Jena in 1806, Hegel boldly stated, “history had ended.” Its finish line (the consciousness of human freedom) had finally been broached by the principles extolled in both the French and American revolutionary efforts.⁵⁵ The state had found a way, through the principles of liberalism, to become the end of human history, and thus the last stage of social evolution. Just as the marathon runner might run a faster pace, the principles of liberalism might be adjusted slightly to better allow for the dynamics of consciousness inherent in human freedom. Nonetheless, the marathon, like history, had been completed; all of the important social contradictions of previous times have been addressed with the “proper” form of the state –liberal democracy.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Hegel’s philosophical system is much more complicated than merely an elaboration of sociopolitical determinism. Hegel’s philosophy of history is embedded within a larger dialectical progression. The progression can be said to begin with a thesis, but the thesis will inevitably contain inherent contradictions. These contradictions lead to the creation of the antithesis, the opposite of the thesis. As thesis and antithesis become resolved a synthesis of the two becomes formed. The synthesis, however, is destined to once again begin the dialectical process; that is, until the resolution of the dialectic (in the form of spirit *guist*) finds its end with the consciousness of human freedom.

⁵⁶ Shortly after Hegel argued that liberal democracy was the emancipation of human freedom Alexis de Tocqueville (1969:12) made the argument in *Democracy in America* that democracy as a political institution was an *inevitable* bi-product of social evolutionary forces.

Therefore the gradual process of equality is something fated. The main features of this progress are the following: it is universal and permanent, it is daily passing beyond human control, and every event and every man helps it along. Is it wise to suppose that a movement, which has been so long in train, could be halted in one generation? Does anyone imagine that democracy, which has destroyed the feudal system and vanquished kings, will fall back before the middle classes and the rich? Will it stop now, when it has grown so strong and its adversaries so weak?

In 1992 Francis Fukuyama sought to demonstrate that since 1782, Hegel's general thesis had been supported. Hegel was, that is, correct in arguing that human history, as a search for new or better governing sociopolitical principles, was over (and had been since the end of the American and French Revolutions). Fukuyama (1992: xi) stated his general argument as follows:

I argued that liberal democracy may constitute the "end point of mankind's ideological evolution" and the "final form of human government" and as such constituted the "end of history". That is while earlier forms of government were characterized by grave defects and irrationalities that led to their eventual collapse, liberal democracy was arguably free from such internal contradictions. This was not to say that today's stable democracies, like the United States, France, or Switzerland, were not without injustice or serious social problems. But these problems were ones of incomplete implementation of the twin principles of liberty and equality on which modern democracy is founded, rather than the flaws of the principles themselves.

Progress in history then becomes, for Fukuyama, an enhancement or elaboration of what has existed since 1806, as opposed to the development of *new* principles. In other words, for Hegel, and more recently Fukuyama, liberal democracy as a sociopolitical system resolving the dialectical contradictions of human past, is the finishing line of history; it cannot be qualitatively improved.

Karl Marx⁵⁷ also perceived human history as a finishing line, but unlike Hegel Marx's finishing line did not take the form of a liberal democracy. Instead for Marx, human history would reach fruition –its finishing line- only after the working class (*proletariat*) acting under the direction of a shared "collective consciousness" would rise up in glorious revolution and topple the oppressive owner class (*bourgeoisie*). This revolution would

⁵⁷ Marx is used here because his communist vision of history as a finishing line provides an alternative to the Hegelian approach. However, although Marx did discuss social evolutionary theory in tangent with the question "Who Deserves What" I have opted not to utilize Marxist theory as the best way to represent the Interventionist ideal type. While Marx is extremely influential, for reasons that will be expanded as this thesis develops, I am very concerned that a Marxist argument is not only unlikely to appeal on a theoretical level, but also likely to repel –after its implications are noted- on a realistic level. Thus, Thorstein Veblen will be utilized as the best representative of the interventionist.

signify the end of human history because, for Marx, history is the culmination of class struggle and economic exploitation among peoples –*historical materialism*. Friedrich Engels (1978: 472) –while crediting Marx- clearly reinforces this sentiment in the preface to the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* as he wrote:

The basic thought running through the Manifesto –that economic production and the structure of society of every historical epoch necessarily arising therefrom constitute the foundation for the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently (ever since the dissolution of the primeval communal ownership of land) all history has been a history of class struggles, of struggles between exploited and exploiting, between dominated and dominating classes at various stages of social development; that is struggle, however, has now reached a stage where the exploited and oppressed class (the proletariat) can no longer emancipate itself from the class which exploits and oppresses it (the bourgeoisie), without at the same time forever freeing the whole of society from exploitation, oppression and class struggles –this basic thought belongs solely and exclusively to Marx

The end of history would occur for Marx only after socioeconomic class (a vertical form of social organization), the force governing the inequitable and unjust treatment of people, is replaced with a classless (horizontal form of social organization) social order.

CHAPTER 3. A THEORY OF EVOLUTION, DARWINIAN STYLE

Linking Darwinism and Social Concerns

It is important, if no other reason than to recognize faulty or disingenuous attributions to Darwin, to understand the basic premises underlying Darwin's treatise on, *The Origin of Species*.⁵⁸ It is also noteworthy to recognize that many social evolutionary arguments were either written before Darwin's work or differ significantly from the evolutionism of Darwin. Why then should sociologists explore Darwin, or other competing explanations of *biologically* driven evolution as a precursor to *socially* driven evolutionary understandings of "Who Deserve What?" Biological and social evolutionism, after all, offer differing contentions and implications. The answer is found in an appreciation of the effect with which the *interpretations* regarding biological notions of evolution have thrust themselves upon both the contrarian and the interventionist. James Rogers (1972: 265), using a vivid analogy of a wine jar pointedly illustrated the lingering effects of Darwinism as applied to social and political ideologies:

⁵⁸ Charles Darwin influence is so pronounced that, on occasion, researchers "look" to find any connection between his ideas regarding biological evolution and social theory (evolution). A connection does exist, but not always as it is reported. For instance, it is often erroneously cited that Karl Marx offered to dedicate *Das Kapital* to Darwin, and that Darwin respectfully declined Marx's gesture. However, Terence Ball, in his article "*Marx and Darwin: A Reconsideration*" *Political Theory*, vol.7 (Nov., 1979) pp. 469-483 debunks this "academic myth." Marx, in all likelihood never offered Darwin the dedication. Nonetheless I have continued, in my research process, to observe this "academic myth" reappear on quite a few occasions in publications written well after Ball's 1979 article. The lesson here seems to be that myths, even academic ones, are very pervasive, and persuasive; and the only defense to such ideas is to have a better grasp of the original source – for our concerns Charles Darwin.

Horace remarks in one of his letters that the wine jar retains for a long period the scent of the first wine which it contained. Intellectual concepts share this trait, among many other pleasant ones, with the classical amphora. They often evoke clusters of ideas with which they were one associated. Mention Darwinism, for example, and many will find lingering on the threshold of their sensibility concepts of “struggle for existence” and “survival of the fittest.” These concepts associated with Darwin’s theory of natural selection were not original to Darwin. But are generally associated with Darwin’s rather than to the ideologies which proceeded them. Later they became major slogans of the Social Darwinists who wanted to view human society through Darwin’s vision of the animal world.

James’s thought triggers several interesting observations, not the least of which returns to the idea of the distinction between theory and thought. Why did Social Darwinists use “evolutionary theory” – in particular the notion of the “struggle for existence” – when such thoughts had been powerfully expressed well *before* Darwin? The answer is thoughts that build upon other thoughts are interesting, but theories that expand upon “old” thoughts are tremendously influential. This is the reason it would be ill advised to ignore why the association between biological evolutionary theory and fundamental social questions.

Biological studies, in particular biology applied to the development of a species (evolutionary studies), add an aura of scientific respectability to fundamentally important sociological endeavors. It was precisely this type of scientific respectability “Comte’s social physics,” which triggered the initial development of sociology as a distinct academic discipline. No longer was social thought *necessarily* an ideologically laden quest; instead the systematic use of evolutionary theory offered more than an opinion of the nature, course, and effect of social action.⁵⁹ The scientific flavor of Darwinism is found in its biology, but a collaterally related issue is whether the sociologist can extend evolutionary science to examine human social order. The answer is yes, and both sociologists and social

⁵⁹ This is not to say, of course, that evolutionary theory will somehow negate ideology, but it does change how ideology is understood. (Thought - thought ideology) is much different and has much different implications than (thought – theory- thought ideology).

policymakers frequently apply a variant of Darwin's theory.⁶⁰ As Hofstadter argued, "It (Social Darwinism) refers to the more general adaptation of Darwinian, and related biological concepts to social ideologies." Darwinism is, like any other theory, unable to render ideology moot. Nonetheless, consistent with an understanding of theory as a perceived image of reality, Darwinism, and social evolutionism in general, are able to create a theoretical base by which to find consistent meaning and use for ideological beliefs.

The term, *Social Darwinism*, has been interpreted in a number of ways, each of which is consistent with the ideology of the person invoking the term.⁶¹ Darwinism can stress either competition or cooperation depending upon which variant the thinker understands as enhancing the struggles of natural selection. Darwin (1871: 151-2), in fact, on occasion more heavily stressed the competitive spirit of evolution, and in certain passages of his work seems like a "Social Darwinist" himself,

We civilized men ... do our utmost to check the process of elimination; we build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed, and the sick; we institute poor laws; and our medical men exert their utmost skill to save the life of every one to the last moment. ... Thus the weak members of civilized society propagate their kind. No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man.

Nonetheless, powerful social thinkers, *e.g.*, Peter Kropotkin used Darwin's evolutionary theory to demonstrate the principle of cooperative *Mutual Aid*. It may well be prudent to approach the notion of "Social Darwinism" as a complex element of social evolutionary arguments, but not as the complete picture. The only adequate way to address the "social" when thinking about "social Darwinism" is to first understand the "Darwin," an

⁶⁰ I purposely avoid the moral language of "should" here. The moral philosopher could fill volumes with this question, but the focus of this thesis must be upon what is and not what ought to be.

⁶¹ Often, Social Darwinism is thought to represent the most vulgar composite sketch of the contrarian character. This portrayal, however, is only one very specific adaptation of Darwin's contribution to social theory. In fact, writing in *Rendezvous with Destiny* (1952) Eric Goldman expanded the term "reform Darwinism," which would come to be associated with mutual aid, and the struggle for the life of *others* (Bannister).

important step that many proponents and opponents of “Social Darwinism” largely ignore.

Along these lines Darwin would readily admit that he knew little “in matters of political economy,” and would be much more comfortable with his evolutionary outlook as applied to “lower animals,” rather than humans.

Darwinism or Evolutionism is not correctly understood as a license to consistently advocate whatever social position one wishes. In briefly reviewing biological notions of evolution, it is possible to simultaneously review how these notions, positively or negatively, yield their influence over the credence and logical respectability of either the contrarian or the interventionist. It therefore becomes important to ask whether certain conceptions of evolution lend greater credibility to either character, or more importantly to answers to the question “Who Deserve What?” Thus, it becomes important to understand minimally the rudimentary aspects and influences of (Darwinian) evolutionary theory. No thought or ensuing larger theory develops in a vacuum, and evolutionism is no different.

The Development of Darwinism

One reason can explain why Charles Darwin, rather than Jean Baptiste de Lamarck, has come to be recognized as the driving force behind most contemporary understandings of evolutionary theory, Darwin’s pivotal reliance upon natural selection as the mechanism by which to explain the evolutionary process.⁶² Lamarck, writing in the late eighteenth century, maintained in his treatise on the law of the inheritance of acquired characteristics, that evolutionary change occurred via “the transmission to offspring of all changes undergone by

⁶² Darwin never argued that Lamarck’s notion of evolution was *wrong* in every *micro* case. Instead, Darwin argued that on a specific individual level Lamarckian emphasis towards acquired characteristics could mean a great deal, but on a universal *macro* level the notion of natural selection must take precedence.

the parent generation.”⁶³ Children are thus viewed as biological expressions of both parental genes and actions *i.e.*, if parents developed the skill to be talented musicians, then their children would inherit this “trait.” Writing on the effect of Lamarckian evolutionary theory and social evolutionism in American thought George Stocking (1962: 241) demonstrated the profound effect the doctrine had upon Comte, Morgan, Spencer, and social evolutionism in general:

The Lamarckianism of American social science also had sources within the tradition of nineteenth century American social thought. A number of its major figures – Auguste Comte, Lewis Henry Morgan, and Herbert Spencer – were either implicitly or avowed believers in the heritability of acquired characteristics. Comte spoke of the doctrine as an “incontestable principle”; Morgan if he did not specifically embrace the belief, made statements which can be given meaning only in its terms; Spencer was the father of Neo-Lamarckian biology, and defended the inheritance of acquired characteristics. This long-winded controversy with August Weismann in 1893. Like many other nineteenth century social theorists, each of these men embraced some form of unilateral social evolution; each felt that the normal evolution of human societies proceeded through a single progressive sequence of social or intellectual stages.

Stocking (Ibid.) continued this line of reasoning by proposing two major outcomes from such a dependence on Lamarckian thought:

Although by no means central to social evolutionary theory, the inheritance of acquired characteristics was able to play at least two roles in such a framework. Comte used the idea to explain the origin of racial differences, which in turn helped to explain deviations from the normal unilateral sequence of development. And for writers whose evolutionism, unlike Comte’s, was biological as well as social, it provided a link between social and intellectual progress and organic mental evolution; indeed, for some writers it was the major mechanism of the evolution of the mind.

This thoughtful treatment of Lamarckian evolutionary influence towards social thought should serve as a reminder that evolution is a vast notion with many different modes of interpretation. Evolutionism is not necessarily synonymous with Darwinism.

⁶³ It would be inaccurate to assess the scientific and cultural shift from Lamarckian evolutionary theory to Darwinism as a “smooth” transition. While some remnants of Lamarckian theory still exist today Darwinism is the much more scientifically accepted interpretation of the evolutionary process. This shift in scientific opinion was neither universal nor widespread with the publication of Darwin’s primary evolutionary treatise. It took nearly seventy-five years for Darwinism to replace Lamarckianism as the accepted scientific evolutionary paradigm.

Darwin grew skeptical with Lamarck's evolutionary design, *i.e.* the notion of "artificial selection" based upon the *complete* inheritability of traits from one generation to the next. This skepticism led Darwin to reason that something beyond merely a genetic generational inheritance must account for long-term macro evolutionary changes. Darwin's five-year South American journey on the Beagle, in particular his experiments with finches, led him to affirm his belief that something much more than generational inheritance was, at least on a macro scale, working toward the *physical* development of all animal species, humans included. Darwin (1868: 10), while writing nine years after the publication of *On the Origin of Species* (1859), recalls how his South American travels focused his attention towards the,

Inexplicable problem (of) how the necessary degree of modification could have been effected (for evolution to occur), and it would have thus remained forever, had I not studied domestic productions, and thus acquired a just idea of the power of selection. As soon as I had fully realized this idea, I saw, on reading Malthus on *Population*, that natural selection was the inevitable result of the rapid increase of all organic beings; for I was prepared to appreciate the struggle for existence by having long studied the habits of animals.

Some mechanism, other than artificial selection (simple single-generation reproduction), had to explain such wide scale adaptations in the human population; thus, from this concern Darwin developed the ideas surrounding the "struggle for existence" and "natural selection."

Darwinian Evolutionary Principles

Darwin observed the uncontroversial notion that almost all populations show multiple degrees of variations for almost every physical trait. Darwin further noted, again uncontroversially, that within a population certain traits improve the chances for survival, while others do not. It is important to note, however, that specific traits which enhance the chances for survival will not necessarily be the same across different populations; a view that was cleverly argued by the physical anthropologist Coon (1939:6):

Small, foetalized, relatively weak races may be more efficient and hence more suitable for survival in certain environments than larger, more muscular, and less infantile ones. Small, foetalized, and relatively defenseless mammals develop elaborate social devices by which the solidarity of the group compensates for the deficiency in individual aggressiveness.

Consistent with this brief series of uncontroversial natural assumptions along with observation and experiment, Darwin concluded that natural traits, which best enhanced the “survival for existence” for any particular population, would be “naturally selected.” The end-result of this proposition was, an increased survival rate for the population in question. If this idea at first glance appears too simplistic to be extremely influential do not be fooled. As noted by Dobzhansky and Allen (1956: 597), “Natural selection is a remarkable enough phenomenon, since it is the sole method known at present which begets adaptedness to the environment in living matter.”

Using survival as a primary criterion, evolution is often seen as developmental or progressive. However, when survival is not a direct concern, an objective notion of progress becomes at best a tenuous proposition. If a variable other than survival were used to assess progress, it would seem that on most occasions “cultural relativism” would play a significant role in subjectively defining progress. Aside from the fairly obvious observation that normally functioning people and cultures desire to survive, are there any other *desires* that transcend culture, time, and history? The contention that “Who Deserves What” is a universal social concern should not be misunderstood as an appeal to address this concern with a specific notion of universal desire or *progress*.⁶⁴ Having a grasp of evolutionism can help make sense of how the question “Who Deserves What” is understood and treated. This

⁶⁴ Regarding progress Stephen Jay Gould (1988: 319) commented, “Progress is a noxious, culturally embedded, untestable, non-operational, intractable idea that must be replaced if we wish to understand the patterns of history.”

understanding, however, must be broached with the cautions and limitations that are built into *any* evolutionary appeal.

Writing in the *Origin of Species*, Darwin (1859: 115) clearly presented the conception of natural selection,⁶⁵

Owing to this struggle for life, any variation, however slight and from whatever cause proceeding, if it be in any degree profitable to an individual of any species, in its infinitely complex relations to any other organic beings and to external nature, will tend to the preservation of that individual, and will generally be inherited by its offspring. The offspring, also, will thus have a better chance of surviving, for, of the many individuals which are periodically born, but a small number can survive. I have called this principle, by which each slight variation, if useful, is preserved, by the term natural selection.

Peter Bowler (1976: 631-2) described the process of natural selection in the following way,

The essence of natural selection lies in the differential rates of reproduction which result from the success or failure of the variations occurring within a species. Animals with a favorable variation, *i.e.*, one that helps to adjust to a changing environment, will get more food and be and be healthier than the average, and will thus tend to produce more offspring sharing their particular character. Conversely, animals with an unfavorable variation will get less food, they will be less healthy and will have fewer offspring, and in harsh circumstances will be eliminated altogether.

Finally, while still developing his theory of evolution, based upon the principle of natural selection, Darwin in 1844 provided a hypothetical example describing the process of natural selection. As Darwin (1958: 119-20) described:

To give an imaginary example, from changes in progress on an island, let the organization of a canine animal become slightly plastic, which animal preyed chiefly on rabbits, but sometimes on hares; let these same changes cause the number of rabbits very slowly to decrease and the number of hares to increase; the effect of this would be that the fox or dog would be driven out to catch more hares, and his numbers would tend to decrease; his organization however, being slightly plastic, those individuals with the lightest forms, longest limbs, and best eyesight (though perhaps with less cunning or scent) would be slightly favored, let the difference be ever so small, and would tend to live longer and to survive during that time of year when food was the shortest; they would also rear more young, which would inherit these slight peculiarities. The less fleet ones would be rigidly destroyed.

Given this information regarding the concept of natural selection it becomes possible to

⁶⁵ Darwin's intellectual creation and development of "natural selection" was not a product of serendipity. Darwin, in fact, began developing the idea of natural selection sometime in early 1838 –nearly twenty years before he published the *Origin*. Natural selection was a "secret," which Darwin highly guarded from all but his most trusted friends.

formulate a number of important extrapolations, which might be directly related to social arguments. Natural selection may be said to contain the following implications. 1) Dependence upon reproduction as a vehicle to pass along traits, *i.e.*, if the *best* adapted organisms within a species are the ones reproducing at the highest rates, then natural selection can be said to apply in its fullest sense.⁶⁶ 2) The process is *extremely* gradual. 3) Because natural selection is governed by a correspondence between organism adaptation and environmental conditions teleological reasoning becomes logically removed from such a view of evolution. As explained by Gerald Runkle (1961: 111), “Darwin showed that natural forms have a history and that teleological considerations are not necessary in order to understand it.”

A brief review of natural selection allows very quickly for the opinion that its applicability to people would be extremely difficult, but is it an impossible linkage? Dobzhansky and Allen set out to address this very question in their article appropriately entitled, “Does Natural Selection Continue to Operate in Modern Mankind?” Dobzhansky’s (1956: 595) answer to his question is almost axiomatic, because as he noted:

Natural selection would cease only if all human genotypes produced numbers of surviving children in exact proportion to the frequencies of these genotypes in the population. This idea does not, and never did, occur in history. Quite apart from the hereditary diseases and malformations for which no remedies are known and which decrease the reproductive fitness, the inhabitants of different parts of the world have different reproductive rates.

By asking a number of well placed rhetorical questions Dobzhansky (Ibid.) makes clear that

⁶⁶ More than any other implication of natural selection this point demonstrates the difficulty in strictly applying the idea to “human animals.” Such an approach taken to apply directly to people tends to advance a type of elitist alarmism. Consider, for instance, the danger described by Cook (1951:260), “As this process continues ... the average level of intelligence and the proportion of gifted individuals declines. Should the feeble minded level be reached, most of the plus genes will have been eliminated. But before that time growing inefficiency and incompetence would cause the collapse of modern industrial society. The period in history labeled the Dark Ages that spread over Europe with the fall of Rome represented a cultural blackout that lasted for a thousand years. The Dark Ages which would be caused by continued gene erosion could last five to ten times as long.”

while natural selection is a gradual process it is not static, and likewise a static understanding of nature –and humanity’s place therein- largely misses the evolutionary implications of natural selection.

The frequent allegation that the selective processes in the human species are no longer “natural” is due to persistence of the obsolete nineteenth century concept of “natural” selection. The error of this view is made clear when we ask its proponents such questions as, why should the “surviving fittest” be able to withstand cold and inclement weather without the benefit of fire and clothing? Is it not ludicrous to expect selection to make us good at defending ourselves against wild beasts when wild beast are getting to be so rare that it is a privilege to see one outside of a zoo. Is it necessary to eliminate everyone who has poor teeth when our dentists stand ready to provide us with artificial ones? Is it a great virtue to be able to endure pain when anesthetics are available?

It is possible to talk about the linkages between natural selection and modern mankind. These discussions, however, must take into account that natural selection, as a process of human evolution, is absent any intrinsic qualities. As the human environment is constantly changed through technological and other sources, so too are the manifestations of natural selection.

As Dobzhansky (Ibid.) plainly puts it,

The direction and the intensity of natural selection are as changeable as the environment. Selection in modern man cannot maintain our fitness for the conditions of the Old Stone Age, nor can it prepare us for novel conditions of the distant future except by increasing our adaptability.

Darwin was not the first thinker to toil with the mechanism of natural selection as underpinning human evolutionary development. Compare, for instance, just how similar Darwin’s explanation of natural selection is with that of Herbert Spencer’s evolutionary thought. Writing just seven years before the publication of the *Origin of Species* Spencer (1852: 499-500) noted:

All mankind in turn subject themselves more or less to the discipline described; they may or may not advance under it, but in the nature of things, only those who do advance under it eventually survive ... for as those prematurely carried off must, in the average of cases, be those in whom the power of self-preservation is least, it unavoidably follows that those left behind to continue the race are those in whom the power of self-preservation is greatest –are the selected of their generation.

Spencer offered the idea of natural selection in his writing prior to Darwin's very similar conception; his blunder came in not carrying his idea to fruition. Spencer himself was too heavily wed to Lamarckian evolutionary thought to enable his appreciation of the revolutionary notion of natural selection, upon which Darwin would soon capitalize. Robert Young (1969: 137) maintained that Spencer's refusal to adopt Darwinism was a product of the ease with which a Lamarckian view could be contorted with other disciplines:

Spencer says in the preface to separately published edition of 1887 that the reason he had clung so tenaciously to the inheritance of acquired characteristics in biological theory was because it had such important implications for psychology, ethics and sociology.

Spencer, by not separating biological from social interests, was unwilling to see what was right in front of him –natural selection. Charles Darwin, on the other hand, would have little problem focusing strictly on biological (evolutionary) issues. After Darwin's study was cleaned proceeding his death a copy of *Das Kapital*, personally given to him by Karl Marx, was found with the pages set and apparently unread. Spencer, on the other hand, could simply not avoid what he understood as an insatiable lineage between biological and social theory.

While writing in his autobiography Spencer (1904: 389-90) recalled his most regretful oversight:

It seems strange that, having long entertained a belief in the development of species through the operation of natural causes, I should have failed to see that the truth indicated in the above quoted passages, must hold, not of mankind only, but of all animals, and must everywhere be working changes among them. ... Yet I completely overlooked this obvious corollary – was blind that here was a universally-operative factor in the development of species.

Aside from the idea of natural selection, the “struggle for existence” represents Darwin's second impacting contribution often cited as a linkage between biological evolutionism and social evolutionary thought. The “struggle for existence” is often

erroneously cited as a simple way to suggest “raw tooth and claw struggle.”⁶⁷ This simplistic view, however, as pointed out by Peter Bowler (1976: 632) misses the more complex dualistic nature of evolutionary *struggle*.

The one (view of the struggle for existence) which represents Darwin’s most significant insight relates to the competition between the different individuals of the same species to see which of them shall survive and reproduce. This is the real core of the idea of a struggle for existence; for natural selection to work at all, those individuals with favorable variations must compete with and supplant those which are not so favored. This crucially important element if intraspecies competition I shall call “struggle (a).” It is evident from Darwin, however, that “struggle (a)” is related to another concept, namely, that of the struggle of the species as a whole against its environment. This emerges as the struggle against challenges imposed by the changing nature and limited supply of the other species which serve as food. This concept of interspecies struggle I shall call “struggle (b).”

This dualistic treatment of struggle is especially important for human concerns, because much of “struggle (b)” would seem to be shaped by the policies socially settled to answer, “Who Deserves What.” The multifaceted approach of interpreting the “struggle for existence” should not detract from the competitive spirit by which Darwin invoked the term. Spencer (1898: 530) suggested that the “struggle for existence” would better be understood as the “survival of the fittest,” an interpretation that Darwin subsequently accepted. Darwin is, however, careful to qualify the extent to which “the struggle of existence” should be understood. As Darwin (1859: 116) would note, “I use the term struggle for existence in a large and metaphorical sense.”

⁶⁷ I say erroneously because, pointed out by Castle, Opler, and Dobzhansky, often times evolution (natural selection) occurs more because of geographic separation as opposed to *raw* struggle per se.

CHAPTER 4. DARWIN'S INTELLECTUAL INFLUENCES⁶⁸

Newtonian Influence

Darwin's sources of influence ultimately began in the sphere of the Newtonian scientific model and continued onward through the grasps of the classical liberal political economists of the eighteenth century. "By adapting the work of political economists, Darwin in turn accessed the Newtonian tradition for biology, hoping thereby to gain a hearing for evolutionary theory" (Depew and Weber 1995: 8). This leads to an important question, why use Newton as an impetus for evolutionary theory? The answer can be directly related to the earlier introduced concept, "temporal acceptability of adequate justification." In the early and mid nineteenth century, *good* science meant peppering aspiring scientific views with a variant of Newtonian influence. Darwin managed to masterfully do this, as Depew and Weber (1995: 9) explained,

Darwin sees organic adaptation and the differentiation of lineages in terms of a Newtonian model, a more or less abstract picture of how systems, whether they be planetary, economic, or biologic, can be expected to behave at each instant over time. In general, whatever the entities are that conform to this model, they will have an inertial tendency of some sort driving them off on a tangent. This is diverted and shaped by an external force. The result is a system that maintains itself in equilibrium.

The argument continues that the Darwinian evolutionary model meets this Newtonian

⁶⁸ Darwin had many influences including many prominent geologists of the early nineteenth century, most notably Charles Lyell. Lyell, for instance, would write, "In the universal struggle for existence, the right of the strongest eventually prevails; and the strength and durability of a race depends mainly on its prolificness, in which hybrids are acknowledged to be deficient." *Principles of Geology, Being an Attempt to Explain the Former Changes of the Earth's Surface by Reference to causes Now in Operation*, 2nd edn. (London, 1833) pp.58. For the purposes of this thesis, however, I am mostly concerned with the influences that can be directly associated with either the contrarian or the interventionist.

systems explanation in two important ways,

(First), if individual organisms tend indefinitely to vary, something will be needed to pull them back into the natural kinds, such as species and genera, that we have every reason to think represents real deviations in nature. (Second), because Darwin assumes that parental traits are blended in offspring, sex, like gravity, performs this role. It pulls individual variants back into the circle of kinds. At the same time, the products of sexual blending, again like the force of gravity, trims variation to fit circumstances.

The necessity of incorporating a Newtonian scientific vision is quite clearly a major contributing factor to the success and quickly realized wide-spread appeal of Darwinism, as noted by Depew and Weber (*Ibid.*):

Darwin was not the first to present evolutionary theory, but he was the first to present an evolutionary model that was consistent with Newton's system. It is this accomplishment which made Darwin's evolutionary theory impossible to ignore.

Further, much of the competitive spirit attributed to Darwinism, largely in the form of Social Darwinism, treats competition as natural as gravitational attraction. William Graham Sumner (1914:68), for instance, would note that, competition is a law of nature which, "can no more be done away with than gravitation."

It is, therefore, possible, consistent with the general systems approach which Darwin took, to observe a chain of thought beginning with Newtonian Physics extending through a series of political economists –namely Malthus, Smith, and Ricardo⁶⁹ - and finishing in grand fashion with Darwinism. Similar with any theoretical construct, Darwinism did not emerge independently. Darwin's evolutionary model, instead, is only a piece in a larger jigsaw

⁶⁹ Ricardo is credited with speaking of people as "rational economic agents."

puzzle, and not the table on which the puzzle rests. No single theory can serve as such a table.

The Malthus – Darwin Connection

Tracing intellectual influences is a difficult and tedious endeavor; however, in the case of Darwin (1958: 120) his autobiography makes very clear that Thomas Malthus was of great influence to his evolutionary thought.⁷⁰

In October 1838, that is, fifteen months after I began my systematic inquiry, I happened to read for amusement “Malthus on Population,” and being well prepared to appreciate the struggle for existence which everyone goes on from long-continued observation of the habits of animals and plants, it at once struck me that under these circumstances favorable variations would tend to be preserved, and unfortunate ones to be destroyed. The result of which would be the formation of new species. Here then I had at last got a theory by which to work.

Malthus is best recognized for his idea of “Malthusian Limits”; he argued that increases in population would *inevitably* cause a scarcity of resources and naturally, through starvation, serve as a population check. The language most commonly associated with Malthus is that “population increases geometrically *i.e.*, 2.4.6.8, while the food supply increases arithmetically *i.e.*, 1.2.3.4.” Thus, regardless of whether the species in question breed in the numbers of a fruit fly or a tortoise, the result will *eventually* be the same; starvation is the mechanism by which populations are kept in check. Such an evolutionary check –

⁷⁰ The Malthus – Darwin connection has been a widely studied area, *i.e.*, Peter Vorzimmer, “Darwin, Malthus and the Theory of natural Selection,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol.30 (Oct., 1969), pp.527-42; Sandra Herbert, “Darwin, Malthus and Selection,” *Journal of the History of Biology*, vol.4 (1971), 209-217; Robert M. Young, “Malthus and the Evolutionists: The Common Context of Biological and Social Theory,” *Past and Present*, (May 1969), pp. 109-145; Barry G. Gale, “Darwin and the Concept of a Struggle For Existence: A Study in the Extrascientific Origins of Scientific Ideas,” (1972), pp. 321-44; Peter J. Bowler, “Malthus, Darwin and the Concept of Struggle,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol.37 (Oct – Dec., 1976) pp. 631-650; to name a few. While the degree of the Malthus – Darwin connection is vigorously debated; it is fairly well agreed that such a connection was significant.

Malthusian Limits-, however, take longer to become realized for slow breeding species.⁷¹

Malthus' work, "*An Essay on the Principle of Population*" was written in direct response to what he considered overly optimistic Enlightenment thinkers, *i.e.* Godwin, and Condorcet. This becomes quite clear when the entire title of Malthus's seminal work is noted, *An Essay on the Principle of Population, as it Affects the Future improvement of Society, with Remarks on the Speculations of Mr. Godwin, M. Condorcet, and Other Writers.* Robert Young (1969: 112) described the intellectual process, by which the Malthusian law of population was established,

In the writings of Condorcet and Godwin, Utopian speculation had reached a stage which contemplated indefinite progress toward the complete absence of struggle among men; no illness, no sexual urges, no cares. ... Reason was supreme, birth and death could conceivable cease to occur, and society could approach perfect harmony. The significance of this view for the history of evolutionary theory is that it so affronted Malthus's sense of reality that it occasioned his essay. Even though Malthus softened his doctrine in later editions, it altered the image of nature from benign harmony to an inexorable imbalance between nature's supply of subsistence and man's need for both food and sex.

What began as a backlash against utopian Enlightenment though, found itself manifested in an "important catalyst for the development of evolutionary theory (Young)." The question is whether Malthus went too far in his attack upon what he maintained as destructive utopian thought, that is, whether he swung the pendulum of proposed human conditions too far in the opposite –struggle oriented- direction. Malthus (1826: 1) would, by the sixth edition of his *Essay (1817)*, admit as much,

It is probable that having found the bow bent too much one way, I was induced to bend it too much the other, in order to make it straight. But I shall always be quite ready to blot out any part of the work which is considered by a competent tribunal as having a tendency to prevent the bow from becoming finally straight, and to impede the progress of truth.

⁷¹ Malthus argued that two types of checks, positive and preventive, might help strike a balance between humans and the food supply. Positive checks are those, which lead to the reduction of living people, these would include famine, disease and war. While preventative checks are those, which would lead to a lower birth rate this would involve, what Malthus would label "moral restraint" –basically less sex. Malthus did not hold much hope out that preventative checks would work. What Malthus could have never predicted is that preventative checks on the population now largely involve not "moral restraint," but contraception.

The tenuous attainment of the exact point of “equilibrium” sought by Malthus did little to detract from the popular and academic speculation, and treatment, of a Malthusian *law* of population. As made clear by one Malthusian scholar, “Malthus’s ideas were as commonplace in the first half of the nineteenth century as Freud’s were in the twentieth.”

The lasting impact of Malthusian thought upon Darwinism can be found in the importance that Malthus attaches with “competitive struggle.” Malthus (1817: 17), for instance, when writing about early human primitive tribes noted,

And when they fell in with any tribes like their own, the contest was a struggle for existence, and they fought with desperate courage, inspired by the reflection that death was the punishment for defeat and life the price of victory.

This notion of the competitive struggle for scarce resources would become an important part of what Darwin would refer to as the “struggle for existence.” Darwin, for instance, consistent with his Malthusian influence noted, “Like a hundred thousand wedges trying to force every kind of adapted structure into the gaps by forcing out the weaker ones (Weber and Depew pp. 123).” Here, using a strict biological precept of evolution, the question “Who Deserves What” is being understood pursuant to a struggle for life-giving resources. The organism that can find food *deserves* to live because its life, and the future success of the species, is advanced through the competitive struggle for resources. Further, consistent with “natural selection,” this struggle will only help to ensure that stronger and more adaptive traits are passed from each generation to the next. As the weak perish so too expire the disadvantageous trait(s) that led to demise of the less skillfully endowed organism. If these organisms reproduce, however, before they perish then it is likely that their offspring will be *cursed* with the same disadvantageous traits.

Natural selection *works* in *nature* because usually organisms with severe disadvantages perish before they can reproduce and pass along the disadvantage. By blending these evolutionary assumptions with a competitive interpretation it becomes possible to find a type of “social virtue” *i.e.*, not assisting the survival of the poor, in the seemingly vulgar notion of Malthusian Limits. Take for instance how Malthus (1817: 361) referred to the general condition of humanity,

Man is sinful, inert, sluggish, and adverse to labor, unless compelled by necessity. Had population and food increased in the same ratio, it is probable that man might never have emerged from the savage state.

The implication is clear; social evolutionism cannot occur unless people engage in a condition of competitive struggle. This idea should be remembered, as it might tend to suggest that if a sociopolitical community decides to “assist the poor,” then its action - although well intentioned- might thwart *positive* social evolution. Before, too much is made of this contention, however, it would be helpful to review how Malthus and Darwin suggested that population limits were related with modern human (social) evolution.

Does the measure of one’s wealth correlate with their evolutionary aptness, or alternatively is one’s wealth a measure of chance occurrence (non-evolutionary aptness) and little more? This question does, after all, represent the crux of many connections between the natural selection hypothesis of biological evolution and sociopolitical concern of “Who Deserves What.” If a measure of wealth somehow marks those who possess superior genotypes, then the implication is that by peeking at a bank statement, it is somehow possible to gauge the evolutionary aptness of the person in question. Helping the poor eat, therefore, will only *artificially* keep members of the species reproducing who are bound to pass along their disadvantageous traits to future generations. Malthus, while supporting the notion of laissez-faire market conditions, did, however, hold the above argument to be largely in error.

For Malthus, the poor generally owed their condition to a “lottery” of sorts, and not necessarily lack of ability or evolutionary station.⁷² As Peter Bowler (1976: 640) noted,

Malthus tended to work with a single view of society as divided into two classes; a small group controlling enough wealth to escape the general misery, and the great mass of the laboring poor. In other words, for him “the poor” were not an underprivileged minority driven to the bottom of the social scale as a result of their own inefficiency, but the whole laboring population. ... He spoke of the poor in fact, as those who have “in the great lottery of life, drawn a blank.”

This passage contains implications for the policy treatment of “Who Deserves What” based upon evolutionary concerns, especially when it is considered that Darwin’s mention of a “struggle for existence” was a response to anti-utopian Malthusian sentiment.

Granting the assumption that every person may start from an equal monetary position, with an equal opportunity to gain or lose the wealth with which he had started, then perhaps monetary measures might assess a general evolutionary adaptedness. By logical extension, the argument could be made that the “best of the species” would have the opportunity to have and care for more children, thus linking monetary gain with biological and social evolution. Even as a hypothetical situation, however, this description of the possible linkage between wealth accumulation and the natural selection theory of evolution fails under the weight of an unavoidable paradox. Grant for a moment the conditions under which an “equal economic playing field” has been assumed. The inheritance of material wealth from one generation to the next would implicitly suggest that chance of birth (the lottery of life) and not general ability would axiomatically begin to infect the next generation of the human species, *i.e.*, ability and adaptedness to the environment would become secondary to the inheritance of

⁷² While Malthus generally argued that the poor were not to *blame* for their condition, he did treat the matter deterministically. For Malthus, no amount of government intervention can change the fact that there will always be a far greater number of poor than wealthy.

wealth.⁷³ In this manner, it becomes clear that to generally link monetary achievement with evolution adaptedness is not only a hopelessly hypothetical notion, but one that would have to be repeatedly conjured up for each successive generation under review.⁷⁴

From a social evolutionary perspective, progression *could* potentially be measured by the successful elimination of *disadvantageous* traits from the population, but what would constitute an assessment of these traits, and more troubling “how” would this elimination occur?⁷⁵ Only a handful of contrarians, and no interventionists, would be willing to supplant the logical extrapolations from the above reasoning to advise the death of those who could not find food as a means to answer the question “Who Deserves What.” The early twentieth century in America, however, was marked with a series of sterilization laws designed to prevent the “mentally unfit” from passing along their *disadvantageous* traits to future generations. For the interventionist, escaping the grips of natural selection’s painful reality is an endeavor, perhaps the most important endeavor, to be waged by the policy maker. In rejecting this intervention, the contrarian holds steadfast to the belief that the unfettered

⁷³ Writing in, *A Theory of Justice*, John Rawls argued that most of the success or failure that we endure in life is largely a condition of *amoral* traits surrounding the conditions circumstances of our birth. If an individual is born with a genetic disposition towards strength or intelligence, then they did well in the “natural lottery,” but as Rawls continues this does not constitute a moral reason why they ought to *deserve* more than the individual who was born without the proper “lottery numbers.” Rawls discussion is helpful because it goes beyond typical treatments of the “natural lottery” involving systems of privilege, *i.e.*, race, class, and gender. Rawls, instead, makes the case that even the talents we are born *potentially* possessing offer us no increased moral claim to a higher level of deservedness.

⁷⁴ This is, of course, not to say that social evolutionary arguments mean nothing in a discourse involving “Who Deserves What.”

⁷⁵ Many contemporary thinkers argue that rooting out “disadvantageous traits,” better wise known as eugenics, is subject to a morally indefensible amount of subjective intrusion into individuals’ lives. However, Plato shared no such moral outrage with eugenics-based social engineering. Plato advocated the selective mating practices, which he felt would help ensure the success of the larger sociopolitical (city) community.

market is best suited to emancipate the person from the pains of natural selection.⁷⁶

Making Evolutionism Fit into an Enlightenment Vision of Political Economy

Recall from the brief treatment of Newtonian physics that the crux of the Newtonian scientific model is that an object “goes off on a tangent,” and then is brought back to the fray by some external source. Adam Smith⁷⁷ saw the potential for this physical scientific theory to be applied *directly* to human agents, and more specifically in the matter of deciding “Who Deserves What.” For Smith, *self-interest* is both the driving force and stabilizer of economic activity. This notion of self-interest, however, does not imply acting in *any* manner one wishes. As noted by Hayek (1958: 238),

What is frequently not understood but need not be stressed again is that to Smith and his contemporaries this result (self-interest) did not come from individuals acting completely as they pleased but from each confining himself to the sphere to which the rules of law and morals confined him.

A full understanding of what Smith meant by the benevolence of self-interest suggests that a Darwinian “struggle for existence” is not constrained to a tooth and claw interpretation of raw struggle.

As symbolically represented by the Newtonian model, the individual “goes off on a tangent,” but it is not certain that this tangent will be destructive because external market forces (supply and demand) will ensure a sort of market equilibrium.⁷⁸ It is often neglected

⁷⁶ In rejecting the concept of the English “poor laws” Spencer maintained that his position is often seen as harsh when in reality it is anything but harsh. Spencer maintained that by attempting to trump evolutionary and market process the government was only ensuring that more future individuals would suffer poverty. As Spencer might say a little pain now will save a lot of pain in the future. As unkind as the market may seem at times it is still the best means to decide “Who Deserves What.”

⁷⁷ Smith is often treated as a political economist, which is not completely inaccurate. It is often forgotten or neglected, however, that Smith was a moral philosopher at the University of Glasgow. Smith was very much concerned with how a commercial economy under the control of moral actors could be understood in a moral sense.

⁷⁸ The contributions of both Smith and Bentham have been greatly under appreciated in one important manner. Both thinkers sought to apply scientific laws to the human. Without this important step social evolutionary arguments would forever be trapped in the realm of speculative thought.

that Smith readily admitted this equilibrium was dependent upon the absence of one, or a few, economic actors to enforce *their* self-interest as the prevailing interest of the marketplace, *i.e.*, a successful market depends upon a *fair* market. With important implications for Darwin's evolutionism, Smith held that what happens to the whole is a function of what the separate parts do. Darwin, after all, viewed the process of natural selection as the natural mechanism that serves to explain the aggregate occurrence (evolution) involved when individual actors "struggle for existence." As Adam Smith (1937: 26-7) is popularly quoted as saying, "It is not the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest." Smith (1976: 25) is, nonetheless, less frequently noted as writing, "And hence it is, that to feel much for others and little for ourselves, that to restrain our selfishness, and to indulge our benevolent affections, constitutes the perfection of human nature." Given these qualifications that Smith places on the notion of self-interest as virtue it would be a mistake to understand the notion simplistically. Nevertheless, the metaphor of the competitive self-interested functional marketplace played a substantial role in the value that Darwin ascribed to the competitive individualistic "struggle for existence." By this point, however, it should become clearer that such a struggle is not *necessarily* competitive or individualistic.

Why then the typical association with Darwinism as a conservative slogan for government non-interference and strict laissez faire economics? This question, after all, could become very important in an address of "Who Deserves What." The answer seems to be found in the way in which Darwinism formed as an intellectual influence for thinkers in the late nineteenth century. A *slogan* as broad as the "struggle for existence" can be

interpreted in many different ways. Consider, for instance, how William Graham Sumner (1914: 90) used the idea of the “struggle for existence” to speak on behalf of millionaires,

The millionaires are a product of natural selection, acting on the whole body of men to pick out those who can meet the requirement of certain work to be done ... They get high wages and live in luxury, but the bargain is a good one for society.

Sumner’s idea here seeks to synthesize Darwinian evolutionary theory with that of Smith’s invisible hand and laissez faire assumptions, *i.e.*, that Social Darwinism does not follow logically from Darwinism, but instead from a Darwinistic –usually ideologically laden– cocktail of sorts.

Darwin seldom, and never in the *Origin*, endorsed specific theories of social redistribution –or the lack thereof. Cultural influences, specifically those rooted in the Enlightenment hope of Newtonian scientific laws and Smith’s market mechanism, *i.e.*, the invisible hand, are evident in both Darwinian notions of the “struggle for existence” and the idea of “natural selection.” It is important to realize, however, that Darwin’s influences were exactly that, influences. It is foolish to become blind to the glaring similarities and consistencies between classical liberal (contrarian) thought and the undeniable tones explicit in the theory of evolution as *presented* by Darwin. A greater foolishness, however, can be found in the complete skeptic who can see no other way to apply evolutionary thought than to that of a contrarian mode. As it will become apparent as this thesis develops, interventionists are more than capable of using (Darwinism) evolutionism to advance their position. Darwin made evolutionary thinking scientifically respectable, just as Newton made science respectable, and just as Smith had challenged the social thinker to appreciate a proposed relationship between Newton’s “new science” and the fundamental social question of “Who Deserves What.” It would represent a defeatist attitude of the worst kind to

abandon an analysis of evolutionism simply because the idea was *influenced* by culture –a simplistic critique which could be used to attack *any* argument. Cultural influences should amplify the appreciation of how thoughts come about, not serve to dismiss the powerful influence of the fusion between culture and thought.

CHAPTER 5. EVOLUTIONISM IN SOCIOLOGY

Background

Evolutionary arguments, by their very nature, profess a certain degree of prophetic appeal, a magical sense of predicting the future schema of societal structure. Social evolutionary arguments, likewise, profess to make predictive statements, based largely upon an assessment of the past, about the future appearance and workings of societal organizational structure. Social evolutionism, however, struggles with one nagging concern, *environmental* change. Thinkers who espouse social evolutionary theory do not attempt to explain the result of any *individual* actor; instead they make predictions regarding the aggregate of collective social behavior and action. The relationship between society and nature is both under examined and vitally important. As Bookchin (1987: 59) explained,

The evolution of society out of nature and the ongoing interaction between the two tend to be lost in the words that do not tell us enough about the vital association between nature and society and about the importance of defining such disciplines as economics, psychology, and sociology in natural as well as social terms.

The biologist or psychologist is concerned with the changes of an individual organism, but the environment (the condition that enables change) is always one step ahead of any *individually* directed notion of change. Dobzhansky (1956: 591) makes clear the role of the environment in an evolutionary process as he remarked,

The environment does not change the genotype of the living species directly, as some evolutionist of the past have wrongly assumed. The role of the environment consists rather in that it constantly presents challenges to the species; to these challenges the species may respond either by adaptive modification or by extinction.

It would seem that in order to survive and adapt the human species has survived because, “they were particularly sensitive and adaptable in their total reactions to each other, to other animals, and to the environment” (Opler 1947: 642). In other words, the ability of people or cultures to *socially* evolve marks the primary mechanism by which they adapt to environmental contingencies, *i.e.*, social and biological evolutionism seem to be linked in this important fashion. Lamarck would deal with environmental contingencies by suggesting that organisms can “will” their direction, largely regardless of environmental concerns, a suggestion that Darwin, and most scientific studies since, have concluded is ridiculous. The “will to power,” originally expressed in Lamarck’s evolutionary biology, and more fully developed by Nietzsche’s moral philosophy, might be a useful analytical tool concerned with evaluating human social *relations*, but it does little to explain the environmental struggle between peoples and their natural environments. How can one “will” away the winds of a tornado or the waters of a flood?

It is a blending of social action with the dictates of seemingly unpredictable environmental forces that forms a void of “future knowledge.” Even if Comte’s hopes were to be realized, and sociologists are able to perform a sort of “social physics,” *i.e.* offer predictive statements as to how an aggregate of individuals will behave, such an analysis would likely use a closed-systems environmental model. In order to make predictions regarding the behaviors of an organism, or an aggregate thereof, one must first know what it is environmentally “outside the control of the actor” that triggers the response of the organism. Thus when concerns of “future knowledge” are evaluated, two types of *triggering* emerge, 1) first cause triggering, or that which occurs unknown to the social actor, and 2) primary cause triggering, or that which occurs from first cause triggering to gain a reaction

from a social actor. The social evolutionary thinker holds that this environmental void is not bottomless, but instead can be filled, and indeed foreseen, as societies change in accordance with various environmental dictates and the will/action of the sociopolitical community under investigation.

Scientific Magic

As Richard Cavendish (1977:1) explained, “Magic is as old as man.” It “is an attempt to exert power through actions which are believed to have a direct and automatic influence on man, nature and the divine.” This talk of magic is just foolishness; every educated person knows that magic, or the ability to tell the future, is just nonsense, right? Well, not exactly. Modern science, usually understood as possessing no magical characteristics, is indeed a sort of predictive *magic*. For instance, anyone, priest or pauper, can *predict* the time it will take for an object to fall to earth if he simply knows the mass of the object and the speed of gravity (9.8 meters/second²). Science is a powerful intellectual and practical force because, using basic Newtonian laws, a certain amount of the future exists without doubt, *so long as the environment is controlled with unwavering certainty*. The future of physical inanimate objects is not in dispute; however, in predicting the course of living organisms, environmental complications can challenge the amount of control necessary to make science *magically* predictive. Nonetheless, Man is, as Aristotle noted a “political animal”; and as such the curiosity with magical prediction cannot be silenced with the examination of a ball or apple, it must instead entertain a future conception of social order. It is this human condition of explaining and examining the circumstances of a “relentlessly changing social

order,” that becomes the justification for finding magical (scientific) ways to advance social evolutionary arguments.⁷⁹

Charles Darwin may rightly be credited with utilizing Newtonian physics as a building block to formulate a respectable “scientific” theory of evolution; however, a variety of influential social thinkers did not wait for Newtonian Physics before offering speculation about evolutionary change in human society. Saint Augustine, in fact, would write about “Christian Evolutionism” in *City of God* nearly 1500 years before Darwin’s seminal work. As the Renaissance, and shortly thereafter the Enlightenment, lifted the heavy religious veil of the Middle Ages from the fog of Europe, those invoking social evolutionary arguments would make further secular advancements. Bishop Bossuet, Baron Turgot, and Marie Condorcet all authored notable universal histories written during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Orenstein). Even, or especially ancient scholars, such as Polybius, argued that generally, social and political structures followed a natural teleological sequence of stages.

Sociology, if it is to imply anything about the future, is necessarily intertwined with the past. As Norman Gottwald reminds, “History without sociology is blind, sociology without history is empty (Goudsblom pp. 30).” Sociology without history is empty because the only way to realize the importance of contemporary social structures is to appreciate that these structures are part of a much larger historical cumulative process. The desire to make sense of the future by reviewing the past (the essential notion of evolutionary theory) is the

⁷⁹The notable twentieth century German philosopher, Martin Heidegger, would devote much of his writing to explaining that Western modernity, in Europe, is plagued with the insatiable desire to technologically “control.” Perhaps social evolutionism is another means by which the conditions of Man seek to magically and predictably *control*.

temptation of sociopolitical animals. In describing social evolutionary theory Ashley and Orenstein (2001:11) concluded, “Most classical social theorists believed that societies followed a series of sequential stages, each with its own form of social organization.” In a similar, yet expanded treatment of social evolutionism, Erik Wright (1983: 26) offered the following description,

For a theory of society to be evolutionary three conditions must hold:

- (1) The theory involves a typology of social forms which *potentially* has some kind of directionality to it.
- (2) It is possible to order these forms in such a way that the probability of staying at the same level of the typology is greater than the probability of regressing.
- (3) In the ordered typology, there is a positive probability of moving from a given level in the typology to the next higher level.

These straightforward observations contain several important insights. First, social evolution is not a haphazard process; it is subject to follow a series of sequential stages. Second, each of these *necessary* stages contains a specific form of social organization. It is, therefore, a misunderstanding of social evolutionary thinking to conclude that “bad” stages of societal evolution exist. Instead, *all* stages are important as they pave the way for the development of future social stages.⁸⁰ Alternatively, Mark Granovetter argued that an adequate measurement of advancement in social evolutionary arguments is impossible to achieve. Granovetter (1979: 511), stated his two-pronged argument in the following way,

The attack has proceeded on two grounds. First, ranking societies according to current efficiency ultimately reduces to a task equivalent to the fruitless interpersonal comparison of utilities no longer attempted by economists. Second, ranking societies according to their flexibility or adaptability requires a level of prediction of future system problems which is unlikely, in principle, to be achieved.

⁸⁰ One of the best cases to illustrate this point is the manner in which Marx treated capitalism. Marx understood capitalism as a necessary precursor to the final *goal* of a communist state. While Marx felt that capitalism was morally repugnant he never suggested that it should not exist. Quite the opposite, Marx actually argued that capitalism *had* to exist if communism was ever to be realized.

Prominent Social Evolutionary Thinkers

The most notable social thinkers to entertain evolutionary arguments include Comte, Hegel, Spencer, Marx, Veblen, and Pareto. This list, however, could be greatly extended consistent with a more encompassing view of social evolutionism.⁸¹ Interestingly, the common evolutionary tendency among these thinkers did not serve to create a unification of social thought; actually the level of thought integrated among these theorists spans across an ideological spectrum just as vast as that separating the contrarian and the interventionist.⁸² Auguste Comte, aside from successfully advocating positivistic means to study social phenomena, argued that the human mind along with human social order travel through three general stages of evolution: the theological, metaphysical, and positive stages.⁸³ It is only after the human mind, and ensuing social structures thereof, advance to the positivistic stage of evolution that social ills might be *fixed* with a type of *social physics*. Thus Comte viewed the social evolutionary process as positive and developmentally beneficial.

Hegel would introduce the idea of dialectic as the mechanism by which a universal spirit (*geist*) would direct the whole of human history. He argued that the “struggle for recognition” distinguishes the human being from the animal. Accordingly, Hegel would ask, what animal would risk death for such symbolic endeavors as the capture of an enemy flag?

⁸¹ Durkheim and Tonnies, for instance, are generally not considered to be social evolutionary thinkers, however both thinkers expoused a view of society –mechanic/organic in the case of Durkheim and *gemeinschaft/gesellschaft* for Tonnies- as “evolving” from a simple homogenous social order to a more complex heterogeneous order.

⁸² The brief mention and attention to each of these theorists is important to explore evolutionism in sociology. However, in the forthcoming sections outlining the contributions of the contrarian and the interventionist my focus will be upon social evolutionary arguments that are postulated to answer the question “Who Deserves What.”

⁸³ It should also be noted that many social evolutionary thinkers also advocated a series of substages to compliment their general stages of social evolution. For instance, Comte had substages intermingled in with all three of his general evolutionary stages; Comte’s theological stage involved the substage sequence of fetishism, polytheism, and monotheism.

If Hegel is granted his argument –a condition Thomas Hobbes and other materialists would not approve- human evolution becomes much more complicated than Darwin’s notion of the “struggle for existence,” it becomes more aptly a fierce “struggle of recognition.” For Hegel, people not afraid to risk their lives became masters while those who valued safety above recognition became slaves. The *masters* wish to be recognized by their equals, but instead they have only *slaves* to show admiration. This internal contradiction (dialectic) constantly haunts social schema until the state, as a liberal democracy, emerges to settle all contradiction. Hegel would sometimes refer to the final settlement of all contradiction as the “negation of the negation.”

Spencer, like his predecessor Hegel, desired to create a complete philosophical evolutionary social synthesis, but unlike Hegel his approach to doing so was grounded in British empiricism rather than German idealism (as such his system was much more in tune with the “realistic” pragmatic disposition of most Americans). Spencer maintained that societies begin with very simple forms of organization then advance to the stage of doubly compound societies, and then finally advanced towards a trebly compound form of social organization. Spencer’s primary goal in his evolutionary synthesis is to explain the change from homogenous to heterogeneous social structure. As Spencer (1891: 10) argued:

It is settled beyond dispute that organic progress consists in a change from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous. Now, we propose in the first place to show, that this law of organic progress is the law of all progress. Whether it be in the development of the Earth, in the development of life upon its surface, in the development of society, of government, of manufactures, of commerce, of language, literature, sciences, art, this same evolution from the simple to the complex, through successive differentiations. From the earliest traceable cosmical changes down to the latest results of civilization, we shall find the transformation of the homogeneous into the heterogeneous, is that in which progress essentially consists.

The guiding force directing social evolution, for Spencer, was military style conflict, but he argued that social evolution –if it was to progress- moved away from the militant and towards the industrial. For this reason Spencer, throughout the course of his life, became increasingly dismayed with his government’s decision to become increasingly involved with military affairs.

Alternately, Karl Marx would introduce a system of social evolution, borrowing concepts from Hegel’s dialectic, suggesting that class conflict as opposed to military aggression, best explained the processes of social evolution. For Marx, societal stages could be broken up in the following economic language: Preclass societies, Asiatic societies, Ancient societies, Feudal societies, Capitalistic societies, Socialist societies, and finally Communist societies. Marx maintained that the inherent conflict between the proletariat (workers) and the bourgeoisie (owners) within a capitalistic social structure would serve as the *inevitable* mechanism, driving contemporary social evolution towards a communist state.

Finally, Thorstein Veblen would postulate that social evolution develops as societies move through the three basic stages of savagery, barbarianism, and finally civilization. The term “move” replaces “advance” in the above assessment because the change in social order as designated by the categorizations of savagery, barbarism, and civilization do not necessarily represent an “advancement.” For Veblen savagery was the most simple and peaceful form of social order, barbarism representing the institutionalization of violence, and civilization as being more peaceful and industrialized than barbarism. With important implications for the question “Who Deserves What” Veblen viewed socioeconomic evolution and history as dichotomously represented by what he termed the “predatory class” and the “industrious class.” The predatory or leisure class actually do little for the good of society,

but are able to maintain their status with an appeal to “conspicuous consumption” – a term he used to denote waste and the excesses glorified by the upper class, *i.e.*, a well mowed yard, the newest fashions and jewelry. Veblen would ask, “what do these measures of wealth actually add to the efficiency or *good* of civilization?”

This simple review of classical social evolutionary thinkers should make clear that evolution is a frequently utilized theory in examining social order, but the use of this theoretical approach is open to a variety of sociological interpretations. Further, this wide variety of “evolutionary relativism” should not serve as a frustration to the contemporary sociologist, but should instead inspire appreciation to what C. Wright Mills would label the “sociological imagination.” Evolutionism does indeed inspire a great deal of socially oriented imagination, and it is this imagination which best embraces the contrarian and interventionist.

Confronting the “Ugly” Side of Social Evolutionism

The seemingly magical and well-developed aspects of social evolutionary arguments do not preclude them from having a disadvantageous and destructive “ugly” component. For this reason Robert Bannister (1979:3) began his book *Social Darwinism: Science and Myth in Anglo-American Social Thought* by noting, “Social Darwinism, as almost everyone knows, is a bad thing.” This observation, while biting, makes a clear point; often, too often indeed, social evolutionary arguments have been used to offer some sort of morally defensible racist or sexist argument.⁸⁴ There would come to be no shortage of futile attempts arguing that if

⁸⁴ It seems appropriate to distinguish between blatant racism and the type of ethnocentrism common during the late nineteenth century and still present today. Although neither position is adequate to broach moral concerns, they are not entirely equivalent. Often ethnocentric arguments were used by classical social theorists as descriptive measures to demonstrate the distinction between “simple societies” and more “complicated” (European) societies.

one group of people defeated another, militarily, economically, technologically or culturally, they were, according to Darwin's "struggle for existence," (morally) superior. After all, the members of the more "successful" group, survived while, those belonging to the other group did not. One noticeable flaw in this reason was in that Darwin never envisioned the "struggle for existence" would be waged with machine guns and the threat of nuclear weapons. Adding military technologies to the "struggle for existence" seems to do much more than establish who should *naturally* survive.

It is logically indefensible to argue that because all members of a culture benefit from the innovations of a few, that somehow *all* members of the culture are superior to the members of an opposing culture, which did not have member(s) who made similar impacting innovations. Before arguing she is "better" because of what she possesses, she should ask herself, "How did I actually accumulate and contribute to the *things* that I have?" The comfort and security that many in Western culture enjoy is almost never *solely* earned. It is not surprising, however, that most of these same individuals extrapolate their comfort and security to some act they have done to deserve such conditions; just as this reasoning is flawed, it is also flawed to suggest that those with less physical comfort are inferior.⁸⁵ Any effort to use social evolutionary arguments (labeled as Social Darwinism or otherwise) to make blatant moral statements regarding an entire society or group therein will fail logical scrutiny. As Morris Opler (1947: 637) argued,

Consequently, to discriminate or legislate against persons or groups on racial grounds is to penalize others because they are in average 95 or 98 percent like the average of your own group in physical traits instead of the sanctioned 100 percent.

⁸⁵ This concept of "getting what you deserve" can be traced back, in at least one sense, to the Protestant notion of "predestination."

What is worse is that such misplaced racist and sexist arguments have given a black eye to social evolutionary arguments in general. As observed by Callinicos (1999:6),

Evolutionary social theory fell into discredit in part because of the influence of thinkers such as Weber, who stressed the intentional character of human action and therefore the fundamental difference between the social and the natural sciences, but also because of the role played by the biological racism in the NAZI holocaust.

Social evolutionary arguments do not make real concurrent racist or sexist justifications; instead, to the logically consistent thinker, they act as a means by which to comprehend the complex process of social organization.

Organicism and Naturalism

Social evolutionism is often associated with two related concepts, organicism and naturalism. Organicism is the notion that the evolution of a social organization can be thought of as analogous to the development of a singular biological organism. The most notable sociological use of organicism was that developed by Emile Durkheim in his use of the metaphor of an organism to describe the way in which social parts, through a division of labor, function properly.⁸⁶ What organicism gains in speculative comparison it often loses in explanatory power. Whereas the development of an organism is a fairly settled matter (a normally developing person will develop two arms and two legs at a given time interval) the notion of evolution is a constantly (due to environmental conditions) changing proposition. The heart of a developing fetus must develop at specific time intervals or the organism will die, but the developmental patterns of any particular social order seem to be individualized to specific cultural and environmental dictates. The organicist is advocating, analogously

⁸⁶ Other notable instances of organicism in social thought include Hobbes's *Leviathan* and Spencer's conception of social order.

through the highly regimented natural processes of organisms, a teleologically determined view of social evolution.

Interestingly, Darwin's theory of evolution is largely credited with removing teleological reasoning from naturalistic thought. Proponents of naturalism suggest that natural, as opposed to supernatural laws, dictate human affairs. The naturalistic view is by definition vague, but is most notably invoked with the frequently used, but seldom understood phrase, "according to human nature." Such an appeal to human nature or natural law is an extension of naturalistic reasoning. Naturalism might appear to be grounded in little more than philosophic speculation; however, this "speculation" often creates the intangible values that serve to direct the course over which social evolutionary arguments travel. It is this type of "speculation" that transformed naturalistic Darwinism into a prominent form of conservative anti-reform laissez faire social Darwinism of the early twentieth century. As Eric Foner maintained,

Spencer, of course, preceded Darwin; well before the publication of *The Origin of the Species*, Spencer not only coined the term "survival of the fittest" but developed a powerful critique of all forms of state intervention with the "natural" workings of society, including regulation of business and public assistance to the poor. But Spencer's followers seized up the authority of Darwin's work to claim scientific legitimacy for their outlook and to press home the analogy between the natural and social world, both of which they claimed, evolved according to natural laws.

Recall, that it was a conception of *natural* rights, as first politically outlined in the American Declaration of Independence as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, which provided the justification for violent American Revolution.

Returning to an earlier Hobbesian proposition, Men could "behave like wolves toward one another" for any number of naturalistic reasons. People are perhaps naturally programmed to feast on one another in their struggle for scarce resources, such as food.

Conversely, Men might be the “noble savages” that Rousseau envisioned them to be in their “natural state”; and thus it is the advent of society, not “human nature,” which turns Man into an insatiable wolf. Marx, and other socialist thinkers, would come to advance this notion of the naturally good and perfectible person. In either event, it is important to take note that naturalistic arguments are often an integral part of larger more systematic approaches to social evolutionism. Naturalistic arguments provide the necessary origins associated with the many various historically induced conceptions, and subsequent treatments, of social evolution.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ The vast majority of human history, more than 90%, occurred before written records were kept. Thus, human nature, and the origins of humanity, remains a necessary speculative endeavor of the social evolutionary theorist.

CHAPTER 6. THE INTERVENTIONIST

A Deeper Reading of the Ideal Type

The general ideological disposition of the interventionist towards poverty welfare has been briefly examined, but more specificity is needed. After all, state intervention can manifest itself in an innumerable number of ways. The state, as represented by all contemporary nation-states, can actively intervene to prosecute and punish a citizen under a criminal statute, establish property and other civil rights, offer varying degrees of social services. The interventionist, however, is concerned with a specific, less broad, type of intervention: economic intervention intended to redistribute/transfer wealth from one social class to another –a mode of intervention which in various and diverse styles is practiced by most sociopolitical communities. The method of economic intervention, like general intervention, can occur in a plethora of ways. Policy boards in the former Soviet Union, for instance, actively intervened to set the prices of most publicly available commodities –this momentous, yet inefficient task contributed to the eventual collapse of the system. The interventionist described in this thesis is not concerned with using evolutionary theory or thought to justify whatever a state *might* decide regarding socioeconomic policy; only that evolutionary thinking can be used to justify the *mandatory* redistribution of wealth from one socioeconomic class to another. Thus, simply treating the interventionist as “one of those communists” is nothing more than an illogical *ad hominem* attack.

The interventionist is aided by the observation that the question of whether a contemporary nation-state ought to intervene, in *any* fashion, has become an affirmatively settled matter. Even the most stringent modern libertarians advise the state to intervene when

“individual liberties,” *i.e.* property rights, are unduly challenged.⁸⁸ Therefore, *every* sociopolitical actor, be they in favor or opposition to poverty welfare, is in the *business* of settling “Who Deserves What.” Even the establishment of property rights, a notion erroneously thought to be in some way “naturalistic,” is an activity wherein people socially negotiate “Who Deserves What.” As Rousseau (1755) noted his sentiments toward the origins of property,

The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, thought to himself to say, this is mine, and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society.

What remains an open concern in modern liberal states,⁸⁹ such as the United States, however, is the extent to which this intervention should be involved with concerns of “poor deservedness,” particularly in a *material* sense. It is not difficult to speculate or formalize through a series of written proclamations, “rules” governing how individuals within a social system, at least, theoretically, possess *civil rights* and *equal opportunity*. These speculations and proclamations, in fact, form the conceptualization necessary to reify, for many Americans, notions of the *American Dream*. These concerns become more difficult, however, when poverty is *directly* confronted. What happens when ideas are not sufficient to ensure that people have access to an adequate standard of living?⁹⁰ The interventionist’s answer is quite simple; actively redistribute wealth among different social classes, regardless of “ideas” that have been socially adopted by *some* to supersede this transfer.

This redistribution takes place as a sociopolitical community *mandates* that an upper socioeconomic class of citizens *must* transfer a portion of the wealth under its control to

⁸⁸ Only the anarchist might disagree with this assessment.

⁸⁹ In this sense I use “liberal state” to encompass the whole of classical liberal thought, not simply the branch of “modern liberalism.”

those of a lower socioeconomic class (as it concerns, this thesis, the extent of this transfer will not serve as strategy to fracture the legitimacy of the interventionist). Notice two important conditions of the interventionist. First, *material* redistribution is a mandated, as opposed to a voluntary, *order* of the sociopolitical community. Charity, giving without the threat of legal sanction, is not the concern of the interventionist.⁹¹ In an 1860 speech to the New York legislature, Elizabeth Cady Stanton remarked, “You who have read the history of nations, from Moses down to our last election, where have you ever seen one class looking out after the interests of another?” Individuals might show occasional benevolence to others in need, but as an economic aggregate a socioeconomic class is concerned solely with the maintenance of the prestige, status, and wealth that class allows. Thus, it would be erroneous to assume that an upper socioeconomic class might decide, absent formal rules and the sanctions to enforce them, to advance the interests, *i.e.* economic prosperity, of the lower classes. For this reason, mandatory intervention driven social reforms become necessary.

Second, the notion of *class* assumes a social order at least somewhat based upon economic factors. A class based economic structure –even if the subject is taboo for most, currently represents a primary component of the contemporary American social experience. This second condition is important because it makes it clear that the interventionist’s evolutionary argument will incorporate, as opposed to mock or “find a way around,” the importance and permanence of socioeconomic class. Marx advanced the social evolutionary argument that the *elimination* of class is essential if humans are to reach the potential of their

⁹⁰ It might appear that “adequate” might be difficult to define in this sense. This, however, is not the case. The United States census uses a definition of poverty based upon income and the price of food to set the “poverty limit” –limit which roughly 15% of all Americans fall under.

species-being, and thus allow the full realization of social evolution, a communist state.

Marx might have argued, if class is eliminated so too must wealth be eliminated, and thus the problem of intervention will take care of itself. That is, there is nothing to distribute because everyone within the system has an equal amount of material. This logical extension of Marxist thought, however, does not seem to be correct. How would any state, communist or otherwise, negate the question, “Who Deserves What?” Presumably, this question would find its answer in that everyone within the state would agree to have the same material possessions, thus “Who Deserves What” becomes settled as everyone within the state evolves towards a position of socially negotiated, and accepted, equality. Marx maintained it is possible for social evolution to be such a powerful force that it can allow for the elimination of a fundamental.⁹² The primary problem with this view (the Marxist elimination of class) is that it depends upon almost unanimous social consent, and likewise becomes exceedingly less likely to find realization as population densities increase and social structures continue to evolve away from “mechanical solidarity” and towards “organic solidarity.” In other words, it is much more probable that a sociopolitical community might agree to certain terms allowing for poverty welfare, than it would be to assume the realization of a communist ideal. Given that the elimination of hierarchical social relationships inherent

⁹¹ Recall the primary question of concern is “Who Deserves What.” How this question is addressed by the benevolence of an individual is interesting, but not sociological. Instead, it is more sociologically productive to evaluate how sociopolitical communities (states) settle this question.

⁹² Aside from the skepticism ensuing from the Marxist argument that the essential might be neglected a more in-depth analysis can ensue. Certainly, “Who Deserves What” is not simply a material question; it can find manifestation in many other ways. Thus it might be worth asking, does the negation of the question in a material sense necessarily negate the question in its entirety? I would suggest not. Thus let us assume that the Marxist vision of materially settling the question “Who Deserves What” becomes realized, what then? Would a utopic community ensue? No, not if “Who Deserves What” is a fundamental social question. People would simply find *other* nonmaterial means by which to settle “Who Deserves What.” Quite possibly this address might actually make for a much less pleasure community. If it were not for money being used to settle our

in social class is unlikely, the interventionist would hold that wealth redistribution as opposed to wealth elimination is the proper means by which to alleviate history's wrongs.

Making "Natural Selection" Applicable to People⁹³

When the uniqueness of individuals is coupled with the relativistic nature of culture what common experience(s) could possibly encompass the "totality of peoples?" Within animal populations the answer is usually reduced to survival; then, "natural selection" becomes noted, in animal populations, as the mechanism of evolution that enhances *survival*. While it cannot be ignored, the obvious importance of human survival, it would be concurrently shortsighted to consider biological survival –in a contemporary American context- as the *direct* aspiration of most social struggles. As Hofstadter (1992: 96) aptly pointed out,

What is called the struggle for existence in modern society is really a struggle for the means of enjoyment. Only the desperately poor, the pauperized, and the criminal are engaged in a struggle for actual existence; and the struggle among the submerged 5 per cent of society can have no selective action on the whole, because even members of this class manage to multiply rapidly before they die. The struggle for enjoyment, while it may have a moderate selective action, is in no way analogous either to natural selection or the artificial selection of the horticulturist. Then the need of mankind is not acquiescence to nature, but a constant struggle to maintain and improve, in opposition to the State of Nature, the State of Art as an organized polity.

People struggle for a vast number of reasons, but generally outright "survival" is not one of these reasons. This does not suggest that a type of "natural selection" does not affect social evolution, only that this *selection* must be interpreted with much more latitude than a strictly survival laden understanding provides. Thus, if natural selection is to be applied to human

fundamental question, then what would be? The answer to this question might prove to be more disheartening than the "money as mechanism" that the Marxist vision tries so desperately to escape.

⁹³ The problem of how to go about applying "natural selection" to people is one of the most troubling concerns of those attempting to mesh social and biological evolutionary views. In this thesis I actively "cover" both views, but acknowledge that a *meshing* of the two usually results in grasping at straws. A social evolutionary view, however, that can provide an interpretation of "natural selection" will most often be more descriptive and enduring than one that cannot.

beings, something other than a literal interpretation of the “struggle for existence” must be interwoven with the operation of such selection.

Under normal circumstances, survival (self-preservation) is sought by all; however, the simple suggestion that an organism, human or otherwise, seeks to continue existence is less than a revolutionary notion. What becomes more useful in a social evolutionary discussion is evaluating whether the totality of peoples figurative “struggles for existence” generally make use of any particularly designated *mechanism*. As was examined earlier, Darwin suggested, and has since been scientifically vindicated, in a general way, natural selection serves as the mechanism that guides the *natural* “struggle for existence.” However, if the scientific language of natural selection were translated into a comprehensive understanding of human history, what would the mechanism of survival represent? What would be included in an evaluation of how the “totalities of all peoples” socially change and develop? A compelling case, using an interventionist argument, translates natural selection into *interdependence* as opposed to an autonomous sense of individuality. Without overly stressing the biological generational dependence of all infant mammals⁹⁴ other convincing, historically driven, reasons suggest that human survival has *long* been an *interdependent* as opposed to an individualistic endeavor.

Interventionist Thought

Interventionist arguments, those that use evolutionary theory to advocate some

⁹⁴ Speaking in a strictly biological sense a human must be subject to almost complete dependence for the first five years of life. This dependence represents, especially in less complex societies, a tremendous human “investment” of both time and effort. This seemingly obvious fact appears to be lost on many who argue that humans are naturally very selfish and uncaring beings. If this were the case surely infanticide in most every instance would occur in one form or another well before five long years transpired.

degree of poverty welfare, are diverse in their origins and contentions. These arguments, nonetheless, may be generally captured by an appeal to one or a combination of the following concerns. 1) The nature and function of government has evolved to the point wherein “the people” are sovereign, *i.e.*, United States. This being the case, there is less concern with a tyrannical political structure “redistributing” wealth in a capricious manner. Hofstadter (1992: 72) using this blending of political and social evolutionism as he noted,

The natural-law and laissez-faire dogmas had been useful intellectual devices in the days when society was being freed from monarchical and oligarchic rule. It was natural enough to oppose governmental interference when government was in the hands of autocrats, but it is a folly to cling to this opposition in an age of representative government when the popular will can be exerted through legislative action. The assumptions are obsolete.

2) Cooperation as opposed to competition offers the best treatment of “natural selection,” and the “struggle for existence” as applied to social evolutionism. Poverty welfare, therefore, is an action of the community, which by its cooperative mission serves to advance social evolution. 3) When speaking of a “social” environment most common assumptions regarding the idea of “nature” are either ambiguous or wrong. Thus sociologists must be extremely careful about making assumptions imposed by capitalistic ideology, and applying them towards discourses regarding poverty welfare. It is not that ideology is “right” or “wrong,” but that it serves to reify conceptions of *nature* and evolutionary processes that are then thought to be unquestionably correct. As a review of prominent interventionist thinkers is introduced, it should be noted that many of their ensuing arguments fall short of suggesting that poverty welfare is an immediate condition of social evolutionism. Their arguments instead often lead to conditions that render poverty welfare a viable choice, which a sociopolitical community *could* make given the correct environmental circumstances. As the interventionist’s position is presented, it is noted that many of the arguments therein were

likely not intended to be included in a discourse of poverty welfare. These positions, however, actively address “Who Deserves What,” and consistently and logically mesh well with a discourse involving poverty welfare. In the next chapter, the disconnection between social evolutionism and a direct interventionist argument will be reconciled with a sociohistorical argument intended to mesh social evolutionism directly with “Who Deserves What” in the context of American class redistribution.

Karl Marx: Anti-Interventionist

When social evolutionism is discussed in relation with “matters of money,” the mention of Karl Marx –or Marxist thought, often erroneously enters the conversation. In certain contexts such a mention might be warranted;⁹⁵ however, in the context of poverty welfare there are good reasons to exclude much of Marxist thought. Marx, to be sure, was a social evolutionist, and he primarily viewed this evolution to be guided by the process of class struggle and conflict.⁹⁶ Would Marx, however, advance an interventionist argument? Oddly, given his belief that capitalism was *doomed* to failure, the answer is, probably not. For Marx’s version of social evolutionism to be realized, the oppressed poor must rise up in

⁹⁵ The connection between Marx and Darwin is well researched; however, as argued by Terence Ball, “*Marx and Darwin: A Reconsideration*” *Political Theory*, vol.7, (Nov., 1979), much of this relationship is a matter of academic folklore. Ball writes, “the Marx-Darwin myth, as created and fostered by Engels and the Social Darwinists, was made even more credible by the discovery of two letters written by Darwin to Marx.” Ball continues, however, by noting that even these correspondences were a product of academic courtesy and positioning. Marx was displeased with the English reception of *Das Kapital*, and sent a copy to not only Darwin, but also his nemesis Herbert Spencer.

⁹⁶ Karl Kautsky, a leading socialist theoretician of the SPD in Germany at the turn of the twentieth century, meshed Darwinism with his view of human history. Using more accurate anthropological data than Marx utilized, Kautsky concluded that capitalism was merely a blimp on the radar screen of human history. Writing in, *The Materialists Conception of History*, Kautsky argued that primitive communism has existed for 800,000 years and class society a mere 10,000 years. As Kautsky put it, “Measured solely to its temporal duration, it is then not classless society, but rather society divided into classes which that presents itself to us as the exception, a mere episode in the history of human society (250).” Viewed in this way capitalism is not, in a Marxist sense, deterministic or necessary for a communist society to emerge. The above information was drawn from Callinicos (1999: 111-13).

glorious revolution and overthrow their capitalist exploiters, thereby creating a socialist (and shortly, a communist) state. If, however, the poor are given “welfare”⁹⁷ they will logically be less likely to revolt, and therein create a better social circumstance for themselves. Poverty welfare, then, becomes the mechanism which hampers communism –Marx’s social telos- from realization. If the poor are given poverty welfare within the context of a capitalist economic and political system, then it stands to reason that such an act of intervention might discourage the social act of rebellion necessary to create the Marxist vision of a communist state. Ironically Marx, as the issue of “poverty welfare” is concerned, would be much closer –for much different reasons- to the contrarian sentiments of Herbert Spencer than towards interventionist appeals.⁹⁸

Rousseau: Artificial Inequality

Jean Jacques Rousseau makes an important distinction between “natural” and “artificial” inequality.⁹⁹ Rousseau, while not an evolutionist per se, was concerned with the origins and development of social, political, and economic inequality. Could inequalities of these varieties be owed to the *natural* differences among people? For Rousseau an answer to this question is not an absolute matter, but instead one of degree. Different people, of course, have different talents and abilities *e.g.*, strength and intelligence, which tend to produce

⁹⁷ P.T. Barnum put the idea of keeping the poor content in the context of, “bread and circuses.”

⁹⁸ Social theory, like politics, can make strange bedfellows. Social Reforms, such as poverty welfare, would probably be opposed by anyone be they a lazzie faire capitalist or a communist if they held a highly deterministic view of social evolutionism. Both Herbert Spencer and Karl Marx held such a position.

⁹⁹ See Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*

“natural inequality.”¹⁰⁰ Thus as an absolute matter, natural inequalities set the stage for “small” social inequalities. These inequities, however, are not, in most cases, substantial enough to account for the level of inequity within current capitalistic sociopolitical systems. The millionaire, while hundreds of times richer than the laborer, is neither hundreds of times stronger nor necessarily more intelligent than the laborer who might be in need of “poverty welfare.” Then what explains the huge material disparities between “king” and “pauper?” The answer, for Rousseau, is that people have historically devised sociopolitical systems of “artificial inequality” that serve to make small –natural- differences manifest into conditions of vastly disproportionate levels of socially designated inequality. In this manner, small natural differences are manifested in broad, materially expressed social differences. Thus, the poor are seen as victims not of their nature, but of “artificial inequality.” Rousseau’s powerful insight aids the interventionist who is constantly reminded by the contrarian that, “reform will not work because the poor are *naturally* meant to have very little.” The response of the interventionist could be that, “reform will work because the poor are not poor because of *nature*, but instead because of a socially constructed “artificial inequality.” As such, they find themselves in a material situation far removed from wholly natural

¹⁰⁰ Thomas Jefferson was also interested in the question of natural versus artificial inequality. In a letter to John Adams, Jefferson (1963: 266-67) would write, “For I agree with you that there is a natural aristocracy among men. The grounds of this are virtue and talent. Formerly, bodily powers gave place among the *aristoi*. But since the invention of gunpowder has armed the weak as well as the strong with missile death, bodily strength like beauty, good, humor, politeness, and other accomplishments, has become but an auxiliary ground of distinction. There is also an artificial aristocracy, founded on wealth and birth, without either virtue or talents; for with these it would belong to the first class.” While Jefferson adheres to the view that the “natural lottery” is important, he cannot attribute the effects of this lottery as a possible way to exactly distinguish between the classes.

contingencies.

Lester Ward: Debunking Nature

Lester Ward, a Lamarkian and Eugenicist, was one of the first academics to actively study sociology in the United States. Ward is included in the interventionist strain of thought because as Hofstadter (1992:68) noted, “He was the first and most formidable thinker who attacked the unitary assumptions of Social Darwinism and natural-law laissez-faire individualism.” It was the analogous treatment between (biologically driven) animal evolution and (socially driven) human evolution that caused Ward his greatest concern. As Ward (1893: 134-5) articulated while noting the distinction between “natural” and “artificial” selection in evolution:

The fundamental principle of biology is natural selection, that of sociology is artificial selection. The survival of the fittest is simply the survival of the strong, which implies and would better be called the destruction of the weak. If nature progresses through the destruction of the weak, man progress through the protection of the weak (Hofstadter, pp. 79).

The message in this passage is clear: nature along with the process of natural selection is brutal and unkind, but why should “natural brutality”, *i.e.*, the typical results of natural selection, stand as the *proper* measure of human conduct or decision-making. Thus the contrarian (Social Darwinist) is not wrong to point out the harsh aspects of nature; he becomes wrong only after he applies these natural realities to the lives of people. Ward might ask, “aren’t we better than nature would have us be if we were mere animals?” Consistent with a positive answer, Ward maintained that social reforms (or social applications), such as poverty welfare, were the best mechanisms by which science could legitimize sociology as well as advance social evolution. As Ward (1913: 352) argued:

It is only through the artificial control of natural phenomena that science is made to minister the human needs; and if social laws are really analogous to physical laws, there is no reason why social science may not receive practical applications such as have been given to the physical sciences (Hofstadter, pp.73).

Notwithstanding the observation that the social sciences lack “effect foundationalism,” or predictive laws of effect, Ward’s point is well taken. If no social reforms come about as a product of sociology, there is little *practical* distinction between sociology and philosophy.

In an earlier section of this thesis the idea of organicism –treating human social order as analogous to a living organism- was briefly examined. In a classical argument Ward posed the question, “if organicism is an accurate depiction of social evolution then what part of the body would government (action) represent?” The context of this question takes place when Herbert Spencer and other Social Darwinists’ were advocating organicism as a strategy intended to promote the natural processes and virtue of “leaving things alone.” This view, however, neglects the fact that the body does not just “leave things alone,” it actively functions to ensure that all the parts work together. Thus, for Ward, if we are to accept the organicist’s analogy the result is not a lack of reform and adherence to extreme individualism, but instead extended reform and increased centralization. The body works best when its organs are part of an integrated system; therefore, society works best (evolves better) when its institutions are cooperative as opposed to being in a state of competitive.

Kropotkin: Cooperation Not Competition

Peter Kropotkin,¹⁰¹ in response to contrarian accounts of Darwinism, argued Social Darwinists’ had simply misinterpreted Darwin’s evolutionary thought from the outset of their study. The contrarian’s competitive fixation on Darwin’s notion of “natural selection,” and

¹⁰¹ Kropotkin devoted the better part of his life attempting to form a synthesis between anarchism and communism. His primary focus was in arguing that the road to communism was best realized through an precursory acceptance and practice of anarchism.

the “struggle for existence,” (especially as applied to people) was, for Kropotkin, simply wrong. Kropotkin, in his most influential work *Mutual Aid*, operated under the assumption that Darwin’s evolutionary treatment of *social* organisms (such as people) was entrenched more deeply in cooperation than in competition. Kropotkin (1902: 75) diligently advocated the *natural* virtue of cooperation:

Don’t compete! Competition is always injurious to the species, and you have plenty of resources to avoid it. That is the tendency of nature, not always realized in full, but always present. That is the watchword which comes to us from the bush, the forest, the river, the ocean. Therefore combine practice mutual aid! That is the surest means for giving to each and to all the greatest safety, the best guarantee of existence and progress, bodily, intellectual, moral. That is what nature teaches us.

Quite a bit of evidence from Darwin’s writings, particularly *The Descent of Man* tends to suggest Darwin was not far removed from Kropotkin’s sentiments. As Hofstadter (1992: 91-2) noted,

Darwin devoted many pages of *The Descent of Man* to the sociality of Man and the origins of his moral sense. He believed that primeval man and their apelike progenitors, along with many lower animals, were probably social in their habits, that remote primitives practiced division of labor, and that man’s social habits have been of enormous importance to his survival.

This discussion of the evolution of adaptive social processes (habits) lends credence to the position that it is probably a collaboration of competition and cooperation, which best exemplifies the process of social evolution. Given this collaboration, the interventionist could argue that it only makes logical sense, consistent with social evolutionism, for a sociopolitical community to decide for itself the issue of poverty welfare. After all, no natural concerns preempt its usage; in fact some naturalistic concerns might even encourage the notion. Accordingly, if the interventionist were somehow banned from acting, with a proclamation thwarting any action serving to endorse poverty welfare, then the cooperative nature of social evolution would cease to advance.

Veblen: The Rich Deserve What

Thorstein Veblen dichotomized social class into industrious and predatory categories. Members of the industrious class actively add to the production of useful goods or services, thereby contributing positively to social evolution. The predatory class, on the other hand, is largely involved with capitalistic financial schemes, speculations, market positioning, and other economic activities which Veblen concluded do little or nothing to advance the productivity of society.¹⁰² While Veblen acknowledged that some of society's poor might be considered to be members of the predatory class, by and large it was the idle rich, doing nothing except perhaps playing "financial games," that constitute the bulk of this class. For this reason, the ideas of "predatory" and "leisure" classes are, for Veblen, somewhat interchangeable. That is, the coal miner—a member of the industrious class—by contributing to the good of the society with his labor was more valuable to the advancement of the social order than a wealthy individual—a member of the predatory class—who clipped bond coupons as a means of continuing his indefinite leisure. As Veblen might ask, "what good could clipping a bond coupon add to society?" Consistent, with a negative response to this question, Veblen argued that by socially supporting the idleness of the leisure class the result would serve only as an impediment to social evolution. They, after all, added no actual productivity to society. Veblen understood social evolution to occur in tangent with

¹⁰² Veblen was one of those thinkers who actually "practiced what he preached." For instance, although he could afford a permanent residence he never purchased a home or any other real estate. Often, he would live with friends, or set up residence in the woods. On occasion when he left a room he would use the window and not the door. When questioned about his behavior he would respond, "the window is closer."

production, thus any measure that encourages production at the expense of idleness, such as, poverty welfare, would likewise advance positive social evolution.¹⁰³

The contrarian response to this talk of a “predatory class” would likely revert into a functionalist defense, *i.e.*, if the idleness of the rich was not in some way functional, it would cease to exist. In other words, the fact that the predatory class exists necessarily demonstrates its social function. Aside from the tautological nature of this defense, Veblen offers yet another reason why the “leisure class” continues to exist, thereby subverting social evolution. The rich, Veblen argued, had found ways to symbolically communicate their “superior” position to the rest of society.¹⁰⁴ This *symbolic* communication could not involve productivity because that would suggest working, something the leisure class tries desperately to avoid. In lieu of production, therefore, the leisure class “invented” the practice of consumption, “conspicuous consumption.” Oddly, through the process of symbolic communication, anti-productivity became revered and respected by the “industrious class.” As Veblen described it, *e.g.*, long fingernails worn by members of the traditional Chinese upper class demonstrated to everyone who could observe them that they were “beyond” participating in laborious activities.¹⁰⁵ Additionally, Veblen argued that much of what is

¹⁰³ The common contemporary American conception of poverty welfare is that it will lead to laziness and less productivity. This view, however, is extremely shortsighted and misses the productive enhancements which poverty welfare could well add. For instance, ensuring that workers can afford proper diets and health care will in turn likely equate into more productive workers, if for no other reason than that they will live longer and more productive lives. Poverty welfare, viewed in this light is not necessarily a drag on a society, but might indeed prove to be more uplifting than financial speculations

¹⁰⁴ Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*

¹⁰⁵ Before one concludes that Veblen’s view is too far-fetched, consider the significance of unproductive “wealth symbols” within contemporary American society. What does a diamond ring on a young women’s finger suggest? Not merely that she is getting married, but depending upon the size of the ring the wealth of her future husband. What do mansions represent? Not merely that one is comfortable, but that the owner is conspicuously wealthy. The notion of conspicuous consumption is so much a part of contemporary social structure that many in the “industrious class” probably do not notice its every instance, even though it is often observed on a daily if not hourly basis.

called fashion and style is little more than a willingness of the “industrious class” to mimic those members of the “leisure class” who are most admired. Thus the existence of an unproductive leisure class depends upon the rest of society (the industrious class) showing admiration and respect for their level and extent of consumption. Veblen’s dismay with the industrious class for allowing itself to be *duped* into a showing of such admiration and respect for the leisure class is clearly expressed in many of his writings. For this reason, Veblen, while in favor of social reforms, could hardly be said to have held the same positive feeling towards the masses that many of his socialist contemporaries held.

Veblen’s contribution to an interventionist position is enormous. The contrarian contention that the rich are such because they are the most biologically fit –nature has dictated their riches- becomes laughable when it is considered that the rich, in the context of civilization, possess their wealth largely because of predatory as opposed to productive behaviors. Veblen (1899: 237) went as far to call most members of the leisure class “moral delinquents.” Nature did not dictate the course of *their* riches; instead the advent of nonproductive business dealings, as treated more highly than industrious behavior, led to such strange (unproductive) measures of wealth and status in present society. Once wealth is established as a socially constructed symbol, (barring an extremely odd coincidence) it cannot also then be a naturally dictated state of affairs. The attainment of wealth must be more of one than the other, and Veblen gives us good reason to believe that it is simply not a *natural* phenomenon. Wealth possesses its social force because members of society agree that it does, not because *nature* dictates that it must.

The aforementioned interventionist thought of, Rousseau, Ward, Kropotkin, and Veblen, is quite helpful in setting up the groundwork for a social evolutionary argument that

allows room for the practice of poverty welfare.¹⁰⁶ This thought, however, falls just short of advocating a social evolutionary position that serves to provide the basis of poverty welfare. What I hope to demonstrate in the next chapter is, consistent with interventionist thought, that it becomes quite possible to advocate a social evolutionary argument that logically ends with the ability of a sociopolitical community to justifiably mandate the practice of poverty welfare.

¹⁰⁶ This list is certainly not intended to be exhaustive. For instance, other interventionist writers include: Thomas Henry Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* (1894), Benjamin Kidd's *Social Evolution* (1894), Henry Drummond's *The Ascent of Man* (1894), Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1889), Henry Holt's *On the Civic Relations* (1907), to name a few. These works were not stressed, however, because their interventionist sentiment was more difficult to tease out than the utilized works.

CHAPTER 7. THE INTERVENTINIST'S ARGUMENT¹⁰⁷

Framing the Argument

A very effective social evolutionary approach that the interventionist can put forward to defend the class redistribution of wealth will involve a collaboration between an evolutionary schema stressing the development of class interdependence with that of Veblen's general social evolutionary framework. The argument will be advanced, consistent with Veblen's social evolutionary schema, that social order is *best* represented by a "history of interdependence." An interdependence, which began well before the advent of social class, (during what Veblen would coin the "savage" era) interdependence occurred among *peoples and not classes* (30,000 BCE – 12,000 BCE).¹⁰⁸ As the savage era made way for "barbarism," however, and finally "civilization," interdependence evolved away from being among *peoples* and towards the direction of interdependence of socioeconomic *classes*. The argument proceeds that human social interdependence, as concerned among socioeconomic classes, can be deviated into three historically evident sub-stages (*guidance* (12,000 BCE – 8,000 BCE, *protection* (8,000 BCE – 4,000 BCE, and *perceived opportunity* 4,000 BCE until present) that mark the *general* social evolutionary trend of social order.

¹⁰⁷ The difficult of presenting a broad ranging wide sweeping social evolutionary approach is that such an approach is bound to miss the detailed description which a more specifically concentrated historical approach would be better suited to handle. Thus the ensuing account is not a "magic bullet" able to address all the concerns of the interventionist. Broad histories are difficult to coherently create, and even provided their creation they necessarily create more questions than they answer. While I acknowledge this limitation the task at hand is still a worthwhile and profitable goal of the interventionist.

¹⁰⁸ While Veblen originally reviewed this evolutionary schema as an economic and social arrangement, it should be remembered that the anthropologist Morgan was to first to introduce this schema in the framework of a historical analysis. Thus as this schema is used to advance the interventionist position it should be noted that it was first advanced by Morgan and then Veblen. The language of guidance, protection, and perceived opportunity are mine, the schema of savagery, barbarism, and civilization are borrowed.

The utilization of Veblen's social evolutionary schema will offer an established framework to better reinforce the proposed manner (guidance, protection, and perceived opportunity) by which the case can be made that socioeconomic classes are interdependent. The logical extension of the argument will continue by noting that if social classes are indeed interdependent, then the members of the upper class *owe* something, to be determined in specific cases by the interventionist, to members of the lower class. This is because particular social class(es), and the members therein, exist, and continue to survive, because they are involved interdependently with the members of a different social class. Of course, the proposed relationship between members of different social classes is not always direct, nor is it always consciously acknowledged, but it exists nonetheless. The task of the interventionist is not an easy one, but a discourse incorporating social evolutionary arguments with a specific conception of "Who Deserves What" in the context of poverty welfare is certainly not an impossibility. Relying heavily upon social evolutionary arguments, along with the *acceptance* and development of "interdependent social class," leads to the emergence of a healthy position, quite able to provide formidable discourse with the approach soon to be taken by the ideal type of the contrarian.

A "Conservative Continuance," as Opposed to a History of Nation-States

The reason for the interventionist's earlier *careful* agreement with Stanton's skeptical account of "class benevolence" is that her concern with class conflict is in regards to members of *Nations*. If, however, human history began roughly 32,000 years ago, as *Homo Sapiens* realized the potential to ascend to the heights of most all land-based ecological niches, then Stanton's concern directly addresses only about two percent of human social

experience.¹⁰⁹ Even if the beginnings of *civilization* are taken to represent a relic of the of contemporary Nation-State, and thus serve to begin a social evolutionary argument, three quarters of the human social experience would, in turn, be entirely neglected. The historical starting place of social evolution is *not* to be found in the “nation-state,” a political endeavor nearly three centuries in the making. A condition of social organization that Max Weber (1919) described as, “An organization which successfully upholds a claim to binding rule making over a territory, by virtue of commanding a monopoly of the legitimate use of violence.” It is likely that such a social organization –the nation-state-, if for no better reason the difficulties surrounding a *socially shared understanding of legitimacy*, would represent a *stage* of social evolution as opposed to the inception of such. It is, therefore, almost certain that the first instance of socioeconomic class substantially pre-dated the “creation” of the Nation-State.¹¹⁰ While the exact quantification of this discrepancy is in dispute, generally social evolution can be understood as a process which began about 30,000 BCE, human civilization beginning about 5,000 BCE, and the nation-state as 300-year young social creation.

Thinking about social organization void the state (the solely legitimized bearer of

¹⁰⁹ The determination that human history began 32,000 years ago resulted primarily from two considerations. 1) Before 32,000 years ago people survived by means of scavenging (not hunting and gathering), and likewise could not be said to rule their ecological niche. 2) Given newfound anthropological data the genetic delineation between Neanderthals and Homo Sapiens is a somewhat *twisted* affair. Some evidence even suggests that crossbreeding between these “species” did indeed occur. What is known for sure is that sometime around 30,000 years ago Neanderthals disappeared, and Homo Sapiens gradually came to dominate land-based ecological niches. Until more anthropological evidence is uncovered it seems wise to begin a study of human history post-Neanderthal extinction. Thus I consider human history to have begun roughly 32,000 years ago.

¹¹⁰ The extent of meaningful human history has the tendency to begin at sometime in between the advent of civilization (5,000 BCE) and that of the Nation-State; however, the power of interventionist argument is contingent upon this very limited understanding of history to become significantly broadened. As this broadening occurs the hope will be that the redistribution of wealth among the classes becomes an ever-appealing freedom to *allow* a sociopolitical community to embark upon.

violence) is difficult in a modern context inundated with vast territorial monsters separating millions of peoples with little more power than guns and guards occupying socially and culturally created “lines of chalk.” In order to appreciate the totality of social evolutionary arguments, however, these “lines of chalk” must be understood as *pieces* of a much broader historical process. To begin a social evolutionary argument with talk of the nation-state is like starting the 100-meter dash at the 97-meter mark. The race will be completed quickly, but the time of the race will have little meaning. If the time of the dash is to be meaningful a review of social evolutionary thought must broach a starting line of roughly 32,000 years ago. Running the full 100 meters, most of which occurring substantially before the inception of the nation-state, allows for a much more comprehensive and convincing treatment of “Darwinian Survival” as well as the mechanism –interdependence- by which this survival has become manifested via the human social experience.

The interventionist is best served by welcoming the Darwinian suggestion of “natural selection” as well as the mechanism of the “struggle for existence” by which this selection is realized. This welcome reception, however, should stress the historically evident interdependent nature of human survival, while calling into question *any* notion of autonomous “individualistic survival.” After an interdependence of human survival and achievement *-first through peoples and then through classes-* is historically established, the interventionist will continue by maintaining that social evolution should continue to advance along this established path by distributing wealth from one socially interdependent *class* to another. The social history of peoples’ demands that class-based reciprocity be mandated if necessary. This is not to suggest that vulgar class-based inequities have been absent throughout human history; only that “the interdependence of social class” has been the rule

of human social history rather than the exception. As such, material redistribution from one class to another becomes, in a modern context, the means by which the mechanism of interdependence shapes social evolution.

In what most contemporary observers would regard as an odd sequence of events, the interventionist would be best served to advocate a “*conservative continuance*” to the already historically determined “interdependence of social class.” The interventionist’s general strategy is to advance a schema of social evolution that has continually existed since the spark of social existence (interdependence), predating even class-based social structures. Before classes were interdependent upon each other individual peoples were. Inherent in this strategy (conservative continuance) of justifying social redistribution both *theft* and *dismissal* occur. The theft occurs as the interventionist “steals” conservatism back away from the contrarian, who made the original theft of “conservatism” about three centuries ago –roughly the same time nation-states emerged. The modern conservative (contrarian) is a *conservative* only if it is accepted that meaningful human history began about 1700 A.D. This intellectual theft, moreover, simultaneously *dismisses* the contrarian notion of *individualism*. The modern conservative’s (contrarian’s) mantra of unwavering and unalterable individual rights seems to be an extremely questionable aspect of social evolutionary thought if the totality of human social existence has been a struggle of interdependent, as opposed to individualistic, development. As this theft and dismissal undergo further development be certain that the contrarian will, when space is allotted, respond to this powerful avenue of interventionist justification.

If the interventionist were to mistakenly concede that the human social evolutionary journey began in tangent with the construction of the first city (civilization), Veblen’s last

stage of social evolution, then their stance towards socioeconomic redistribution would be substantially weakened. This is because, after the institutionalization of social class, alongside individual rights, the interventionist becomes the bearer not of a particular social evolutionary *tradition*, but instead as the instigator of meddling fairness, change, and the pilferage of individualistic claims. In other words, they become the brunt of all typical present day attacks against liberalism, a disadvantageous position for any social evolutionary argument. The *starting point* of any social evolutionary argument will separate the righteous position from the meddling and the conservative from the liberal. Assumptions that govern the *origins* of an evolutionary argument become the standards by which evolutionary mechanisms, *i.e.*, natural selection and the struggle for existence are understood to be *properly* working. Given the importance of a “starting place” in evolutionary arguments, where can the interventionist seek to begin the *theoretical* justification for material redistribution?¹¹¹ Strangely, or not so when recognizing that a “conservative continuance” marks the general mode of interventionist attack, the strongest interventionist treatment of a social evolutionary starting place can be found in the anti-revolutionary conservative writings of Edmond Burke.

Finding the Theoretical *Origins* of an Interventionist’s Social Order

In *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Burke, an English statesman of the late eighteenth-century, showed alarm with both the French revolution as well as the values underpinning the effort. Burke, an aristocratic conservative, was quick to realize that revolutionary values offered a great threat to the aristocratic social structure that he had good

¹¹¹ While 30,000 BCE will mark the temporal beginnings of human history it seems as if a social contract style notion of “human beginnings” would aid the justification process of the interventionist.

personal reason to deeply admire. In an effort to intellectually protect the social and political status quo of Europe, in a time of revolutionary upheaval, Burke offered a far too underutilized notion of human nature, as well as the origins and conditions of social organization. Straddling the fence, or lack thereof as Burke would maintain, between a “state of nature” and society there exists nothing but fantasy. As Burke (1815: 210-11) argued,

In a state of rude nature there is no such thing as a people. A number of men in themselves have no collective capacity. The idea of a people is the idea of a corporation. It is wholly artificial; and made like all other legal fictions by common agreement ... When men, therefore, break up the original compact or agreement which gives its corporate form and capacity to the state, they are no longer a people ... They are a number of vague loose individuals and nothing more.

In accordance with this observation, the individual is little more than an abstraction, an entity that finds meaning *only* within a social setting. This community dependent notion of meaningful human existence has strong social evolutionary implications that are not lost on the interventionist. If it is indeed the building of a sociopolitical community that establishes social meaning and further the increase of *survival* and *improvement* -the crux of Darwin’s “struggle for existence”- then it stands to reason that rights, property or otherwise, should not be solely, or perhaps not at all, individualistic claims. Rights and claims thereof, instead, belong to the only *real* consequence of human social evolution, the social group. Consistent with Burke’s notion of the “social contract,” therefore, individual rights become tertiary, not primary considerations, involved with an analysis of “Who Deserves What.” The rich can no longer hoard wealth solely based on a claim of “property rights” because, if Burke’s view is adopted, it is the collective that inspires the motivation to amass wealth in the first instance. From the base of a social collective, all else becomes possible, an uninviting idea in mainstream American culture.

It is no coincidence that most American discussions of Western political thought unrightfully exclude Burke, while applauding Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau's conceptions of an asocial person existing with varying degrees of happiness in a "state of nature" (or in Hobbes's case a constant "state of war").¹¹² Often this selective praise is almost solely ideologically driven—even though such praise is often misplaced. For instance, Rousseau who greatly admired the "noble savage"—an essentially asocial human being who happily existed void any discernible social structure—also makes clear that (1963: 205), "the social order is a sacred right which serves for the basis of all others." For Burke, as well as many sociologists and communitarians, asocial persons lacking society "are a number of vague loose individuals and nothing more." In this fashion, it matters a great deal whether society was formed as *an arena* of individual endeavor, or conversely if social creation represents the *only avenue* available for meaningful human achievement. In agreement with the latter suggestion Emile Durkheim would tackle the "problem" of self-interest—a concern that must almost always be addressed when material resources are at stake—by arguing that man has a dual nature, concerned with both "self-interest" as well as the interests of others. As Durkheim argued (1964: 337):

It is not without reason, therefore, that man feels himself to be double: he actually is double. There are in him two classes of states of consciousness that differ from each other in origin and nature, and in the ends toward which they aim. One class merely expresses our organisms and the objects to which they are most directly related. Strictly individual, the states of consciousness of this class connect us only with ourselves, and we can no more detach them from us than we can detach ourselves from our bodies. The states of consciousness of the other class, on the contrary, come to us from society; they transfer society into us and connect us with something that surpasses us (Ashley and Orenstein, pp. 90).

¹¹² Immanuel Kant's notion of "asocial sociability" argues that social creation is a result of Man's vanity and competitive spirit. Resources are not pooled so much for purposes of survival, but instead are incorporated so that one may be on the "winning" side. However, a necessary precursor to being on the "winning" side is *playing* within a social environment.

This notion of a social consciousness “surpassing us” –and simultaneously self-interested concerns- might well serve the interventionist who is confronted with a barrage of contrarian appeals endorsing a strictly self-indulged starting and ending point of social evolution.¹¹³

Clearly, the origins of human *social* evolution, for Burke, are synonymous with the origins of meaningful human improvement and achievement. Humans cannot evolve independently of their social surroundings; therefore, no meaningful human evolution occurs void an established social environment. The often times unspoken compact between peoples forming a “dependently woven web” of social relations –manifested through the notion of socioeconomic class- is a key ingredient making social development and evolution possible. Viewed in this manner social evolution began and continues to develop as an attempt to increase survival and comfort by relying on the pooled resources of a social environment. Burke explained that this compact of social agreement represents much more than the protection of individual concerns, such as personal liberties. As Burke (1969: 194) elaborates his understanding of “social contract”:

Society is indeed a contract. Subordinate contracts for objects of mere occasional interest may be dissolved at pleasure – but the state ought not to be considered as nothing better than partnership agreement in a trade of pepper and coffee, calico or tobacco, or some other such low concern, to be taken up for a little temporary interest, and to be dissolved at the fancy of the parties ... It is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in all virtue; and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born.

Burke’s language seems to be elusive. His formation of a social order represents three different groups, two of which are physically nonexistent. How can the dead and the yet to

¹¹³ Alex de Tocqueville writing in *Democracy in America* argues for a type of “enlightened self-interest,” or self-interest properly understood. Accordingly, as individuals become more “enlightened” they would realize that long-term group interests are almost always superior to short term selfishness. Self-interest, as such, for the enlightened would have exceedingly less to do with the short-term *desires* of the self.

be born have any claim to the continuing social structure of society? Further, why is a “social contract” so much different from an “economic contract?”

The dead and the yet to be born, in a much greater sense the latter, can advance in only one fundamental sense, a social sense, and as such the idea of a social contract is not strictly a *free* choice, because making the alternative choice –not establishing a social order– would condemn not only current but future generations to an existence that necessarily lacks meaning. The social contract instead, is a necessary covenant stretching between the first and last persons and including the totality of humanity in between.¹¹⁴ An economic contract, however, is established in order to realize a specific goal –bringing buyer and seller together in mutual agreement. Society, on the other hand, is the mechanism by which the realization of *all* human agreement and achievement becomes possible. Without social order there is no money, no objects to purchase, and no comparisons by which to give objects value. The decision to end an economic contract is one of a deliberate analysis of interest; no such deliberation could, according to Burke, logically surround the negation of a social contract. Furthermore, it would be a misunderstanding of the social contract to hold that one party of contract, the living, possesses the proper authority to renege in the name of all three interested parties, two of which are unable to speak for themselves.

The Social Structure of the *Savage*¹¹⁵

It is easy to suggest, as many have, that human ancestors living hundreds of generations ago were simply brutish savages with few commendable qualities or virtues. Whatever “brutish” means in this context, however, it should not suggest class-based

¹¹⁴ Recall that the first man, in any sense that would be consistent with social evolution, would be a part of a social group. Thus Burke would likely suggest that there is no *first* man only a first group of people.

¹¹⁵ The term savage here is synonymous with the notion of hunter-gatherer.

hierarchy. Boehm (1999:3-4), described social structures before 10,000 BCE with the following language:

Before twelve thousand years ago, humans basically were egalitarian. They lived in what could be called societies of equals, with minimal political centralization and *no social classes*. Everyone participated in group decisions, and outside the family there were no dominators.

This portrayal of a savage society might seem excessively favorable; however, this picture seems more realistic in light of Stone Age population densities. For instance, in all of France during the late stone-age there were probably no more than 20,000 and possibly as few as 1,600 human beings (Harris).¹¹⁶

Further, aside from comparatively egalitarian behavior, savage peoples enjoyed a comfortable standard of living. In all likelihood a workday of four hours, a concept that would make most living in modernity jealous, provided more than enough resources for survival –not *above* subsistence, but survival nonetheless. Dental records from roughly 25,000 years ago suggest that individuals within savage society societies were well nourished, eating a diet rich in protein (Harris). Their average life expectancy of roughly thirty-five years for men and thirty years for women was comparable with life expectancy figures of the most “developed” countries just two hundred years ago. Most instances of increased life expectancies within contemporary nation-states, broaching 70 years in many modernized nations, are *largely* the result of better prenatal, postnatal, and geriatric care.

¹¹⁶ The notion of population density is a constantly occurring theme in social and political thought. As population increases social dynamics seem to undergo almost axiomatic changes, which in turn bring with them certain changes in political structures, *i.e.* increases centralization. Foucault, for instances, discusses how increases in population densities during the late 17th century automatically led to societies undergoing the institutionalization of “disciplinary structures,” *i.e.* prisons, mental hospitals, schools *etc.*

The Social Group Survives and Distributes Interdependently

Aside from the “Neanderthal controversy” another important human event occurred roughly 30,000 years ago, the ability to *routinely* hunt and kill big game. Prior to 30,000 BCE animal remains have been found at Old World habitation sites, but these animals probably died natural deaths, or were trapped or wounded by nonhuman predators. Scavenging and gathering “leftovers,” rather than hunting, probably marked the mechanism of survival for *humans* prior to about 30,000 BCE. By about 30,000 years ago, however, the situation had changed dramatically, and bands of hunter-gathers possessed the technologies for killing and butchering the largest of animals on a fairly routine basis (Harris). Hunters often cornered their prey by setting fires and then chasing them off cliffs, or overwhelming the animal with an arsenal of finely tuned stone and bone projectile points, spears, darts, long knives, and bows and arrows (Harris). A significant shift in the balance of ecological power (hunting and killing) was taking place, and as a result struggles between humans and “other animals” became *less* important for the course of social and biological evolution. Accordingly, human evolutionary disputes –“the struggle for existence”- have increasingly been the result of *intraspecies* tensions. Social reforms intended to alleviate some of this tension, *i.e.*, poverty welfare, might serve to make social evolution a smoother operating process.¹¹⁷ This is important because nonhuman animals are almost always, in an evolutionary sense, contending with the pains of “natural selection” from the vantagepoint of struggles from both “within” and “outside” the species. At least for the past 30,000 years,

¹¹⁷ Here I mention the notion of a “smoother operating” process in a positive manner, but this does not settle the matter. Most everyone wants a system, be it social or otherwise to operate smoothly, but is this desire paramount. In other words, is there anything to be desired more highly than smooth operation as a general aspiration?

however, human evolutionary concerns along these dualistic lines have been comparatively much less significant. Often this distinction between the struggles of human and nonhuman evolutionary processes are not included in comparative evolutionary discussions. This oversight is unfortunate because such discussions would likely lead to mention of important differences between human social evolutionism and the evolutionism of animals that must naturally undergo “dualistic struggle.”

This general schema of human life before the sedimentary reality of agricultural production represents one of the most *independent* eras in human history, yet in a number of important ways, interdependence continued to mark the primary mechanism of human survival. This mechanism was simply realized on a more individualistic level before the “creation of class.”¹¹⁸ In the 1996 film *The Ghost and the Darkness*, Michael Douglas and Val Kilmer play big game hunters, both equipped with high power rifles and precision scopes, employed to kill troublesome lions impeding the “progress” of an African railroad. In the movie this trained duo, even with the technology and skilled use of high-powered rifles, had more than their fair share of big-game hunting. In order to hunt and kill the kind of game, *i.e.*, woolly mammoth, woolly rhinoceros, steppe bison, and giant elk, routinely pursued by humans between 30,000 BCE and 12,000 BCE the task at hand was certainly almost always a *group* effort. The means of subsistence (survival) in savage society, where the killing of big game is the difference between life and death, was necessarily a matter of interdependent group hunting.

¹¹⁸ In this way, the biological notion of “natural selection” was probably most applicable to people during the savage era, and has, with the creation of social class and the continued notion of “interdependence” become increasing less *directly* involved with social evolution.

Not only was the killing of prey made by the actions of the group, so too were decisions regarding the *distribution* of this life-giving kill. Examining the Kung, a group of Kalahari foragers, illustrates a case of savage group distribution.¹¹⁹ The Kung must effectively deal with “upstarters” –members of the community who attempt to break social solidarity by engaging in selfish or deviant actions (Boehm). Upstarters were, in other words, individualistic members of the group. The potential exists for upstarters to be members of the community who, through their hunting ability, provide others with the means of subsistence. The sociopolitical “problem” for the Kung was to find a means to avoid the potential for intimidation and domination based upon some –the upstarters- taking “hostage” the resources of the many. Boehm (1999: 46) described the Kung’s chosen means to resolve this vexing sociopolitical “problem”:

As with other forager groups, hunting prowess brings great respect among the! Kung because large game meat is shared by all households within the band. ... Credit for the kill goes to the owner of the first arrow to hit the game. This man (who may not have even been present) has to distribute the meat formally to all households heads in the band –a task associated with not only prestige, but tension. Because the Kung trade arrows often, the responsibility of owning the meat while it is distributed is randomized, thereby preventing the more successful hunters from presiding over their own accomplishments. In effect it is a way to remove the temptation to dominate.

Initially this means of distribution appears to be an individualistic matter; however, a social dynamic was created, as the credited hunter *must* distribute the kill to *all* other members of the band.¹²⁰ This ingenious method of “credited distribution” acts as a powerful social check against the overly proud and ambitious upstarter. If the same skilled hunters are constantly

¹¹⁹ The Tlingit Indians in the northwestern United States offer a second example of group distribution. The Tlingit held *Potlaches* –a winter celebration featuring singing, dancing, feasting, and the lavish distribution of wealth and property. While a *Potlathe* could easily bankrupt the host, if successful they would raise the prestige of the host as well as his clan. Often this trade of material possessions for social status was thought to be well worth the exchange.

¹²⁰ This example nicely illustrates that even before agriculture created a means of survival above subsistence the fundamental social question of “Who Deserves What” still was a matter than needed to be socially settled, perhaps with more deliberate speed than if a means of subsistence above survival did exist.

bringing the entire band their means of substance, a deadly form of contempt might emerge within the group directed towards the perpetual “bearer of survival.” For this reason the most skilled hunters within the band often “traded arrows” –credit for the kill- and actively downplayed their essential hunting role (Boehm). Not only was the killing of prey the means of survival for the group and the individuals therein, but a product of group coordination and cohesion. So too was the method by which food was allocated within the group.

Generational Technological Interdependence

Aside from the actual hunt and subsequent distribution, savage social structures were marked with a kind of “generational technological dependence.” The view of the technologically ignorant “caveman” is largely folklore, as well as an illegitimate means to practice “modern self-indulgence.” As Harris (1977:9) argued,

Humans who lived between 30,000 BCE and 12,000 BCE were no technological amateurs; they achieved total control over the process of fracturing, chipping, and shaping crystalline rock, which formed the basis of their technology.

One of the most practical applications of savage technology was the creation of the “laurel leaf” knife, eleven inches long but only four-tenth of an inch thick, a technology that still cannot be duplicated in mass by modern industrial techniques (Harris). Aside from the technology of weaponry other anthropological discoveries suggest that housing technology made the cave of the hunter-gatherer as formidable a dwelling as many contemporary American inner city housing units. In Czechoslovakia, for instance, Winter dwellings with round floor plans twenty feet in diameter were already in use more than 20,000 years ago (Harris). These dwellings were lined with rich furs for rugs and beads, as well as plenty as dried animal dung or fat laden bones for the hearth. In addition, the ability to “control fire,” a technology thousands of generations in development, represents a socially acquired type of

technological skill; a specific element of culture that Talcott Parsons explained as being “learned, shared, and transmitted (Goubsblom).” The possessions held in post-industrial society, *all* the material comforts that Americans possess, are not “our own”; they are instead the product of a complex series of technological generational transfers that began at least as far back as 30,000 years ago.

These few, but impressive, examples of early human technological savvy represent an effective way to understand what Burke might have meant when he spoke of a *strange* compact with “those who are dead.” Technology is a cumulative, usually very slow paced, endeavor and as such sophisticated weaponry or artificial dwellings do *not* appear suddenly with the gleeful undertakings of an uninfluenced group or individual. The technologies that allow for human survival, instead represent the cumulative endeavors of the dead *mixed* with new innovations of the living. Interdependence, in particular of the technological variety, “becomes a partnership not only among those who are living, but among those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born.”¹²¹

The ecological balance, however, that allowed for a savage lifestyle and social structure would be altered beyond repair as of about 13,000 years ago when a global warming trend signaled the beginning of the terminal phase of the last ice age. As the climate became less harsh, forests of evergreens and birch invaded the grassy plains, nourishing the prey essential to the hunter-gatherer’s means of subsistence (Harris). Given

¹²¹ Burke himself, largely due to ignorance of recently discovered anthropological evidence, would probably not have made such a case involving “*primitive* man.” In certain discussions of Modern American and European thinkers, however, some of this critique along these same lines simply goes too far in its negative treatment. Thomas Jefferson, for instance, would note that the sociopolitical arrangements of the American Indians was actual superior to that of European Arrangements, and that such a structure allowed the Indians to be generally much happier than Europeans.

these environmental dictates biologically driven concerns of human survival, and interdependence evolved abruptly towards a *new* class-based human era, the agricultural age.

Barbarism: Agrarianism Begins *Class* Interdependence

As a period of global warming began to render hunting moot as a means of survival, stationary planting entered the ecological and social fray to provide people with a typical means of subsistence. The emergence of agriculture would mean much more to the social order than the planting of crops, and peoples becoming more geographically stationary.

Johan Goudsblom (1996:32-33) noted that the instigation of agriculture led directly to five important dominant trends at the societal level of social organization:

1. Toward an increase in food, and an increase in people;
2. Toward greater concentrations of food, and greater concentrations of people;
3. Toward an increasing specialization in the production and consumption of food, and an increasing specialization of people;
4. Toward the growth of organizations allocating greater quantities of food and coordinating larger number of peoples over longer distances;
5. Toward an increasing differentiation of power or “stratification” among people.

The social incorporation of these “dominant trends” represented one of the most dramatic and straightforward cases of biologically/environmentally driven social evolution. The social shift consistent with transference from hunting and gathering to agricultural production was likely a result of biological necessity, and not a “choice of interest.”¹²² People “chose” to lead more stable, less mobile, lives and to *grow* their subsistence because the choice was consistent with the environmental exigencies of the “struggle for existence.” Hunting on barren plains *could* have continued, but it would inevitably have lead to the deaths of most

¹²² Agriculture does provide a “*storage* of subsistence,” however it is unlikely that this storage was reasoned to be worth the trade-off of four-hour workday for that of at least an eight-hour day. Also, as we will see agriculture necessarily means discipline and control, it is unlikely that people would have “chosen” an agrarian *option* if they did not have to.

hunters who made this valiant attempt. In remaining consistent with the idea of interdependence, if many members of the band perished, the survival of the entire band was threatened.

Roughly 12,000 years ago, agriculture addressed the biological “struggle for existence” while simultaneously making major alterations, as Goudsblom’s five jolting long lasting (still existing) social trends suggest, to human social organization and social evolution. Biological necessity can serve as a major force “encouraging” the direction of social evolution. This is not to suggest that all social interactions and organizations past, present, and future, are a closed deterministic matter; only that the aspirations which a people might desire to attach with social evolution cannot “play” tug of war with biological evolution, at least not for long. It is important to note that, in all likelihood, Goudsblom’s dominant social trends were not products of intentional planning. These trends, instead, were a “necessary contingency” inescapably chained with the evolving mechanism of human social evolution, better understood as interdependence.

A close review of Goudsblom’s third, fourth, and fifth dominant trends suggest that specialization associated with the planning, planting, maintenance, and harvest of crops led to an increasingly complex set of social relations, and as such the *emergence of social class*.¹²³ Four major divisions of social class emerged in concert with the agricultural scheme of social development: peasant/farmer, artisan/craftsmen, priest/clergy, and warrior. The existence of social class distinctions tended to create inevitable situations of material and nonmaterial inequality, and thus bred social conflict. Given the conflict associated with the

¹²³ Recall that the interventionist is concerned with the (re) distribution of wealth from one class to another. The interdependence of the hunter-gather created the foundational evolutionary treatment of this argument. As class and interdependence is concerned, however, the argument is best to begin with agriculture.

inequities of class distinction, why would any people create and maintain a class based social order? To reiterate it would be a mistake to assume that the inception of class was an entirely “planned” activity; however, the continuance and maintenance of a class based social order does entail a certain level of deliberation. The reasons for maintaining a class system superseded oppositional concerns with the conflict associated with such a system. The function of class based social structures, in other words, outweighed concerns of conflict. Perhaps the class conflicts of early and contemporary social structures were and remain the inevitable results of socially negotiated and generally accepted functionality.

The codification of a distinct class based social order was largely a continuance of the importance placed upon the notion of *interdependence* that marked the beginnings of human history. Accordingly, class based distinctions within the social order grew out of the function associated that these distinctions had in concert with *interdependence*. Socioeconomic class and production deviations therein, came about, and continue to exist, because without socially accepted deviation it would be nearly impossible to engage in socially shared production. Notice that this functional type argument avoids both teleological and tautological fallacies that often plague functionalism. The argument is not that x supports y, which in turn supports x, in an eternal free-for-all of circular reasoning. Instead, an open ended but evolving sense of interdependence (the language of natural selection translated by human society) is best maintained and advanced, when a stationary social structure is involved, by the use of a codified class system.¹²⁴ Here the distinction between “static” and

¹²⁴ This line of thought potentially expressed by the interventionist will sound very dissimilar to a Marxist notion that wishes to “transcend class.” Either a functionalist or conflict approach could be incorporated into an evolutionary argument that seeks to distribute wealth. A functional argument, moreover, as advanced above, can formidably and forcefully decry certain gross inequities associated with class struggles.

“codified,” as applied to social order, is important to note. Static social orders, those in which the “role players” are mandated, generally become stale and unproductive quickly. On the other hand, codified social orders, those in which the “role rules” are mandated, generally encourage enough vitality to spur positive social advancements.

The Functional Creation of Class

The creation of social class during the dawn of the agricultural age occurred in tangent with the delegation of specific “production roles.” A sedimentary, commodity based, community that lacks a “consistency of role understanding” will likely fail to produce a life supporting level of substance.¹²⁵ For instance, envision a small agriculturally based village where the residents awake every morning and shortly thereafter meet in the center of the village to socially negotiate their “roles for the day.”¹²⁶ Assuming that squabbles over this means of social organization would not intensify into the night and postpone the next morning’s meeting; such a method of dividing labor would be highly unproductive, perhaps so unproductive as to challenge biological survival. A peasant/farmer, for the sake of the community, had better be apt at planting and harvesting crops, a priest (during the inception of agriculture) had better be very good at predicting when to plant crops, and a warrior had better be equally as good at defending the crops. Barring a community of “supermen” who were equally well-versed in all essential social functions (those functions which are necessary for survival), the trajectory of social evolution moved as Goudsblom suggested, “toward an increasing specialization in the production and consumption of food, and an

¹²⁵ Here questions of dysfunction become secondary to concerns of survival. Conflict within a social order is actually only a luxury to be enjoyed after concerns of function have been addressed and *decided*.

¹²⁶ During the Cultural Revolution in China Mao actually attempted to have large industrial facilities function in a “pick your role” fashion. This idea failed and Mao regrouped with the idea that each Chinese family would smelt their own iron in their backyard. This back-up plan never was brought to fruition.

increasing specialization of people.” In other words, the well being of the individual is increasingly evolving a greater dependence upon the function associated with their class expectations. In turn, this dependence of individuals with their class is wrapped around a much broader *interdependence of social classes*.

The Guidance of the Priest and the Reciprocity of the Peasant

The influential moral philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche speculated, consistent with his skeptical view of (Christianity) religion, that via some form of *trickery* the priest was able to displace the warrior and achieve upper class or “first estate” status, thus implying that the warrior *originally* occupied upper class status. The rise of the priestly class, however, to “upper class” status was much more likely not a product of “tricking” the warrior, but instead an “understanding of interdependence” based upon *guidance* and reciprocity between the peasant/farmer and the priest. Nietzsche failed to realize that during the *inception* of human agriculture, the function of the warrior was limited, while the function of the priest was essential.

During temple ceremonies in ancient Mesopotamia archeologist Seton Lloyd (1996: 36) described a rather secular purpose of ritualistic sacrifice.

Their (the Gods) food included bread in large quantities, the meat of sheep or cattle and drink in the form of beer, which was greatly favored by the Sumerians. Among provisions listed in later times were honey, ghee, fine oil, milk dates, figs, salt, cakes, poultry, fish and vegetables... The meal of the god was technically a banquet to which other deities were invited and at which the human worshippers and even the dead might be present. The gods themselves received special parts of the animals, *the remainder going to the king, the priests and the temple staff* (Goudsblom).

Clearly, wealth (as represented by a cornucopia of gourmet food) was being distributed from the peasant –lower class- to the priest –upper class- through the use of a perceived *supernatural* medium. Thus, an initial instance of class directed material redistribution was

not an effort to assist the poor, but was instead a way to support the upper class priest. The first cases of poverty welfare were not top-down attempts to help the poor, but instead bottom-up offerings of reciprocity. The material benefit accorded the priest is obvious, but what social service did the peasant gain *materially* from the relationship?¹²⁷ A proper reply to this question must recognize that agrarian societies were labor-intensive creatures of *production* and *vulnerability*.¹²⁸ In order to establish an agrarian regime, people needed to have knowledge of plants and animals, and the conditions furthering or impeding their growth. In other words, the planting of crops *must* involve human intervention into the blind process of natural selection between and within numerous species of plants and animals (Goudsblom, 38). Viewed in this manner it would be a mistake, far too frequently made today, to understand agriculture as a second hand or *natural* activity. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Everything about agriculture must be *learned*, and in this way the priests offered reciprocation to the peasant.

Agriculture is an endeavor that *requires* expertise in “extrahuman nature” (Goudsblom). The evidence suggests that this was an area in which priests claimed –and to some extent also possessed- such expertise. Much literature, for instance, examines the “mediating” role of the ancient priest between this world and the next (Goudsblom). Under closer examination, however, in many cases this mediation transpired between ordinary people and the *supernatural* notions of weather and the seasons or parasites and pests.

¹²⁷ Typically the answer to this question would involve how *naturally* religious people (peasants) gain freedom from supernatural fear or the redemption of their soul. This type of nonmaterially dependent answer is one of great assumption and probably not true.

¹²⁸ Agriculture is usually thought of as *part* of a larger industrial or post-industrial division of labor. However, in strictly agrarian societies agriculture is not a *part*, but the *entire* process surrounding the division of labor. For this reason it is not an overstatement to suggest that a crop failure in an agrarian society might have triggered death on a massive scale. Being able to succeed with agricultural production meant being able to live. In this way production was a necessity and vulnerability sprung from this necessity.

Priests retained their class status primarily because their “mediation,” and sense of critical crop timing, was at least moderately successful. How did the priest manage this feat?

Most likely priest’s success could be attributed to the fact that ancient priests often times were entrusted to control and interpret the *agrarian calendar*. Accordingly, they had to register, by observing the position of the sun, moon, and stars, whether the time was ripe for certain essential agrarian activities, such as planting or harvesting crops. Without the employment of this crucial “timing” function provided by the priest it is doubtful that early agrarian societies could have produced even a minimal amount of subsistence. Religion – worshiping the priest, who in turn worshiped the “stars” that told him when growing and harvesting could occur- may or may not have been *natural*, but it was certainly functional, not in the sense of “progress” per-se, but in the sense of survival.

It would be disingenuous to treat ancient religion as analogous with modern religion. The ancient priest made predictions, through a perceived supernatural medium, that were meant to be, and often were, realized in a practical human application. In this respect, using a “prediction to occurrence” formula, the ancient priest was much easier to understand in a modern context as the “first scientist.” If the priest used any type of deceit, it was not in tricking the warrior, but actualized with “monopolizing the earliest forms of science.” In an interdependent manner, the peasant revered and supported the priest while the priest made “mystical” (scientific) predictions that decreased the vulnerability of agrarian life while simultaneously raising production levels. Hence, the contention that *guidance* marked the beginnings of class interdependence; this guidance, it should be noted, existed because it helped sparked the mechanism of natural selection as applied toward peoples, class

interdependence. It continued to strive, however, because of accepted level of reciprocity ensued between the peasant and the priest.

Interdependence, in the above context, appears to be much more a function of “expected reciprocity” than general benevolence. Classes were, and still are, interdependent, not necessarily because they believe it offers some sense of a Platonically inspired “good life,” but instead because they expect their survival to be secured or enhanced by such interdependent action. Speculation about motivation is usually frivolous;¹²⁹ however, as survival is concerned, motivation seemed fairly straightforward. The peasant farmer supported the priest and his lavish habits, but the priest had better have properly exercised his role of “mediator” between *God* and crop. Likewise, the priest will predict when the peasant ought to plant and harvest crops, but the peasant had better realize this function with lavish gifts for the *Gods*, and leave the leftovers for the priest.

Class as a Means of *Protection*

Two circumstances signaled the general social evolutionary trend away from an agrarian based priestly upper class, catapulting the warrior to such high social status. First, mystical (scientific) secrets held by priests, solidifying their compulsory social roles, would proliferate, far too significantly for the priest to continue the monopolizing “mystic knowledge.” Second, consistent with Goudsblom second dominant trend, as human population density increased, so too did the need to defend agricultural commodities, (not surprisingly it is *easier* to steal food than worry with the regimented and orderly lifestyle necessary for producing food.) Thus, in functional terms, social class based interdependence

¹²⁹ Evidence from social psychology has never established a strongly statistical relationship between attitude and behavior. Actually if anything regarding the literature on the subject is interesting it is that the general connection between attitude and behavior is extremely disconnected.

would once again undergo evolutionary development. This time, however, it would move correspondingly with the tit-for-tat nature of violence best exemplified by the ethos of the warrior. Similar to the Hegelian dialectic, as agriculture became more productive, in that it was able to support more people, it became, due to an influx of agriculturally supported peoples, a lifestyle increasingly vulnerable to violent attacks. The “better” the agricultural method, the more incentive there was for thievery, looting, and violence.¹³⁰ Moving in tangent with an increase of “violence inspired technology”; the *monopolization of knowledge* held by the priest would be unable to compete with the *monopolization of violence* advanced by the warrior. During the outset of agrarianism, as production levels were low, there was little incentive to use pilferage as a means of survival. As agricultural methods improved, however, pilferage, as opposed to actually working the land, became an ever-increasing temptation.

As it would be a mistake to assume that humans are *naturally* religious, it would also be a mistake to assume that humans are *naturally* violent or warlike. It is, instead, more accurate to presume violence and war serve a particular function, and that this function created an increasing amount of interdependence among various social classes.

Archeological evidence in Mesopotamia, China, and Mesoamerica suggest that the first cities were built around temples that apparently were not strongly fortified (Goudsblom). Thus the creation of the city, a major social evolutionary event, did not initially entail a strong military presence. However, this method of social organization, void an active military presence, would prove to be disastrous. The first temples were burned to the ground, and in their place

¹³⁰ Hegel argued that every argument contains the seeds of its destruction (dialectic). The case of militant agrarian regimes might represent a case were this statement is literally true. The seed of agriculture, if realized in its best possible sense leads to its eventual demise.

fortified military-style “temples” were erected to ensure that such destruction would not recur (Goudsblom). Hence, the professional socially supported “full time” warrior became a byproduct of the reaction to the violent booty supported “part time” thieves who preyed upon the excess production of vulnerable agricultural regimes.¹³¹ A non-militaristic agrarian community was virtually defenseless against bands of thieves unless it could mobilize an army of its own. The function of the warrior, therefore, was simply to fight against other warriors (or looters if such a distinction can be made). How could a sociopolitical community prevent its means of substance from being looted, and its geographic enclave ransacked by violent intruders? The only acceptable answer, consistent with the “struggle for existence,” demanded a firm response, one the peasant and priest most likely equally held in disgust, *develop* and maintain an upper warrior class with the vital purpose of *protecting* the community. Those in post-industrial society are generally quick to suggest that, “violence does not solve anything.”¹³² This sentiment, in the context of protection based class interdependent social orders, could not be further from the truth. In protection-based agrarian societies, the ability to combat violence with violence solves “everything” of immediate concern.

Barring any other deterrent, socially supported violence from *within* a community was a functional requisite, because it was the *only* mechanism that could serve to adjudicate violence from *outside* the community. Social controls from within a community could usually prevent and punish internal violence; however, these controls, *e.g.*, shunning,

¹³¹ In these regimes the priest was of great help with increased production, but could do little to deter the innate physical vulnerability of the farmer and his crop from roaming violent bands.

¹³² The Christian adage “turn the other cheek” would not have been very appealing, or have made very much sense, in the age of “Barbarism.” Even the religious adages that most take for granted are largely a product of “civilization” –representing at most only about a quarter of human history.

exclusion, or imprisonment, meant nothing if the bearer of violence had every intent of leaving the community after the violent act. Violence instigated from *outside* the community could only be dealt with by violence from *inside* the community. Only after the success of agriculture did the control and use of violence begin to guide social evolution. A violent trend that, in one form or another, remains evident to this day.¹³³ The retention of “violence” and protection, should make it clear that as interdependently directed social evolution occurs, it would be a mistake to assume that change suggests the elimination of past interdependent mechanisms. Guidance and protection as social evolutionary manifestations of class-based interdependence have not disappeared.

The diametric differences between the warrior and the peasant created an ideal circumstance for class interdependence. While the peasant farmer was productive and vulnerable, the warrior was largely unproductive and destructive. After all, the function of the warrior was, and still is, to either destroy or protect from destruction, but never to produce. In many ways, the unproductive nature of the warrior lends credibility to a functional argument. Warriors were unproductive either because they used brute cohesion to force their unproductive *will* upon the defenseless peasant, or unproductivity was “allowed” because a function (protection) enabling the productivity of the peasant was at stake. Certainly brute force was always an understood threat; however, the implied threat of violence in conjunction with the function of protection was most likely a result of the nature of the relationship between peasant and warrior.

The German historian Alexander Rustow explains the relationship between peasant

¹³³ If violence replaced knowledge as the mark of interdependence then what if anything in the future can replace violence?

and the warrior as one of the warrior class "overcasting" agrarian society (Goudsblom, pp. 57). Hence, an adhesive bond is produced between protector and producer. The peasant agreed to feed and support the unproductive warrior on the condition that the warrior would protect the peasant and the territory needed to produce subsistence. Interestingly enough, by protecting the peasant's wheat, the warrior was, in a direct sense, protecting his own dinner as well. All the parts of the system (distinct social classes) must work together, not because they *want* to, but because they *have* to if they wish to prevail in the "struggle for existence." No one person or small group can successfully grow crops while simultaneously protecting those crops from roaming bands of thieves.¹³⁴ Only through relying on an integral system of interdependent human classes, and their agents therein, can human survival and social evolution advance. Once agriculture was introduced into human history, individualism necessarily becomes a lesser mechanism of survival than class-based interdependence.

Recall that in the case of savage societies and guidance based agrarian regimes, interdependence meant that survival and development was largely a matter of obtaining *skills* from another and then utilizing these skills in the best possible way. Those unable to learn the "skills of survival" would likely perish, and if they did so before they could reproduce then Darwinian "natural selection" could certainly have been at work. However, due to the nature of the warrior's "fulfillment of the social bargain," this sociobiological evolutionary trend would evaporate. An upper crust of warriors does not disperse *skills* instead they offer, at best, *protection*. Individualism, in an evolutionary sense, is rendered almost completely

¹³⁴ In an argument that Thomas Hobbes used to defend absolute monarchy, he stresses that whether a social order exists does nothing to change the biological fact that Man needs to sleep. Further, our biological make-up renders us dependent on others for protection. As such it is better, for Hobbes, that we accept the limitations of our biological and embrace social order in whatever form it takes.

meaningless if survival, as it did roughly 9,000 years ago, becomes a matter of protection by *another* and not the adaptation and use of *survival skills*, such as hunting a wholly mammoth or planting berries. The increasing complexity of social structure all but assured that social evolution would slowly escape meaningful *individualistically* based influences. The individual, consistent with an increasingly complex division of labor and protection, has increasingly less unilateral control over his or her survival and condition. Thus, the notion of the “struggle for existence” evolves with time, and this evolution has suggested that humans do not survive and advance absent a social environment.

As the protection of the warrior became increasingly important as to become crystallized with a system of social class, the “struggle for existence” became largely a product of which warriors one *chooses*, or is able to, align themselves under.¹³⁵ This notion seems to make the notion of a “struggle for existence” almost completely void of individualistic concerns. Why is someone “better,” or more suitable to survive, simply because they are successfully protected by another? Of course, this choice, a choice separating the winners from the dead, is almost entirely a fictitious one. As civilization began to emerge, class interdependence (the human translation of natural selection) would evolve away from the “transference or guidance of skill” and the ensuing “dependence of protection,” and move toward the increase of “perceived opportunity.” This dominant trend, largely mandated by broad structural social changes, would produce the social climate for the rise and development of civilization (city dwelling), as well as the “lines of chalk” that would

¹³⁵ The choice here is, of course, almost always a false choice. In almost all cases, extending into the present day, one is protected by the social system to which they are born.

draw the boundaries between nation-states.

The Emergence of Class *Perceived Opportunity*

One of the most serious problems with discussing civilization is that its very invocation often erroneously signifies, for many, the beginnings of a “worthwhile,” yet ambiguous, historical or evolutionary review of human history. Even Merriam Webster’s (1999: 210) dictionary falls into this trap by defining civilization as,

A relatively high level of cultural and technological development: the stage of cultural development at which writing and the keeping of written records is attained.

This notion of a “relatively high level,” in this context, does not seem to significantly add to a definition of civilization. John Dewey (1934:336) expressed the frustration with a “dictionary” definition of civilization as he wrote,

I find that even the dictionary avoids defining the term “civilization.” It defines civilization as the state of being civilized and “civilized” as being “in a state of civilization.” However, the verb “to civilize” is defined as “to instruct in the arts of life and thus to raise in the scale of civilization.” Instruction in the arts of life is something other than conveying information about them. It is a matter of communication and participating in values of life by means of the imagination, and works of art are the most intimate and energetic means of aiding individuals to share in the arts of living. Civilization is uncivil because human beings are divided into non-communicating sects, races, nations, classes, and cliques.

Dewey’s account of civilization emphasizes two important thoughts. 1) Civilization is a process, which necessarily depends upon a diverse exchange of values, art, and life instruction, and 2) it would be wrong to confuse the notion of *civil* with that of *civilization*. The diverse exchange, mentioned in the above first point, tends to suggest that civilizations are involved with a number of activities beyond agrarian production; that such social orders are actively transmitting knowledge, skill, and instruction in lieu of an increasing number of perceived production opportunities. In conjunction with the second observation Dewey argues that the distinction which we create in states of “civilization” actually tend to make those within civilization generally more uncivil. In other words, by producing the in-groups

that best help advance our perceived opportunities a paradox is created wherein the development of out-groups becomes a *natural* by-product of such “advancement.” Thus the more civilized our social environment becomes the more uncivil we tend to treat those members of society whom do not happen to occupy the niche which we perceive as benefiting our sphere of opportunity. Perhaps in this fashion, generally the more advanced civilization becomes the more uncivil out-groups, *i.e.* lower social classes, are treated, *i.e.*, as having little or no function.¹³⁶

It seems best to think of civilization as the relative time period, which signified that non-agrarian based labor options became available or, more aptly put as the idea of *perceived opportunity* suggest, were believed to have become available. No longer was agrarianism the only lifestyle “choice.” Before the advent of a social structure complex enough to support the diversities of city life, class based interdependence was an easily observable phenomena, as it was necessarily linked directly with agricultural production. With the complexities associated with a civilized –or city based- social order, it becomes more difficult to observe the direct interdependence of class.¹³⁷ This difficult, nonetheless, can be overcome by an appeal to what Emile Durkheim coined the transition away from “mechanic solidarity” and towards “organic solidarity.” At this juncture it should be clear that for whatever civilization might signify it does not represent the beginnings of meaningful human history or social

¹³⁶ The ideas become very difficult at this point when speaking about civilization in terms of a large conglomerate, it is not. Civilization, is instead, a collaboration of historical processes. Such processes cannot tend to produce a common understanding of “perceived opportunity,” different ideological underpinnings will treat various notions of “perceived opportunities” differently.

¹³⁷ This is a reason why beginning a social evolutionary discourse with the notion of “civilization” is usually not advantageous for the interventionist.

evolutionary trends. Civilization,¹³⁸ in fact, as a social order and distinct stage of social evolution, could only come about only after the development and maturity of both savagery and barbarism.¹³⁹

Mechanical solidarity, for Durkheim (1972: 139), occurs, “In societies where were this type of (interdependent) solidarity is highly developed, the individual is not his own master, and as we shall see later; solidarity is, literally something which the society possess.” The social conditions of mechanical solidarity would seem to mark a level of adherence and discipline necessary to effectively operate an early agrarian regime. Mechanical solidarity, however, becomes increasingly less necessary as the opportunities provided by an expanding division of labor lead to more autonomous social beings. As Durkheim (1972: 8) defined organic solidarity,

Organic solidarity thus consists in the ties of co-operation between individuals or groups of individuals which derive from their occupational interdependence within the differential division of labor. ... The term “organic” solidarity is used to stress that the organization of developed societies resembles the structures of an advanced organism, in which the functioning of the organism depend upon the reciprocal relationships which the various specialized organs of the body have with each other. ... The removal of an organ will hamper the workings of the body, or even put an end to its existence altogether.

¹³⁸ The early sedentary settlements established patterns for future civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, and Africa. The levels of specialization and political organization present in the towns were critical to new inventions and techniques appearing in the fourth millennium BCE. The plow increased crop yields; wheeled vehicles eased transport. Bronze replaced copper and stone in weapon and tool production. Writing in Mesopotamia and other later civilizations permitted expanding trading networks and enlarged bureaucracies. All allowed the growth of larger nonagricultural populations. The isolations of the American peoples prevented the new technology from reaching them. They remained isolated from the rest of the world until the sixteenth century (Pearson education online).

This very parsimonious treatment of civilization allows for a number of insightful generalizations. One, early agricultural settlements established during the eras of guidance and protection were necessary for the establishment of civilization. Two, civilization is a social order based upon the dual realization of both “deagrarianism” and an increased specialization of task. Three, different types of technologies were created in order to facilitate the changes in both individual task and accompanying social schema. Geographic isolation is an important contributing factor, which might well slow the spread of forces that serve to underpin civilization.¹³⁹ By suggesting that civilization is part of a larger process supporting the maturity and development of both savagery and barbarism I do not mean to suggest that this process must be understood as “good.”

The idea here is of tremendous assistance to the interventionist when trying to explain the mechanism of class interdependence in civilization. Increased opportunities within a social structure able to support Durkheim's organic solidarity serve to increase, not decrease, the level of interdependence among various social classes. Only with the "creation" of more diverse opportunities does this interdependence become more difficult to orchestrate. Using Durkheim's organic analogy we might suggest that, as matters of social structure are concerned, human social evolution has not always been equally complex, *i.e.* the organism used in any analogy to describe social evolution is not merely evolving in terms of life stages from birth until death, but transforming from a simple to a more complex organism.

The mere invocation of the term, *city* is likely to create within many a diverse set of passionate sentiments. The city can be busy, dirty and unsafe, while at the same time it is the hub of innovation and change. When thinking about "city life," however, and how it has served to shape civilization it is best to appreciate what the city accomplishes, as opposed to merely the multitude of social problems that result from the increased aggregation of individuals within the city. The social organization of a city allows for a highly specialized division of labor, from this occurrence two important social consequences arise. First, social stratification within a city reaches levels that would likely be dysfunctional within a rural sparsely populated (mechanical) environment. Second, and more to the point of understanding what a city *adds* to social evolution, Rowe (1900: 722) argued:

The close association of city life first makes possible the division of labor, and with such division of labor comes increased productive power. Every advance in productive power creates new wants and involves new possibilities of enjoyment.

Rowe then explains the positive results attached with this division of labor and increased production power, "Throughout the history of civilization we can readily trace the close

relation between the aggregation of population and the development of the arts and sciences.”

Without a complex division of labor each person or small unit of people must spend their time *directly* fulfilling the needs associated with the “struggle for existence.” In tandem with a complex division of labor, however, individuals who occupy various social classes may work towards extremely diverse goals, while at the same time *inadvertently* support the “struggle for existence” for other social members.

The advent of the city (civilization) creates the groundwork for the shift from mechanic to organic solidarity. As this shift occurs, however, the linkage of interdependence among the various social classes becomes one of perceived opportunity. Lower socioeconomic classes perceive an opportunity to move away from a regimented agrarian lifestyle and find more “chances of diverse labor selection” in the city. The term perceived is used here because often these “chances” are often unrealistic “hopes.” Upper socioeconomic classes, consequently, perceive the opportunity to become what Veblen coined the “leisure class.” These dual perceptions of *opportunity*, while vastly distinct, stress a strong degree of class interdependence. In civilization the poor perceive the rich as providing them with the opportunity for multiple forms of labor, they -the rich- provide them -the poor- with their bread. The rich understand the poor to be providing them with their means of leisure. The relationship is, strangely, one based upon interdependence.¹⁴⁰ Such a relationship did not occur absent an imputes. There are no natural mechanisms that suggest certain people or classes will necessarily have lower expectations than others. How did this strange difference in perceived opportunity come about? An answer will not be elaborated here, but consider

¹⁴⁰ Here it is important to look at who controls the discourse of “Who Deserves What.” Consider the ideological tones of the leisure class as they argue that, “we are providing the poor with jobs and opportunity.” It is rarely argued the opposite way; that is the poor are providing the rich with their leisure.

the likelihood that power differentials beginning first with *guidance* extended through *protection* and resulting with *perceived opportunity* likely helped shape contemporary notions of “expected opportunity.” Social classes are interdependent, and the cumulative historical effect (social evolution) of this interdependence has formed the basis for contemporary discourses regarding “poverty welfare.”

Summing Up the Argument

For the interventionist “complex interdependence” is abound in the modern world. Almost every possession of the typical twenty-first century American was mass-produced by technologies representing the ingenuity of hundreds, if not thousands, of successive generations. These very possessions, moreover, were most often mass-produced in a process involving scores of laborers. Contemporary American interdependence, however, does not cease with material possessions. For instance, one gets sick and goes to the doctor; needs protection and calls the police, uses the internet or goes to the library to find possible answers to a vexing question, and the list could continue almost indefinitely. With so many avenues and extensions of interdependence, the complexities of which make class the appropriate unit of analysis, the question rightfully becomes, what does the “lone individual” actually autonomously accomplish? The interventionist is quite happy to answer this question using an immense amount of cumulative historical knowledge with a scream of **nothing**, and feel quite confident that the contrarian will have a formidable task in challenging this one word answer.

The giving of poverty welfare is typically viewed as a process whereby the upper classes give money to financially support the lower classes. I suggest, however, that when a broad historical –social evolutionary view- is taken the lower classes have, for the most part,

“supported” the upper classes.¹⁴¹ This support, however, has existed with the mandate of past interdependent class-based relationships. Understood in this fashion Veblen’s distinction between the “industrious” and “leisure” class is insightful. There exists no class-based integrated understanding of “Who Deserves What.” The question, while being fundamental, is answerable, in its present understanding, only in the context of the “industrious”/“leisure” dichotomy.¹⁴² It is simply wrong to suggest that the “marketplace” unilaterally addresses the question of “Who Deserves What,” nothing intrinsic to the market dictates that the industrious laborer live in squalor while the bond clipping millionaire in luxury. These conditions are agreed upon, they are not determined. We control the “marketplace,” it does not control us! And in this spirit, social evolutionary arguments may rightly be used to justify a sociopolitical community’s decision to aid the poor.

¹⁴¹ This “support,” however, has been reciprocated with functional sorts of activities, *i.e.*, guidance and protection. Nonetheless, it would seem that as social evolution “advances” this reciprocation has become less and less functional.

¹⁴² This dichotomous treatment is, of course, too cut and dry, *i.e.*, there are rich who are industrious and there are poor who live in leisure. Veblen’s treatment, however, is useful enough in challenging the domain assumptions often associated with “poverty welfare.”

CHAPTER 8. THE CONTRARIAN REBUTTAL

Contrarian Thought Examined

The contrarian, while unlikely to deny the historical establishment of class interdependence, takes issue with poverty welfare as the proper form of reciprocity in the current relationship among the social classes. Social evolution has “made” certain social classes what they are and what degree of material they possess, why should a sociopolitical community (government) make any attempt to alter or displace class divisions hundreds, perhaps thousands, of generations in the making? The interventionist’s answer of reciprocity is not sufficient justification for the contrarian. Similarly, to the interventionist, the contrarian adheres to a series of principles meant to form a clear and adhesive bond attaching social evolutionary arguments with a corresponding stance toward poverty welfare. The contrarian’s stance, of course, uses the derivatives of these arguments to justify the exclusion or removal of poverty welfare as a viable sociopolitical option.

Contrarian arguments can generally be reduced to the following categories: (1) competitive individualism, as opposed to group cooperation, best describes the process of social evolution and advancement. This argument typically places a heavy emphasis upon the “great” accomplishments of a few exceptional people, and downplays any importance of the masses. As will be explored, Friedrich Nietzsche greatly subscribed to, and expanded, this line of thought. Thus the “herd,” as Nietzsche referred to the masses, *deserve* nothing from the rich nobleman. Any attempt to “take” from the rich is an act of jealousy and hatred. (2) Money and morality are somehow integrally connected; *i.e.* the poor are by definition immoral. The poor have only themselves to blame for their present condition, and

poverty welfare can only (immorally) denigrate any positive developments of social evolution. Accordingly, giving poverty welfare to the poor will only encourage their immorality. Thomas Chambers made zealous attempts to collaborate accounts of morality with an individualist account of social evolutionism. William Hanna (1862: 384), for instance, would cite a February 7, 1811 letter written by Chambers as stating:

It is quite vain to think that positive relief will ever do away with the wretchedness of poverty. Carry the relief beyond a certain limit, and you foster the diseased principle which gives birth to poverty. ... The remedy against the extension of pauperism does not lie in the liberalities of the rich; it lies in the hearts and habits of the poor. Plant in their bosoms a principle of independence – give a high tune of delicacy to their character – teach them to recoil from pauperism as a degradation.

(3) A dominant trend of determinism (anti-action) runs through a great deal of contrarian thought. Consistent with this trend, the implication is often advanced that social reform, *i.e.* poverty welfare, will inevitably fail because such reform is engaged in a hopelessly waged antagonistic struggle with an opposing “natural non-reform way.” Reform, therefore, in its opposition to the natural way of social evolution, while often good intentioned, will simply never achieve the anticipated result. (4) Last, the contrarian might advance the argument that government has evolved into an “organization not to be trusted,” and consistently has no business deciding, “Who Deserves What.”¹⁴³ Consider, for instance, the way in which classical American writer Henry David Thoreau describes receiving help from others, “If I knew for a certainty that a man was coming to my house with the conscious design of doing me good, I should run for my life”(Bay, pp. 96). Thoreau’s point is expressive of the strong

¹⁴³ This fourth position is likely the least effective in the contrarian’s arsenal. I would suggest, as was earlier considered in note 31, that this view is dependent upon how “government” is understood. The important distinction being either “us” or “them.” I would suggest that in contemporary United States culture the latter has somehow become much more prevalent.

mid-nineteenth century American transcendentalist movement.¹⁴⁴ This movement stressed the positive aspects of nature as well as the ability of the individual to “transcend” concerns of a social structure. Accordingly, people have evolved beyond concerns of interdependence, which *plagued* their ancestors. Thus social evolution has advanced “beyond interdependence”; and “good doers” wrapped in “kindness” not realizing this “truth of social advancement” are to be feared.

John Locke as an Alternative to Edmond Burke

The force of Edmond Burke’s notion of social compact, and the importance he attached with social relations, is not lost on the contrarian. If people are indeed, “a number of vague loose individuals and nothing more,” absent a social structure to allow meaning in life, then the reciprocity of interdependent social classes appears to be sensible. Competition, even within Burke’s system, could readily occur, but only after some sort of cooperative social organization had been established. Thus the position of the contrarian becomes a secondary or tertiary concern. Moreover, if we adhere to Burke’s understanding of social creation, cooperation and sociability –as opposed to competition and individuality- are the logical pillars underpinning social evolutionism. This appreciation becomes important as we consider the practical logistics of mandated poverty welfare. After all, the state is playing Robin Hood. A sociopolitical community, of course, ought to have the force backing a decision to mandate poverty welfare, if the advent of such a community is a necessary

¹⁴⁴ Both Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson would, through literature, extol the benefits of individuality and self-reliance. Thus strongly encouraging the American value schema to place “rugged individualism” over that of the *lesser* notion of “solidarity or cooperation.” Thoreau, (1849) in fact, opens the influential *Civil Disobedience* the following way, “I heartily accept the motto, -- “That government is best which governs least;” and I should like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically. Carried out, it finally amounts to this, which I also believe, -- “That government is best which governs not at all;” and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will have.

condition of a meaningful (individual or social) existence. The contrarian cannot, unless they wish to abandon their argument, allow such an understanding of social creation to be applied towards social evolutionism, the logical extensions hinting towards poverty welfare are simply too strong. The contrarian, therefore, uses the thought of John Locke to rebut the conception of social creation and sociability offered by Burke.

Locke recorded his arguments regarding the characteristics of people, absent a social order, amidst a concern of the “absolute state.”¹⁴⁵ If *everything* worthwhile arrives from the state – “the solidification of the social”-, then what reason could be given for curtailing *any* state action?¹⁴⁶ Locke sought to argue that everything worthwhile does *not* arrive from the advent of social relations, and as such, at times, individualistic claims might be held to supersede the will of the state. The implication is, of course, that certain individualistic claims might warrant a curtailment of the good intentions sought by the interventionist. As Waldron (1994:54) maintained,

Locke’s opposition to absolutism is based on the idea that government is founded on individual consent and that there are clear limits on what individuals will or may give consent to. “A rational creature cannot be supposed, when free, to put himself into subjection to another, for his own harm.”

What then, for Locke, exists prior to the “social,” and what type of individualistic claims might supersede the will of a sociopolitical community? It is found in the answers to these

¹⁴⁵ Notice that for the differences we can rightfully point out separating the thought of Burke and Locke a glaring similarity is apparent in both. Both thinkers were devising arguments that warranted their respective ideological stance toward present concerns of sociopolitical structure. Burke, was more than happy to develop a system of thought, which led logically to the exclusion of rebellion as a viable option. Locke, on the other hand, devised a system of thought, which gave people reason to challenge the notion of an absolute Monarchical system of governance. I will stress again that the connection between ideology, thought, and theory is much more closely linked than many are willing to admit.

¹⁴⁶ Thomas Hobbes argued that short of the “open killing” of citizens the answer is, and ought to be, nothing.

concerns that the contrarian might best begin the support of their position.

Locke (1997: 218) argued that before the existence of a discernible social order there existed a “state of nature” wherein,

All men are naturally in, and that is, a state of perfect freedom to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons, as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of nature; without asking leave or depending upon the will of any other man. A state also of equality, wherein all the power and jurisdiction is reciprocal, no one having more than another; there being nothing more evident than the creatures of the same species and rank, promiscuously born to all the same advantages of nature, and use of the same facilities, should also be equal one amongst another without subordination or subjection.

Thus it was quite possible in Locke’s view to imagine a “state of nature” in which all people enjoyed a high degree of freedom, and an almost certain degree of equality. Locke had a ready response for those who argued his conception of a “state of nature” was pure fantasy.

As Waldron (1994: 59-60) noted a likely reply from Locke,

Government is everywhere antecedent to records, and letters seldom come in amongst a people, till a long continuation of civil society has, by other more necessary arts provided for their safety, ease, and plenty. The result is that civil societies, like human individuals, are commonly ignorant of their own births and infancies. Therefore, it is not at all at all to be wondered that history (in the sense of historical records) gives us but little account of Men, that lived together in the state of nature.

Yet, although Locke appears to accept both the factual accuracy and the positive aspects of the “state of nature,” he does realize how such a state *might* prove disadvantageous.

Freedom and equality, on their face, seem to be positive virtues (a face which sees only through the lens of a social environment); however, too much freedom –absolute freedom– merely suggests one can “do” whatever they wish. Surely this is not always for the best of either the individual engaging in freedom, or those around him. Absolute equality, likewise, tends to suggest that in a “state of nature” men become the “judge of their own case,” and accordingly accounts of *justice* (and punishment therein) are as diverse as bodies to hold

them. Acts of retribution, within a “state of nature,” become the responsibility of the “wronged” individual. Thus while the “state of nature” was much more, for Locke, than a “number of vague loose individuals,” it nonetheless was far from representing an advantageous social order.

Given considerations of the degree to which freedom and equality were present in a “state of nature,” Locke speculated that this state could quickly become a “state of war.” As Locke (1997: 222) maintained,

The state of war is a state of enmity and destruction: And therefore declaring by word or action, not a passionate and hasty, but a sedate settled design upon another man’s life. Puts him in a state of war with him whom he has declared such an intention, and so has exposed his life to the other’s power to be taken away by him, or any one that joints with him in his defense, and espouses his quarrel: it being reasonable and just I should have a right to destroy that which threatens me with destruction.

This passage suggests that asocial beings might have existed in a “state of nature” - before a codified social structure. This existence, however, was easily interrupted by the absolute freedom of one or some in the system challenging the life of others, *i.e.*, creating a “state of war.” This occurrence, surely, happens within contemporary modern nation-states, the difference being that currently, under normal circumstances, if an individual decides to begin a “state of war” they will have to contend with the sanctions set by socially designated authorities. It is, indeed, states that cannot offer such sanction and authority that are commonly referred to as “in a state of chaos.” Due to the tension created between the “state of nature,” and the “state of war” Locke (1997: 223) concluded,

To avoid this state of war (wherein there is no appeal but to heaven, and wherein every the least difference is apt to end, where there is no authority to decide between the contenders) is one of the great reason’s of men’s putting himself into society, and quitting the state of nature.

Notice the telling language Locke used to describe exiting the “state of nature.” Man has the *option of quitting* such a state. Burke, on the other hand, with his understanding of the “state of nature” as nothing more than an abstraction, would have seen such an option as illogical.

Quitting, a designated social structure, is a calculated activity that must involve an analysis of costs and benefits, for Burke, such a calculation becomes an absurdity when man is considered in a “state of nature,” a state Burke might have labeled “the phantom state.”

How then would one, or a group, go about “quitting” the “state of nature?” Locke (1997: 221) suggested that quitting the “state of nature” must involve consent, “all men are naturally in that state, and remain so, till by their own consents they make themselves members of some politic society.” Accordingly, for Locke, natural rights precede the creation of the state or any benefits derived thereof. Moreover, Locke extends this argument by suggesting that such consent is, likely rationally given, because men in the “state of nature” accept that the rule of a sociopolitical body can protect their *natural* rights of life, liberty, and property, better than the dictates of the ever shifting “states of nature and war.” Thus the “social” would not exist, for Locke, if it were not socially accepted –and consented upon- that life, liberty, and property could be better protected within a system of codified governance. Social evolution, therefore, is best advanced when the agreed upon sociopolitical community makes their first priority the protection of life, liberty, and property. Absent this “first priority,” Locke suggested, people might well be better suited to take their chances in the “state of nature.”

While this listing of natural rights –life, liberty, and property- is open too wide latitudes of interpretation, notice that “reform” is strikingly absent from this list of *rights*. Consistently, the contrarian emphasizes the governmental responsibility to protect property, *i.e.*, money. Further, by mandating that some people (classes) make some of their wealth available to other people (classes) the charge is leveled that government, in turn, is wrongly reneging on a primary duty (protection of property), in order to “decide” the secondary

matter of poverty welfare. While all the arguments cannot be exhausted here, it is appropriate to conclude that Locke could be read to discourage the act of poverty welfare. Such a reading might suggest that consent to *quit* the “state of nature” would not have occurred if the government created therein took property from some as a way to alleviate the poverty of others. This notion is no less controversial than Burke’s conception of the social contract, but it represents the best starting place for the contrarian.

Nietzsche and the “Will to Power”

The late nineteenth century German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, expressed an odd configuration of diversely scattered thought. Most of what he considered a consistent pattern of thought, many observers have scrutinized as contradictory or worse hypocritical.¹⁴⁷ He, for instance, held staunchly conservative aristocratic values –advocating what he saw as a clear delineation between “strong” and “weak,” while at the same time strongly supporting the postmodern notion that *truth* is nothing but an illusion. In many ways Nietzsche’s *perspectivism* formed the underpinnings for what is now contemporary post-modernism. Nietzsche was not a social evolutionist per se. He did, however, use historical/evolutionary arguments in a limited fashion to suggest that Christianity and Modernity were the dual sources that most threatened any potential *real* meaning attached with life. Many of his arguments, nonetheless, speak directly to points of contention that the contrarian might raise with the interventionist. His thought, in other words, can quickly become part of an evolutionary argument.

The interventionist, as well as many contemporary Americans, takes as given that generally: a democratic sociopolitical environment is for the *best*, reciprocity within

interdependent relations is clearly a *good*, and helping others in need is not only admirable, but also indicative of advancements in social evolution. Through a variety of strategies, Nietzsche takes aim at each of these assumptions, and concludes that they constitute nothing more than the dominance of Christianity and the unfortunate rejection of the “will to power.” Nietzsche’s thought is extremely complex, and its richness cannot be captured in a few pages; however the following points are strategies that might be given force by the contrarian. (1) His treatment of the “will to power,” (2) treatment of Christianity and Christian virtues, (3) the evolution of morality, and the distinction between master (noble) and slave (herd) morality. The purpose of this presentation is not to suggest that the contrarian would utilize *all* of these Nietzschean notions to justify the exclusion of poverty welfare. The contrarian, however, is apt to minimally take pieces of the above arguments as an initial step in challenging the interventionist. For whatever might be said, and many things could, to lambaste Nietzsche’s thought one thing is for certain, it is extremely, and increasingly, influential. For this reason it deserves our attention here.

For Nietzsche, human struggle is largely wagged between competing “wills” –namely the “will to power,” and the “will to truth.” The latter is a figment of the imagination, a creation the weak “invented” to escape the strength of the former. As Nietzsche (1977: 226) observed,

And you too, enlightened man, are only a path and footstep of my will: truly, my will to power walks with the feet of your will to truth! He who shot the doctrine of “will to existence” at truth certainly did not hit the truth: this will – does not exist! For what does not exist cannot will; but that which is in existence, how could it still want to come into existence? Only where life is, there is also will: not will to life, but –so I teach you- will to power! The living creature values many things higher than life itself; yet out of this evaluation itself speaks –the will to power!

¹⁴⁷ See Peter Gay’s introduction to Walter Kaufmann’s *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (2000; New York)

Admittedly, Nietzsche's style of writing (typically in somewhat confusing aphorisms), as with many of his German cohort, is difficult to decipher. This difficulty, however, is not insurmountable. Further, once Nietzsche is better understood his thought is reducible to some quite simple assertions –this more than any other reason suggests his immense contemporary popularity. Nietzsche argued that people *naturally* strive to gain power, and if necessary dominate others, *i.e.* the will to power. Thus within each of us exists a “will to power,” which is intrinsic to our very nature.

Further, Nietzsche utilized the tragic view of life expressed by the Ancient Greeks to demonstrate that power, more than any other will, is the true expression of human existence.¹⁴⁸ The “will to power,” on its face, does not appear to be very controversial (it is indeed the way in which many view *savage* society), it becomes controversial as Nietzsche argues that man does not, and cannot, evolve *beyond* such a will. It was present in the first man, and will remain in the last. The “will to power” lingers within us, and there can be no evolving past its grip. The interventionist talk of cooperation and reciprocity, in the name of poverty welfare, is a denial of the “will to power,” a corruption of human nature. The interventionists, therefore, good intentions or otherwise does nothing but advance a position that can only corrupt our nature of power and domination. If people cannot find a way to get what they need on their own –through an exercise of power, then perhaps they should not get it at all.

Why then is helping others (intervening on their behalf) generally viewed as a *good*? Nietzsche suggests that an answer can be found in the European acceptance and spread of

¹⁴⁸ In Nietzsche's doctoral dissertation, *The Birth of Tragedy*, he examined the tense struggle between Apollonian reason and Dionysian impulse. The attempt is then advanced to carry this tragic Greek struggle to an analysis of Modern (late nineteenth century) German culture.

Christianity and Christian virtues.¹⁴⁹ Christianity professes a “will to truth” in kindness, mutual aid, and “turning the other cheek.” All values which, if practiced in their full, offer an *easy* alternative to the “will to power.” Nietzsche offers two reasons why the masses –or the *herd* as he calls them- might opt for the false “will to truth” as opposed to the naturally intrinsic “will to power.” First, the *weak* will always detest the “will to power” because they can never gain it. Second, Christianity offers the “herd” an appealing reason to *hate* that which life is, a “will to power.” Thus a denial of the “will to power,” best exemplified through Christianity, represents, for Nietzsche, a hatred for what life best represents –a tragic struggle. As Nietzsche (2000: 23) suggested,

Christianity was from the beginning, essentially and fundamentally, life’s nausea and disgust with life merely concealed behind, masked by, dressed up as faith in another or better life. Hatred of “the world,” condemnations of the passions, fear of beauty and sensuality, a beyond invented to better slander this life, at bottom a craving for the nothing for the end, for respite, for the Sabbath of Sabbaths... at the very least a sign of abysmal sickness, weariness, discouragement, exhaustion, and the impoverishment of life.

Christian values, *i.e.* reciprocity, and kindness, (values not lost on the interventionist), therefore, constitute a hatred for life. Life is tragic; poverty, social ills, and death are but parts of life’s tragedy. These social *ills* are only intrinsically *bad*, for Nietzsche, if accordingly life is understood as *bad*. For Nietzsche, if we are to love life we must also appreciate its tragic quality. Using this logic the contrarian could argue that the interventionist is trying to do the impossible, alleviate life itself. Poverty is not to be *fixed*; it is instead a tragic condition that must be embraced if life is to be appreciated. Thus, social evolution, if it is to include any particular ethos, suggests finding ways to advance the “will to power,” not trying to alleviate the hardships of others.

¹⁴⁹ By introducing this line of reason I do not intend to equate, in every case, the interventionist with the Christian.

A rejection of the “will to power” comes about only after the “herd” establishes its own moral code. As Nietzsche (1977: 102) plainly stated, “Morality is the herd instinct in the individual.” Such an instinct comes about only after the “will to power” within the individual becomes displaced by a communal “herd-like” mentality. Thus as Nietzsche (1977: 94-5) maintained,

What is wanted –whether it is admitted or not- is nothing less than a fundamental remolding, indeed weakening and abolition of the individual: one never tires of enumerating and indicting all that is evil and inimical, prodigal, costly, extravagant in the form individual existence has assumed hitherto, one hopes to manage more cheaply, more safely, more equitably, more uniformly if there exists only large bodies and their members.

The displacement of individuality is synonymous with the taking of the “will to power.” Morality becomes, for Nietzsche, the act of following custom. Following custom, however, becomes an act inspired by function. As such, the function of the “herd” becomes – especially with the advent of Christianity- to engage in what Nietzsche labels “slave morality.” In describing “slave morality” Nietzsche (1977: 108) extrapolated,

Suppose the absurd, oppressed, suffering, unfree, those uncertain of themselves should mobilize: what would their moral evaluations have in common? Probably a pessimistic mistrust of the entire situation of man will find expression, perhaps a condemnation of man together with his situation. The slave is suspicious of the virtues of the powerful: he is skeptical and mistrustful, keenly mistrustful of everything “good” that is honored among them – he would like to convince himself that happiness itself is not genuine among them.

Thus the weak, unable to practice the “will to power,” have devised a system of morality – “slave morality”- which serves to make “good” a function of weakness, and “evil” a function of power. The weak can never gain power; therefore, they despise the power and comfort that accompany the strong and noble. To act in any other way would be in opposition to the *nature* of the weak. As Nietzsche (1977:115) argued,

To require of strength that it should not express itself as strength, that it should not be a desire to conquer, a desire to subdue, a desire to become master, a thirst for enemies and resistance and triumphs, is just as absurd as to require of weakness that it should express itself as strength.

Most of Nietzsche's thought would be unable to find an approving audience in contemporary America; it is difficult to form a collective base when your thought revolves around the dismissal and condemnation of the collective as "herd." Nonetheless, his emphasis upon, individuality, strength, and will is attractive to many, even if they must read such notions away from the prying eyes of others. When the poor are seen as weak, they are simultaneously viewed as "drags on the system," or a hindrance to the advancement of all. The question "Who Deserves What," for Nietzsche, becomes answered, with the response, he who can muster the power to gain it. This power becomes the basis for the competitive individualistic ethos of the contrarian. Herbert Spencer was one such contrarian not afraid to add a dose of evolutionary moralism with Nietzsche's individualistic "will to power."

Herbert Spencer: The Apex of "Evolutionary Individualism"

It would not be an over-statement to suggest that, absent the thought of Herbert Spencer the contrarian position as defined within the parameters of this thesis would scarcely exist. One might, of course, for any number of reasons, complain about poverty welfare, but this complaint becomes *reasonably* wrapped within an evolutionary framework only after Spencerian thought served to include individualistic sentiment as a correlate of social evolutionism. Social evolutionists, such as those we have already examined, are typically quick to emphasize the collectivist implications of evolutionary arguments, *i.e.*, the species evolves through collective, as opposed to individualistic mechanisms. Spencer, on the other hand, used his brand of social evolutionism to support: extreme individualism, laissez faire economics, the abolishment of "poor laws" (the equivalent of the expression "poverty welfare"), and the general restriction of most governmental intervention. The late nineteenth century American thinker Oliver Wendell Holmes placed Spencer's intellectual influence

second only to Darwin when he expressed his doubt that, “Any writer of English except Darwin has done so much to affect our whole way of thinking about the universe (Hofstadter, 1992; 32).” The respect afforded to Spencer’s evolutionary synthesis allowed him to lambaste the interventionist. As Spencer (1868: 354) argued:

Spurious philanthropists who, to prevent present, would entail greater misery on future generations. Blind to the fact that under the natural order of things society is constantly excreting its unhealthy, imbecile, slow, vacillating faithless members ... in their eagerness to prevent the really-salutary sufferings that surround us, these sigh-wise and groan-foolish people bequeath to posterity a continually-increasing curse.

Spencer came as close to a *real* representation of the contrarian as any “popular” thinker ever has. How did Spencer brilliantly blend social evolutionism with an exceptionally harsh treatment of poverty welfare? The answer, as will be explored, is dependent upon the individualistic telos of Spencer’s social evolutionary system. It is important to remember as suggested by Hofstadter (1992: 35-6), “His (Spencer’s) social ideas are intelligible only in the setting of his philosophy; his social laws were but special cases of his general principles.” As valiantly as it might be attempted, the breach of Spencer’s evolutionary synthesis with his social thought is a battle to be waged in frustration. Spencer’s contrarianism exists only because of his larger evolutionary synthesis, or visa-versa, but in either event they are separable only at the risk of misunderstanding his evolutionary synthesis.

Spencer was born (1820) in a small brick house on the outskirts of Derby, England. Spencer’s early childhood involved a strain of intellectual and religious influences. His mother, a devote Methodist, would regularly take young Spencer to Sunday religious service. Spencer’s father, on the other hand, had decided to leave the Methodist church, and attend –

less supernaturally inclined- Quaker meetings.¹⁵⁰ Instead of being absolutely pulled in one of these directions, Spencer was socialized into both, very different, spiritual settings –provided the Quaker meetings he attended with his father involved much more intellectual conversation than religious proselytizing. Later in his life while compiling his autobiography (1904) Spencer would speak glowingly about his father’s influence, and give only scarce mention to his mother. For whatever else socialization agents produced in Spencer childhood, they certainly created an extremely individualistic and non-conformist young man. At age thirteen, for instance, Spencer was sent to live with his Uncle, and attend Hilton Charterhouse in Somerset. After three days, however, a disgruntled Spencer decided to leave with no money and little food. After three days of near-continuous walking he arrived home in Derby. This incident was to set the indignant and individualistic tone prominent in the whole of Spencer’s thought.

Spencer’s three-day march back towards Derby did not produce his desired effect. He was sent back to Somerset, where he would continue his study of: Euclid geometry, Latin, French, Greek, trigonometry, mechanics, chemistry, and political economy, until he was sixteen. At the age of sixteen Spencer would cease formal schooling, and take a job serving as an engineer for the railroad. When the voluminous quantity, quality, and breath of Spencer’s work is considered, it is astounding that his formal schooling ended before his seventeenth birthday. Spencer’s lack of academic credentials produced both positive and negative consequences for the treatment of his work. While he gained a great deal of popular respect, large portions of his works were strenuously critiqued in academic circles –perhaps a

¹⁵⁰ These meetings were often frequented by some of the most respected thinkers in England. For instance, Spencer, in his early adolescence, would meet and discuss issues of the day with Erasmus Darwin –Charles Darwin’s grandfather.

greater deal of critique than a fellow colleague would have endured. In particular, the American pragmatist William James –Professor at Harvard- would devote countless lectures to the thrashing of Spencer’s work. Apparently Spencer’s feeling towards academics was mutual. He rarely used academic sources in his writings, and when he did most were references to obscure thinkers. Further, when Spencer did read the thoughts of others he usually found them, as in his reading of Kant, to be “rubbish” (Kaldenberg). Spencer’s distance from academia, however, gave him a considerable amount of intellectual sway with those skeptical of academics and intellectualism. If a profound social theorist such as Spencer had no need for higher education, then what good was it to anyone? Spencer did not need the government for education, and he used his self-sufficient style of learning to argue against the intervention of government into the education of its citizens. Spencer (1868: 366-7), for instance, would argue:

Legislators exhibit to us the design and specification of a state-machine, made up of masters, ushers, inspectors, and councils, to be worked by a due proportion of taxes, and to be plentifully supplied with raw material in the shape of little boys and girls, out of which it is to grind a population of well-trained men and women who shall be useful members of society.

For Spencer state education was little more than a device the government could easily use to thwart the individuality of its citizens. In many of his diatribes, stressing the “evils of government,” the non-academic Spencer could freely voice what he understood as the logical extensions of his evolutionism without biting the hand that feed him –a unique position for most involved with intellectual pursuits.

Spencer was a “Social Darwinist” in name recognition only. In fact, Spencer was scarcely a Darwinist at all. As discussed earlier Spencer was a Lamarckian; consistently his biological and social evolutionary synthesis stressed Lamarckian as opposed to Darwinian evolutionary principles. That is, they espoused the belief that the inheritance of acquired

characteristics is a means by which species can originate and advance. Accordingly, if acquired characteristics are the primary mechanism of evolutionism (they are not, since the early twentieth century Darwinian evolutionary principles, *i.e. natural selection*, have consistently shown to be the likely driving force behind –physical- evolution) then it makes more sense why Spencer would have been so inclined to have a detest for the “undeserving poor” or the “good for nothings” as he was prone to label them in his writing. It is inaccurate and unproductive to conceptualize Spencer as any type of Darwinist, social or otherwise.

Tim Gray argued that there exists in Spencer’s thought a tension between the organicist conception of social order, and (potentially) inconsistent views towards individualism.¹⁵¹ Thus it is possible to read many portions of Spencer’s thought, which sounds very much like the views of the interdependent hungry interventionist. As Kaldenburg (1977: 35) explained, Spencer’s general evolutionary synthesis as applied to human society suggested that:

Finally evolution occurs sociologically in human societies where instead of each man fulfilling all the roles need to survive, each man assumes one of the roles to the exclusion of the others. By assuming one role he becomes able to perform its tasks better and at the same time becomes dependent upon others in society in order to survive.

If one were to use, as Spencer did, an analogy wrapped in organicism to describe social order, how could they avoid relying heavily upon the notion of interdependence –the very notion that the interventionist argues represents the mechanism of natural selection as applied to class based social orders? Spencer, after all, in his *Principles of Sociology* asks his own rhetorical question, “what is society” with the quipped answer “society is an organism.”¹⁵² In

¹⁵¹ Gray’s book, *The Political Philosophy of Herbert Spencer*, (1996), is a wonderful treatment of the tension between Spencer’s adhere to both organicism and extreme individualism.

¹⁵² I found this reference to Spencer in, Kaldenburg (1977: 37)

addition, Spencer often supported the practice of certain types of governmental intervention.

In regards to public sanitation, for instance, Spencer (1902:157) commented:

Public control of individuals is needful in the sphere of hygiene as in other spheres ... In a town, care of the roads and pavements must obviously be undertaken by a public authority, as also sewage.

How can such a position be reconciled with Spencer's more anti-interventionist stance—a stance to be expanded in this section? Such reconciliation might not exist, and if it could its examination would likely broach the trajectory of the arguments here. I offer, however, one reason as to why Spencer seems to be caught somewhere in between the sentiments of interdependent organicism and extreme individualism. By all accounts, Spencer was an egotistical and arrogant thinker. Perhaps, Spencer viewed his greatest intellectual opponent as himself. Spencer might have, in other words, very well viewed himself as his greatest and perhaps only worthy adversary. This explanation might help explain the ease at which Spencer can change from a position of interdependence to one of self-sufficiency in almost the same breath. It would be impossible to argue that Spencer was typically a consistent thinker, he certainly was not. His arguments, nonetheless, can, when Spencer is in the individualist mood, form a very strong contrarian rebuttal; a rebuttal he would probably be happy to argue against.

Spencer's evolutionary synthesis allowed him to reveal his "individualistic mood" with a great deal of ease. Recall from the earlier brief discussions of Spencer's evolutionism that he viewed evolution to occur as a process wherein change came about with a shift, from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, from the undifferentiated to the differentiated. In other words, social evolution was a result in change from the similar to the dissimilar. Spencer maintained that this general evolutionary synthesis could be applied to human social order. This application of social evolution took place as society evolved from the militant to

an industrial social stage. In describing the militant stage of social order (a stage that appears strikingly similar to Durkheim's notion of mechanical solidarity)¹⁵³ Spencer (1882: 571-72) places heavy emphasis upon the lack of individuality:

His life is not his own, but is at the disposal of society. So long as he is capable of bearing arms he has no alternative but to fight when called on ... Of course, with this goes possession of such liberty only as military obligations allow. He is free to pursue his private ends only when the tribe or nation has no need for him; and when it has need of him, his actions from hour to hour must conform not to his will but to the public will. So, too, with his property ... in the last resort he is obligated to surrender whatever is demanded from the communities use.

For Spencer such a way to live –condemned to serving as little more than a tool for public needs- represents a lesser-evolved social order. Interdependence, for Spencer, does not get more complicated; instead –if society is to evolve- it withers away. Thus the more homogeneous and interdependent the social order under review necessarily tends to suggest a correspondingly low level of social evolution. Life in militant society was/is a hindrance to the full capacities of people, for social evolution to occur the state must move beyond this stage. If the state can order its people to kill and die, then accordingly the individuality and differentiation of people is in a position of constant jeopardy. Towards the end of his life Spencer became an increasingly indignant anti-war activist. War, for Spencer, was the path of devolution, the path that paved the way for the state to dominate the interests and advancement of people. Spencer was horrified with British involvement in the Boer war, so much so that he would publicly announce that he was “assumed of his country,” strong words for a proud Brit (Grey).

Spencer (1900: 375-6) makes his disgust for militant society clear as he wrote:

¹⁵³ Jonathan Turner writing in *Herbert Spencer: A Renewed Appreciation*, comes very close to suggesting that this similarity is more than a coincidence, and that Durkheim should have actively credited Spencer's thought more than he did.

Advance to man and higher forms of society essentially depend on the decline of the militancy and growth of industrialism. This I hold to be a political truth in comparison with which all other political truths are insignificant.

In very non-negotiable language Spencer draws a steadfast line in the sand. Social Evolutionism can never fully occur, for Spencer, unless a significant social shift away from the militant and towards the industrial takes place. Consistent with a shift to the industrial Spencer formed the “law of equal freedom” (everyone has freedom to do as he wills, provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man).¹⁵⁴ In a perfectly evolved Spencerian evolutionary social synthesis it would be this law that would mark the pathway of human behavior. Thus if Spencer’s evolutionary stage of industrialism is carried to its logical conclusion it is clear why he placed such an importance upon individualism, and, at almost every turn, found fault in government intervention. Any form of government intervention, which interfered with Spencer’s “law of equal freedom,” was bound to face his challenge. The intervention was, indeed, serving only to disrupt, or worse prevent, Spencer’s complete evolutionary synthesis from reaching positive human social fruition. Only when the individual¹⁵⁵ is free to live under a law of equal freedom can social evolution reach its highest apex. For this reason it is not wrong to label Spencer an “individualistic (social) evolutionist.”

¹⁵⁴ Spencer’s “law of equal freedom” is almost identical with John Stuart Mill’s “harm principle.” Interestingly, when Spencer was running low on funds, Mill in an act of academic cooperation, lent Spencer a sizable amount of money.

¹⁵⁵ Spencer, for all his emphasis toward the individual, never actually offered a clear definition of individuality. Instead he explained (1898: 249); “there is ... no definition of individuality that is not unobjectionable. All we can do is make the best practicable compromise.” Spencer offers the compromise of considering the individual to be independently self-sufficient, a few pages latter he writes, “to consider as an individual any organized mass which is capable of independently carrying on.” These passages present an interesting question, that is, do individual humans exist? Americans are socialized to believe, of course, that the answer must be a resounding yes. This answer, however, ought to be open to more discussion than it is usually afforded.

Spencer (1981: 100) would note that all *progress* is a derivative of individual aspiration and ingenuity,

That abundant crops now grow where once only wild berries could be gathered, is due to the pursuit of individual satisfactions through many centuries. The progress from wigwags to good houses has resulted from wishes to increase personal welfare; and towns have arisen under like promptings. Beginning with traffic at gatherings on occasions of religious festivals, the trading organization, now so extensive and complex, has been produced entirely by men's efforts to achieve their private ends. Perpetually, governments have thwarted and deranged the growth, but have in no way furthered it; save by partially discharging their proper function and maintaining social order (Ashley and Orenstein pp. 121).

Thus it is through the actions of private interests that offered force to positive social evolution. Spencer's interpretation of evolutionism would have garnered no less than a grin from Adam Smith. What is to be said, however, of a collective community driven conscious in the process of social evolution? Spencer's answer to this question, which could have asked by either Marx or Durkheim, was to deny the existence of any conscious other than that of "individual conscious." As Spencer (1950: 397) maintained:

It is well that the lives of all parts of an animal should be merged into the life of the whole, because the whole has a corporate consciousness. But it is not so with a society; since its living units do not and cannot lose individual consciousness, and since the community as a whole has no corporate consciousness. This is an everlasting reason why the welfare of citizens cannot rightly be sacrificed to some supposed benefit of the state, and why, on the other hand, the state is to be maintained solely for the benefit of its citizens.

This passage points to an important difference of thought separating the contrarian from the interventionist. The interventionist understands the individual as an abstraction and the community as real, while the contrarian, taking an almost opposite view, understands the individual as real and the community as the abstraction. A productive discourse surrounding poverty welfare must commence with this important difference.

Whenever a government (sociopolitical community) attempts to intervene in the interests of one group they will, for Spencer, axiomatically disrupt the law of equal freedom

for others. Taking from one and giving to another, *i.e.*, playing Robin Hood, because it is thought of as a “social good,” does nothing except make society weaker (the body grows weak if “harmful” agents persist within). Thus in describing government intervention Spencer (1868: 366) suggested:

And yet strange to say, now the truth is recognized by most cultivated people ... now more than ever in the history of the world, are they (interventionist) doing all they can to further the survival of the unfittest!

Spencer absolutely despised the state deciding, “Who Deserves What;” by making any such decision the interventionist was doing nothing more than ensuring that “survival of the unfittest” would occur. State intervention –or interference, as Spencer would have labeled such state action- breeds a sort of paternalism at odds with his “law of equal freedom.” Even as health care is concerned, Spencer (1843: 35) argued that any state intervention is ill advised, and insulting to the autonomous person.

No one has a claim upon the legislature to take that care of his health which he will not take himself ... It (health legislation) treats them as so many children. It puts the people into leading strings. Poor things! If we do not look after them they will be going to ignorant quacks for advice, and perhaps get poisoned!

While Spencer did not coin the phrase “big brother” to describe government action, he was astutely aware and extremely mistrustful of the paternalistic implication attached with the interventionist. If the state insists on continually looking after your “best interests,” then the implication for Spencer quickly becomes that individuals will never do this “looking” for themselves. For this reason Spencer (1868: 230) remarked, “Government is essentially immoral ... the offspring of evil, bearing about it all the marks of its parentage.” Spencer (1868: 234) was not through with his tyrant, he would continue, “even its most equitable form it is impossible for government to dissociate itself from evil.”

Spencer is perhaps most ambivalent as he wrote about English “poor laws” – legislative attempts to alleviate poverty. Spencer gives mixed messages as to whether he opposed “poor laws” because he wants to help the poor in the “long run,” or because he opposed such legislation because of his detest with the poor. For whatever reason, Spencer would contend that such legislation is necessarily at odds with his first social law of “equal freedom.” Assuming the former explanation Spencer (1868: 358) argued, “to the extent that a poor-law mitigates distress in one place, it unavoidably produces distress in another.” Consistently, Spencer argued that the working-class poor would bear the heaviest burden of supporting the “undeserving poor.” Thus by eliminating poverty welfare the poor were actually –as a collective- better off. In addition, Spencer would conclude that by *giving* extra money to the poor they would likewise be encouraged to have more children than they could support absent poverty welfare. Spencer, likewise, often claimed in his writings that his position towards “poor laws” were compassionate to future generations of potentially avoidable “poor births” that, if welfare was withheld, could avoid the pains of poverty. A little Malthusian pressure, for Spencer, represented a positive mechanism of social evolution.

Nonetheless the potentially compassionate aspects of Spencer’s rejection of poverty welfare are eclipsed by the greater possibility that, Spencer simply had no room for the poor in his evolutionary house. In haste language Spencer (1868: 414) leaves no acceptable social space for those who cannot sustain self-sufficiency.

If they are sufficiently complete to live, they do live, and it is well they should live. If they are not sufficiently complete to live, they die, and it is best they should die (Hofstadter pp. 41).

In describing the “idle poor” Spencer (1950: 22) maintained:

They have no work, you say. Say rather that they either refuse work or quickly turn themselves out of it. They are simply good-for-nothings who in way or another live on the good-for-somethings vagrants and sots, criminals and those on the way to crime.

Why should, as Spencer would ask, the working-poor be stripped of some earnings in order to feed the idle poor? Spencer did not dislike the poor per se, only the “idle poor” who refused to work. Interestingly, this condemnation did not extend to a critique of the “idle rich,” a group that if they knew the meaning of industriousness had practiced such an art only once at birth (perhaps this assessment of the idle “well-to-do” hits too close to home for Spencer, who received a sizable inheritance from his uncle). Spencer (1904: 394) seems to capture an aspect of Nietzsche’s thought as he suggested that suffering might be the only way the poor can escape their social position.

The mass of effete humanity to be dealt with is so large as to make one despair: the problem seems insolvable. ... Certainly, if solvable, it is to be solved only through suffering.

Spencer reasons that the problem of poverty appears unanswerable not because of a flaw in nature –or his evolutionary synthesis-, but because do-gooders have attempted to corrupt, with advancements of poverty welfare, the “survival of the fittest.”

The irony in the above assessment is that Spencer was quick to use deterministic (anti-action) arguments when they suited both the purposes of his evolutionary synthesis and his individualistic implications therein. Spencer (1868:170), for instance, argued:

One would have thought it sufficiently clear to everybody that the great changes taking place in the world of ours are uniformly slow. Continents are upheaved at the rate of a foot or two a century. The deposition of a delta is the work of tens of thousands of years. The transformation of barren rock into life supporting soil takes countless ages. If any think society advances under a different law, let them read.

This gradualist position is optimistically extended to an examination of human social order as Spencer (1868:454) later in the same work concluded:

The seeds of civilization existing in the aboriginal man, and distributed over the earth by his multiplication, were certain in the laps of time to fall here and there into circumstances fit for their development; and in spite of all blightings and uprootings, were certain, by sufficient repetition of these occurrence, ultimately to originate a civilization which would outlive all disaster and arrive at perfection.

The peculiarity here is that Spencer is advocating both a destiny of social perfection, and the position that “poor laws,” and other aspects of “government interference,” are detestable and a hindrance to social evolution. Spencer’s dual positions seem odd for two reasons. First, if Spencer’s brand of social evolution leads to a specific telos, it is strange, perhaps inconsistent, to think that poverty welfare could thwart this end. Second, the notion of “interference” could occur in at least two ways. Spencer viewed governmental intervention as seemingly the only type of socially destructive interference; however, restricting a sociopolitical community from deciding “Who Deserves What” in a manner consistent with poverty welfare could also be viewed as interference. If “Who Deserves What” is a fundamental sociopolitical question without negation, then it seems that some type of “interference” by some party is unavoidable. The contrarian may rightly claim many things, but one cannot be that they are opposed to *all* interference, there stance necessarily suggests interfering in the decision of a community to construct a system of poverty welfare.

Spencer, at the time of his death (1903), lived long enough to see Darwin credited as the father of evolutionary theory (a title Spencer should have had if he would have simply abandoned his Lamarckianism) as well as the increased implementation of governmentally mandated social programs. The weight of these factors led Spencer to die an unhappy and regretful man. The headstone of Spencer’s grave in London’s Highgate Cemetery overlooks Karl Marx’s tomb. Marx’s tomb is tended to by a single attendant who must sort and organize the barrage of messages to the departed father of communist political theory. The

flora that tends to tangle itself around the mass of forgotten dead, on the other hand, often overruns Spencer's grave. Spencer was no less the thinker than Marx, and ironically they wished for the same end to social evolutionism. They both wished for, and foresaw, the "inevitable" withering away of the state. The difference is that whereas Marx foresaw cooperative social relations as the apex of social evolutionism, Spencer was much more comfortable in viewing this apex as the solitary individual –after all, for Spencer "collective consciousness" was the abstraction, not *visa versa*.

William Graham Sumner: The Forgotten Man

While Spencer is the father of contrarian thought, it was William Graham Sumner that brought contrarianism to a broader American audience. It was Sumner, not Spencer, who is properly labeled a "Social Darwinist." In describing the important linkage between Spencer and Sumner, Kaldenburg (1977: 80-1) explained:

The Social Darwinist disciples of Spencer were found in most English speaking countries. Yet his effect was probably greatest in the United States where one of the first noted followers was the sociologist William Graham Sumner. Sumner fought a battle with the officials of Princeton University who had placed a ban on the use of Spencer's books at the university on the grounds that their agnosticism would destroy the moral character of the students at Princeton. Sumner was able to encourage the university to allow the books to remain; and in doing so he won, not only a battle for Spencer in the United States, but also a victory for academic freedom.

Sumner, therefore, served as an extremely important advocate for the academic appreciation of Spencer's work. Spencer's evolutionary synthesis, and implications for poverty welfare therein, either stand or fail on their own merit; however the implications of his contrarian thought were dependent upon others –such as Sumner- hailing and "reproducing" his work. Sumner was Spencer's American messenger, and his letter was titled "Social Darwinism."

Sumner (1934: 56) would, like Spencer, understand "survival of the fittest" in comparison with its antithesis.

If we do not like the survival of the fittest we have only one possible alternative, and that is the survival of the unfittest. The former is the law of civilization; the latter is the law of anti-civilization.

Thus, for Sumner, if social order is to become, or remain, a “civilization,” then a necessary cause of such an order is an appreciation for the “survival of the fittest.” Sumner creates a two fold typology of the “struggle for existence” (survival of the fittest) in order to show that those who favor government interference –the interventionist- are ignorant of man’s dual evolutionary processes. As Sumner (1911:176) argued,

We have noticed that the relations involved in the struggle for existence are twofold. There is first the struggle of individuals to win the means of subsistence from nature, and secondly there is a competition of man with man in the effort to win a limited supply. The radical error of the socialists and sentimentalists is that they never distinguish these two relations from each other. They bring forward complaints which are really to be made, if at all, against the author of the universe for the hardships which man has to endure in the struggle with nature. The complaints are addressed, however, to society; that is, to other men under the same hardships. The only social element, however, is the competition of life, and when society is blamed for those ills which belong to the human lot, it is only burdening those who have successfully contended with those ills with the further task of conquering the same ills over again for somebody else.

Accordingly, the interventionist is almost always engaged in trying to alleviate –through taking from one and giving to another- the hardships, which only the “author of the universe” is responsible for. Why should one pay to “fix” hardships they are not responsible for? Is this reciprocity? Life is a battle with necessary, natural or divinely inspired, hardships. Sumner, as Nietzsche did, subscribes to this tragic metaphor of life. This metaphor is extremely powerful, because, among other things, it shapes the extent to which social evolutionism can be viewed as *positive*. If life is necessarily tragic, then the reform of the interventionist is by extension a wasted, harmful, and likely unjust effort.

In addition, if hardship is viewed as normative –as in Sumner’s case- then a reply to “Who Deserves What,” typically will shift the language of “deserves” to one of “owes.” People deserve *nothing* because they will unavoidable experience the hardships of life, and

for such hardships only the “author of the universe” can offer redress. What then does *society* “owe” its members? Sumner (1911: 177) addressed this question as he argued:

The law of the survival of the fittest was not made by man and cannot be abrogated by man. We can only by interfering with it, produce the survival of the unfittest. If a man comes forward with any grievance against the order of society so far as this is shaped by human agency, he must have patient hearing and full redress; but if he addresses a demand to society for relief from the hardships of life, he asks simply that somebody else should get his living for him. In that case he ought to be left to find out his error from hard experience.

Sumner’s naturalistic argument speaks directly to the question of deservedness. If another person inflicts harm, then full redress of the grievance should be expected. Alternatively, on the other hand, if harm is self-inflicted, or if a person falls upon a hardship that is the fault of no one then they *deserve* nothing. Deservedness is a matter to be settled on a case by case basis, therefore, legislative do-gooders who attempt to settle such concerns with the foul swoop of a legislative wand will necessarily be in error, and will likely only encourage the “survival of the unfittest.” Using both naturalistic competitive language and a Newtonian analogy Sumner (1934: 153) stressed that any effort of the interventionist to thwart competition is bound to end in failure.

Competition can no more be done away with than gravitation. Its incidence can be changed. We can adopt a social policy, “Woe to the successful.” We can take the prizes away from the successful and give them to the unsuccessful. It seems clear that there would soon be no prizes at all, but that inference is not universally accepted. In any event, it is plain that we have not got rid of competition – i.e., of the struggle for existence and then competition of life. We have only decided that, if we cannot all have equally, we will all have nothing. Competition does not guarantee results corresponding with merit, because heredity conditions and good and bad fortunes are always intermingled with merit, but competition secures to merit all the chances it can enjoy under the circumstances for which none of one’s fellowmen are to blame.

Sumner presented his naturalistic antagonism to social reforms, *i.e.* poverty welfare, as part of his larger mission as “champion to the middle class.” The typical member of the “middle class,” for Sumner, was facing, due to the expansion of social welfare programs, the destruction of their livelihood. In describing this member of society Sumner (1934: 477) noted,

Now who is the forgotten man? He is the simple, honest laborer, ready to earn his living by productive work. We pass him by because he is independent, self-supporting, and asks no favors. He does not appeal to the emotions or excite the sentiments. He wants only to make a contract and fulfill it, with respect on both sides and favor on neither side. He must get his living out of the capital of the country. The larger the capital is, the better living he can get. ... But we stand with our backs to the independent and productive laborer.

The forgotten man does not ask for, nor would he accept, the help offered by the interventionist. Instead, the interventionist offers help only to the “greasy wheel,” squeaking by with a request for help, largely to redress hardships that society has no business addressing. As Sumner (1883: 132) described the invisible status of “the forgotten man.”

When we see a drunkard in the gutter we pity him. If a policeman picks him up we say that society has interfered to save him from perishing. Society is a fine word, and it saves us the trouble of thinking. The industrious and sober workman, who is mulcted of a percentage of his day’s wages to pay the policeman, is the one who bears the penalty. But he is the forgotten man. He passes by and is never noticed, because he has behaved himself, fulfilled his contracts, and asked for nothing.

Thus poverty welfare serves only to rob the forgotten man of his wages. The interventionist argument that such robbery should be done in the name of “compassion,” neglects to calculate compassion toward the labor and earnings of the forgotten man, as well as ensuring that the unfittest will survive and thrive. Sumner (1883: 123), in a mathematical form, described the “real” effect of the interventionist’s *good* intentions by arguing:

A and B put their heads together to decide what C shall be made to do for D. The radical vice of all these schemes, from a sociological point of view, is that C is not allowed a voice in the matter, and his position, character, and interests, as well as the ultimate effects on society through C’s interests, are entirely overlooked. I call C the forgotten man.

The short-lived but widespread acceptance of Sumner’s Social Darwinism (roughly a twenty year period around the turn of the twentieth century) can be somewhat explained by his framing of contrarianism into a position of middle class admiration. Sumner advanced a naturalistic reason why *everyone* except the “good-for-nothings” had reason to be skeptical of the interventionist. During the turn of the twentieth century Sumner altered the question “Who deserves What” to that of “Who Owes What.” This significant shift in the American

understanding of the socially fundamental had serious implications for the way in which poverty welfare was viewed. We are, for Sumner, “owed” in proportion to how each of us can fulfill *personal* “social duty.” A duty that Sumner (1883:113) explained with the following language:

Every man and woman in society has one big duty. That is, to take care of his or her own self. This is a social duty. For, fortunately, the matter stands so that the duty of making the best of one’s self individually is not a separate thing from the duty of filling one’s place in society, but the two are one, and the latter is accomplished when the former is done.

With this sentiment the contrarian closes their rebuttal.

Closing Thoughts on the Use of Discourse and Ideal Types

This chapter outlining a formidable contrarian argument, like the proceeding interventionist chapter, is not intended to “close” the issue. The closure of a fundamental social question is unlikely; nonetheless, advancement can be made after discourse is allowed to flourish. Consistently, more issues and respective challenges could be raised; the attempts here are designed only to survey some of the more important aspects of the ideal types. The discourse between our ideal types could inevitably spawn well beyond the scope and parameters granted in the preceding two chapters. The chapters, however, offered a brief summary and treatment of the major points and ensuing arguments each side of the discourse will likely raise. The contrarian case, for instance, is largely dependent upon two correlates. 1) Social order evolves *beyond* as opposed to *through* interdependence, and 2) the individual is real, and social order is an abstraction created to support the natural (property) rights of the individual. The intent here is not to find a means by which these correlates can be weighed against the interventionist argument; such a process is outside the bounds and intentions of this work. It seems, instead, that the discourse of poverty welfare often occurs with as much precision and mutual understanding as an ill-fated game of blindfolded “pin the tail on the

donkey.” The blindfolds are self-imposed, as we rarely understand why we believe what we do regarding poverty welfare. When those blinders are removed, I would suggest, evolutionary and naturalistic arguments often become quite illuminating. The two sides rarely talk with each other because often, sadly enough, they rarely understand the imputes for their own position, much less an appreciation of the “other side.” Thus in presenting the arguments in the present context, people might learn better the undertones of their own position towards “Who Deserves What.” Only after this process of self-knowledge occurs can truly productive discourses surrounding, “Who Deserves What” emerge.

CHAPTER 9. SOCIAL EVOLUTIONISM AND AMERICAN POVERTY

Making Poverty Welfare Real

This chapter will outline¹⁵⁶ the evolution *of* action and sentiments toward American poverty welfare. As the title of the chapter suggests, however, an inclusion of evolutionism within the general evolutionary trend of poverty welfare will –when helpful- be mentioned and discussed. The American treatment of poverty welfare can roughly be compartmentalized into three general categories, 1) pre- civil war,¹⁵⁷ 2) pre –“New Deal,” and 3) post- “New Deal.”¹⁵⁸ The arguments presented in the proceeding chapters were heavily involved with demonstrating the importance of evolutionary arguments in the shaping and legitimization of positions toward poverty welfare. In this chapter, however, the goal is to bring social policy toward poverty welfare “alive” by discussing its predominant trends (evolution), and reviewing the practical implications thereof. It is cautioned, however, that *any* broad treatment of poverty welfare is inevitably wrapped in the larger concern of deservedness, *i.e.*, “Who Deserves What.” The approach of this chapter does not seek to abandon the importance of social evolutionism in the discussion –relevant mention of theory meeting practice will be given considerable treatment. The “real” affects of a sociopolitical community's decision regarding the practice and magnitude of poverty welfare can be fully

¹⁵⁶ The purpose of such an outline is not necessarily to offer a timeline of the most influential aspects of American policy toward policy welfare; such efforts have already been done by numerous sources. The outline here, instead, is intended to speak directly to the question of deservedness, and accordingly challenge certain “domain assumptions,” regarding poverty welfare in American history, that are held by a vast number of contemporary Americans.

¹⁵⁷ The American civil war ended in 1865, six years after the publication of Darwin’s *Origin*. Thus, in the second period of examination it could also be understood as reviewing the post- Darwinian period.

¹⁵⁸ Of these three periods I would suggest that the first is the most important as it sets the groundwork for the other two. Also, the last of these periods will be given attention in so much as an appendix of material stressing quantitative data.

appreciated only after an examination of the impact of such decisions are examined. It is one thing to engage in a discourse regarding “Who Deserves What,” it is quite another to see what actual effect this discourse helps create. Moreover, if social theory –unlike social philosophy- is an activity that *creates* explanations of the *real*, then –especially in a discourse and theoretical treatment of poverty welfare- it is important to generally understand the major trends and practical effects of welfare policy.

As this chapter reaches its conclusion, the use of specific state empirical data regarding poverty welfare will be given apt consideration. While none of these states is a *perfect* representation of either the contrarian or interventionist each provides a real representation of how each of these positions might *actually* impact a sociopolitical community. This analysis is, of course, interwoven into a complex array of issues, *i.e.*, the level of *federal* poverty welfare support, the concentrations of wealth within the state under review, the number of poor within the state, etc... The work in this chapter will not untangle all of these complexities. This chapter will, however, given specific parameters of poverty welfare, empirically demonstrate the actual policy manifestations of such decisions (1958-2001) with individual states as the units of analysis.

The History of American Poverty Welfare Prior to the Civil War

The Idealistic picture of happy, *virtuous*, high-spirited, and well-fed American “pilgrims,” as representing the “typical” early Colonial immigrant, is largely a matter of folklore and false “historic nostalgia.” Those espousing the hard-working Puritan ethos of early American immigrants, often neglect to mention that most early American immigrants were “escaping England” for strictly monetary or legally mandated, as opposed to religious, reasons. Walter Trattner described both the hardships of “coming to America” before 1700,

as well as the effects of English law in the immigration of “unsavory peoples” to America during the Colonial period. As Trattner (1999: 15) maintained:

Those who came to the colonies (land proprietors, tax-dodgers, and a handful of others excepted) were of moderate or poor means. The English practice as authorized by Parliament and the transportation laws, of shipping to America thousands of rogues, convicts, political prisoners, beggars, vagrants, orphans, the unemployed, and other undesirables hardly helped. Then there was the trip across the Atlantic; not only a prolonged but also a debilitating experience for many. Passengers were packed into tiny ships with filthy and foul-smelling quarters, lack adequate food and drinking water and exposure to disease. Many did not survive the wretched conditions the voyage; those who did frequently reached shore ill or infirm.

This description of both the living conditions of those making the journey to the New World, as well as the types of people embarking upon such an “adventure” suggest a few noteworthy points.

First, given the conditions of the treacherous three-month Atlantic trip there would be few reasons compelling enough to sway the decision of the typical European to make such a voyage. It is not impossible to imagine such a decision in contemporary times. Imagine that a new space colony has just been erected, and the United States government is looking for volunteers to make the journey. The advertisement might read something like this:

Do you love to travel, seeing new places, experiencing new things, then space colony travel is right for you. During your three month journey you will be cozy living conditions not much larger than your typical closet, the food will likely rot, and the water undrinkable. Once you arrive, if you arrive, you might have to contend with “alien” populations fairly upset that you have trespassed on their lands. To make matters better you will leave behind everything, both material and non-material that you have accumulated thus far in your life. Now, just sign below, and this once in a lifetime chance could be yours.

Few reasons existed to explain why anyone would make such a life altering and likely devastating choice. Reasons most early American immigrants included, destitution, penalty of law (roughly a quarter of all convicts in England were sentenced to “transportation to America”), escaping legal punishment, being sold into slavery, becoming an indentured servant, and the commonly cited and idealized reason, fleeing religious persecution. The myth of early American colonists as pure and virtuous men, women, and children fighting a

resilient battle against religious oppression invokes only a small piece of the colonies' true early immigration picture.

Second, the affect of appealing to the “early immigration myth” is powerful beyond the typical amount of good will that accompanies any *virtuous* view. The Puritan ideal of hard-work and religious obedience was reinforced as “proper” because it was mandated as an order to be applied “to all.” The expression “to all,” as seen above, did not solely imply those fleeing for religious reasons, but included everyone. With this nearly impossible inclusion, disenfranchisement became problematic. The beginnings of American history may be told by two groups, *i.e.*, the worthy who brought official charters, religious scars, and hard work, and the unworthy who brought the *badges* of destitution, punishment, or slavery.¹⁵⁹ The “early immigration myth” is easier to accept if the virtues and policies toward “Who Deserve What” represented everyone, but they did not. The respect assigned to the myth was often explained using the erroneous belief that all, or most, were politically represented. Thus as early American attitudes and approaches toward settling the fundamental question, “Who Deserves What” are discussed, it is important to remember that the sociopolitical community making the decision “for all” did not represent the concerns and interests of all immigrants during the colonial period. America, from its outset, would settle the question of deservedness with the few who believed that they were, and others agreed, most deserving. The *worthy*, therefore, determined deservedness, the options for the *unworthy* were then to agree, leave, or rebel. So long as the *unworthy* did not opt for the latter option, the *worthy* were usually content.

¹⁵⁹ Badges, in this sense, go well beyond the invocation of a metaphorical illustration. In many of the early colonies the poor actually were mandated to wear a badge, based on the assumption that such shaming would convince the poor to lead more virtuous lives.

William Quigley (1996: 35) described the standards of deservedness as applied to the poor during the colonial period by stating:

The ability of a person to work was the preeminent in determining whether they were worthy of public assistance. Those determined able to work were not eligible for help; people already working were not eligible. Although widows and children in need were given assistance, they also were expected to work. Only those unable to work were considered truly worthy of poor relief. Of course this rule did not apply to slaves, free blacks, or Native Americans.

The ability to work marked the threshold of deservedness as applied to poverty welfare in Colonial America. Captain John Smith (1886: 265) –the leader of the early Jamestown settlements-, for instance, directly stated the above point as he maintained, “those who would not work, must not eat.” If a person could work and chose not to do so, then the sociopolitical community owed him nothing at all. On the other hand, if a person was unable to work, the early colonists saw it as their social, political, and religious duty to assist. As Quigley (1996: 55) described,

Colonial poor laws continued the English poor law concept of classifying the poor based on their ability to work. Relief was provided only to the “worthy poor,” *i.e.* those unable, by reason of some infirmity, to work. Those in need who were able to work were rarely provided assistance under the colonial poor laws. In the colonies, as in England, voluntary idleness was regarded as a sin and a crime. The able bodied unemployed were either bound out as indentured servants, whipped and run out of town, or jailed.

Assistance for the poor was, in fact, offered, to some degree, in all thirteen colonies.

Americans have always, since the advent of the first settlements, addressed “Who Deserves What” with certain provisions consistent with active poverty welfare.

Often specific measures were taken so that such an address would be kept to a minimum. For instance, Trattner (1999: 21) described the common colonial practice of requiring sea captains to post bail for newly arriving American immigrants:

The Massachusetts General Court and other colonial legislatures even required masters of all vessels to post a bond for each person they brought to the colonies. In 1721, the New York Assembly passed a similar measure requiring ship captains to file passenger lists with the town recorder within twenty-four hours after docking. Then they had to post fifty pounds security for each passenger who might become a public charge or else return that person to his or her point of embarkation. Again, in most places, ship captains were required to post binds for sick mariners left in port.

In addition to charging sea captains with certain economic responsibilities for their passengers, most colonies passed residency requirements for those seeking relief from poverty. Massachusetts, for instance, maintained a standard three-month residency requirement for those seeking the aid of the colony. Deservedness, in this sense, was largely thought to be a product of one's *place* within the sociopolitical community. Thus the wandering trapper or hunter was owed nothing, because he had no community from which to make a claim of assistance. "Who Deserves What," therefore, for the colonists became settled by the dimensions of *established* custom and place.¹⁶⁰

Assistance for the poor and categories of "poor assistance administration," absent a federal system of regulation and oversight, was tailored to the specific cultural or moral concerns of the various colonies. As Quigley (1996: 61) maintained:

The first method of assistance was always to look to the family. Family members of the poor were the primary group responsible for their support, and only if they did not provide support did the poor relief system begin. ... If the family was unable to assist, the colonies utilized one of four basic methods of assisting the nonworking poor: (1) a contract between a town and a provider; (2) auctioning off the acre of the needy person to the lowest bidder; (3) requiring the needy to move into poorhouses or other institutions and there to receive assistance (often classed indoor relief); or, (4) giving assistance directly to the poor and allowing them to live wherever they pleased (often called outdoor relief).

The dependence of "family intervention" during the Colonial Period served largely to make a sociopolitical address of deservedness a back-up measure. Typically, and this is as accurate today as when the first American settlements were created, the less a sociopolitical

¹⁶⁰ Not only were the parameters of who could be helped a matter of the established practice of residency so to was the actual legal basis for poor assistance. Not surprisingly the colonists borrowed heavily from the English poor laws of 1601. Consistently, these laws established poverty welfare for those unable to work, but prescribed harsh –often violent- penalties- for those who chose not to work.

community has to address “Who Deserves What,” the more comfortable it will be. Throwing matters of deservedness to the realm of the family relieves the community from addressing such essential concerns. The family, however, is simply unable to eliminate all concerns associated with such fundamental social questions. The community, in fact, must address such questions because of breakdowns within the family. How can the family address questions related to the abandonment of children? In addition, the notion of “welfare to work” is not novel to the late twentieth century. Poor assistance to the able bodies has held a long American tradition of “forced employment.” It was not atypical, for instance, in Colonial America to observe unmarried women or widows –unable to support themselves- on the “auctioning block” prepared to be “sold” to the highest bidder willing to pay for “domestic services.”

Despite Colonial attempts to preempt or alleviate poverty, the problem continued to persist and grow increasingly worse in tangent with rapid industrialization. As Trattner (1999: 30) explained the increasing attention devoted to poor assistance in Colonial America:

Not only was the number large (of those in poverty) but each year it increased, as did relief expenditures and taxes. In 1700, the residents of Boston spent 500 pounds on public relief; by 1715 the annual expenditure was more than 2000 pounds, half of what it would be some twenty years later. By 1753, poor relief expenditures in Boston climbed to 10,000 pounds per year, and the figure continued to increase even more rapidly each thereafter through the 1770s, even though the population was relatively static by that time. The same was true for New York. By 1752 the needy so burdened the city’s residents that in order to care for them poor law officials had to borrow 150 pounds against next year’s taxes.

This description challenges the erroneous notion held by many in contemporary America that, the forefathers were rugged individualists, who would scoff at helping the poor.

Colonial policy makers, in fact, did not scoff at such a notion; instead, in lieu of increasing poverty, they offered increased assistance to the poor. Contrary to what certain contemporary conservative personalities might suggest, American policy makers have never

been comfortable watching the *deserving*, or the *undeserving* starve. This desire to help the deserving poor was strong. Colonial cities, for instance borrowed large sums to help the poor.¹⁶¹ A strange notion today when domestic public assistance comprises less than five percent of the federal budget, and does not approach that figure in any state jurisdiction. Today public debt is incurred to bolster the military, or to pay the interest on debt incurred to bolster past projects of the military.

Tensions, including shipping restrictions between America and Britain, even before the effects of the Revolutionary War, took a heavy economic toll on the residents of the colonies. At the outset of the Revolutionary War more than a quarter of all colonists lived in poverty. It would be intuitive, especially considering contemporary modes of political socialization, to believe that on the brink of the Revolutionary War George Washington would have nothing but war on his mind, but this was not the case. Even in the midst of military tensions, Washington (1889: 236-7) took the time to write the agent of his estate at Mt. Vernon to specifically, and personally, address the issue of assistance to the poor.

Let the hospitality of the house, with respect to the poor, be kept up. Let no one go away hungry. If any of this kind of people be in want ... supply their necessities; and I have no objection to your giving my money in charity to the amount of forty or fifty pounds a year. ... What I mean by having no objection is that is my desire that it should be done (Trattner).

Washington was offering much more than the statement, the poor should be helped. He was, instead, opening his house to those in need. Washington could have just as easily, ordered his forty pounds to be spent “securing” his mansion from the poor who might try to take what was his. How many current congresspersons would open their house to help the poor? It would seem that the number living in exclusive gated communities hints at the answer. It

¹⁶¹ Today the poor are viewed as a burden to be “dealt” with. This view, however, was less likely to surface in Colonial America because with abundant land and a scarcity of people helping others was viewed as an investment. Now, the poor are not invested *in*, but dealt *with*.

would be inaccurate, though not ineffective, to cite influential colonists to justify treating the poor like the plague.

After the Revolutionary War a number of important steps toward the solidification of state intervention in matters of poverty welfare were undertaken. While private sources, *e.g.*, churches, charities and private donors, have always had a strong tradition in America of assisting the poor, secular and public statutes mandating poverty welfare had existed in every state since the end of the Revolutionary War. As described by Trattner (1999: 40-1):

In New York, for example, a state body –the Committee on Superintendence of the Poor- was appointed to administer emergency relief to persons removed from their places of settlement because of the war. The principle of settlement was thereby relaxed as a prerequisite of public aid. ... So it was that the state began to assume added responsibility for public relief; in 1796, it allocated funds to New York City (and then other municipalities) “for the maintained and support of such persons as shall not be gained settlement in the state.” ... In the North, then, as people migrated from the eastern seaboard to the areas west of the Appalachian Mountains, they reenacted amidst the difficulties of frontier life the poor laws they had brought with them, just as their forefathers had enacted similar statutes carried from England to the New World. Thus in 1790, only three years after its establishment, a poor law based on those of the northeastern states was enacted in the Northwest Territory. ... As the southern states drew up new constitutions, between 1780 and 1785, they created the position of county overseer of the poor, elected by the freeholders within the county to collect and administer relief funds raised through a compulsory tax.

Assistance to the poor was not unique to large northeastern cities. Those who proclaimed poverty welfare as synonymous with “liberal” northeastern jurisdictions are correct only in that these jurisdictions were the trendsetters, largely because they held the first established settlements. As other areas of the country grew and sociopolitical communities began to form, however, poverty welfare proliferated. It is not surprising that poverty welfare reached the western states last; they after all were the last to form sociopolitical communities.

The above description is not intended to argue that poverty welfare was embraced by a *strong* majority of early Americans. Many Americans, in fact, held steadfastly to the belief that the only way in which pauperism could effectively be eliminated was with the elimination of “poor laws.” So long as the poor were relegated to remote locations to starve,

the problem would take care of itself. The debate between those advocating poverty welfare, and those opposed to it grew increasingly aggressive in the early nineteenth century. The antagonism between these “two sides” grew to the point where it became common practice for city officials opposed to assistance, to “run” the poor just far enough out of their jurisdiction so assistance would become the “problem” of another jurisdiction. Often this repugnant cost-saving activity was carried out in the dark of night. The poor were led away under threat of violence, to become the problem of a different sociopolitical community. The state legislature of New York realized that if assistance was to be effective, such clandestine and unproductive practices had to be put to an end.

The Yates Report (1824), the first comprehensive survey of relief for the poor in the United States and one of the most influential documents in American social welfare history (Trattner), was conducted for the purposes of holding New York state’s poverty welfare system under the scrutiny of “program evaluation.” Yates outlined the types and problems associated with the major variants of poverty welfare available in the state of New York. As described by Trattner (1999: 57),

Yates cited four main methods of public assistance that were used throughout the state – institutional relief, home relief, the contract system, and the auction system – and outlined what he felt to be cruelty, waste, and inefficiency arising from the chaotic system. Where the poor were “farmed out,” through either the contract or the auction system, they were often treated cruelly, even inhumanly. Moreover, the “education and the morals of children were almost wholly neglected” and, according to Yates, “They grew up in filth, idleness, and disease, becoming early candidates for prison or the grave.”

Yates evoked a humanitarian concern for the poor. It was not enough just to keep people alive; instead they ought to be provided with the tools that will help them become productive members of society. Thus, the Yates report was much more than an administrative document, it outlined the principle that the poor deserved more than just their lives. Social

reform, that is, was not simply about keeping people alive; it was about helping the poor become “better” people. Such an appeal made no sense if the poor were *naturally* doomed to fail. Thus for the Yates report to have the effect it did, naturalistic assumptions about the poor could not have concluded that such a group was bound to fail, for if they did, Yates would have been talking in a foreign language. Social reform above the level of pity for another’s life, must assume that nature does not prevent such reform from working.

This sentiment (the notion that natural process did nothing to hamper positive and meaningful social reform), therefore, signaled the change from the notion that the deserving poor deserved as much as keep them alive, to the notion that the deserving poor deserved an opportunity to excel. Consistently the Yates report outlined three major steps that ought to be, and subsequently would be, taken by the New York legislature if it hoped to rescue the “failing” system of assistance. 1) No able bodied person between the ages of eighteen and fifty would be given public assistance; 2) for the old, young, and disabled, institutional relief would be supplied; 3) each county within the state would establish a poorhouse and replace the town as the administrative unit. Of these three “program enhancements,” the latter is often viewed as having the most influence. It was also this third suggestion, which solidified the increased centralization of poverty welfare, and created the “poorhouse,” which became the prominent mode of poverty assistance well into the twentieth century. The township had proven an ineffective provider of assistance to the poor, and deservedness became the concern of larger sociopolitical communities.

American Poverty Welfare Post Civil War

The level of destruction during the American Civil War ushered in an era of substantially increased assistance to the poor. As in most wars, the American Civil War

substantially altered general perceptions of deservedness. Not only did the horrors of wartime battles have a chilling effect on contrarian ideas, so too did the manner in which most perished during the Civil War. While (typical) battlefield fatalities were inordinately high, an even greater number of deaths were caused by unsanitary medical conditions. This condition led directly to the post-war creation of the Red Cross, as well as passage of one of the first federal steps toward the direct intervention into poverty welfare with the creation of the creation of the National Board of Health in 1879.

Perhaps the contrarian could advance the argument that survivors of wartime battles were simply better adapted than their dead companions, and thus deserved to live, prosper, and multiply. Thus interference with post-war remedies were inappropriate. This argument, however, became unrealistic when it was taken into account that many of the dead found their fate due to infection, not inferior fighting ability. If America learned anything from the brutality of the Civil War, it would have been that the survivors of war were no better or more adaptive than the dead. The living owed their lives to a crafty general or a backfiring rifle; they were no more or less deserving than the dead. Further, and more to the point of poverty welfare, how could the families of the dead be blamed for the sudden loss of the family's "breadwinner?" The war created a greatly expanded appreciation of the *deserving* poor. This expansion included the sons, daughters, wives, and parents of dead or disabled soldiers. Consistently, state assistance to the poor, and where this was implausible federal assistance, skyrocketed during the years following the war.

With the war at an end, America embarked upon an almost universally unprecedented level of industrialization. Trattner (1999: 81) described this massive industrialization by noting:

Between the years 1865 and 1900, America underwent a spectacular expansion of productive facilities and output that was without parallel in the history of the world. Statistics tell part of the story. In 1860, approximately \$1 billion was invested in manufacturing plants; the annual value of manufacturing plants was \$1,885,000,000; and 1,300,00 workers were employed in American factories. By the turn of the century, the amount of capital invested had risen to more than \$12 billion, the yearly value of the products to over 11 billion, and the number of workers to 5,500,000.

What all this industrialization meant, of course, was that America was becoming a much more urbanized nation. Industrial factories, particularly those operating at the turn of the nineteenth century, required an abundant amount of skilled and unskilled labor. This situation created new questions of deservedness that did not force themselves upon less industrialized sociopolitical communities. The Jeffersonian ideal, for instance, envisioned a small family-farm operation that produced enough for subsistence, but was uninterested and not dependent upon trading with other family-farms. Given this agrarian based assumption, the question of deservedness becomes a fairly simple one. Small family operations deserve exactly what they are able to produce nothing more or less. Jefferson might have softened this notion by suggesting if a family could not produce subsistence, then a neighbor would have likely helped out, but this was no guarantee. On the contrary, work in an industrial setting served to further remove the laborer from the means of subsistence. Before the advent of industrialization, people ate what they could produce, while after industrialization people bought food with the money they earned, *i.e.*, deserved. An overstated response to this last observation is that the *market* makes such a determination, but this not so. The market does not decide the acceptable level of profit to be extracted from a factory. If a worker were paid “what is left over,” how could the difference be anything except a question of “intentionally-reasoned” deservedness?

Aside from the increasing complexity of addressing standards of deservedness in conjunction with increased industrialization the shift in American social structure from

agrarianism to industrialization produced unexpected and troubling consequences associated with working conditions. The conditions in many early twentieth century industrial factories were unacceptable by contemporary American standards. O.S.H.A., and other federal regulatory agencies, did not exist to regulate *standards* safe working conditions. Further, given the diversity of industrial life and the lack of dissemination of information regarding factory condition it is not clear if a “public standard” existed. As Upton Sinclair (1905: 328) described the conditions of the urban laborer in a Chicago slaughterhouse shantytown,

All day long the blazing midsummer sun beat down upon the square mile of abominations: upon tens of thousands of cattle crowded into pens whose wooden floors stank and steamed contagion; upon bare, blistering cinder-strewn railroad tracks and huge blocks of dingy meat factories whose labyrinth passages defined a breath of fresh air to penetrate them; and there are not merely rivers of hot blood and carloads of moist flesh, and rendering vats and soup caldrons, glue factories and fertilizer tanks that smelt like the craters of hell-there are also tons of garbage festering in the sun, and the greasy laundry of the workers hung out to dry and dinning rooms littered with food black with flies, and toilet rooms that are open sewers.

More to the point, Sinclair (1905: 70) mentioned all factory conditions, and labor relations, as he stated,

So from the top to the bottom the place is simply a seething caldron of jealousies and hatreds; there is no loyalty or decency anywhere about it, there is no place in it were a man counted for anything against a dollar.

The important consideration raised by Sinclair in the preceding passages is that, with industrialization necessarily came *different* considerations of deservedness, primarily those associated with working conditions, that were originally thought best settled in the “private sector.” Deservedness is as static or dynamic as the social structure in which it is considered. Americans, as a collective sociopolitical community, decided shortly after Sinclair published *Jungle*, that their political representatives were better suited to handle such matters of deservedness that were private actors. Poverty welfare is simply an extension of earlier acts of intervention that Americans have already endorsed.

The most significant and noticeable collaboration between social reform and approaches to evolutionary theory can be seen in public and academic attitudes, as well as in policies, toward negative eugenics¹⁶² or sterilization laws. The widespread legality of compulsory sterilization laws –existing in varying latitudes in 30 states by 1920- tended to suggest the support for negative eugenics crosscut Americans of all belief-systems and political patronage. Eugenics was simply not something to be feared, unless, of course, one was determined to be “unfit.” Much of the widespread acceptance of sterilization laws stemmed from the naturalistic and social assumptions many held about the poor, that they were the seed of sloth, disease, and immorality. Children of the poor often, in their adulthood, became poor themselves. Thus while it might be humane to assist the living poor, it was just as humane to ensure that future generations were not forced to undergo a similar fate. In a strange twist, therefore, many social reformers of the early twentieth century adopted a Spencerian adherence to preventing the poor from reproducing. Social reformers were collectively minded, whereas Spencer was individualistically minded. Oddly, both positions were mixed with naturalistic assumptions of the poor and “stupid” to support their hopes with compulsory sterilization. Consider, for instance, the way in which E. S. Gosney (B.S., LL.B) and Paul Popenoe (D. SC.) (1929: v) described the evolutionary and social

¹⁶² Darwin never advocated the manipulation of human reproduction as a means by which to better human society. Darwin’s cousin Sir. Francis Gaulton, however, would herald the good of Eugenics as a means of social improvement. Gaulton would discuss two types of Eugenics, 1) positive eugenics which suggested encouraging the “fit” to reproduce at a higher rate than the “unfit,” and 2) negative eugenics which suggested preventative measures so that the “unfit” could not reproduce. For Gaulton the better method to be attempted was positive eugenics. Americans, however, were much more receptive to negative eugenics.

need of sterilization:

The human race has developed through countless ages of under the laws of heredity under the laws of the survival of the fittest. The weak and defective have perished. Only the physically strong and mentally alert could withstand the severe conditions of early life, reach maturity, and become the fathers and mothers of the next generation. Modern civilization, human sympathy, and charity have intervened in Nature's plan. The weak and defective are now nursed to maturity and produce their kind. Under Nature's law we breed principally from the top. Today we breed from the top and bottom, but more rapidly from the bottom. Today the most intelligent and efficient, the strongest strains of blood, as a rule, limit their children to a point that means the extension of a family in a few generations.

Many involved with social reform would hold the above position to be consistent with the mission of "helping" the poor. It is important to remember that supporting social reform and assistance for the poor was not considered to necessarily contradict an acceptance of the tactics used by eugenicists.

The underlying, and often concealed, tensions behind eugenics are the assumptions by which people attribute the "cause(s)" of poverty. A related question is whether poverty is a condition of structural or biological "failure?" Consider the implications of selecting either option. If poverty represents a biological failure, then the only party responsible might be the "author of the universe." Alternatively, if poverty represents a certain dimension of structural failure within a social order, the blame is to be placed on the structural conditions imposed by ancestors and reinforced actions of those currently living. A claim of structural failure might even imply the challenge of an idea as sacrosanct as the "American Dream." Because the separation of these assumptions, are too troubling for most a simple thought-scenario should offer the best way to gauge a position. Assume that all the poor were gathered up and offered the following contract:

I hereby accept payment of 300, 000 dollars on the sole condition that I will ask for no addition money, and that I relinquish the right to reproduce in any capacity.

Would such a condition, if agreed, to and followed by all, eliminate poverty. If yes, then poverty is a biological trait that could potentially find its extinction with negative eugenics.¹⁶³

If no, then one likely subscribes to the belief that poverty exists, perhaps inevitably, because of social structural conditions. Interestingly, it would take the market failure of the great depression –displacing millions of the middle-class into the “doldrums” of the poor, before *deserving* Americans, in a personally relevant way, finally recognized that poverty was in part influenced by structural factors, and not biologically determined.

Eugenics is often, in contemporary America, viewed as something that Hitler ordered, or if order in America, must have been done for a justifiable “greater good.” Such *monstrosities* could not possible exist in progressive twenty-first century America, right? Without broaching problematic issues associated with serve mental illness the answer is more complex than most ever considered. A number of states, increasingly upset with AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) expenditures, have legally mandated that women receiving the aid be required to undergo doctor-supervised birth control. It appears that the assumptions and logic behind the state mandate are quite comparable with those who exposed broad sterilization laws just seventy years earlier. The technology of birth control has made such assumptions regarding the biological aspects of poverty kinder and gentler to carry out, but the position has not substantially changed. If the poor can be prevented from having children, then poverty will be reduced. This assertion is logical in so much as poverty is not a structural condition.

¹⁶³ The logic here is the same as was followed by supporters of the American eugenics movement in the early twentieth century. The only difference is that the act of compulsory sterilization was cheaper and more certain to have the desired effect.

When the Great Depression destroyed economic prosperity in 1929, suffering was immediate and widespread. Absent federal intervention, the unforgiving and devastating consequences of rapid and almost total market failure was felt like the throbbing pain inflicted by a well-placed bayonet. Private charities made valiant attempts to assist the masses of poor, but the task was simply too weighty to be carried out entirely by private charities. As Trattner (1999: 273) described the relief effort attempted by private sources,

The task of relieving the jobless and their families was first undertaken by private local agencies. It quickly became evident, however, that they were unprepared to meet the crisis. To begin with they were ill suited to the task because the “services” they performed would not feed the hungry or feed the homeless. Furthermore, the financial needs of so many people –not only the aged, the sick, the disabled, and other members of the lower classes but also the plain, ordinary middle class people who had worked all their lives but who were now unemployed, penniless, and hungry, the so called new poor –were clearly beyond their meager means; indeed between 1929 and 1932, about one-third of the nations private agencies disappeared for lack of funds.

Clearly, private charities could not offer meaningful poor assistance, to the bulk of Americans living with the pains of Depression Era poverty. To make matters more desperate, relief from the federal government between 1929 and 1932 was almost nonexistent. What factors, especially given the failure of private charities, could possibly account for the non-action of the federal government? The answer to this question was largely grounded in the naturalistic assumptions of then President Herbert Hoover.

For Hoover, any suggestion that people be supported by the “public dole,” represented an unacceptable implication of “moral deterioration.” People were not meant to feed from the fingers of government. Such assistance was tantamount to treating people as if they were animals, and any exceptions to the rule would only serve to solidify its practice. Consistent with this naturalistic holding in December of 1930, President Hoover approved a congressional appropriation of forty-five million dollars to feed the livestock of Arkansas farmers, but opposed an additional twenty-five million dollars to feed the starving farmers

and their families (Trattner). President Hoover's absolute contrarian appeal was imbedded in the belief that values other than life, *e.g.*, self-respect and pride, represented the *true* essence of human nature. It would seem to this observer that a man who has bread should never have the authority to make such a determination.

The Roosevelt Era

At the same time President Hoover was deciding that livestock were more deserving of famine assistance than people, a young New York Governor, Franklin D. Roosevelt, was charging his state with the unprecedented responsibility of large-scale poverty welfare. In August of 1931, amidst ever-increasing unemployment, Roosevelt called a special session of the New York legislature wherein he argued that, those suffering from unemployment were as responsible for their present economic shape as widows or orphans. Many of the unemployed were members of the *deserving* poor and the state, absent any positive federal action, ought to offer poverty welfare. Sympathetic to this appeal, the legislature quickly passed provisions that provided immediate emergency relief, in what came to be known as the first governmentally mandated act of unemployment assistance (the Wicks Act). In a landslide presidential election, little more than a year later, Governor Roosevelt defeated Republican nominee Alf Landon to become the nation's thirty-second President. With the country still deep in the depression, Roosevelt did not hesitate to continue his interventionist strategy.

The nation that President Roosevelt inherited from his predecessor was in economic shambles. To make matters worse, the contrarian policies of the Hoover administration led to widespread, sometimes loud, "whispers" of rebellion. It was not that considerations of rebellion were a direct result of poverty and hunger, but that people could not understand

what ideal (naturalistic, in the case of Hoover) could possibly be held as more important than their lives. People with little or no food were more than a little incensed at the notion they needed “character building” lessons.¹⁶⁴ President Roosevelt quickly and decisively, as he had done in New York a year before, acted to directly intervene in the economic processes that were so badly trampled by the once sacrosanct *market*. Below are a few of the more important programs passed into law under the strength and guidance of President Roosevelt – these are often referred to as the New Deal.

*Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) –this program created jobs, usually at state or federal parks or some other environmentally based activity, for millions of unemployed Americans. The pay was meager –usually around a dollar a day, and often this amount was to be sent “home” to help support one’s family- Workers were however provided their room and food.

*Emergency Banking Act/ Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) –this legislation ordered all American banks shut-down and reevaluated, as well establishing insurance for all bank deposits in the amount of 5,000\$ (this sum has since increased to 100,000\$)

*Civil Works Administration (CWA) –this program was similar in design to the (CCC), but differed in that the work offered with this project focused on the construction of infrastructure, *i.e.*, roads, airports *etc.* It is estimated that at the height of the program it employed more than 4 million workers. This program was similar to the (WPA) –Works Progress Administration- that program provided more than 8 million jobs.

Roosevelt’s New Deal, constituted the passage of more than twenty separate legislative actions, most of which would not be classified as instances of “poverty welfare.” Roosevelt was primarily interested in getting people back to work as well as “fixing” the structural problems imbedded in the, once thought indestructible, American economy system of the 1920’s.

¹⁶⁴ I find it a mystery of history as to why Hoover’s economic policy between 1929 and 1932 did not trigger massive revolt.

Nonetheless, as the American economy grew stronger and federally subsidized jobs were of lesser concern, Roosevelt's New Deal had its greatest long-term impact in the passage of the 1935 Social Security Act (SSA). This act established: old-age pensions, unemployment insurance, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and care for the blind and disabled. This act served to establish contemporary standards of deservedness as applied to poverty welfare. Notice the recipients of the type of governmental aid offered in the SSA were given monies and expected to render no service in return. This was allowable because the one-way transfer of funds was consistent with determination of deservedness, *i.e.*, poor women with children and no means of support were deserving of poverty welfare. This stipulation also applied to the old and the sick. Interestingly, it has been the AFDC provision of the 1935 SSA that has suffered the most challenges as it is related to deservedness. The act offers assistance to those, *e.g.*, the disables, poor women, and children, who have traditionally held little or no political or social power. Deservedness, in a fashion that would make Nietzsche grin, has a strong tradition of being settled by those who hold power. It is important, however, that remember the distinction between power and authority. Authority is to legal "right" to impose one's will. Power, on the other hand, is the ability to achieve one's goal despite resistance (Weber). Accordingly, both power and authority are social phenomena that are agreed to and accepted, even by the "subjugated" party. Likewise, when deservedness is discussed it is not enough to speak about the power involved with "controlling" the question from the standpoint of the powerful. It is just as important to discuss the consent, either explicit or tacit, that must be given in order to *create* the powerful.

The best way to approach discussing more recent approaches toward poverty welfare involve reviewing the trends of various states. Appendix B contains information that

graphically and quantitatively evaluates the state welfare spending of the four poorest and four richest states, including Wisconsin as representative of a “medium” income state. The quantitative data presented can tell us “what” happened, but they do little to address the fundamental, and thus are considered on my account to be tertiary to an address of “Who Deserves What.” Acknowledging that administrative matters of dispersing poverty welfare – the interplay among local, state, and federal involvement are admittedly more convoluted than presented here, Appendix B quantitatively demonstrates various state poverty welfare per capita spending from 1958 through 2001.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

What more could be said of the linkage between social evolutionary or naturalistic sentiments and policy toward “Who Deserves What?” Given that, to my knowledge this thesis is the first attempt to formulate the fundamental as “Who Deserves What,” much more can and should be voiced about this encompassing question. The purpose of this thesis as stated from the outset was one of “discourse formation”; a formation which is inescapably affixed with our broader assumptions regarding the worth and nature of peoples.

Unfortunately, because there is often a lack of understanding of how and why these assumptions originate, discourse often breaks apart before anything productive results. This thesis offers one measure by which we might go about better understanding our own assumptions and approaches toward the stated fundamental social question, “Who Deserves What.”

After the discourse commences, however, the debate begins, and debate necessarily leads to increased turmoil and conflict. The winners of debate, be it waged on an intellectual or physical playing field gain power, while the losers must struggle with what they are determined to have deserved. Neither the contrarian nor interventionist has “won” at this juncture in an address of the fundamental, but the playing field that might enable a debate has been drawn. The concerns of this thesis, however, are much more complex. For the interventionist, they signify the cooperative extensions of positive social reforms, and the lifting of all peoples to their *perfectible* end. The contrarian, on the other hand, must prevail so that the competitive, and often individualistic, aspects of social evolution are not corrupted by the “survival of the unfittest.”

The suggestion of *discourse* signifies a softer, more friendly and gentle notion that the abrasive undertones of invoking a *debate*, for this reason many contemporary sociologists invoke an appeal to discourse and scarcely mention the abrasive *debate*. Discourse, nonetheless, leads to the emergence of debate. While the simple act of discourse is important, it is limited precursory stage in the development of intellectual progress. For the process to reach fruition conflict and debate must ensue. Let no one who reads these pages suggest this author's adherence to the assumption that any fundamental social question can be addressed in an "easy" and painless manner. No such position is set forth.

As was maintained in the introduction, the question, "Who Deserves What" is fundamental to the very notion of social order, and as such is not subject to negation. The treatment of fundamental social question(s), however, need not involve poverty welfare. The same question could be applied to health care, state-sponsored building contracts, admission into a public college or university, or almost any juncture at which a sociopolitical community must (or could) make an evaluation of deservedness. Social evolutionary arguments, moreover, need not represent the *only* mode by which to render such an evaluation. I have, nonetheless, argued, and continue to support the notion that the beginning of productive discourse must involve a common starting point, and that this starting point – for both ideal types- can reasonable be grounded in evolutionary and naturalistic appeals. As it has been observed throughout this work, evolutionary appeals do *not* offer an escape from "morality plays," but they do serve to guide morality in a coherent *scientific* appeal. Removing morality from an address of fundamental social question(s) would be tantamount to suggesting that those engaged in discourse abandon the "good" in their respective positions, a qualification that seems antithetical to social bargaining.

Whenever one invokes “natural law” or “evolution” some reaction is to be expected. Most people have a minimal level of subjective knowledge of what these expressions mean, even if they have never read a line of Darwin, Kropotkin, or Spencer. One cannot suggest social evolution without drawing a raised eyebrow from those with strong views of religion, “man’s perfectibility,” or a host of other views that frequently become entangled with evolutionism. If one had to point toward the two most controversial topics in contemporary America, he could reasonably conclude them to be discussions of social class and the mention of social evolutionism. For these reasons, such appeals are often interwoven with seemingly less divisive issues. Evolutionary appeals as applied to the question “Who Deserves What,” however, are far from dead. Evolutionary appeals will live, change, and develop for so long as the fundamental remains. In other words, they are as permanent or temporary as social order itself.

APPENDIX A. REP. GEPHARDT'S CAMPAIGN SPEECH

In a February 2003 campaign stop in Des Moines, Iowa democratic presidential nominee hopeful Rep. Dick Gephardt offered this compelling interventionist appeal.¹⁶⁵

You know, before I decided to take this step to run for President I thought a lot about what I wanted to say in this campaign. When I look at it, I really want to say things to America that probably will be seen as hard by a lot of people, and not easy. There's usually an inclination in campaigns to go with what's easy, and not what's hard, but I think right now we need to hear what's right, but sometimes difficult. You know it's easy to give a corporation a quick tax break, get support from that sector. It's a little harder to finally fix the public schools and fix the education system so that every young person gets a good start. It's easy to wring our hands and say, Oh we just can't figure out the answer to this health care problem it's too hard. I hope you can afford it, but not much we can do. It's hard to find an answer to this problem, this timeless problem. It could really pass the congress, pass the muster of the American people and get done. It's easy to sign trade agreements that just open up more trade and allow our company's to go all over the world and find the cheapest labor they can find. It's hard to have trade treaties that require minimum standards and it's hard to lift wages overseas so we can compete and workers everywhere can live a better life. When I thought about this I thought, you know there really is a different world-view between what I think and what George Bush thinks. You see, I think we're all tied together. I think we're all bound together whether we like it or not. Martin Luther King once said "We're all tied together in a single garment of destiny. What effects one directly affects all of the rest of us indirectly." He put it another way, he said, "I can't be what I ought to be, if you can't be what you ought to be." And if you think about it, that's really true. If you don't have health insurance, when you get sick you go to the emergency room you'll get health care and then the hospital will try to add that bill onto everybody else who has health care. That's part of the reason health care costs are going through the roof. We got 42 million people who don't have health insurance in this country, most of them work. If your child doesn't get a good education, winds up on welfare or worse winds up in crime, all the rest of us pay the price. You see we're all tied together whether we want to be or not. I'm the best example. As I told you a minute ago I got to

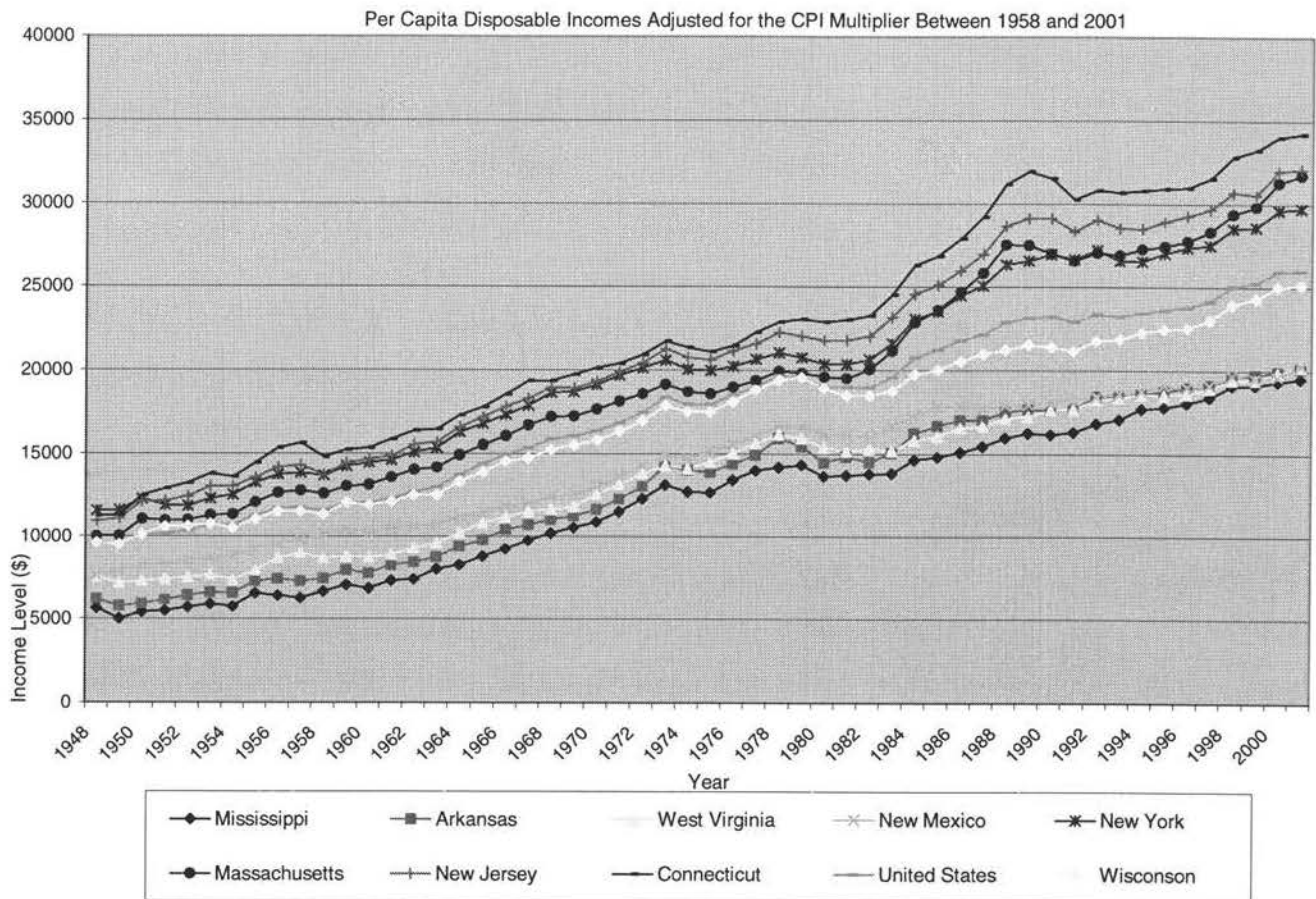
¹⁶⁵ This portion of the speech represents the last five minutes of the thirty-minute campaign speech. Special thanks to Susan Roe –station secretary- who served as a valuable intermediary, and Rick Fredericksen –news director- who went out of his way to make a usable copy of the speech for my purposes. The presentation of Gephardt's speech here is transcribed exactly as given, making no corrections for usage.

go to college, I got to go to law school. Not because of what I did necessarily, but because of what my parents did, because of what my church did, because of what my government did. I got that education because I had help. I've been leader of the Democrats in the United States Congress for 13 years. I'm running for President of the United States. I didn't do it on my own. I had help. George Bush, I think, believes we're all separate. If you can make it great, survival of the fittest that's the way it works. If you don't, it doesn't make any difference. You see I just don't believe that. I want to get in a room with George Bush and I want to get in those final debates and I want to argue my view of America and the world against his. I want to talk about people like my parents and the people that I grew up with, because those are the heroes of this country. I want to bring a view that we are all tied together and that we only succeed when we all succeed. I want us to be a country where we really reach out to help one another succeed because that's the way we succeed. I want America to be an even better place than it's ever been in our past and I believe with all my heart that with leadership and the great work and effort of the American people and the values of the great American people in our workers we will do just that. I'm going to be here a lot, I'm going to be working hard to win this campaign and it's not about me, it's about us. And it's about what we want America to be. Thank you, God bless you. Thank you for listening to me this afternoon.

APPENDIX B. STATE POVERTY WELAFARE DATA

Graph one compares the economic trend of the four richest and four poorest states between 1958 and 2001, using Wisconsin as representative as the closest approximate to the U.S. average (as determined by a running average of per capita disposable income). The data were collected as a part of publicly available sources tabulated by the United States Department of Commerce (Bureau of Economic Analysis). The data are limited to the contiguous forty-eight states.

Graph 1



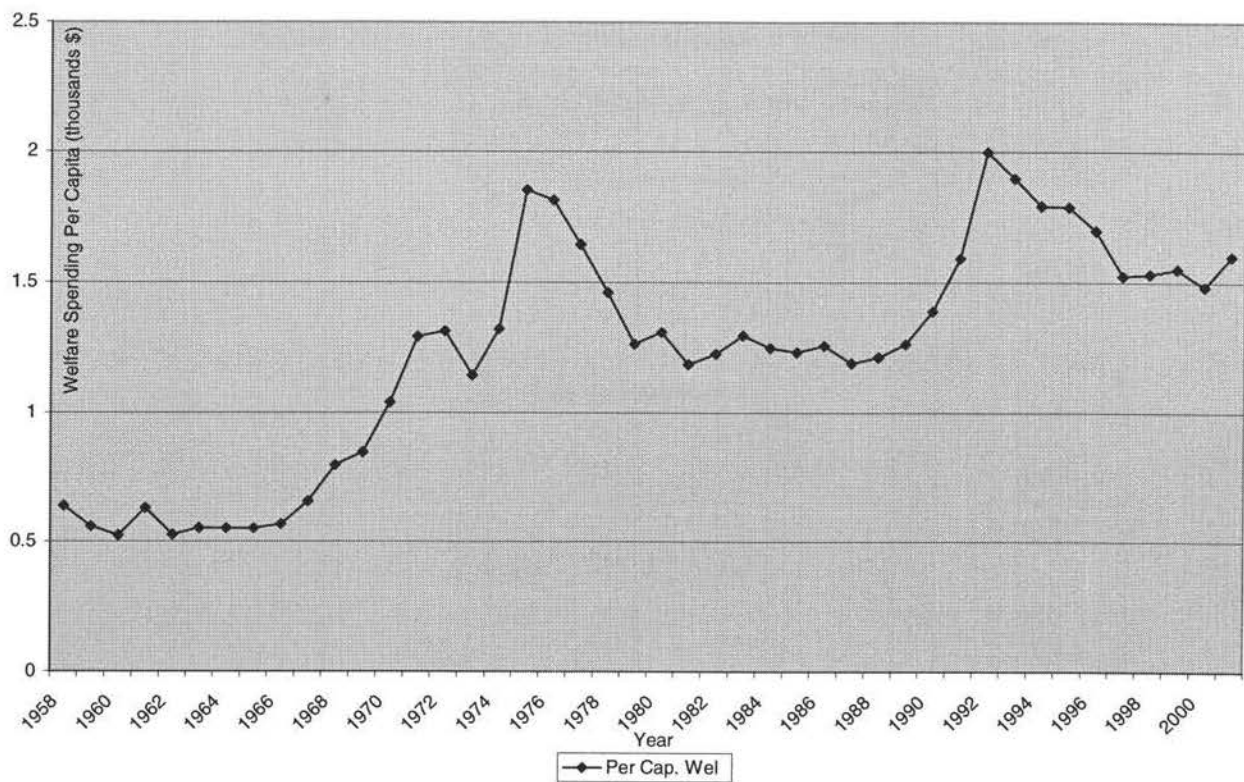
This graph leads to important generalizations as well as interesting questions.

Wealthier states, since 1958, have been significantly better off economically than poor states.

One might claim that cost of living measures would render this relationship moot, but this would be an over simplification. The gap among the poorest states has lessened to the point where currently, all four (Mississippi, New Mexico, Arkansas, and West Virginia) of the poorest states are huddled in mass at approximately the 20,000 dollar per capita disposable income amount. This is distressing news when it is considered that the 2003 federal poverty guidelines have established poverty guidelines for a family of four at 18,400 dollars. Also there seems to be a “slumping effect,” beginning in the early 80’s that effects poor states, but not their wealthier counterparts. This is, however, not surprising, considering that the largest transfer of wealth (from poor to rich) took place in America during the 1980’s. The question that arises from graph 1 as related to poverty welfare is, which set of states is more apt to endorse provisions of poverty welfare. By looking at the next set of empirical data results, the discovery, or lack thereof, of the best representative contrarian or interventionist should reveal itself. Here then is the trend in poverty welfare within state jurisdictions between 1958 and 2001.

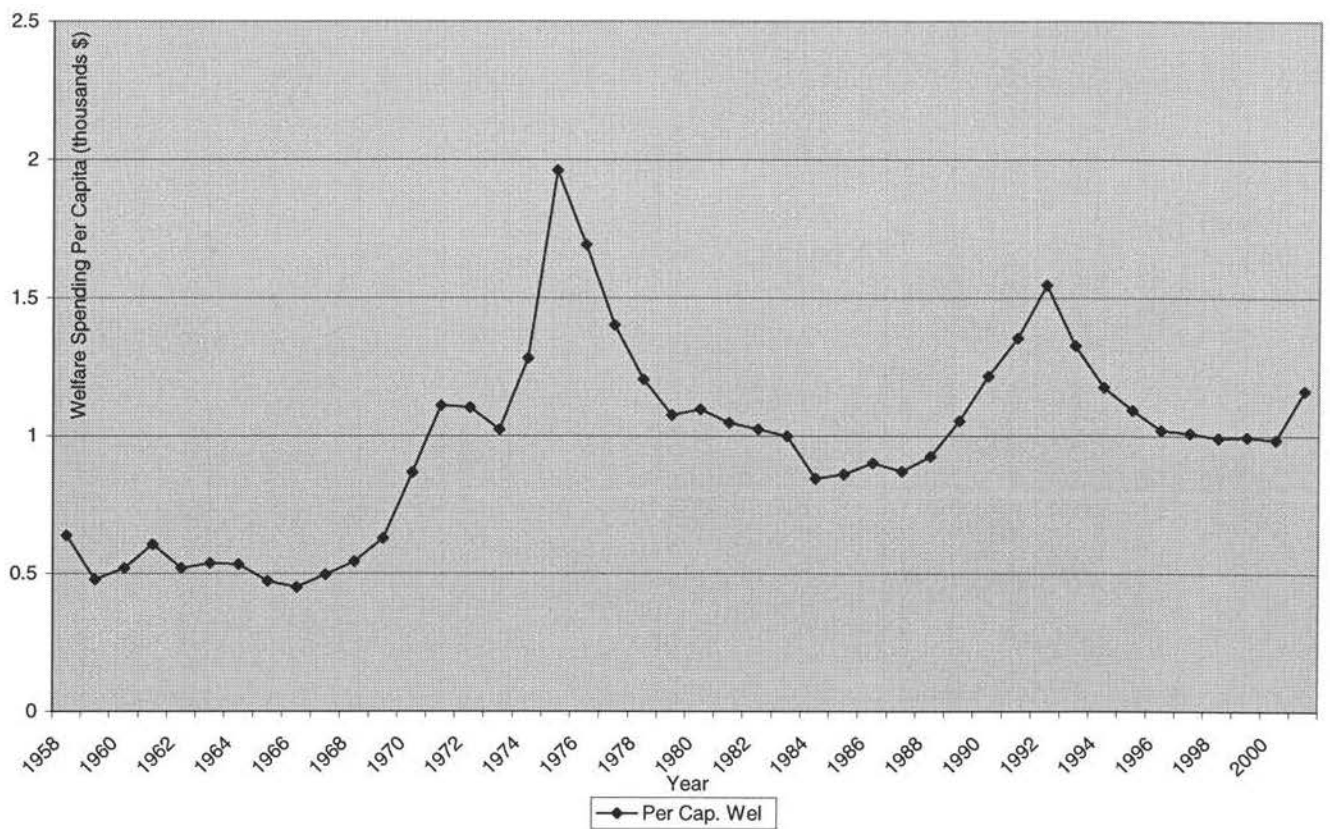
Graph 2

Per Capita Welfare Spending in New York Between 1958 and 2001



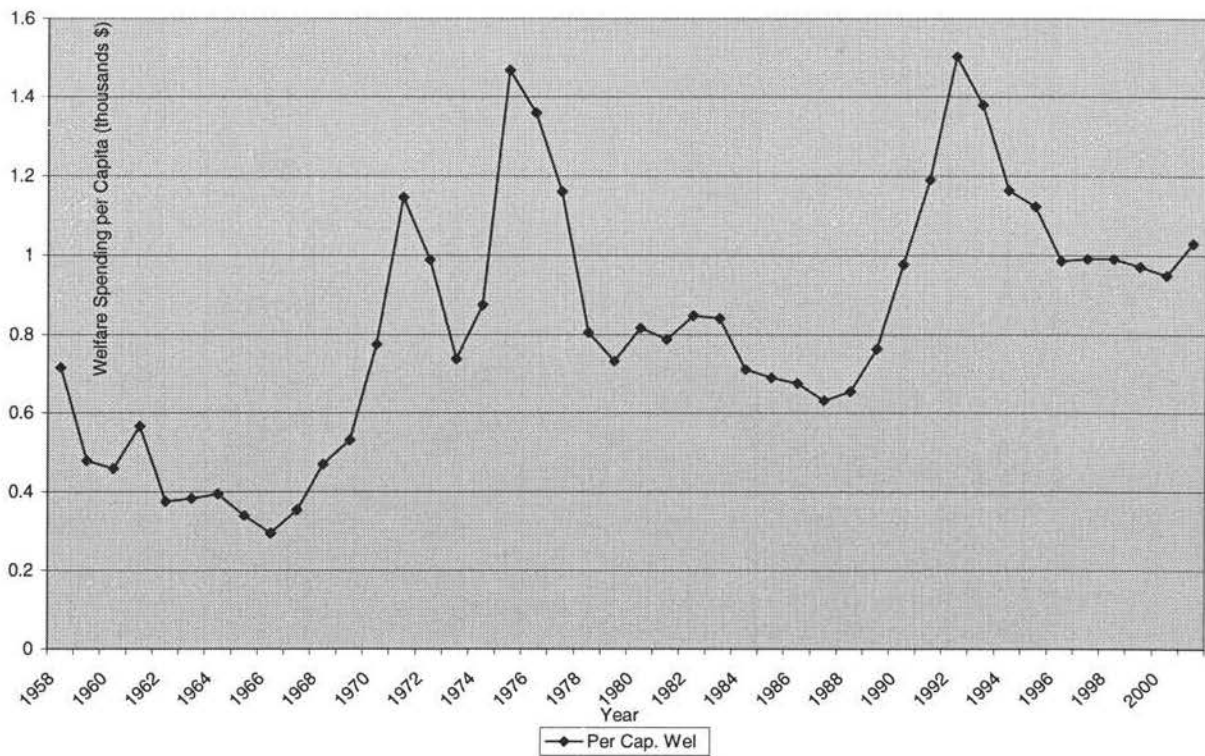
Graph 3

Per Capita Welfare Spending in Massachusetts Between 1958 and 2001



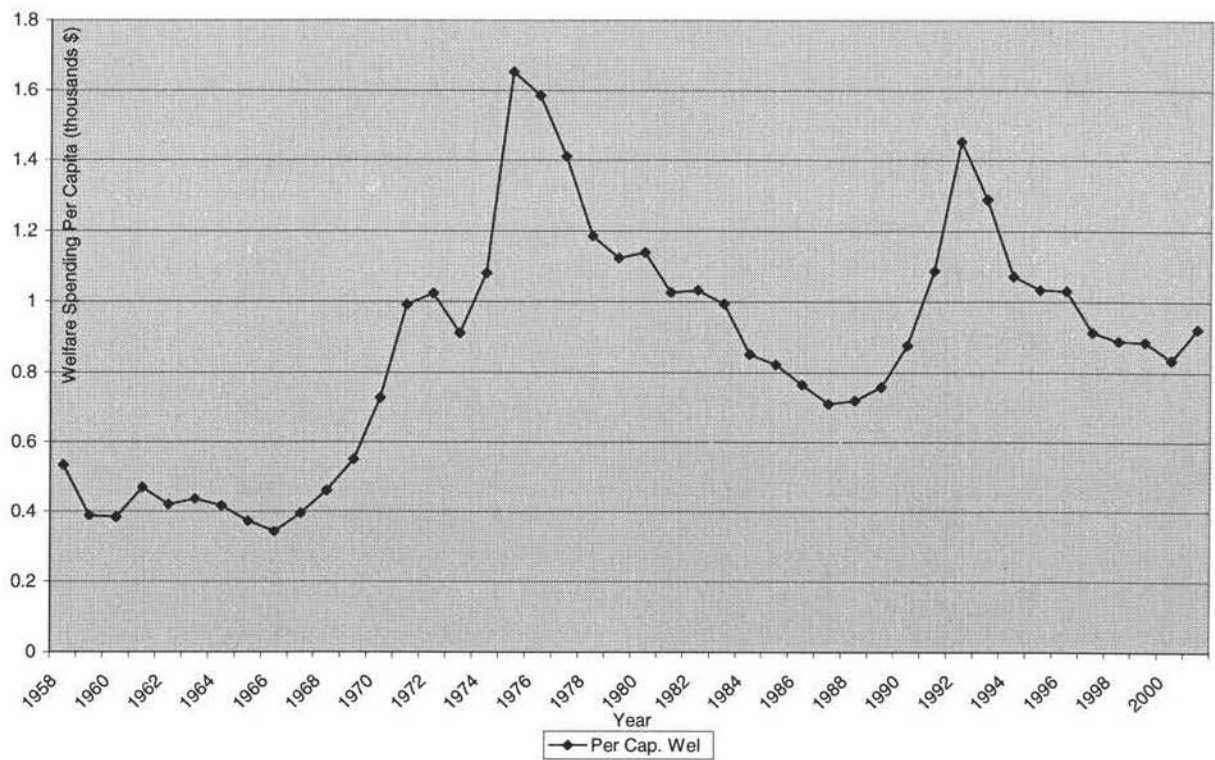
Graph 4

Per Capita Welfare Spending in Connecticut Between 1958 and 2001



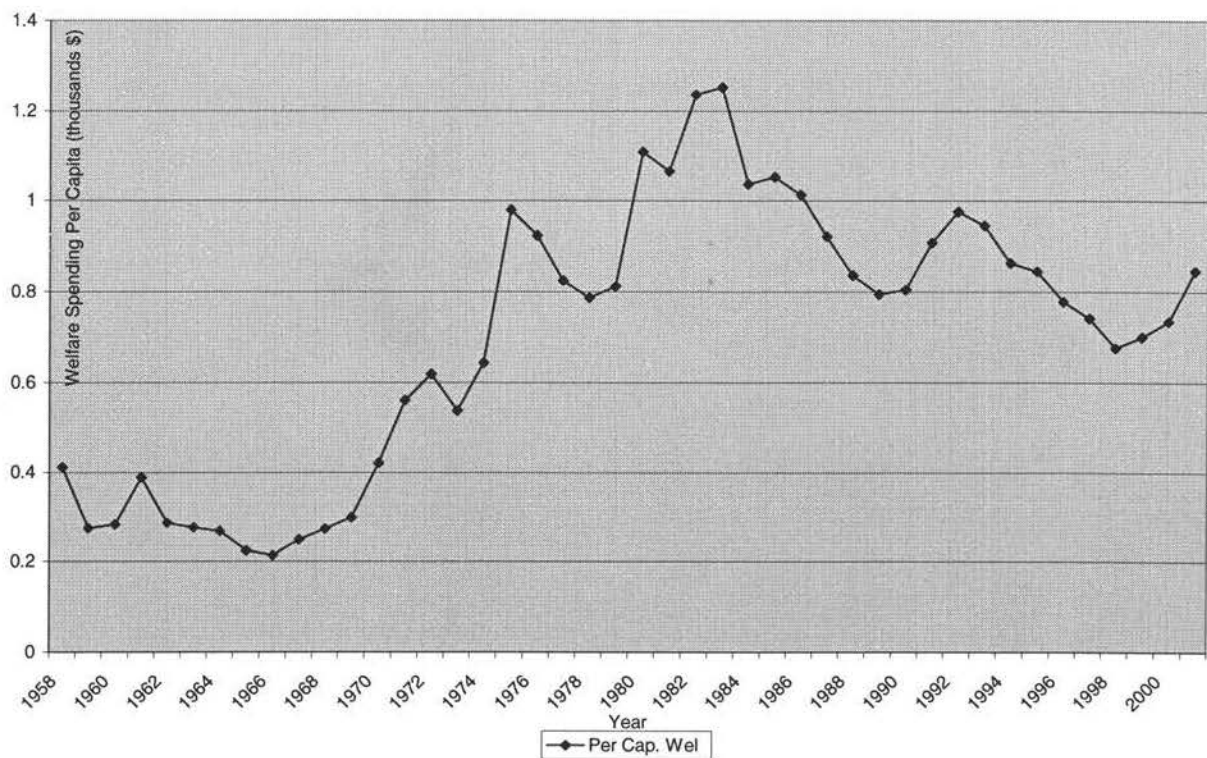
Graph 5

Per Capita Welfare Spending in New Jersey Between 1958 and 2001



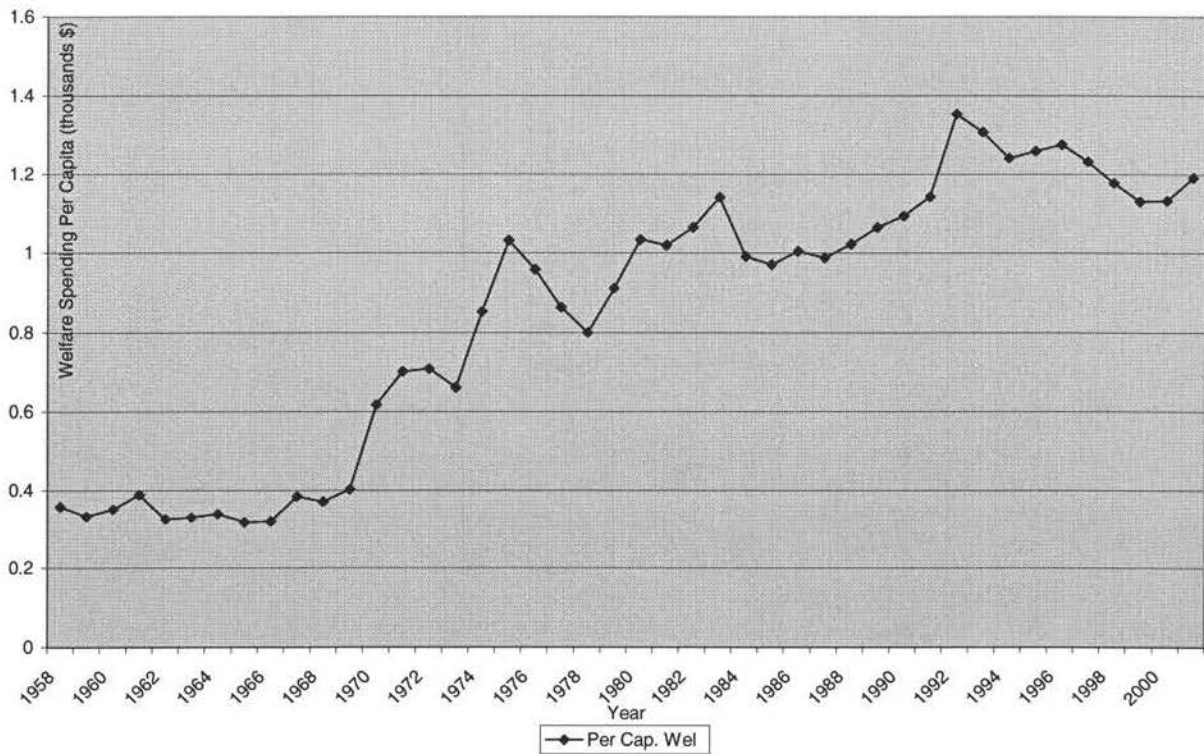
Graph 6

Per Capita Welfare Spending in Wisconsin Between 1958 and 2001



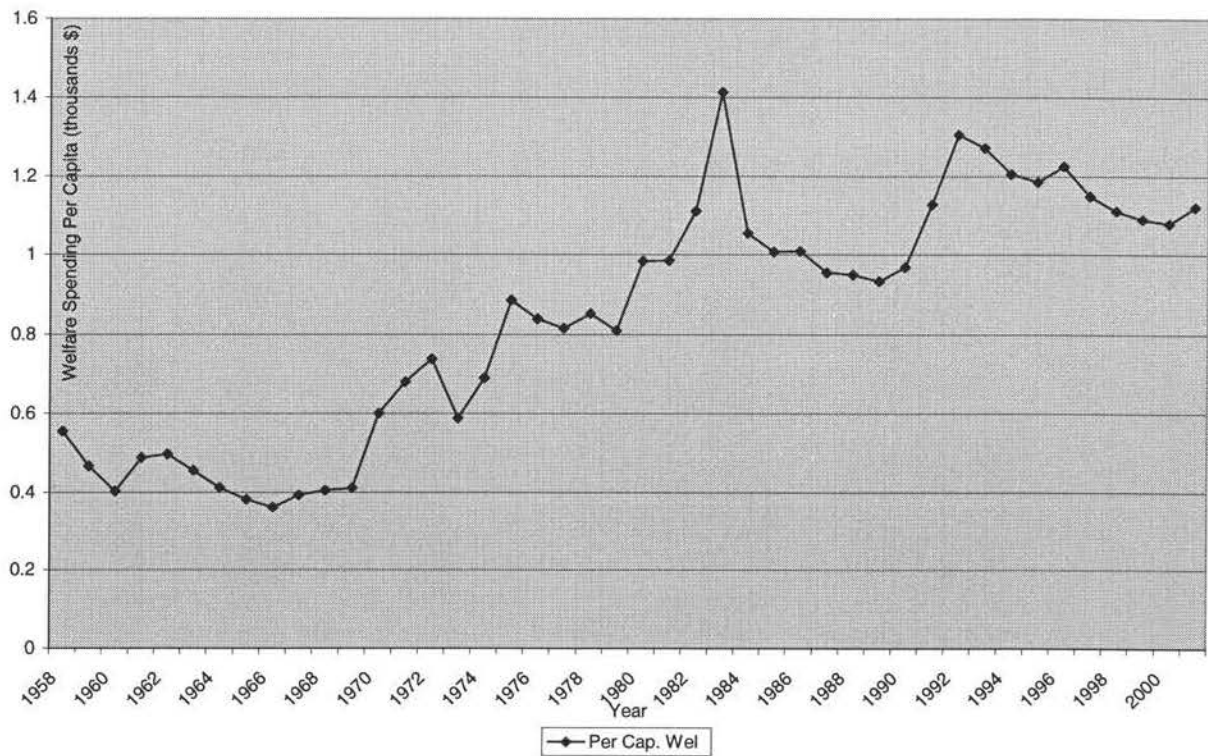
Graph 7

Per Capita Welfare Spending in Mississippi Between 1958 and 2001



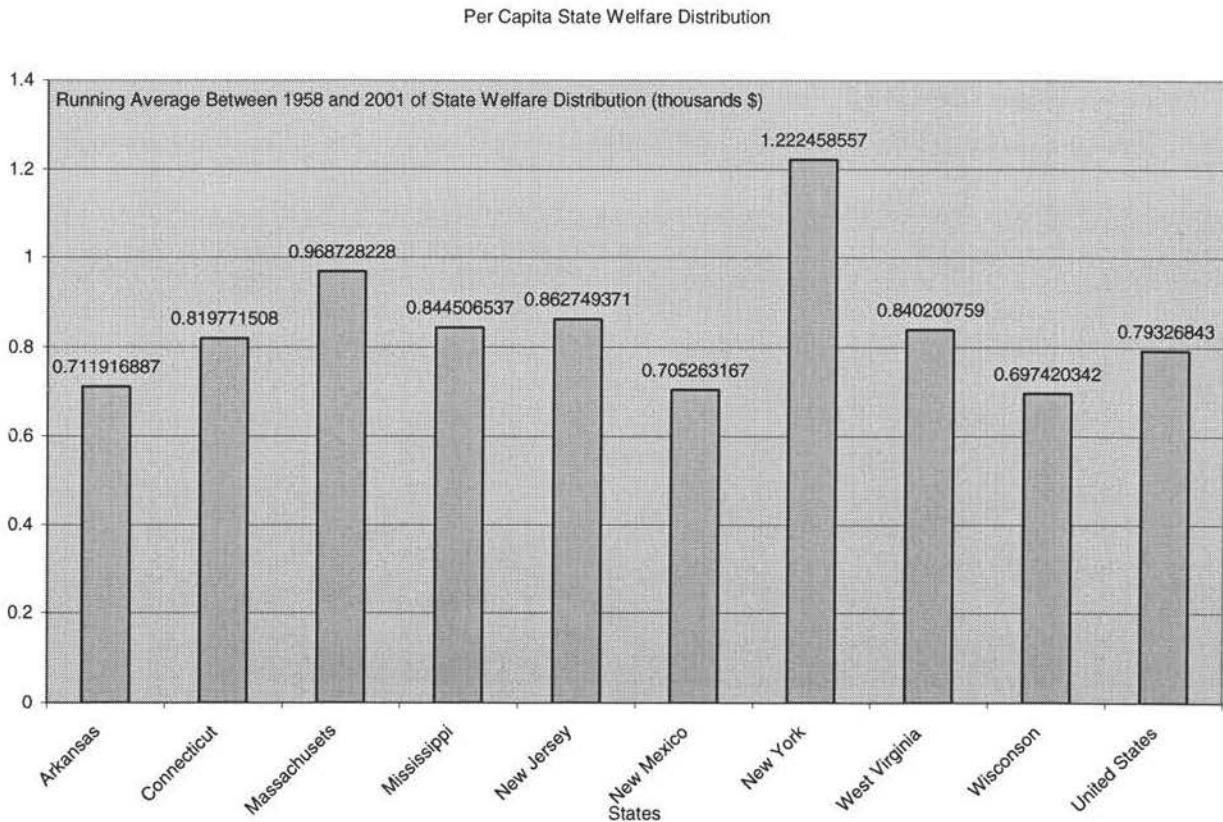
Graph 8

Per Capita Welfare Spending in West Virginia Between 1958 and 2001



If the totals spent on poverty welfare were calculated using a running average over the forty-three year period in question the results would be as such:

Graph 9



The data gathered for the graphs regarding the poverty welfare figures, like the figures about state per capita income, were gathered from a publicly available source provided for the U.S. Department of Commerce (Bureau of Economic Analysis). It is important to explain the standards by which a determination of “poverty welfare” as an act of spending was determined. Often welfare becomes calculated as the total “transfer payments” from governmental organizations to individuals. This practice, however, created a much

broader scope of poverty welfare than has been examined thus far. Therefore, in determining how a conceptualization of poverty welfare ought to occur, the following categories from within the larger transfer payment data records were selected. The categories as descriptors of poverty welfare included, income maintenance benefit payments, supplemental security payments, family assistance (including AFDC), food stamps, other income maintenance, unemployment insurance benefit payments, and state unemployment insurance compensation. All other transfer payments including Medicaid, Medicare, old age, and veterans programs were excluded from the analysis.

The data suggests the following. First, as the empirical component of the original hypothesis is considered, it seems to only be half supported. New York with its strong interventionist history continued, in the late twentieth century to be representing the interventionist –reform minded- ideal type. It is suspected, however, that a clear contrarian would emerge from the empirical data. This does not seem to be the case. There is simply no state that has abandoned the main tenants of deservedness established with the passage of the (SSA) in 1935. This could, of course, change dramatically with the 1996 Personal Opportunity and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, state mandated welfare to work laws, and the proposal sought by President Bush to greatly involve (religious) charities in the determination of deservedness.

Another important finding from the empirical data suggests that the wealthiest states spend more money on social services or AFDC than the poorest. The difference in spending, however, is not overwhelming, nor absolutely true. Both West Virginia and Mississippi, for instance, spent more per capita addressing poverty welfare concerns than Connecticut, the richest state. Poor states and rich states alike are increasingly interventionist (nonetheless

developments in changing perceptions of deservedness threaten the expansion of this increase) the extent to which is highly dependent upon their respective histories and fundamental assumptions.

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