1998

A critical view of Kai Erikson's Everything In Its Path: the current state of Appalachian studies

Matthew Franklin Moore

A Critical View of Kai Erikson's *Everything In Its Path*: The Current State of Appalachian Studies

Thesis submitted to
The Graduate College of
Marshall University

In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts
Sociology

by

Matthew Franklin Moore

Marshall University

Huntington, West Virginia

July 4, 1998

This thesis was accepted on July 8 1998
Month Day Year

as meeting the research requirements for the master's degree.

Advisor Lynda Ann Ewen
Lynda Ann Ewen, Ph.D.
Department of Anthropology and Sociology

Committee Member Richard Garnett
Richard Garnett

Committee Member Kenneth Ambrose
Kenneth Ambrose

Leonard Deutsch
Leonard J. Deutsch
Dean of the Graduate College

Acknowledgments

There always comes a time for me in the course of my work that words begin to play hide-and-seek between my mind and my fingers. As I reflect on the past two years, I am amazed at how important time gone by has become. The magnitude of gratitude overwhelms me as I reflect on what I have been taught. I am beginning to understand just how hard it is to fulfill a dream.

First of all, I would like to thank my daughter Haley for being an inspiration to continue my work. Secondly, I want to thank all the professors and staff in the Sociology department for all their knowledge, instruction, and compassion. In particular, I wish to thank the members of my committee, Richard Garnett, Lynda Ann Ewen, William Westbrook and Kenneth Ambrose.

I would have been lost in a pile of Appalachian social history and theory without Richard and Lynda Ann. And of course, the ultimate devil's advocate, Dr. Westbrook, whose advice over the last 3 years has been priceless. Dr. Ambrose has been a steady influence on me, providing opportunities and solutions to many situations. I would also like to thank all my colleagues, Wayan Mastriyana, Bryan Williamson, Travis Williams, and Lois Ratanamalaya in particular for sharing their ideas and working as a team.

No tally of gratitude would be complete without the inclusion of my parents who have supported me and my escapades through thick and thin. Also, my great aunt Lillian Dye, who has studied Appalachian works for 60 years. She has been an inspiration to all people she has been around. I would also like to thank Camela Rogers for putting up with my

tirades and tantrums during the process of writing this paper. Finally, my grandparents who have been steady and true my entire life. God bless the ties that bind.

Abstract

A Critical View of Kai Erikson's *Everything In Its Path*: The Current State of Appalachian Studies

This thesis is a critical response to Kai Erikson's depiction of Appalachian culture in his book, *Everything In Its Path*. I also survey associated writers such as Jack Weller and others. Erikson's traditional "Culture of Poverty" model frames the research questions by "blaming the victim". *Everything In Its Path* is written in a vacuum, without historical continuity. The questions that Erikson (following Weller) employs in his research methodology are poor cause and effect description in which Erikson blames the Appalachian culture for its societal differences. Erikson glosses over the social dynamics and socio-economic history of the Appalachian region. Furthermore, the culture of poverty model does not account for geopolitical factors. The colonial approach addresses the structural factors; however, world systems analysis expands on the colonial model by placing geopolitical factors within a historical continuum. Erikson, Weller and associated writers paint the picture that the Appalachian culture could not adapt to their versions of modern American culture.

Introduction:

Such abstraction which refuses to accept the given universe of facts as the final context of validation, such "transcending" analysis of the facts in the light of their arrested and denied possibilities, pertains to the very structure of social theory.

Herbert Marcuse

The purpose of this paper is to describe the theoretical and methodological failures of Jack Weller's *Yesterday's People* and Kai Erickson's *Everything In Its Path*, and to survey some of the other Appalachian scholarship that employs similar errors. A critical theoretical design will be used to critique the research questions posed by Weller, Erikson, and other writers who have applied the culture of poverty model to Appalachia. At this stage in the research the theoretical position of Erikson will be defined generally as a combination of the folk society model as developed by Jack Weller and Harry Caudill, and of the subculture of poverty model. I will present alternative scholarship based on work done primarily by Lewis, Fisher, Dunaway, Salstrom, and Ewen which refutes their claims and offers a much clearer theoretical framework for studying Appalachia in a more reliable manner.

"Appalachians have lived, we are told, on 'a retarded frontier' (Vincent, 1898), in a land 'where time stood still' (Roberts and Roberts, 1970). This is the typical image of Appalachia in current scholarly literature. Mountaineers are believed to 'have worked out their individual existence far removed from the forward march of progress' (Raine, 1924: 240). Moreover, the region is portrayed as a large land area that is backward and lacking

development of its potential and as an economy 'severely limited in its possibilities' (Semple, 1901) in Dunaway (1994).

These scholars suggest that Appalachians are a "mutant" culture living amongst the "normal" American culture (Spaulding, 1915: 61) encased by geographical isolation and trapped in a "Rip Van Winkle sleep" (Kephart, 1913: 329). Furthermore, they suggest that Appalachians are "less affected to-day by modern ideas, less cognizant of modern progress, than any other part of the English-speaking world" (Kephart, 1913: 454). "Some writers point to the isolation and living conditions of the people as the causative factors in the region's retardation" (Kirby, 1987: 119-120). Other writers claim that Appalachian culture is at such variance with the capitalistic goals and values of the larger society that the region has been kept out of step with progress (MacDonald, 1928; Photiadis and Schwarzweller, 1970; as cited in Dunaway, 1994).

According to this view, the majority of the United States progressed and moved into the new era of capitalism and modernization while the Appalachian region remained primitive in culture and industry and engaged in a form of agriculture that was both destructive to the environment and nonproductive (Caudill, 1962: 82-85). Regarding isolation and the Appalachian culture, Jack Weller states, "Their differences in fundamental psychology from the other settlers who moved west began the accidents of history, environment, and circumstance which have led the southern highlander to a profound separation from his fellow countrymen in the rest of the nation" (Weller, 1965: 11). Kai Erikson comments about the culture, "(Mountain life) helps to breed a social order without philosophy or art or even the rudest forms of letters. It brings out whatever capacity for superstition and credulity a people come endowed with, and it encourages an

almost reckless individualism...price for those freedoms in the form of loneliness, anxiety and personal suffering" (Erikson, 1976: 60).

An emergent thesis on the abnormal Appalachian cultural characteristics develops from these scholars. "In these approaches, the causal factors for Appalachia's problems lie within the region itself; or more specifically, the people themselves have certain shortcomings. In this view, Appalachia's failure to 'develop properly' can be blamed upon *cultural barriers* to change and upon the residents' peculiarities" (Dunaway, 1994). These theoretical perspectives could be termed the "folk society model" and the "subculture of poverty thesis". For the purposes of my paper, the folk society model contains theoretical description of extracted Appalachian cultural traits. The subculture of poverty model is an abstract theoretical scheme applicable to third world areas of exploitation.

In summary of my position, Weller's and Erikson's methodology and theory is at best incomplete. There is little geopolitical historical context for these particular works. Both Weller and Erikson rely heavily upon sources that were written in the 1800's and early 1900's by non-social scientists in most cases. In addition, Jack Weller's position was that of a minister, while Caudill was a politician and a lawyer. Kai Erikson is a social scientist and should not have made the same mistakes that Caudill and Weller did.

The sources that they use tend to "blame the victim", and they portray an inaccurate picture of Appalachia's social history. Based on my findings, many of Weller's and Erikson's research questions lead to poor cause and effect relationships in which they simply blame the Appalachian culture for its differences from the dominant American society. I also question Erikson's claim that the area did not change over time.

> The environment required almost nothing in the way of planning or innovation, almost nothing in the way of personal or social change. And so a cultural style came into being on this frontier that remained largely intact for the better part of a hundred and thirty years. There was no encouragement for change from within, since old habits and old traditions seemed wholly adequate for the simple realities of everyday life, and there was no encouragement for change from without, since new ideas and new people rarely penetrated that vastness (Erikson, 1976: 53).

The hazards of solely relying on cultural explanations for poverty or other social problems was thoroughly detailed in 1971 by William Ryan in his classic work, *Blaming The Victim*. Erikson who published *Everything In Its Path* in 1976, obviously did not listen. Furthermore, Weller's and Caudill's work had been severely criticized by social scientists and others long before 1976.

Weller and Erikson ground their studies in the false assumption that Appalachia was an isolated region to be discovered and civilized. Also, Erikson practically ignores the analysis of the power relationships which existed between native Appalachians and outside capitalists. Furthermore, Erikson glosses over the extreme and obvious exploitation, degradation and dehumanization of the Appalachian people and their extractive resources. Erikson states, "...residents of Appalachia have never placed conservation high on their list of personal priorities, and a portion of what happened to them must be charged to their own accounts..." (Erikson, 1976: 70). But how could a geopolitical region experiencing tremendous socio-economic exploitation from powerful absentee-owned timber and mining companies, (with enough capital to buy the region, which is in many cases what they did) raise enough capital to fight with these institutions?

Erikson's analysis of the labor movements and the social factors concerning labor issues is incomplete. In sum, Erikson and Weller paint the picture that the Appalachian

culture could not adapt to their version of modern middle class American culture. Erikson seems mystified by the Appalachian culture because he could not understand or interpret the land, the culture, or very few of the social, economic, and geopolitical structures of the region. In fact, Erikson claims that, "In a country with no public institutions, no townships, no systems of social control, few stable congregations, and no other associations of any kind, membership in a family unit was the only source of identification" (Erikson, 1976: 59).

Although the colonial model fits much better than many, following Wallerstein and Dunaway, I propose that the area be studied through world systems analysis. A great deal of social research continues to compare "other" cultures and sub-cultures to the White Anglo-Saxon status quo; instead of attempting to see the "other" from a less ethnocentric model, or insider's perspective. In addition, these models extract cultural characteristics from the external and coercive factors that shape them. By employing an ethnocentric model, the essence of the "other" culture becomes distorted and loses its human element as well as its "true" reality.

In all fairness to Erikson, *Everything In Its Path* does contains some good ideas. The book is divided into three major sections. In the first section, Erikson does a good job of describing the flood while incorporating testimonies from some of the victims. However, in the second section Erikson uses a culture of poverty model to describe Appalachian history. In this section, Erikson glosses over many of the real reasons concerning the Appalachian cultural formation and history. He makes note of the exploitation but does not give a complete explanation, or simply dismisses some with a few paragraphs. This section is theoretically weak due to Erikson's reliance on the "culture of poverty" thesis

and his staging of many of the contradictions concerning the culture. Erikson relies heavily upon Jack Weller in this section, which is a weakness of the work. Weller's work and the sources for it had been heavily criticized before Erikson wrote *Everything In Its Path*. Yes, poverty exists in the Appalachian region; and, there are some backwards people that fit the stereotypes. However, it is a theoretical failure to over-generalize a whole culture into these stereotypes. It does not take a trained observer or sociologist to note that poverty and so-called "hillbillys" or "crackers" exist in every state of the Union. The third section of *Everything In Its Path* concerns the psychological damage the victims experienced from the disaster. I wish to concentrate this paper on the second section concerning the cultural explanations.

Chapter One: The Model In Question

In this chapter, I would like to list and describe some of the purported Appalachian character traits. I argue that the culture of poverty approach is theoretically weak because of its heavy reliance on comparisons with middle class America. In addition, these alleged chararacter traits are removed from the sui-genris social forces that shaped them. The model seems tautological in that the culture is blamed for these characteristics.

Erikson references Jack Weller's *Yesterday's People* and Harry Caudill's *Night Comes to the Cumberlands* several times in his work in spite of the fact that Weller's and Caudill's books had already taken serious criticism. Although based on personal speculation, the conclusions reached by Weller, Caudill, and Erikson have frequently been accepted without question by those unfamiliar with the region. According to Stephen L. Fisher, "This is unfortunate, for, while both [Weller and Erikson] provide valuable information about Appalachia, they are seriously flawed works" (Fisher, 1975: 2). In fact, according to Ewen, *Everything In Its Path* is still being used by law schools in New York as an example of how to handle legal ramifications in disaster situations.

Weller and Caudill make an attempt to describe the Appalachian culture. They believe that they are genuinely concerned about Appalachia, however, the fact remains that their works are ethnocentric and framed from the "culture of poverty" model. Therefore, social researchers and laymen must use caution when interpreting and applying their findings. In addition, these works are based upon small community studies. "The two books are viewed by many as the most important studies ever written about the Appalachian region, yet *Night Comes to the Cumberlands* deals almost exclusively with developments in eastern Kentucky, while *Yesterday's People* concentrates on a single coal community in

West Virginia" (Ibid., p. 2) Caudill at times displays a patronizing attitude toward Appalachians, describing them as "less ambitious", "mental defectives", and "slatterns", while Weller portrays their culture as "unrealistic" and "inadequate" (Caudill, 1962: 4-7).

All three works are very scantily documented. *Night Comes to the Cumberlands* does not contain even a trace of a bibliography, and has only a few footnotes. In addition, Caudill's assertion that the first settlers of the Appalachian region were homeless orphans, criminals, and other outcasts imported as indentured servants from Great Britain was severely criticized. As I will show later in this paper, Weller's, and in particular Erikson's, studies are obviously flawed and contain many myths, stereotypes, contradictions and biases.

Even though Caudill's study contains many of the same problems, *Night Comes to the Cumberlands* "has had a positive impact because it has helped to acquaint many Americans with the history and problems of Appalachia" (Fisher, 1975: 2). Following Stephen L. Fisher, Ron Lewis, Helen Lewis, Wilma Dunaway, Paul Salstrom and many others, I cannot say the same about *Yesterday's People* or *Everything In Its Path*. In *Yesterday's People*, "Weller identifies the traits of a Southern Appalachian folk culture which he claims has failed to prepare its people for the cooperative, interrelated, technical society in which they now live" (Ibid., p. 2). Weller also states that before the problems of Appalachia can effectively be resolved, the people must abandon their "defective" folk culture and adopt middle class values. According to Fisher, many of the assumptions and conclusions by Weller are similar to those espoused by Oscar Lewis, Edward Banfield, Daniel Moynihan, and others who believe the root cause of poverty lies in certain cultural

traits shared by the poor. At this point, I feel it necessary to reproduce part of Weller's Appendix in *Yesterday's People*.

A COMPARATIVE SUMMARY

	Middle Class American	Southern Appalachian
	Personal Characteristics	
1.	Emphasis on community, church, clubs, etc	Individualism; self-centered concerns
2.	Thoughts of change and progress; expectation of change, usually for the better	Attitudes strongly traditionalistic
3.	Freedom to determine one's life and goals	Fatalism
4.	Routine-seeker	Action-seeker
5.	Self-assurance	Sense of Anxiety
6.	No particular stress on maleness	Stress on traditional masculinity
7.	Use of ideas, ideals, and abstractions	Use of anecdotes
8.	Acceptance of object goals	Rejection of object goals
9.	Oriented to progress	Oriented to existence
10.	Strong Emphasis on saving and budgeting	No saving or budgeting
11.	Desire and ability to plan ahead carefully	No interest in long -range careful planning
12.	Placement of group goals above personal aims	Precedence of personal feelings and whims over group
13.	Recognition of expert opinion	Expert opinion not recognized
	Family Life Characteristics	
14.	Child-centered family	Adult-centered family
15.	Responsibility for family decisions shared by husband and wife	Male-dominated family
16.	"Togetherness" of husband and wife	Separateness of husband and wife; separate references
17.	Home tasks shared by husband and wife	Sharp delineation of home tasks between spouses
18.	Many family activities shared	Few shared family activities
19.	Disciplined child-rearing	Permissive child rearing
20.	Family bound by common interests and emotional ties	Family bound by emotional ties; few common interests
21.	Family a bridge to outside world	Separation of family and outside world
	Relationships With Others	
22.	Reference groups less important	Reference groups most important
23.	Object-oriented life pattern	Person-oriented life patterns
24.	Association between sexes	Little or no association between sexes
25.	Strong pressure of status	No status seeking
26.	Striving for excellence	Leveling tendency in society
27.	Readiness to join groups	Rejection of joining groups
28.	Ability to function in objective ways in a group	Ability to function in a group only on a personal basis
29.	Attachment to work; concern for job security and satisfaction	Detachment from work; little concern for security
30.	Emphasis on education	Ambivalence toward education
31.	Cooperation with doctors, hospitals, and "outsiders"	Fear of doctors, hospitals, those in authority, the educated
32.	Use of government and law to achieve goals	Antagonism toward government and law
33.	Acceptance of the world	Suspicion and fear of outside world
34.	Participation in organized amusements, cultural activities, etc	Rejection of organized amusements, cultural activities,etc

(Weller, 1966: Appendix).

The concept of explaining poverty by identifying cultural differences has been under attack dating back to before the civil rights movement; yet, these explanations continue to develop in scholarship and mainstream society. Erikson's and Weller's concepts concerning the Appalachian culture continue to generate and re-legitimate false stereotypes.

Weller's ideas have been thoroughly criticized over the past three decades. However, according to Helen Lewis, in the beginning, the attack on the Appalachian subculture model was somewhat unorganized and resided heavily in obscure underground journals, movement newsletters, etc. (Lewis, 1970: 6) Lewis defines the Appalachian subculture model as "a subculture with unique and different customs, values, and style of life which developed historically and is passed on through each succeeding generation" (Ibid., p. 4).

According to Stephen Fisher, the first decisive endeavor to verify if a distinct Appalachian culture exists was by Thomas Ford in a work "The Passing of Provincialism" (Ford, 1967: 9-34). Ford extracted four value categories to be analyzed within the Appalachian culture: religious fundamentalism, fatalism, individualism and self-reliance, and traditionalism. He devised a survey to examine these four traits. The survey basically devalued the concept of a unique Appalachian culture; but it did lead researchers to zero in on the cultural factors he extracted for examination. Furthermore according to Fisher, "Although Weller's discussion of the mountain culture is based primarily on his own observations, he was obviously influenced by Ford's study and by Herbert Gans' *The Urban Villagers*" (Gans, 1962). Fisher also believes that studies following Weller's have utilized and re-legitimated Weller's basic conclusions relating to the reality of a distinctive

Appalachian culture and the characteristics that compose the Appalachian culture. (Ball, 1968; Riddel, 1971; Gazaway, 1969; Kaplan, 1971; Photiadis, 1971; Stephenson, 1968).

This section lists and describes some of the Appalachian character traits that are typically extracted by earlier commentators on Appalachia. Thomas Ford, Herbert Gans, and Jack Weller in particular discuss them extensively in their work. These traits were extracted to show that a distinct Appalachian folk culture exits. Notice the stark contrast to middle class values.

Religion

The first mountaineers were composed primarily of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and of "other formally organized denominations which required an educated clergy and centralized organization" (Fisher, 1975: 8). The geography of the Appalachian region made it difficult to maintain a centralized body; therefore, local branches began forming from these original groups. These branches "stressed religious fundamentalism and otherworldliness, made use of local resources and leadership, and emphasized the importance of conversion and sanctification as the path to salvation" (Jones, 1973: 10-11; Schwarzweller, 1971: 99-114; Weller, 1966: 121-33). The predominant view was that these branch churches functioned as stumbling blocks to dynamic social change due to their focus on fatalistic, individualistic and traditional outlooks. Furthermore, many of the branches promote a state of mind that shuns social and political action. Erikson suggests that Appalachians have a belief in "otherworldliness".

> The mountaineer took it for granted that salvation was available to anyone who experienced a real conversion and that there would be divine compensation some day for earthly suffering. This was a

> promise made in the Bible and repeated over and over again by the many preachers who patrolled the mountains on mules, and the mountaineer took it to mean that the sorrows of this world are transitory, not entirely real, something, even of a dream (Erikson, 1976: 73).

In addition, Erikson describes the mountaineer as preferring "vigorous demonstrations of faith to quieter forms of prayer, almost as if he hoped to reach the Almighty by the urgency of his passions rather than by the cogency of his appeals" (Erikson, 1976: 74).

Fatalism

Although fatalism and traditionalism normally are adjunct in many rural communities, Weller singles out Appalachia, where he believes a direct relationship exists. Along this line, Appalachians' fatalism developed from a depression caused by environmental disasters such as floods, depleted soil for agriculture, etc. Due to these factors, the mountaineer began to feel that he had no control of his circumstances. In other words, man submitted to external forces beyond his control. This belief led to a passivity and tolerance of the mountaineers' condition. Furthermore, this fatalism is linked to Appalachian religion. "One accepts one's lot in this life in order to gain rewards in the next. There is little questioning, little planning for the future, little complaining" (Ibid., p. 72). Erikson follows Weller in this category as well. "The mountaineer also had a profound streak of fatalism" (Ibid., p. 73). Erikson then recognizes the difficulties of living in the hollows, "The caprices of nature and of other men always seemed to erode his efforts to become established on a secure footing, and whatever hopes had entertained in the beginning of shaping the wilderness to his will and creating a comfortable future had begun to fade. Over a period of time, the self-confidence that had accompanied his move to the frontier gave way to a form of resignation and passivity" (Ibid., p. 73)

Individualism

John C. Campbell, an early traveler in Appalachia and one source that Erikson cites, stated that the most prominent character trait of the mountaineer is "independence raised to the fourth power" (Campbell, 1921: 91). Many people view independence as a necessary and functional characteristic of a culture. However, according to Weller,

> the independent attitude of the Appalachian people has degenerated into a type of self-centered individualism. Today, everything that the mountain man does has the self and its concerns at heart. He is reluctant to join groups and does so only in order to promote his own needs. He judges government as good or bad by the extent to which its policies serve him. This attitude explains why public welfare programs have been welcomed in the mountains and why Appalachians have little conception of the 'public good'. He wants, and expects, this government to care for him, but he does not want to have to pay for it (Weller, 1966: 33).

This independence-turned-individualism, concludes Weller, is a major obstacle for those attempting to promote regional development and cooperation" (Ibid., p. 29-33).

Traditionalism

"He is bound to the past in an amazing way: 'their adherence to old ways is stubborn, sullen, and perverse to a degree that others cannot comprehend' While much of American culture has faced so many changes within the last hundred years as to leave many people virtually rootless. mountain life, as it has continued in its more or less static way, has preserved the old traditions and ideas, even encouraged them" (Weller, p. 33). According to Weller, there are two major factors which illustrate the manifestation of the Appalachian's motionless culture.

> Most Americans are 'progressive'; that is, we look ahead with at least some expectation of joy and encouragement. We have lived a good portion of our lives in times which have led us to believe that next year things will be better. Tomorrow will bring new

> opportunities, new experiences. We expect our children to have more than we have of the things that make life enjoyable and comfortable. They will have better education, better jobs. We look ahead to tomorrow with pleasant anticipation.
>
> The mountain man, however, has a 'regressive' outlook, for he does not look forward to tomorrow with pleasant anticipation. For generations, his life has been hard and uncertain. The sharp limit to the amount of land available for supporting his increasing family; it low productivity, because of his unscientific methods; the uncertainty of life in the mines, where he was never sure that he would come out of the hole alive after the shift; the insecurity of life tomorrow if the breadwinner were maimed or killed in the mines, and the family was forced to move; the chance of the cutoff slip coming without warning—all were factors which led the mountaineer to look, not ahead to an uncertain tomorrow, but backward to a yesterday which was remembered, perhaps nostalgically, as being happier than today. Yesterday, the family was still together. Children were still at home instead of away working. Parents were still alive. The old homestead was still standing. The old values held firm (Ibid., p. 34).

This mindset depresses innovation and promotes resistance to outside sympathizers. The second major point Weller makes concerning traditionalism is that while the majority of middle class Americans are oriented toward progress or "improvement-oriented", the mountaineer is "existence-oriented". Weller feels that subsistence characterizes life in Appalachia as people struggle to survive. "Secondary goals of beauty, excellence, and refinement are not valued. The mountaineer is contented with just getting along" (Ibid., 33-37).

Erikson quotes Horace Kephart, "And he [the mountaineer] was bound to ancient traditions by an attachment that was 'stubborn, sullen and perverse.'" (Erikson, 1976: 73). "He longed for the past with a nostalgia bordering on bitterness and found virtue in almost any idea or custom that could be demonstrated to have descended from an ancestor. The past for which he yearned never existed, and he knew this to be so in his

more reflective moments, but his reverence for it did not seem to be diminished at all on that account. He was conservative in principle, suspicious of change, and vaguely convinced that adherence to the old ways would somehow stabilize the uncertainties of the life around him" (Erikson, p. 73-74).

Seekers of Action

The typical middle class American is a routine seeker finding solace and energy in the everyday routine. "It is from this routine that life gets its real meaning and through it that the work of life is done. The housewife finds a sense of security in washing on Monday, ironing on Tuesday, cleaning on Wednesday, and so on the rest of the week. Routine-seeking families have traditional celebrations on holidays or special days of the year. Christmas is celebrated in a certain way; the Fourth of July has a certain kind of picnic" (Weller, p. 40). The middle class American enjoys stability on the job, in church, clubs and financially.

However, Weller states that the Appalachian is an action-seeker. Appalachians do not like patterns and avoid them if possible. Life occurs in episodes as the mountaineer rejects the systematic structures of education and church. The mountaineer is impulsive with his spending, "often wasting money that he could well use on necessities for his family; perhaps he buys a very expensive TV set or refrigerator just to satisfy his whim of the moment, his need to act. He saves little for a rainy day, or for the education of his children, or for projected goals in the future" (Weller, 1966: 42). The mountaineer enjoys unstable jobs such as coal mining because it is action-oriented, dangerous and unpredictable. Erikson states, "The mountaineer was also a creature of action rather than contemplation. By nature a hunter rather than a farmer, he avoided routine whenever he

could and had a good deal more faith in actions executed today than in plans due to mature tomorrow" (Erikson, 1976: 74). Erikson characterized the Appalachian as action oriented and linked to "movement", "impulse", "locomotion"; and, stated that the mountaineer would lose his problems in a "blur of activity" (Ibid., p. 74). "When he 'set to studying,' then, which was not too often, his ideas were quickly converted into something very akin to bodily states. A sense of gratitude, a feeling of affection, would turn into a great inner swell requiring expression; a feeling of resentment would turn into a dark humor clouding the heart until it was discharged by some act of vengeance" (Ibid., p. 74). Then, Erikson quotes a seasoned traveler, Ellen C. Semple.

> Men, who, from the isolation of their environment, receive few impressions, are likely to retain these impressions in indelible outline; time neither modifies nor obliterates them. Thus it is with the Kentucky mountaineer. He never forgets either a slight or a kindness. He is a good lover and a good hater; his emotions are strong, his passions few but irresistible; because his feelings lack a variety of objects on which to expand themselves, they pour their full tide into one or two channels and cut these channels deep (Ibid., p. 74)

The Psychology of Fear

According to Weller, the mountaineer is fearless in the face of an accident or flash-flood, yet apprehensive in his daily life.

> Beneath his stoical manner, the slow-moving, apparently peaceful, self-assured mountain man or woman may well be the victim of intense anxieties. It is not uncommon even for young people in their early twenties to have bleeding ulcers. The simple request to speak a word or lead a meeting in public will strike debilitating fear into the hearts of most mountain folk.
>
> Children are made to obey through fear: 'I'll get the law after you, if you don't mind.' When a stranger visits in the home, the children cling closely to their parents or hide behind them. More adults fear

> 'haunts' or ghosts, and graveyards than will readily admit it (Weller, 1966: 44).

Weller also feels that Appalachians have trouble making decisions due to confidence problems. The mountaineer is not taught to offer an opinion unless it proves to be one shared by the consensus. "Never having been taught to face and overcome difficulties, but instead to retreat and 'keep out of it,' mountain people often have no confidence in their abilities. 'I can't do that' is their common reaction on being asked to do something new, whether it be serving on a committee, being a treasurer of a group, or taking part in a meeting. This response is not simply a case of extreme modesty, a man confessing that maybe there are others more able than himself, but expresses a deep fear of failure and consequent inferiority" (Ibid., p. 46-47).

> Mountain people are indeed reared into a society of the 'known,' a rural environment providing little stimulation or opportunity, and thus acquire neither the attitude of mind nor the few skills needed for meeting new and different situations. There are few broadening experiences available to them—few simple experiences, like sitting with people you don' t know on a bus, asking for change from a bus driver, doing business with strangers in stores or supermarkets, meeting and playing with strange children in the park. Though these are not usually thought of as social learning experiences, they actually are, for they teach people to be more competent and secure in new situations and more able to take in stride whatever comes along (Ibid., p. 47-48).

Erikson quotes Weller, whom he labels as a concerned observer. "It is difficult and useless, perhaps, to try to name all the fears of the mountaineer, for apprehension pervades his whole life. One does not have to live long in the mountains to see that this anxiety affects persons of all ages, eating away at the relationships of person with person, even within families, at self-confidence, happiness, and health. The mountaineer lacks a confident sense of who he is and where he is going; instead, one finds a reluctant and

anxious person who seems to ask for defeat by his very reluctance and uncertainty. Everybody who works in the mountains should be aware of this anxiety and its ramifications, for it determines in great measure the working of the group process as well as the kind and quality of response that can be expected from mountain people" (Erikson, 1976: 75).

Person Orientation

Jack Weller uses Herbert Gans's concepts of personal orientation and object orientation when discussing Appalachian culture. According to Fisher's interpretation of Weller's work, "The object-orientation person strives toward a goal or object outside himself, while the person-oriented individual strives to be liked, accepted, or noticed. The mountaineer is person-oriented. His life goals are achieved in relation to his family and peer groups" (Fisher, 1975: 6). In summary of Weller's cultural analysis concerning person-orientation, Frank Riddel states:

> The time perspective of many mountain people, their attitudes toward work, the absence of object goals, and the lack of planning for the future are related to their person-orientation...Because the rural Appalachian relies entirely on the reference group as a source of ideas as and values, he is not easily reached or influenced by people beyond his group. This not only contributes to the maintenance of a closed society, but it also complicates efforts to promote a spirit of cooperation among different reference groups within the community. Ideas, beliefs, and values are internalized by members of the group to such an extent that new ideas from outside the group or disagreements with outsiders are taken personally rather than in the spirit of intellectual give and take that prevails elsewhere. This super-sensitivity to criticism or any hint of criticism in the guise of an opposing idea derives from the person-orientation of the rural Appalachian who equates the rejection of his ideas or beliefs with personal rejection. Thus, it is difficult for the mountaineer to settle grievances with another individual or an agency because every disputed issue involves a deep personal commitment, cooperative activity among different reference groups is hindered, effective leadership does not develop, outsiders remain objects of suspicion, new ideas are rejected, and change does not take place (Riddel, 1971: 169-171).

Isolation

Another myth perpetuated and re-legitimated by early scholars which still operates is the concept of cultural isolation. In his 1961 dissertation, Cratis Williams asserts that the case for the Appalachian subculture is linked to communication between relatives that migrated further west. (Williams, 1961: 79). Richard Couto describes the culture as "dormant" or "arrested" as opposed to regressive. Couto's concept comes from the idea that Appalachian cultural traits were imported into the area in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. According to Couto, natural increase spurred the population growth, not migration. This view is shared by many early Appalachian theorists. Natural increase along with lack of adequate transportation, "contributed to the maintenance of a closed society and thus the perpetuation of pre-Civil War cultural traditions" (Couto, 1975: 13).

Weller asserts that thousands of inhabitants in the Appalachians still live in isolation. Furthermore, "It is these families—isolated by distance, by lack of roads, and by choice—that most clearly display the characteristics of the folk culture" (Weller, 1966: 88). Erikson refers on numerous occasions to this isolation. "But the formidable mountains of Appalachia, for all their vastness and isolation, may have been immensely attractive to certain kinds of migrant and it makes sense to suppose that they were a somewhat select sample of their fellow homesteaders" (Erikson, 1976: 52).

Erikson claims that migration had slowed by 1830 and, "by 1850 it had come to an almost complete stop. And from that moment until recent times the original stock of settlers lived virtually alone in the remote hollows of Appalachia, untouched by the currents of change reaching across the rest of the country" (Ibid., p. 52). Furthermore Erikson states, "Hardly a hint of the outside reached into that vastness, however, and the

rest of the world barely knew of its existence. Edgar Allan Poe spoke vaguely in 1845 about the lands in the western part of Virginia 'tenanted by fierce and uncouth races of men', but for the most part, the people of Appalachia were lost in an envelope of silence." (Ibid., p. 52). Erikson further states, "It was a life of isolation and individual self-sufficiency...It was a life of sorrow... And it was a life of mystery" (Ibid., p. 72).

Family

If the claims made by Weller and Erikson concerning an out-of-date regressive culture are the case, then they would insist that isolation has perpetuated this claim. Furthermore they would assert that the process of socialization has faithfully re-legitimated this isolationism. Many scholars have portrayed the rural Appalachian region as characterized by a familial society. In this type of society, loyalty to kin and extended family supplants loyalty to secondary groups. According to Gazaway, the family "prescribes how members will react toward people, things, or institutions" (Gazaway, 1969: 94). Weller asserts that the family becomes a stumbling block to social change because of the strict loyalty to each other. According to Fisher, "By monopolizing the individual's allegiance, the family has hindered the development of formal organizations in Appalachia and has been an obstacle to programs promoting change" (Fisher, 1975: 8). Many people would suggest that this loyalty would lend security to the region; however, Weller and Erikson find that the emotional dependence leads to an increased insecurity (Weller, 1966: 88). Weller further asserts that "permissive" and "indulgent" child-rearing practices in Appalachian families foster insecurity because children are instructed to believe that their concerns are put before others. "Yet every child knows he is not capable of making decisions for himself, and he needs to find a security in parents who do know. The mountain child is

made to depend upon his own choices very early in his life, thus building an insecurity into him almost from the start" (Ibid., p. 49). Erikson follows Weller's findings concerning the Appalachian family structure. "The tightness of family and peer relations, then, does not leave room enough for the development of a sure sense of identity, and yet, in an odd way, the family does not appear to offer much security either" (Erikson, 1976: 86). Erikson further describes a dilemma. He feels that the Appalachians' individual action orientation derives from their self-centered demeanor, yet the mountaineer must be group centered in that he needs a large group of people for support in identity linkage. Erikson contends that the Appalachian can't leave the group due to this linkage. However, his individual isolation limits his participation in group activities. Furthermore, this has served as a problem to "community organizers of one stripe or another who have passed through the mountains on their way to braver futures elsewhere" (Ibid., p. 87).

Migration

The mines began to shut down as the age of machines came into full swing, so thousands of Appalachians moved to Cincinnati, Chicago, Detroit, and other possible job centers. According to Weller, the majority were: the young couples, with strength and ambition for themselves and their children, who were not content with the marginal existence; they were the better—educated adults who could find in the cities the kind of employment that would enable them to live comfortably...; they were the leaders who had the skills that were useful in the cities—and would have been useful in the mountains (Weller, 1966: 21). Who were the people left behind?

> The poorly trained and poorly educated, who could find either no jobs or else such poor jobs that life in the cities would have had to be lived in the undesirable slums, the unambitious, who could

> tolerate a subsistence living at home; those above forty, who found it hard to be retrained and who are not wanted in the already over-full labor market; the aged, the sickly, and the retarded; and the psychologically immobile, who could not move away from the familiar, protective mountain culture (Ibid., p. 21).

According to Weller, the very backbone of intellectuals and leaders who could possibly have saved Appalachia, and provided insight into the changing modern world left the region and "yesterday's people" (Fisher, 1975: 9).

Adaptation

Erikson and Weller both would agree that a good portion of the Appalachian cultural traits that they describe developed as an adaptive response to the environment in the physical and social sense. According to their model, fatalism originated from the particular problems mountaineers faced during their everyday lives. They would argue that fatalism then protected the Appalachians' psyche against the harsh realities that they encounter. Weller comments on Appalachian culture, "it has developed along lines that would allow him to bear up under the crushing loads he had put upon him" (Weller, 1966: 29). According to Fisher, Weller and others tend to ignore the significant implications of this adaptive nature when looking at strategies of change in the Appalachian region. Assuming that Erikson adopts this view, I shall challenge his analysis of social change in the region. I will describe Fisher's ideas and expand on them later in the paper.

To conclude this section, following Helen Lewis, Stephen Fisher and others, I have outlined some of the basic alleged cultural traits that appear frequently in traditional Appalachian scholarship, Weller's and Erikson's works in particular. Erikson's adoption of Weller's cultural interpretations is demonstrated as Erikson states, "And that is the conventional portrait of the mountaineer as drawn by several generations of observers, its

general accuracy certified by the sheer number of people who have contributed to it" (Erikson, 1976: 75).

Erikson, following Weller, works under the assumption that a distinct Appalachian subculture exists which has formed over time and is passed from one generation to the next. They have described this culture as possessing very different characteristics from middle class Americans. Furthermore, they assume that these differing characteristics are primarily accountable for the social problems such as poverty, dysfunctional government, destruction of environment, culture of violence, poor education, etc. Given this, Erikson and Weller feel that the Appalachian culture and people are to blame for the failure of outside attempts to alleviate these problems.

Specifically, they point to the above outlined cultural traits. It could be assumed that Erikson and Weller feel that the culture must be changed before social progress can occur in the Appalachian region. These assumptions have been made "in spite of the fact that Weller's descriptions are largely unproven and abound with contradictions and that his prescriptions have had some very damaging consequences for the Appalachian people" (Fisher, 1975: 10).

Chapter Two: The Culture of Poverty Model

In this chapter, I wish to briefly define the culture of poverty model and concentrate more specifically on the ideology and methodology of Weller and Erikson. I do not find it necessary to be drawn into the debate about, "What is Appalachia?" This debate rages on; and, probably will for some time. However, to my knowledge, most cultural regionalists recognize a distinctive 'upland' culture that consists of a geographic region dominated by the Appalachian mountains.

As I stated earlier, confusion also originates from the "culture of poverty" theoretical approach of the Appalachian subcultural proponents. According to Oscar Lewis, "The culture of poverty is a label for a specific conceptual model that describes in positive terms a subculture of Western society with its own structure and rationale, a way of life handed on from generation to generation along family lines. It is a culture in the traditional anthropological sense in that it provides human beings with a design for living, with a ready made set of solutions for human problems and so serves a significant adaptive function" (Lewis, 1966: 19).

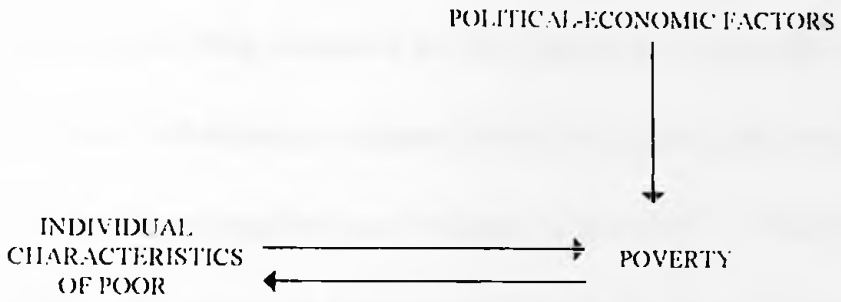
An example of this confusion is illustrated when Weller claims that the middle class and professional class in the Appalachian region possess the same traits as these respective classes in other regions of the country. Later on, however, Weller asserts that the majority of the people living in the Appalachian region have developed from the proposed folk subculture; therefore, they share these characteristics to a certain degree. (Weller, 1966: 5-7). What proportion or degree is Weller speaking of here? Weller provides no empirical evidence for this conclusion.

Social scientists have predominately used three major questions when analyzing poverty. (1) Are the poor different from other people? (2) If this is true, how different are the poor? And (3) How deep are the perceived differences? "The dominance of these questions is unfortunate not because they lack any significance but because they have deflected interest away from more important questions about the nature of societies and a world system that helps produce poverty" (Kerbo, 1996: 265-266). There are five major factors in the culture of poverty theory:

1. Because of the conditions of poverty, the poor are presented with unique problems in living (compared with the non-poor).
2. In order to cope with these problems, the poor follow a unique lifestyle.
3. Through collective interaction and in the face of relative isolation from the non-poor, this unique lifestyle becomes a common characteristic of the poor, producing common values, attitudes, and behavior. A common culture (or, more accurately, a subculture) is developed.
4. Once this common subculture of poverty has become, in a sense, institutionalized, it is self-perpetuating. In other words, it becomes relatively *independent* of the social conditions of poverty that helped produce the subculture. The values, attitudes, and behavior that are a part of this subculture are passed on to the children of the poor—*that is, the children are socialized into this subculture of poverty.*
5. Because this subculture is believed to shape the basic character and personality of people raised in poverty, even if opportunities to become non-poor arise, the poor will retain the traits that allowed them to adjust to the original conditions of poverty. Thus, the poor will *not be able to adjust to the new situation* through values and

behavior that will allow them to take advantage of new opportunities to become non-poor (Ibid., p. 266).

The traditional view as espoused by Oscar Lewis would look something like this



In this example, poverty becomes institutionalized, and self perpetuating. Poverty becomes independent of the social forces that created the subculture. The model further suggests that the poor will not extricate themselves from poverty even if other variables are introduced. In other words, the poor will not adapt to new conditions even when presented with new behaviors and norms. Even though Oscar Lewis suggested that this theory did not have wide applicability in the United States, Weller, Erikson, and many others have applied it. Lewis, states: "Because of the advanced technology, high level of literacy, the development of mass media and the relatively high aspiration level of all sectors of the population, especially when compared with underdeveloped nations, I believe that although there is still a great deal of poverty in the United States...there is relatively little of what I would call the culture of poverty" (Lewis, 1966:li).

Bill Best claims that a "culture of poverty" and a "traditional mountain culture" are operating in Appalachia (Best, 1973: 26-28). According to Best, the "traditional mountain culture" is grounded in subsistence. Due to the lack of farming skills that their ancestors had, the coal families that were cut back migrated to urban areas or became welfare dependent. The migrants that found employment, thus avoiding welfare dependency, were what Best classified as the traditional mountain culture. Furthermore, Best claims that their subsistence oriented living promotes independence; whereas, the welfare dependent were classified as a "culture of poverty". "People of both cultures share many of the same values and one uninitiated to the ways of the mountains probably couldn't tell the difference between the two. While both groups are individualistic to a degree, traditionalism is less dominant in the culture of poverty. Those in the culture of poverty have less to lose when change comes to the social order and they can usually be found willing to join many of the new programs which have proliferated in the region since the early sixties" (Ibid., p. 28).

Edward Banfield believes that the "culture of poverty" encompasses a lower class characterized by "pathological" traits. For instance, action-seeking behavior, present-orientedness, and some of the other characteristics described in the previous section. These traits function to "keep people poor" (Banfield, 1974: 10-17). Thus, I can argue that the "culture of poverty" model and the Appalachian subculture model share the same theoretical implications and confusion. They both suggest that the culture and values of the people in question must be modified. (See Valentine, 1968; Ryan, 1971; Gursslin, 1967; Dunaway, 1994). Now that I have defined the culture of poverty model, I will argue some of the failures of the model.

Chapter Three: A Critique of the Model

Section One:

In this chapter, I will review some general criticisms of the culture of poverty model. Then, I will look at criticisms specific to Appalachia. Blaming the victim for his or her problems is dangerous. From a symbolic interactionist perspective, blaming the victim can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Lewis states, "the wide acceptance of the Appalachian subcultural model may have helped create an Appalachian subculture by convincing the Appalachian that he is inferior, backward, and has 'bad' values" (Lewis, 1968: 5).

The scholars that use the "culture of poverty" model trace the root of Appalachia's modern problems to the culture. They compare the culture to the typical middle class status quo, and enumerate the differences; thus, labeling these differences as deviant. "Coined by Oscar Lewis (1961) and popularized by Michael Harrington (1962), the notion of a 'culture of poverty' postulates the existence of a cross-generational pattern of impoverishment that is linked with particular personality traits and social values" (Dunaway, 1994). According to (Waxman, 1983: 7), the "subculture of poverty" model:

> refers to the lives of the poor...who are seen as being different from the non-poor not only economically, but in many other respects as well. Their being different, or deviant, with respect to a whole set of patterns of behavior, it is suggested, sets them apart basically from the rest of society. According to the cultural perspective on poverty, the lower class is seen as manifesting patterns of behavior and values which are characteristically different from those of the dominant society and culture. Moreover, according to the culturalists, these unique patterns of behavior and values are transmitted intergenerationally through socialization and have become the subcultural *determinants* of the lower socioeconomic status of the poor.

Ball states that "the conduct of [Appalachians] seems...even more senseless than that of most hard core poverty groups" (Ball, 1970: 72). Furthermore, according to Caudill, deviant currents:

> had been at work long before the mountaineer's ancestors reached these shores, and for three or four generations before he had reached Kentucky. By 1840 they had accomplished their work. The twig had been bent. The tree had grown. The course of the mountaineer's development was determined. Consider then these forces in synopsis: The illiterate son of illiterate ancestors, cast loose in an immense wilderness without basic mechanical or agricultural skills, without the refining, comforting and disciplining influence of an organized religious order, in a vast land wholly unrestrained by social organization of effective laws, compelled to acquire skills quickly in order to survive, and with a Stone Age savage as his principal teacher. From these forces emerged the mountaineer as he is to an astonishing degree even to this day (Caudill, 1962: 31)

Weller typifies this scholarship in *Yesterday's People*, stating:

> Thousands of persons in the mountains still live a life of isolation. These are the families farthest up the hollows, where the creek bed may often serve as the road, in the coves that extend for miles up the twisting valleys, and out on the tops of the mountain ridges. These folk have but occasional contact even with their neighbors, who may well be their own kin. They may not take even a weekly newspaper. The children, however, usually do get to school fairly regularly. In a classroom they can generally be spotted by their head-hanging shyness, their "on-the-outside-looking-in" quality (Weller, 1966: 88).

After a very careful examination of his work, I feel that Erikson's Appalachian cultural analysis is almost indistinguishable from Weller's. They both use several of the same sources, noted in my analysis. In fact, many of these writers rely on these outdated sources that were written in the days when inequality was much more acceptable, especially for the elite. Erikson states:

> Thus we come face-to-face with one of those cruel circularities that mark poverty everywhere: The obvious deficiency of educational programs in Appalachia, far from convincing people that more sustained efforts were necessary, instead convinced them that education does not actually confer the advantages claimed for it anyway. Nor can one argue that this is an unreasonable way to read the evidence, for experience has suggested again and again that the best education

> available in the mountains does not really change a persons prospects appreciably. Everyday life in Appalachia, then, tended to repeat itself in slow cycles as one generation gave way to the next (Erikson, 1976: 64)

Weller and Erikson both outline a lower class in the Appalachian region that is founded upon the culture of poverty model. They claim a distinction; however, both fail to clearly show the differentiation. Instead they offer broad sweeping generalizations and provide no reliable support. For example, Weller claims that the lower class is slightly more suspicious of outsiders, and needs more assistance than the folk class. Also, the folk class is more resistant to social change than the lower class. (Ibid., 151-2) Given this confusion, I can't understand why Erikson would continue the same theoretical mistakes. In addition, why did Erikson assume that Weller's conclusions were valid and reliable given the immense criticism of the model?

Furthermore, "the wholesale and intemperate acceptance and promulgation" of the Appalachian subculture model has been "extremely pernicious and wasteful of money". Due to this fact, Lewis asserts that it is "untenable and unjust to characterize Appalachian culture patterns as deficient or pathological versions of mainstream American culture" (Ibid.)

Weller and Erikson both outline a class system in the Appalachian region that is founded upon the culture of poverty model and the folk society model. Their theoretical discourse concerning the classes is vague. First, Weller describes a professional and middle class in Appalachia that is similar to these classes in other regions. He continues by claiming that most of the people in the region were socialized in the folk culture and they share these traits to a degree (Weller, 1966: 5-7). The description of these class systems

is not valid or reliable. For example, Weller claims that the lower class is slightly more suspicious of outsiders, and needs more assistance than the folk class. Also, the folk class is more resistant to social change than the lower class (Weller, 1966: 151-152). This description leads me to believe that it was used selectively and conveniently.

The lack of a sustainable definition encompassing the folk culture leads to the idea that the Appalachian culture is homogeneous. As with most, if not all cultural systems, hegemonic status of one cultural type is highly unlikely, if not impossible, so this is an invalid generalization. Weller's and Erikson's limited exposure to the culture leads them to fall into this trap. As a native of the region, it is obvious to me that many different types of people exist with varying lifestyles in the region. Neither Weller nor Erikson addressed the questions of "What types of status or class groupings exist in Appalachia? What types of subculture exist? What are the characteristics of the class and groups? What is the relationship between particular classes and strata in the mountains? What type of interaction occurs among classes?" (Fisher, 1975: 13).

Even with this theoretical confusion, and, in spite of Billings', Lewis', and others findings, the Appalachian subculture model proponents such as Weller, and later Erikson operate under the possible "myth" that their distinctive Appalachian subculture subsists. In light of past, and especially recent scholarship by Salstrom, Dunaway, and others, I argue that Erikson's work needs to be re-examined.

Erikson uses the culture of poverty model in a 1976 publication in spite of previous and ongoing criticism of the model in sociology, cultural anthropology, and related fields. William Ryan's brilliant classic, *Blaming the Victim*, published in 1970, thoroughly critiqued the "culture of poverty" approach. "The 'multiproblem' poor, it is claimed,

suffer the ***psychological*** effects of impoverishment, the '***culture of poverty'***, and the deviant value system of the lower classes; consequently, though unwittingly, they cause their own troubles" (Ryan, 1971: 5-6). This perspective ignores the overt fact that poverty is most importantly a lack of money or capital.

Victim-blaming can be very subtle. "Victim-blaming is cloaked in kindness and concern, and bears all the trappings, statistics, and furbelows of scientism; it is obscured by a perfumed sense of humanitarianism" (Ibid., p. 6). In other words, these researchers are victims of false consciousness in that they falsely believe that they are being genuinely humanitarian.

I will illustrate how Erikson fell into the theoretical trap described by Ryan. Erikson describes himself as possessing little knowledge about Appalachia in his introduction to *Everything In Its Path*: "I came back from that visit so awed and depressed by what I had seen that I volunteered my own services to the firm. There was a certain element of presumption in that act, considering I knew very little about Appalachia, very little about coal mining, and very little about the character of human disasters" (Erikson, 1976: 10).

Erikson further elaborates about his sympathy and respect for Appalachians:

> ...once one comes to know and respect a community of people, it becomes increasingly difficult to think of them as examples of a large sociological proposition—all the more so if they are suffering in some sharp and private way...People like that have been the victims of so many different forces outside their control that one hesitates to imprison them once again between the cold parentheses of a theory. Much of what follows is theoretical, of course... (Erikson, 1976: 12-13).

These two statements are almost an ideal type description of "culture of poverty" theory and "perfumed humanitarianism" that characterizes the victim blaming. Erikson

paints the picture that he is acting in a humanitarian fashion be generating sympathy and regret for the people. Erikson's cultural analysis is primarily grounded in the literature that has historically so typified Appalachian scholarship—missionaries, early travelers' comparative speculation, storytellers, and other laymen. In fact, Erikson uses sources that are extremely out of date. For example: The Council of Women for Home Missions, 1924; *Early Western Travels*, 1748-1846; Edgar Allen Poe, 1845; Francis Asbury, 1776, 1788, 1803; and many other outdated sources. In addition, some sources such as Ellen Semple (an early traveler) had religious agendas that heavily influenced their analysis. Erikson attempts to cover for this lack of research by making the statement that the area remains largely unchanged for one-hundred and thirty years.

Furthermore, Erikson cites as experts the following laymen: Meshach Browning (author of *Forty-four Years in the Life of a Hunter*), F. A. Michaux ("Travels to the West of the Allegheny Mountains, 1802"), and S. S. MacClintock ("The Kentucky Mountains and Their Feuds") from the American Journal of Sociology, 1901, Presbyterian Home Missions, etc.

Section Two:

Now, I would like to provide several examples that show Erikson's reliance on the "culture of poverty" model and illustrate his victim-blaming. This section will analytically critique Erikson's assertions by first giving a series of direct quotes and then providing the socio-historical realities.

From *Everything In Its Path*, Part II: "Notes on Appalachia"

....a special breed of men and women, raw in manner...(P. 51)

....And from that moment (1830) until recent times the original stock of settlers lived virtually alone in the remote hollows of Appalachia untouched by the currents of change reaching across the rest of the country...Hardly a hint of the outside reached into that vastness...the people of Appalachia were lost in an envelope of silence. (P. 52)

....The environment required almost nothing in the way of planning or innovation, almost nothing in the way of personal or social change. And so a cultural style came into being on this frontier that remained largely intact for the better part of a hundred and thirty years. There was no encouragement for change from within, since old habits and old traditions seemed wholly adequate for the simple realities of everyday life, and there was no encouragement for change from without, since new ideas and new people rarely penetrated that vastness. (P. 53)

....Yet the mountains were dark with distrust. (P. 56)

....a sullen, sustained guerilla resistance...But the sounds of violence did not end

with these sporadic outbreaks of something very akin to war (reference to Michaux, A Traveler's Diary 1748-1846.) (P. 57)

....And in those lonesome, hungry stretches of time, the family came to assume an

importance unlike anything known in less isolated parts of the land. (P.58)

....In a country with no public institutions, no townships, no systems of social control, few stable congregations, and no other associations of any kind, membership in a family unit was the only source of identification...(no reference)...the mountaineers were so absorbed in the tissues of family life, so thoroughly a part of them, that they felt greatly diminished as persons when they were separated from them...they felt adrift, vacant...(P. 59)

This statement leads the reader to believe that there exists nothing comparable to the American middle class version of civilization in Appalachia. Regardless of what time period Erikson is referring to by this statement, it is empirically incorrect. This statement

mirrors Dunaway's use of the term "vacuum". Does Erikson actually believe that there are no public institutions or associations?

In reality, the Appalachian region and West Virginia, in particular, is and has been one of the most unionized areas in the world. In fact, the miners in West Virginia pioneered the formation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), and led the charge for improved industrial health benefits in the Black Lung Movement. In addition, the miners spurred the largest wildcat strike in the history of the United States. (Mary Lou Worth [pen name for Lynda Ann Ewen], 1980: 237-253).

Erikson continues:

> ....(Mountain life) helps to breed a social order without philosophy or art or even the rudest form of letters. It brings out whatever capacity for superstition and credulity a people come endowed with, and it encourages an almost reckless individualism...price for those freedoms in the form of loneliness, anxiety and personal suffering...separate people into isolated hollows...(P. 60)
>
> ....combined with the noted reluctance of mountain folk to invest much faith in the value of book learning, spelled a gradual form of suffocation...(P. 64)
>
> ....it was a primitive life in every important respect (P. 65)
>
> ....the mountain people did not know enough about fertilization of prevention of erosion or crop rotation to protect their narrow holdings...(P. 67)
>
> ....The key to understanding modern Appalachia, however, does not lie in knowing who the original settlers were and what they did with their land, but in knowing what has happened to them since at the hands of outsiders...men and women of Appalachia are among the most truly exploited people to be found anywhere. (i.e. victims), (P. 68)
>
> ....residents of Appalachia have never placed conservation high on their list of personal priorities, and a portion of what has happened to them must be charged to their own accounts...did not "develop"

according to the prevailing American standards. It changed a great deal, in fact; but the direction of that change was downward and its end product was depression in both the economic and spiritual sense...It was a life of monotony...(P. 70, 71)

....like people everywhere who stay close to nature...a life made for caricature...(P. 72)

....The mountaineer also had a profound streak of fatalism...resignation and passivity...a third mountain trait—the otherworldliness that seemed to pervade so much of Appalachian culture. And he was bound to ancient traditions by an attachment that was "stubborn, sullen, and perverse" [reference to Horace Kephart, 1913]. (P. 73)

....He (the mountaineer) was oriented to movement, impulse, location, and his general approach to problems was to obscure them in a blur of activity...his ideas were quickly converted into emotions, and his emotions, in turn, were converted into something very akin to bodily states. (P. 74)

....The mountaineer lacks a confident sense of who he is and where he is going; instead, one finds a reluctant and anxious person who seems to ask for defeat by his very reluctance and uncertainty. Everybody who works in the mountains should be aware of this anxiety and its ramifications, for it determines in great measure the working of the group process as well as the kind and quality of response that can be expected from mountain people. [Weller's observations, 1965]. (P. 75)

....Mountain women often grew gaunt and leathery while still young, tough as rawhide but mistaken for aging grandparents at the age of twenty-five. (P. 76)

....people without a strong sense of their own history...(P. 80)

....When he gets mad, in fact, he usually does not do much of anything, especially if the object of his irritation is some powerful interest; but the potential for response is always there, eating away at his relationships with others and at his own sense of self

> esteem...the people of Appalachia are self-centered and group-centered at the same time, and they live in such uneasy suspension between those contrary leanings that they find it difficult to develop either strong selves or effective groups. (P. 85, 86)

The portrayal of Appalachians as passive victims is simply incorrect. During the long and hostile UMWA national strike in 1977 and 1978 angry miners questioned media representatives concerning the portrayal of their side of the story. Why has only one side of the story been told by TV stations? Stephen Fisher, among many others, asserts that this question, "has been raised time and again throughout the Appalachian mountains and reflects a long history of media bias and neglect that has firmly implanted in the national consciousness two conflicting images of the people who live in Appalachia" (Fisher, 1993: 1). On one hand, the mountaineers are seen as "complicit in their own oppression"; yet, they are also viewed "as among the most vicious and violent people in the United States" (Branscome and Holloway, 1974: 33). Along this line, Fisher maintains that "the many bloody mine wars and skirmishes between miners and the coal industry throughout this century are responsible, in large part, for this latter image" (Fisher, 1993: 1).

Erickson goes on to say:

> ....the people of Appalachia seem to be forever poised at some vague midpoint between ability and disability...(P. 87)
>
> ....Life in the mountain hollows had been spare, to say the very least. People were bone-poor, generally illiterate, and easy prey to all the ills of mankind which result from poor hygiene, inadequate diet, and general hardship. (P. 95)

....For most of them, the move out of mountain cabins into company shacks did not represent an abrupt change of cultural manner. (P. 100)

....they did not have enough experience with money to measure its work or count its uses. After all, it takes a certain capacity for abstraction to understand deep in one's bones that a few disks of metal or a few crumpled pieces of paper can be a proper return for twelve hours of hard work...(P. 104)

....The coal camps were such isolated countries, such remote enclaves, that they even had their own currency. (P. 107)

....Appalachia had been more or less sealed off from the rest of the world for a century and a half. (P. 108)

....drawing away the best-educated, the youngest, and the most energetic people in the region, while posing obstacles to the least endowed among them. (P. 109)

....the readiness with which those proud mountain folk took to the dole was both astonishing and profoundly sad. The potential had been there all along... this skid into dependency was to sap what reserves of respect were left and to further demoralize an already devastated people. (P. 110)

....the coal camps appeared to bring out the weaker trait in every pair of contrary tendencies. (P. 114)

.... in true Appalachian fashion, few people are ready to accept the responsibility of leadership. (P. 129)

> ...Appalachian men and women moved into the coal camps balanced, as it were, between contrary inclinations built into their cultural heritage, and they lost a good part of that balance in their new surroundings. (P. 131)

> ....the Appalachian experience in general has to be viewed as something akin to a chronic disaster that has worked its way into the human spirit in a more gradual fashion. When we talked previously about the modern mountaineer, that numbed and dispirited creature shuffling off to welfare offices of one kind or another, we were talking about somebody who already suffers the effects of shock...the people of Buffalo Creek had to face the effects of the flood with reflexes that had already been dulled by a more chronic catastrophe, a catastrophe that is part of the Appalachian heritage. (P. 132)

These quotes clearly show that Erikson's theoretical orientation for *Everything In Its Path* was the subculture of poverty model. Furthermore, they illustrate almost perfectly how Erikson blames the victims for their differences.

Although Erikson does discuss some positive features of the Appalachian culture such as hospitality, willingness to aid neighbors, and loyalty, he concentrates on the negative traits outlined above. This negative focus tends to neglect the benefits that derive from valuing relationships with people over material goods. Weller's and Erikson's work practically ignore the labor movements that developed from the southern West Virginia coal mines. Furthermore, both authors gloss over evidence of Appalachian cooperative efforts to prevent destruction of the environment, the social dynamics of social change, and the subsequent acceptance of change.

Furthermore, the majority of the negative characteristics described by Weller and Erikson are only so in comparison with urban Eurocentric middle class standards. Jack Weller feels that "existence-oriented" Appalachian culture does not possess the secondary

goals of "beauty, excellence, and refinement." Erikson claims that the Southern Appalachians "were a special breed of men and women, raw in manner, nonconformist in religion, adventurous in spirit, independent in temperament" (Erikson, 1976: 51). Best pointed out that Appalachians have positive goals; but, they are simply articulated in different fashion than those of the "improvement-oriented society" (Best, 1973: 22-24).

Whereas the technocrats strive for hegemonic status in the corporate world, the Appalachian might concentrate on growing the best garden, telling elaborate stories, or writing and playing music. "The mountaineer's sense of beauty is expressed in good craftsmanship, the preservation of the great ballads and tales of English literature, and the use of simile and metaphor in song, story, and speech" (Fisher, 1975: 15).

The negativism I suggested earlier is exposed when we examine Erikson's rhetoric concerning his description of cultural characteristics. According to Stephenson, "Why is the mountaineer's 'what will be, will be' attitude most often described as 'fatalism' rather than 'contentment' or 'realism?'" (Stephenson, 1968: 96-99). The characteristics in question are extracted from the culture by those who do not accurately or comprehensively describe the culture from which they derive the traits.

According to Ernest Austin, "Weller tells the reader that mountain people are 'place bound', then laments their migratory habits; he states that they are so independent as to disdain group cooperation, then speaks of their emotional dependence upon group and community agreement....Mountain teenagers find life dull partly because they have nothing to do, but there is little delinquency 'partly because the rural nature of the area provides plenty of room to work off pent-up emotions' via hiking, fishing, exploring, hunting, etc....The author explains that the people fiercely reject change of any kind, and

then he later demonstrates how they readily accept and become attached to changes..." (Austin, 1966: 38). Erikson could be accused of the same contradictions.

If Appalachians are not able to function in a group collective, then why is the region so heavily unionized? If Appalachians are so fatalistic, then why did thousands migrate to Detroit, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and other urban centers? "If, as David Looff maintains, the problem of the poor white in Appalachia is his 'overly close' family, why do other social scientists such as Daniel Moynihan claim that the fundamental black problem is its weak family structure?" (Billings, 1974: 317).

If the proponents seek to conclude that the culture causes the poverty, then the focus should be on reasons precluding the attitudes and values claimed as uniquely Appalachian. However, if the thesis is to extract the effects of the subcultural differences, the researchers should focus on the generational behavioral transmission. Lewis feels that pure description does none of the above. "It does not tell us why the problems prevail or why the problems cause certain values, norms, or behaviors of the people" (Lewis, 1968: 4-5).

Lewis further elaborates, "culture is more than just description. It refers to a set of normative patterns which arise through a group's interaction with its environment. By discussing culture in isolation from the social, economic, and political setting, most studies portray the Appalachian people as the passive and apathetic carriers of the destructive traits of their culture. Such a picture, insists Lewis, is misleading. The cultural traits of the mountain people cannot be understood apart from the conditions that shaped them and the processes that perpetuate them. Appalachia, she suggests, may be viewed as a subsociety, structurally alienated and lacking resources due to processes of colonialism

and exploitation. Those who control the resources preserve their advantage by discrimination. The people are not essentially passive but these subcultural traits of fatalism, passivity, etc., are adjustive techniques of the powerless; ways in which people protect their way of life from new economic modes and the concomitant alien culture. These values are reactions to powerlessness" (Ibid., p. 6).

"Blaming the poverty of Appalachia upon the eccentricities of the region's early settlers has typified the work of several writers. Such genetic explanations have their roots in the late 19th-century work of Fiske (1897: 311) who claimed that Appalachian settlers were 'the shiftless people who could not make a place for themselves in Virginia society, including many of the 'mean whites'" (Dunaway, 1994). The Appalachian regional commission stated this in 1979:

> The poverty of Appalachia is almost as deeply rooted in American history as its mountains. The first settlers—frontiersmen --were English and Scotch-Irish. They were poor, ill-educated and lacked rudimentary farm skills. Proud, independent, skeptical of organized society, they stayed in the hills, eking out a living. So did their descendants (Deakin, 1979: 2).

In concordance with Wilma Dunaway, I feel that this statement demonstrates the "yellow journalism of the early 1900's local-color writers" (Ibid.). For example, John Fox (1901) or Thompson (1910: 53) who depicted three classes of poor people in Appalachia:

> the Lord's poor, destitute by misfortune, the devil's poor, stranded by their own follies; and poor devils from worthless stock who never were nor could be otherwise.

Another writer, Horace Kephart, states:

> Sprung from a more or less degraded stock...these, the naturally shiftless, were now turned out into the backwoods to shift for themselves. It was inevitable that most of them should degenerate even below the level of their former estate, for they were no longer forced into steady industry. The white freedmen generally

> became squatters on such land as was unfit for tobacco, cotton, and other crops profitable to slave-owners (Kephart, 1913: 432-3).

Unfortunately, many of our more recent scholars such as Caudill (1976: 58) argue the same rhetoric: Appalachians are simply a "pathetic remnant of the race that [once] inhabited the hills." Furthermore, Caudill characterizes the early frontiersmen as "destitute people, illiterate, rootless, unchurched" (Caudill, 1976: 10). Caudill earlier characterized the settlers as "human refuse" (1962: 6) and a "population born of embittered rejects and outcasts from the shores of Europe—as cynical, hardened and bitter a lot as can be imagined outside prison walls. They were free hands with fists, knife, and rifle, illiterate, uncouth and hard-drinking" (1962: 13). Fetterman's analysis is quite similar:

> There were plantations in the Carolinas and Virginia in need of workers. Just as Americans enslaved the black men, they enslaved the derelicts from the "old countries." Bonded, beaten, despised, these forbears of the hillbilly knew nothing of the arts of craftsmen, the cunning of the merchants, the skills of the tradesman. Their inheritance was a feeble spark of hope that they might escape their ordeal (Fetterman, 1970: 22).

Many of the scholars that employ the "culture of poverty" model claim that Appalachians were "modified by long isolation in an area of lesser opportunity" (Davis, 1925: 43; in addition Moore, 1957: 239). "These mutations have occurred, they contend, as a result of generations of genetic inbreeding among an insular and deprived people" (e.g., Day, 1941: 29-30; Caudill, 1962: 84-5); in Dunaway, (1994).

As early as 1974, Dwight Billings stated that the "distinctiveness" and "importance" of the Appalachian subculture model had been exaggerated. (Billings, 1974: 315-323) Billing's derived a middle class scale of his own by examining data collected from thousands of North Carolina respondents. This research questions the existence of the

Appalachian subculture model. Billings found that differences in attitudes were extremely small when comparing respondents from the Appalachian region of North Carolina with other regions. Therefore, according to Billings, the existing differences could be explained by rurality. From this interpretation, Billings concludes that poverty in the Appalachian region cannot be explained by behavioral traits. Although this is only one piece of the puzzle, it does shake the foundation of Weller's and Erikson's usage of the model.

Many scholars have discredited the model because of the large, sweeping generalizations made by its proponents. The scholars that employ the model fail to identify exactly who in the Appalachian region are encompassed by their proposed model. "The folk society model presents a portrayal of Appalachia as a region that has been homogeneous in ethnic composition, in ownership of wealth, in status patterns, in values or 'folkways', in artifacts and in culture" (Dunaway, 1994). "Weller and many other students of mountain culture have tended to attribute the traits of the folk culture to the people of Appalachia in a somewhat blanket fashion" (Stephenson, 1968: 95). These "blanket statements" have led to serious confusion among scholars which seem to be divided by ideology. Also, these statements have perpetuated and re-legitimated several harmful stereotypes.

> The whole concept of "folk culture," indeed, suffers from this inherent destructiveness, since its image is constituted in the dominant, modernized, rationalized culture out of precisely those elements which that dominant culture has consigned to destruction...And the bearers of a subordinated culture can only escape that doom by refusing to see themselves in the observer's parental terms, negative or quasi-positive (Cunningham, 1987: 122).

According to Dunaway, "Methodologically, this model has been grounded largely on studies of small, rural areas, usually communities specifically chosen for study because

they possessed the very 'frontier-like' qualities that the writers hoped to prove" (Dunaway, 1994). Using these small communities, these scholars overgeneralize to the entirety of Appalachia. From a historical perspective, the subcultural model is erroneous in many ways. To begin with, the model perpetuates a view that Appalachia has not changed, but remained in a time warp. Anyone that is familiar with the region knows this to be incorrect.

"Second, the model's depiction of ethnic homogeneity blurs the historical blending of cultural and ethnic groups that actually occurred during the early resettlement of the region. The ethnic biases of this model are most demonstrable in its neglect of the contribution of Native Americans and of the Black slaves during the settlement and early development of the region" (Dunaway, 1994). Furthermore, according to Dunaway, the model does not acknowledge the 23,000 Cherokees and the numerous indigenous civilizations. As previously stated, the Appalachian subcultural model also ignores class distinctions and simply selects or extracts a small portion of the rural population. Also, these scholars act as if land ownership, and other capital was equally distributed throughout the region.

> The typologies of folk cultures can be quite misleading. First, there were quite distinct differentials in styles of life within the earlier, pre-urban community. It was not as homogeneous as we would have expected....Second, social life appeared to be far more complex than would be indicated by the conceptual criteria used to define a folk society. Finally, the typologies in practice encourage contrasts—personal versus impersonal—rather than a focus on the processes of social change (Kaplan, 1971: 139)

During the process of building the subcultural theory, the model: (1) "imports sociological or psychiatric categories and focuses on the pathological. [Writers] overgeneralize from problem families to the culture of one or more social classes" (Walls,

1974: 9). (2) [The Appalachian subcultural model] "is applicable only to a small minority of the region's people" (Ibid: 17).

Another important criticism is the fact that the Appalachian subcultural model interchanges character traits and cultural values with those of other ethnic groups and/or other geopolitical regions (Billings, 1974). Thus, there is confusion concerning whether or not the model presents truly distinct Appalachian characteristics. Furthermore, according to Dunaway: "Perhaps the most damning criticisms of this model point to the underlying biases of the writers themselves" (Dunaway, 1994). The model paints the picture that the dominant middle class values do not exist in the Appalachian region. The supporters then exaggerate the differences between the Appalachian culture (if it even exists) and these middle class standards. According to Westbrook, Fisher, Garnett, Dunaway, and many others, the "burden of proof" falls on the researchers who perpetuate the idea that a "sui genris" Appalachian subculture actually exists.

The majority of the political attempts to remedy the social problems of the Appalachian region "have focused not on economic and political realities in the area as they evolved over time, but on the supposed inadequacies of a pathological culture that is to have equipped mountain people poorly for life in the modern industrial world. Having overlooked elements of movement and change that have tied the mountains to the rest of the American experience, we have blamed the mountaineers for their own distress, rather than the forces which have caused it" (Eller, 1982: xviii).

Chapter Four: Alternative Models

Section One: The Colonial Model

Now that I have critiqued the Appalachian subculture of poverty model, I wish to describe some of the more valid models that have been proposed. The colonial model would suggest a structural view focusing on political and economic forces leading to the poverty.

POLITICAL-ECONOMIC FORCES ⟹ POVERTY

The colonial model stands in stark contrast to Weller's and Erikson's interpretations. Instead of viewing the characteristics outlined in Chapter Three as cultural "problems", the colonial model perceives them as adaptations to traditional colonial exploitation.

Lewis describes a biculturalism that developed from elders teaching Appalachian children to act "hillbilly" at home and refined in public. "Appalachians passively enact the behavior of mainstream culture in settings of formalized intergroup contact: at the welfare office, in court, and at school. It is in such cases that the mainstreamer is limited to a single cultural system whereas the Appalachian is bicultural or bidialectical" (Lewis, 1968: 6).

Lewis relies heavily upon Robert Blauner's colonial model analysis of African Americans. According to Blauner, colonialism is "domination over a geographically external political unit most often inhabited by people of a different race and culture, when this domination is political and economic, and the colony exists subordinated to and dependent upon the mother country" (Blauner, 1969: 393-408). Lewis admits that the model does not exactly fit; however, she contends that the history of the Appalachian region enables one to support Blauner's four colonization steps. (1) A forced or

involuntary entry; (2) a rapid modification of the culture and social organization of the colonized; (3) control by the dominant group; and (4) a condition of racism, social domination by which the colonized are defined as inferior or different and which rationalizes the exploitation, control, and oppression by the superordinate group. The last twenty years have proven the effectiveness of Lewis' model.

If one accepts the colonial model as applied to Appalachia, then a radical change in the perception of external factors affecting the region must be initiated. I define external factors as social, political, and economic forces. Acceptance of the colonial model is definitely not a prerequisite for critical analysis of the Appalachian subcultural model as presented by Weller and Erikson.

Section 2: Historical Economic Analysis

Weller and Erikson gloss over what I feel is the most important factor leading to economic problems in the Appalachian region. Erikson briefly mentions economic exploitation in his description of the coal camps; however, his analysis only deals with a small part of the story. Weller and Erikson do not provide analysis to properly ground Appalachia's economic problems in a historical context. Traditional analysis simply does not paint the complete or correct picture of the history of exploitation in Appalachia. Recent scholars such as Paul Salstrom details the exploitation by outsiders from quite a different perspective and fills in some of the pieces left out by Erikson and Weller.

Salstrom analyzes this problem in his 1994 book, *Appalachia's Path To Dependency*. The banking problems during the 1800's and early 1900's left many Appalachians without access to paper money; and, many times the paper money they had was not acceptable for transactions. According to Salstrom, a serious problem with paper money and banks

existed in the Appalachian region during incorporation. "After the creation of local banknotes was curtailed in 1865, an increased proportion of locally used capital was imported" (Salstrom, 1994: 29).

In most cases, capital that is brought in from the outside will not be used to bolster local markets; and, more importantly to finance local markets that were accommodated by local production. Local production that is supplied by external capital is usually set up for export. Furthermore, the most economic damage occurred in areas that exhibited a high level of production capacity but a low level of accumulated capital to be used for the backing of paper money and loans. The majority of Appalachia's early industries exemplified the condition discussed above.

West Virginia was not created until 1863. The creation of the state was obviously linked to banking and market monopoly problems. "Within Virginia's state politics prior to the Civil War, for instance, banking discrimination was one of the main grievances of western Virginian's. By 1810 western Virginia contained more than one hundred thousand people, and yet not a single bank was allowed to open there. When unchartered 'private banks' stepped into this breech by accepting deposits and issuing banknotes, the Virginia legislature in Richmond levied heavy fines that squelched them" (Ibid., p. 29). A bank was chartered in 1817 in Wheeling due to pressure from the West; however another was not established until 1834 (Russell, 1965: 17-18, 27).

The situation was similar throughout many areas in the Appalachian region, as the northeastern U. S. controlled the majority of national banks. The federal realignment of banks officially came in 1865. The loan structure was altered "by no longer issuing most loans in the form of newly created banknotes but in the form of bank deposits that could

then be drawn out by writing checks" (Galbraith, 1975: 75). However, the bank-deposit loan worked in favor of people who had been banking that way from the outset. Thus, the elite had an advantage and participated in this structure more often than the common Appalachian.

Paper money was more advantageous to the collective because it circulated throughout the economy, whereas the majority of checks only benefited the bank and the writer. "Checks changed hands only between the relatively rich, whereas cash had changed hands between virtually everyone" (Salstrom, 1994: 30).

The shift to national banks did not benefit many areas in the Appalachian region. "When state-chartered banks were effectively prohibited from issuing banknotes, many of them, if sufficiently large, then acquired charters as national banks in order to regain the right. But Congress had set a limit on the overall amount of banknotes that national banks as a body could issue. This limit of $300 million was quickly approached by eastern banks alone (generally the first to be chartered), and banks in other regions, if and when they too eventually received national charters, were left with the dregs of the banknote quota" (Ibid., p. 30).

Despite the fact that between 1869 and 1899 farm production more than doubled, the population of the U. S. almost doubled, and manufacturing value increased six-fold, circulating paper money failed to double (Tindall & Shi, 1989: 490). In fact, according to James, it fell by about ten percent (U. S. Census Bureau, 1975: 993, Tindall & Shi, 1989: 559). The fact that real estate was not accepted as collateral for a loan was highly advantageous to the elite; the opposite held true for the majority of Appalachians. This congressional change lasted until 1914. "Because the assets of Appalachia's local people

were primarily real estate assets (mainly land, minerals, and timber), Appalachians qualified for relatively little credit from the only banks that could issue banknotes, national banks" (Salstrom, 1994: 31).

Paper money circulation did not even come close to expanding with the overall financial growth of the U. S; in fact, it actually fell. According to James, the U. S. held about $1.50 in deposits for every dollar of paper money when the Civil War ended; but, this grew to $9 for every dollar of paper money by 1914 (James, 1978: 22; Friedman and Schwartz, 1970: Table 4-57). The key here is that "behind national bank notes the government required 111 percent U. S. bond ownership, but the government required no significant reserves behind deposits in national banks" (Perkins, 1984: 835-6). Obviously, the profit-minded banks would then encourage checking-deposit loans over the banknote loans. This new system was extremely profitable for the eastern U. S. elites who owned a great portion of the Appalachian region.

Salstrom places Appalachia into it's historical economic context by illuminating these factors, whereas Weller and Erikson simply dismiss many of them. I feel strongly that many of the social problems in Appalachia must be analyzed with these historical economics factors in mind. These factors provide what I believe is the key context for the geopolitical exploitation of Appalachia's resources. According to my model, these factors are primary in explaining many of the reasons for Appalachia's current state of economic stagnation.

The lack of banks, cash on hand, and the difficulty of obtaining capital due to loan restrictions were at least major factors in Appalachia's economic difficulties. However, Wilma Dunaway has taken this a step further by linking land ownership to the scenario;

and, most importantly adding that Appalachia was never isolated in the first place. This assumption differentiates world system analysis from a colonial model. She also points out a very important factor by describing the Cherokees and other indigenous peoples of the region. The Cherokees contributed significantly in the Appalachian economy from the outset . Furthermore, Dunaway following Wallerstein, details very specifically Appalachia's incorporation into the capitalist world system.

According to Wilma Dunaway,

> Outsiders proclaimed that early-twentieth century Southern Appalachians had 'worked out their individual existence far removed from the forward march of progress.' From the late nineteenth century until the 1970's, this area was nostalgically described as the last place in the country where 'time stood still,' preserving the vanishing American frontier life. Presuming that the region had not undergone the 'normal' linear advance toward modernity, journalists and intellectuals contended that isolation froze Appalachians into 'a folk world of small, isolated, homogeneous societies' shaped by the traditions of early settlers. Fascinated with the imagery of a 'strange land' and a 'peculiar folk,' Americans still view Southern Appalachia as one of the most distinct sub-regions in the United States (Dunaway, 1996: 3).

It is a well known fact that the Appalachian region is impoverished. Also, the timber, coal, and other extractive industries have inflicted a tremendous amount of ecological damage to the landscape. Many scholars, most of whom were not socialized in Appalachia, explain this according to their traditional "culture of poverty", and/or rural industrial continuum theories. These scholars, Erikson and Weller in particular, tend to believe that the region experienced slow development prior to the postbellum invasion of corporate outsiders. They claim that the region remained undeveloped, in this scenario, because there was "little in Appalachia to attract capitalist development" and because the Appalachian region did not possess the infrastructure and capital necessary for economic

progress. According to these scholars, the difficult terrain, inadequate roads hindered trade expansion and prevented the substantial growth of an export economy.

Along this line of inquiry, these scholars claim that "isolation" allowed for the development and perpetuation of an independent economy which persisted in the Appalachian region far longer than elsewhere in the United States. Furthermore, instead of national integration, Appalachia became more economically isolated due to competitive international trade modifications in response to industrialization. This traditional argument states that Appalachian culture became isolated from the rest of the developing areas, therefore, resistance to change is purported as an additional factor in Appalachia's backward transition to capitalism.

Responding to this view Dunaway declares,

> In the predominant view, Appalachia's transition to capitalism was peculiar and unique. It was late and it involved little agrarian transformation toward market production. Unlike other regions of the country, it is thought, Appalachia was 'a colonial appendage of the industrial East and Middle West..' As such, the transition to capitalism brought to Appalachia a one-industry export economy operated by 'particularly exploitative and brutal' capitalists who disrupted rural communities with new company towns (Ibid., p. 5).

These traditional studies share a strong Anglo-centricity. In this manner, history is written in terms of the outsiders discovering and civilizing the savages as well as the wilderness. This point incorporates Ryan's ideas concerning incorporation. (See Ryan, 1971, Chapter One). A great majority of these researchers ignore or dismiss Native American societies as well as the dislocation of indigenous peoples by advancing settlers. Furthermore, these studies share a narrow focus on internal barriers and stimuli to development. Many of these approaches have relied on small community studies focused

on the Northeast and New England. Along this line of inquiry, broad-sweeping generalizations have been advanced about the transition to capitalism throughout the entire United States. In addition, these approaches do not direct enough focus on the larger global setting within which the United States developed.

Dunaway's analysis includes the indigenous peoples into the model, and places the questions in the historical context of the incorporation of Appalachia into the capitalist world system. Weller, Erikson and the culture of poverty theorists fail to do this. Therefore, I conclude that their work is incomplete.

Also, I concur that both subsistence and market are often misused and/or poorly conceptualized into a "shaky" dichotomous scenario. The application of the terms is often done in the context of homogeneous and static communities. Furthermore, "the term 'subsistence' is probably the most misused, for it has been applied to a wide range of farms producing disparate levels of surpluses and participating in market exchanges to varied degrees" (Ibid., p. 7). The result of this error is the confusion regarding whether the community was operating under predominately a subsistence or household economy. This is a very important point when analyzing Appalachia, as the majority of early re-settlers used a farming based economy. There needs to be a clarification by scholars regarding this matter.

By relying on loose generalizations about "cultural resistance to capitalism", and employing the "culture of poverty" models, Weller, Erikson and many other authors could be considered ethnocentric. Dunaway asserts,

> The popular rural-industrial continuum erroneously portrays Appalachia as a region that has been homogeneous in economic pursuits, in culture, in ethnic composition, and in distribution of

> wealth. As a result, internal diversity has been denied, leaving too many Appalachians without history. Because the intellectual discourse upon the Appalachian region has emanated from the dominant culture, much of the resultant research is steeped in an erroneous image of the region as a deviant subculture. Many of our contemporary perceptions about this region were largely shaped by works written at the turn of the twentieth century. This factor is an extremely important variable when critiquing Weller and Erikson. The majority of the sources they rely on for description were written at the turn of the twentieth century. Concomitant with the postbellum industrial boom, altruistic outsiders and yellow journalists redefined what they saw in the region, often labeling as "peculiar Appalachian" folkways that have been present in practically every rural section of the United States (Ibid., p. 7).

In summary of Dunaway, the inclination to stereotype cultures developed from two limitations. The first is the "provincial reticence to test the so-called peculiarity of Appalachia against comparisons with trends in other areas." The second, "much of the accumulated knowledge about Appalachia has been generated out of 'history written backwards'" (Ibid., p. 7-8). I feel that I have demonstrated in Chapter Three that Weller and Erikson have exemplified both of these factors. Many academics have faithfully re-legitimated the colorful exaggerations of early-twentieth-century novelists and yellow journalists. Kai Erikson's Sorokin award winning classic, *Everything In Its Path*, is classic in the sense that it is a classic example of this re-legitimation.

Frontier expansion did not simply happen in a single movement, but in spurts and bursts at different times in history. In addition, the expansion was cyclical as opposed to linear. Also, Dunaway's study exposes several inequalities that can't be explained by the previously discussed models. Furthermore, one could argue that these studies did not adequately address inequality in the first place. Therefore, following Wallerstein, I

propose that a world systems approach would explain much more clearly the transition to capitalism in the Appalachian region as well as other aspects of American social history.

The world-system model provides a macroscopic context linking the Appalachian region with the capitalist markets throughout the globe. In establishing this linkage, one can compare the Appalachian region with similar regions throughout the world. I feel that this comparison is crucial to uncover a valid interpretation of the Appalachian region. Instead of noting differences as cultural or "ethnic" flaws, one must look for similarities of the Appalachian region with other colonies and tease them out in the proper historical context.

The internal forces of rural communities that operated with and against this change are ignored by traditional paradigms. World-systems analysis correctly asserts that capitalism originated in rural agricultural societies. In doing so, world-systems analysis correctly removes the gloss inherent in the "transition in a vacuum" myth.

According to Wallerstein, capitalism originated sometime between 1450 and 1640 in the context of western European agricultural communities. In these rural communities, commodity production expanded as well as the average size of landholdings, the number of absentee landlords living in urban areas, and the emergence and expansion of a large class of farmers who did not own their land (Wallerstein, 1974: 347-348).

I concur with Wallerstein, Dunaway, and others in that the definition of capitalism is vague and often incorrect in traditional approaches. "One argument equates capitalism with international commerce and with the presence of exchange mechanisms; but it is possible for localities to engage in long-distance trade without becoming capitalist" (Hopkins and Wallerstein, 1987: 776-777). The other two arguments define capitalism

as the "set of social relations in which labor is commonly divorced from the ownership of the land, tools, or materials that form the means of production" so that "there exists in society a significant number of people whose principal means of livelihood is the wage work that they can obtain" (Ibid.). This particular conceptualization overlooks antebellum forms of wage labor that formed outside industry and excludes the reserve army of labor who did not own their land and were forced to sell their labor power to exploitative capitalist intruders. In addition, this definition is heavily centered on manufacturing, which neglects the fact that the capitalist mode of production developed in a rural agricultural system.

The world-systems approach is more complete than traditional models because it includes a comprehensive view of political economy. Dunaway used world-systems analysis to form a much more complete picture of the Appalachian region by tracing the origin of regional capitalist systems to the Native American societies. Furthermore, Dunaway's application of world-systems analysis escapes the theoretical errors that occur in small community studies because it allows the diversity of the Appalachian region to be compared in the global context.

The reliance on subsistence agriculture was only temporary in the Appalachian region. According to Mitchell, American frontiers were infrequently "reduced to a raw state of economic evolution distinguished by geographical isolation, complete self-sufficiency, and marginal living standards. Such conditions were, at most, a temporary feature of the first year or two of initial permanent settlement." In light of this, researchers should examine expansion as controlled "by the search for and exploitation of goods in demand on world markets" (Dunaway, 1994: 10).

Furthermore, a world systems approach allows for the analysis of the conflict between competing political economies, cultures and civilizations. Thus, a frontier is seen as a "territory or zone of interpenetration between two previously distinct societies. Usually, one of the societies is indigenous to the region, or at least has occupied it for many generations; the other is intrusive." The region is then placed into the capitalist world economy "when the first representatives of the intrusive society arrive." The transition occurs when the outside "political authority has established hegemony over the zone" (Lamar and Thompson, 1981).

The world system approach asserts that there are internal forces in the capitalist world system that force the boundaries to expand. Therefore, capitalist incorporation into the world system is a global process that distends outside of the geopolitical boundaries to engulf territories beyond the limits of the capitalist world system. Core nations struggle for hegemonic status in the capitalist world system. According to Wallerstein and Arrighi, an "acute competition among capitalists has always been one of the *differentia specifica* of historical capitalism" (Arrighi, 1979: 161-2). The core countries wrestle against forces that would lower their location in the capitalist world economy, whereas the semiperiphery countries fight to join the core countries and the peripheral countries attempt to develop a semiperipheral position.

The global struggle for hegemonic position causes cycles of contraction and expansion which alter regions in the world economy. During economic stagnations, core countries struggle to avoid the loss of hegemony, whereas semiperipheries attempt to move upward into the core. Wallerstein asserts that in the capitalist world economy expansion cycle of 1672-1700, "the semiperipheries of the world economy included Spain, Portugal,

Germany, Italy, Sweden, Russia, Prussia, Denmark, Austria and the northern and middle colonies of North America.

During this same period, the peripheries of the world economy included eastern Europe, southern Europe, Hispanic America, and the extended Caribbean, which stretched from northeast Brazil to Maryland. During this global expansion, Southern Appalachia was incorporated as a peripheral fringe of the European colonies located along the southeastern coasts of North America" (Wallerstein, 1980: 233-4; 167).

Wallerstein states that there are five "recuperative" processes that effectuate the incorporation of new frontiers: (1) alteration of the production strategies, (2) redistribution of the world surplus, (3) the international search for cheaper labor, (4) industrial transfer to the semiperiphery, and (5) expansion into new geographical zones. Along these lines, the peripheral aperture resulted from the intrinsic character of capitalism to export capital and incorporate markets into the world system. The European core had established hegemonic status over twenty-eight frontier peripheral colonies by 1700; meanwhile, Southern Appalachia's incorporation had already begun (Wallerstein, 1980).

During the struggle between Britain, France and Spain from 1689-1763, a majority of the fight occurred in the semiperipheries and peripheries of the world system. Wallerstein states, "The continual commercial conflict of Britain and France in the Americas 'merged almost imperceptibly, but none the less certainly,' into the culminating struggle that was the Seven Years' War. The Dutch tried to remain neutral but were constrained by British force to limit their trade with France. The Spanish were tempted into joining France as a way to abolish British privileges at last, but it did France no good. The Treaty of Paris of

1763 marked Britain's definitive achievement of superiority in the 100 years struggle with France" (Wallerstein, 1979: 257). Dunaway asserts that, "in fact, this international rivalry was the impetus for the incorporation of Southern Appalachia when Britain, Spain, and France all sought political alliances and trade agreements with the region's indigenous peoples" (Dunaway, 1994: 11).

Drawing upon Wallerstein, Dunaway lists three major reasons for the competition between European core countries for American colonies. To begin with, gold and silver could be extracted to feed the fire for expansion. These European countries were exploring the southern mountains by 1540. As the core and semiperipery economies expand, the periphery is weakened due to the inherently unbalanced exchange operandi existing in the hierarchy of the capitalist world system. The core countries export surplus value from the periphery, causing a polarization of the world system. "Because of the increasingly uneven development in different zones, the core and the periphery are far apart in levels of well-being, social structure, labor specialization, and wealth" (Wallerstein, 1979: 34).

A second reason for the expansion and incorporation of new regions into the capitalist world system is illuminated when we analyze capitalism historically. Traditionally, capitalism has "involved the widespread commodification of production, marketing, distribution, and investment processes, the three tiers of the world economy are linked through vast commodity chains that operate as the mechanisms of exchange between the distant corners of the world market" (Wallerstein, 1980: 169, 175, 266). According to Wallerstein, western European capitalism shared five factors by the expansion era of 1672-1700: technological expansion of agriculture; improved and expanded shipbuilding

capacity; emergence of proto-industrialization, especially in the textile industry; and improved trade routes with eastern Europe, Asia, and the Atlantic region.

Concurrently, between 1650 and 1750, England rose to hegemonic status in the capitalist world economy through global mercantilism. Great Britain flexed its power by controlling Ireland. The British annihilated Ireland's wool textile industry and controlled the corn supply. Due to the industrial expansion of the mining, textile, and ironworks in Britain; they were able to substantially increase exports. The advanced shipbuilding techniques proved important as Britain controlled the majority of trade with the colonies in the western hemisphere. Colonies could be used to extract slaves and marketable produce such as: sugar, naval stores, tobacco and cotton. Due to increased English consumption of these extracted raw materials, the merchant and coerced labor classes developed in peripheral regions. Merchants marketed in Europe the agricultural crops that had been produced by coerced laborers in the peripheral zones of the world economy. Therefore, the relations of production in peripheral regions were characterized by cash-cropping, slavery and tenantry. It is during this context and time period that Appalachians "were incorporated into the commodity chains of the world economy to supply slaves, to produce raw materials for Europe's emerging leather manufacturing, and to absorb surplus manufactured goods" (Wallerstein, 1980).

The third reason for expansion is that colonies provided an absorption point for the reserve labor army of Europe. The centralization of capital characteristic of the world system created a polarization of European classes; therefore, new colonies were needed to assimilate this reserve army of labor. Another key point is the fact that a large portion of the land in Europe was concentrated into large estates. This phenomenon left many of

Europe's masses without land. Peasants began massive international migrations around 1775, which led to resettlements in several peripheral countries and the United States as well. Similarly to other American frontiers, Southern Appalachians' native Americans were displaced as this resettlement occurred. Thus the Appalachian region was resettled in three historical phases ranging from the early 1700's to approximately 1840. (Wallerstein, 1989: iv.).

Around the time of the American Revolution, the northeastern and middle colonies were in a semipheriphery position in the capitalist world system. The Northeast became an important economic colony for Western Europe. This European linkage propagated exploitation in the American South, Africa, and the West Indies. "This privileged position, not shared by others in the New World, must be considered as a crucial factor in the economic development of the northeast during colonial times" (Frank, 1979: 194).

Due to the labor shortage and restriction of capital by the British, American industry was constrained and North America was forced to rely on British manufactured goods. North America consumed approximately one-fourth of British exports and more than one-third of all colonial exports were sent to England. Meanwhile, the majority of North America's capital came from commerce. "Southern Appalachia was linked into the commodity chains of the triangular trade through the exchange by colonial merchants of Cherokee deerskins for slaves and European manufactured goods" (Dunaway, 1994: 14).

The southern colonies' economic system was largely agrarian. Virginia and Maryland were the largest agricultural exporters in colonial America. According to Wallerstein and Frank, tobacco grown in the southern colonies provided close to half of the total value of commodity exports from British colonies in 1750, "and remained the dominant export

throughout the colonial period" (Agnew, 1987: 27). Thus, the southern colonies were limited to peripheral status in the capitalist world system.

Dunaway asserts that deerskins, which were primarily produced by Southern Appalachians, "were the most stable economic product of the southern colonies before the Revolutionary War, and the Indian trade was the chief instrument of southern economic expansion during the early colonial period" (Dunaway, 1994: 14).

Furthermore, by 1760, a large discrepancy existed in the distribution of wealth in North America. "One-third of all adult males were landless, and coerced labor mechanisms (slavery, tenancy, and crop-sharing) were entrenched throughout the northern, middle, and southern colonies. Moreover, wealth was concentrated into the hands of a small group of elites, a landed gentry in the South and the merchant class in the Northeast" (Ibid., p. 15). Southern Appalachia was not isolated from the inequality that characterized the diffusion of the capitalist world system.

At this point, it is important to introduce a very crucial fact in the historical development of Appalachia. "After 1763 settlers were forbidden west of a 'proclamation line' drawn down the crest of the Appalachian-Allegheny mountain belt. Despite official edicts, several large companies and syndicates initiated vigorous speculation in the prohibited inland Appalachian areas between 1750 and the Revolutionary War" (Frank, 1979: 179, 200).

After the revolution in America, Southern Appalachia was incorporated further through a second historical movement as part of the first frontier-periphery situated in the United States. As a new country, it was economically and geopolitically necessary to control the land and people of the southern mountains. The most lush lands of Appalachia

served as geopolitical trophies to speculating capitalists such as George Washington, who interestingly, owned the land where I grew up. "When the eighteenth-century Northeast ascended into semiperipheral status (catapulted by the fur trade and mercantilism), the peripheral southern colonies (Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia) competed for their share of global profits by encroaching steadily into the Southern Appalachians in search of mineral wealth, new trading markets, and fresh plantation soils" (Dunaway, 1994: 16-17).

Contrary to many scholars' claims, Appalachia's settlers were not peasants, but were "born capitalist, for the region was repopulated by 'the children and grandchildren of eighteenth century colonists...from an agricultural and mercantile capitalist country about to enter into the industrial revolution" (Billings, 1977: 135; Dunaway, 1994: 17). The incorporation of the Appalachian region took approximately 150 years; as geopolitical borders were redrawn, cultures were reshaped, and the economy took on a new form. Thus Appalachia became a peripheral zone of the capitalist world system, conveniently located within the boundaries of the U. S. In this macroscopic view, Appalachia was not isolated. However, one could point out that the levels of absentee ownership of land was extremely high in the region, especially in West Virginia. Thus, I could say that Appalachians were isolated from their land, which was in many cases the primary means of production.

Dunaway's analysis is important and unique due to the fact that she adds two important concepts to my thesis: (1) empirical detail to describe the cultural upheaval, and, (2) description of the exploitation of the environment. A key point concerning cultural transformation is the way the capitalist world system reacts defensively toward

competing economic *modus operandi*. When the world system incorporates a new region, global forces operate to dismantle the local culture and attempt to make it compatible with the capitalist world system. "In as much as capitalist commerce thrives upon systematization and efficiency, it abhors the nontechnical, irrational economic traits of precapitalist peoples, who must consequently be brought under the influence of the market and made to conform to its rules" (Dunaway, 1994; 17, Wallerstein, 1979).

Following and accompanying structural changes in the institutions, the incorporation of a region into the world system fosters the exploitation and degradation of human and natural resources. The key to capitalist expansion is what Marx termed, "the reserve army of labor." "Accordingly, integration with the world economy demands a realignment of labor mechanisms and of the family units that reproduce workers. A society undergoing incorporation would, consequently, experience a realignment of labor around three major objectives: export production, subsistence production, and biological reproduction of the labor force" (Hopkins and Wallerstein, 1987: 777).

The land is also transformed during incorporation. According to Phillips and Wallerstein, there are four major changes to the land during commodification: (1) The native peoples are moved in order to redefine property lines for the efficient marketplace transactions, (2) public property is eliminated by differing forms of private enclosure, (3) land tenure is shifted to allow for increasing large landholdings, and (4) due to the commodification, the land is also articulated into the world system. Thus, land and resources are exploited in order to increase exports for world markets. This process changes the ecology of the incorporated region. Natural equilibrium points are disrupted, leading to flooding, erosion, and other devastating phenomena. A perfect modern

example of this is the mountaintop removal projects occurring in West Virginia and Kentucky.

The most striking and impressive quality of Dunaway's work is that she uses world systems analysis as "a protest against the kind of social scientific inquiry that has characterized much of the scholarly research on preindustrial American societies. Because they have grounded their research in several faulty politico-historical myths, too many analysts of the American frontier have operated out of a priori assumptions that have 'the effect of closing off rather than opening up many of the most important questions.' Methodologically, world-systems analysis compels questions that stimulate the 'unthinking' of a litany of revered tenets about what so-called 'preindustrial' America was like" (Wallerstein, 1991: 237).

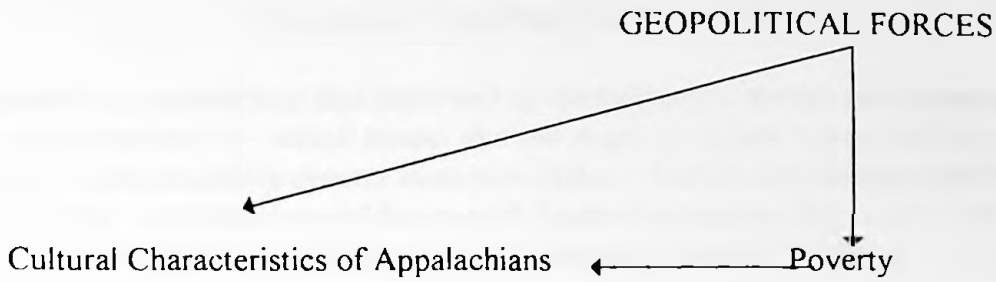
This point is primarily important to me because these mythical assumptions and quantum leap generalizations represent exactly the kind of theoretical model that I have shown Erikson espoused in *Everything In Its Path*. The picture is much more complete with the addition of Salstrom's and Dunaway's economic-history and world systems analysis. Now, I argue that a new model should be formed. I suggest that we can combine the recent scholarship by Dunaway and Salstrom with a situational view (Kerbo, 1996: 269) developed by Della Fave (1974a), Valentine (1968), and Rodman (1963) to form this model.

A structural view would suggest that political and economic forces lead to the poverty. I suggest a view that is similar to the situational view, with a slight difference. The situational view suggests that the poor indeed differ from the middle class on some characteristics; however there is no significant value difference. The model argues that the

poor could be adapting realistically to their situation. We have to consider that the poor are constrained by many geopolitical factors and lack the opportunities that others experience. "The situational view *rejects* the idea (1) that the poor would not prefer to live up to most values held by a majority in society or (2) that the differences found result from deeply held values" (Kerbo, 1996: 269).

At first glance, one may conclude that the differences between the culture of poverty model and the situational view are slight, but they are not; they visualize the actual causes of poverty in a different way. "For the culture-of-poverty theory the characteristics of the poor are part of the problem; for the situational view of poverty, although the poor may have some differences from the middle class, the differences are not part of the causes of poverty—only a reflection of their situation" (Ibid., p. 270). The culture of poverty theory espouses the view that the values and norms of the poor need modification, whereas the situational view states that if the scenario of poverty is changed, the cultural differences of the poor will not hinder them from utilizing new socio-economic opportunities.

I am proposing a combination of the situational view, the structural view, and most importantly the incorporation of world systems analysis, the difference being an added geopolitical variable. I am suggesting that geopolitical forces cause poverty; however, they can also cause significant differences concerning the characteristics of a culture-- the Appalachian culture in this case.



This model suggests that geopolitical forces can influence both poverty and the cultural characteristics of Appalachians. The added variable of geopolitical forces influencing the cultural characteristics of Appalachians takes into account the historical conditions suggested by incorporation into the capitalist world system. Following Wallerstein, Frank, and Dunaway, I suggest that these factors must be analyzed as a primary cause for socio-cultural systems.

Conclusion: The Need For Opposition

The capabilities (intellectual and material) of contemporary society are immeasurably greater than ever before—which means that the scope of society's domination over the individual is immeasurably greater than ever before. Our society distinguishes itself by conquering the centrifugal social forces with Technology rather than Terror, on the dual basis of an overwhelming efficiency and an increasing standard of living.

Herbert Marcuse

I believe that I have exposed the theoretical and methodological flaws of Weller's and Erikson's depiction of Appalachian culture. I have thoroughly covered the failures of the culture of poverty model when applied to Appalachia. I have also surveyed some associated writers and pointed out their relationship to my argument. The questions that Erikson (following Weller) employs in his research methodology are simply cause and effect descriptions in which Erikson blames the Appalachian culture for its societal differences. Erikson glosses over what I feel are the most important variables concerning the Appalachian situation. Erikson and Weller ignore the socio-economic history of the Appalachian region when building their theory. I have also shown that the culture of poverty model does not account for the geopolitical factors that influence both the culture and the poverty in the Appalachian region.

Following Fisher, Lewis, Salstrom and Dunaway, I have presented alternative scholarship that refutes Erikson's claims. I have offered a much clearer and complete theoretical model for Appalachian analysis. Following Dunaway, I have also shown that the isolation argument concerning Appalachia is a myth. Furthermore, the cultural explanations offered by Weller and Erikson are classic examples of blaming the victim. I have also shown that Erikson and Weller provide broad sweeping generalizations instead

of solidly grounded socio-economic history. Also, I have pointed out the hazards of relying solely on cultural explanations of poverty.

I have also discussed the pro's and con's of using alternative models such as the colonial model. Although the colonial model fits much better than many, I have proposed that the Appalachian region be studied through world systems analysis. In addition, I have argued that it is methodologically incorrect to compare the Appalachian region with the Anglo-Saxon middle class status quo. I also conclude that the culture of poverty model extracts cultural characteristics from the external and coercive factors that shaped them.

I also conclude that poverty and so-called "hillbilly's" or "crackers" exist in every state in the union, thus it is not correct to single out the Appalachian region in this regard.

Reflexive Statement:

The original reason I had for writing this paper was to learn about my own history, or at least the history of the region I have lived most of my life. I have learned some about Appalachian social history, economics, etc.; however, I have also learned a great deal about yellow journalism, outsiders who claim to understand the social problems we face, and the bickering of academics over their particular agendas. Most importantly I have learned that the social problems faced in Appalachia are not unique to the region. These problems exist throughout the world and must be analyzed as such. The majority of writers that I have surveyed, Weller and Erikson in particular, fail to grasp this idea. In all fairness to them, it is hard to get through the theoretical orientations and underpinnings of one's academic training. Some of the description they recount contains some truth; however, I still fail to grasp the reason for their writing. I find no analysis in their work

that posits the social problem of poverty and associated problems into any geopolitical historical context that attempts to get at the root of these questions.

"From the beginning, any critical theory of society is thus confronted with the problem of historical objectivity, a problem which arises at the two points where the analysis implies value judgments:

1. the judgment that human life is worth living, or rather can be and ought to be made worth living. This judgment underlies all intellectual effort; it is the *a priori* of social theory, and its rejection (which is perfectly logical) rejects theory itself;
2. the judgment that, in a given society, specific possibilities exist for the amelioration of human life and specific ways and means of realizing these possibilities. Critical analysis has to demonstrate the objective validity of these judgments, and the demonstration has to proceed on empirical grounds" (Marcuse, 1964: x-xi).

In today's age of information, we obviously have the material resources to accomplish what Marcuse suggests above. The question is how can we use our resources for the development of individual needs? I believe that social history must be historical theory, "and history is the realm of chance in the realm of necessity" (Ibid., xi).

I contend that I have exposed the theoretical and methodological errors made by Weller, Erikson, and other Appalachian writers. Their work is not without merit; however, it should be used as what it is: functional cultural description that blames the victim, culture of poverty theory applied to Appalachia. As I stated before, the principal founder of the theory warned that it should not be used in the United States. Therefore, I

must conclude that all the writers that applied it to Appalachia are methodologically and theoretically incorrect.

As we move into a new global age of information and tolerance, social scientists should turn their focus toward utilizing world systems analysis to sort out the facts from the fiction. We must begin our work from the origin of the question itself; not from the middle or the end. There is still much work to be done concerning Appalachia. Following the lead of Helen Lewis, scholars such as Stephen Fisher, Dwight Billings, Wilma Dunaway, and Paul Salstrom are beginning to put the pieces together. I suggest that anyone interested in the socio-economic status of Appalachia should disregard Weller and Erikson for academic purposes concerning social change or theory. While both authors provide some legitimate description, they both fall very short of explaining the real reasons for Appalachia's problems. They gloss over the exploitation, resistance, banking problems, land-ownership, and other geopolitical forces operating in the capitalist world system.

Furthermore, I do not intend this thesis to be representative of an "identity politics" standpoint. It is merely a critical response to Appalachian studies that have not been grounded in a proper historical continuum. I feel that the elevation of culture to a paramount position in social theory has many times confused the underlying material and social forces forming cultural production. Cultural conditions should be structurally analyzed noting the conditions of social change and destabilization through the effects of modern technology and commodification.

I would like to conclude by quoting one of my favorite sociologists, Randall Collins:

I would suggest that micro-macro analysis has a payoff for applied or 'clinical' sociology. Unlikely as this might have seemed while we were wandering in the conceptual thickets of the micro-reduction argument, when we emerged at a chained model of interactions we acquired a means of diagnosing many of people's personal problems. Psychological theories and psychotherapy, I am suggesting, are weak because they look for sources inside an individual. But if what people feel, how much emotional energy they have, and what they think and talk about in interactions are determined by the intersection of interactional chains, then an adequate diagnosis and treatment depends on a sociological perspective. Instead of psychoanalysis, what is needed is 'socioanalysis.' Depression, mania, and other personal difficulties result from situational patterns as particular individuals get caught in their unique interactional markets and hence generate and regenerate a particular pattern of emotional energies and cultural capital. Granted, it may be easier to diagnose such problems microsociologically than to cure them, since the latter involves treating not only an individual but somehow changing his or her relationship to an entire network. But any solid practical payoff must begin with a solid understanding of the source of the problem. Here, too, sociological theory has fruitful work to do (Collins, 1988: 407-408).

Bibliography

Agnew, John. 1987. *The United States in the World Economy: A Regional Geography.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Arrighi, Giovanni. "Peripheralization of Southern Africa, I: Changes in Production Processes." *Review of the Fernand Braudel Center3* (1979): 161-192.

Asbury, Francis. *Journal.* (London: Epworth Press, 1958). The excerpts are from Vol. I, p. 197 (1776); Vol. I, pp. 576-577 (1788), and Vol. II, p. 411 (1803).

Austin, Jr. Ernest H. 1966. "One view of Yesterday's People. *The Appalachian South.* 1 (spring/summer): 38.

Ball, Richard A. 1968. "The Poverty Case: The Analgesic Subculture of Southern Appalachians." *American Sociological Review,* 33 (December): 885-895.

Ball, Richard A. 1970. "The Southern Folk Subculture as a Tension-Reducing Way of Life." In J.D. Photiadis and H K. Schwarzweller, (Eds.), *Change in Rural Appalachia.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press: 69-80.

Banfield, Edward. 1974. *The Unheavenly City Revisited,* rev. ed. Boston: Little, Brown and Co.: 10-17.

Best, Bill. 1973. "From Existence to Essence: A Conceptual Model for an Appalachian Studies Curriculum." Ed.D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts.

Billings, Dwight. 1974. "Culture and Poverty in Appalachia: A Theoretical Discussion and Empirical Analysis." *Social Forces* (December): 315-323.

Blauner, Robert. 1969. "Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt." *Social Problems*: 393-408.

Browning, Meshach. 1928. *Forty-four Years in the Life of a Hunter.* Philadelphia: Lippincott.

Bryant, Carlene. 1981. *We're All Kin: A Cultural Study of a Mountain Neighborhood.* Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press: 11-12.

Campbell, John C. 1921. *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Caudill, Harry M. 1962. *Night Comes to the Cumberlands: A Biography of a Depressed Area.* Boston: Little, Brown and Co.

Caudill, Harry M. 1966. "Forward." In Jack E. Weller, *Yesterday's People: Life in Contemporary Appalachia.* Lexington: University of Kentucky Press: xi-xv.

Caudill, Harry M. 1970. "Forward." In John Fetterman, *Stinking Creek.* New York: E.D. Dutton.

Couto, Richard. 1977. "Political Silence and Appalachia." *Appalachian Journal,* 5 (Autumn): 116-124.

Cunningham, Rodger. 1987. *Apples on the Flood: The Southern Mountain Experience.* Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.

Davis, D. H. 1925. "The Changing Role of the Kentucky Mountains and the Passing of the Mountaineer." *Journal of Geography* 24 (February): 41-52.

Day, John F. 1941. *Bloody Ground.* New York: Doubleday, Dorna and Co.

Deakin, Doris. "Appalachia—On the Way." *Appalachia,* 12 (March-April 1979): 2.

Dunaway, Wilma A. 1996. *The First American Frontier: Transition to Capitalism in Southern Appalachia, 1700-1860.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Dunaway, Wilma A. (1994) "The State of the Field of Appalachian Studies: A Critical Review of the Literature." Unpublished copyrighted manuscript cited with permission from the author.

Eller, Ronald D. 1982. *Miners, Millhands and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930.* Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.

Erikson, Kai. 1976. *Everything In Its Path: Destruction of Community in the Buffalo Creek Flood.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Ewen, Lynda Ann. 1998. "Revisiting Buffalo Creek and Kai Erikson: An Oral History Critique of Appalachian Community Stereotype." Unpublished copyrighted manuscript cited with permission from the author.

Fetterman, John. 1970. *Stinking Creek.* New York: E. D. Dutton.

Fisher, Stephen L. 1993. *Fighting Back in Appalachia: Traditions of Resistance and Change.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Fisher, Stephen L. *Victim-Blaming in Appalachia: Cultural Theories and the Southern Mountaineer.* In B. Ergood and B.E. Kuhre. Appalachia: Social Context and Present. Dubuque. Iowa. Kendall-Hunt. (1983): 154-164.

Fisher. Stephen L. 1975. *Victim-Blaming in Appalachia: Cultural Theories and the Southern Mountaineer.* Unpublished copyrighted manuscript.

Ford. Thomas R. 1962. *The Passing of Provincialism.* In T.R. Ford. "The Southern Appalachian Region: A Survey." Lexington: University of Kentucky Press: 9-34.

Fox. John. 1901. *The Southern Mountaineer.* Scribners. 29: 387-392. 557-570.

Frank. Andre Gundre. 1979. *Dependent Accumulation and Underdevelopment.* London: Macmillan Press.

Friedman. Milton and Schwartz. A. J. 1970. "Monetary Statistics of the United States: Estimates. Sources. Methods." New York: *National Bureau of Economic Research.*

Galbraith. John Kenneth. 1975. *Money: Whence it Came. Where it Went.* Boston: Houghton. Mifflin.

Gans. Herbert. 1962. *The Urban Villagers.* New York: Free Press of Glencoe.

Gazaway. Rena. 1969. *The Longest Mile.* Baltimore: Penguin Books.

Gursslin. Orville R. 1967. "An Evaluation of the Concept 'Culture of Poverty.'" *Social Forces.* 45 (March): 383-392.

Harrington. Michael. 1962. *The Other America: Poverty in the United States.* New York: Macmillan.

Hopkins. T. and Wallerstein. Immanuel. 1987. "Capitalism and the Incorporation of New Zones Into the World-Economy." *Review of the Fernand Braudel Center* 10.

James. John A. 1978. *Money and Capital Markets in Postbellum America.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kaplan. Berton H. 1971. *Blue Ridge: An Appalachian Community in Transition.* Morgantown: West Virginia University Press.

Kephart, Horace. 1913. *Our Southern Highlanders: A Narrative of Adventure in the Southern Appalachians and a Study of Life Among the Mountains.* New York: Outing.

Kerbo, Harold R. 1996: *Social Stratification and Inequality: Class Conflict in Historical and Comparative Perspective.* Third ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Co., Inc.

Kirby, Jack T. 1987. *Rural Worlds Lost: The American South 1920-1960.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.

Lamar, Howard, and Leonard Thompson. 1981. *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa Compared.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Lesser, Roger. 1970. "Culture: Toward Tomorrow's People." *Peoples Appalachia,* 1 (March): 6.

Lewis, Helen. 1968. "Subcultures of the Southern Appalachians." *Virginia Geographer,* 3 (spring): 2-8.

Lewis, Helen. 1970. "Fatalism or the Coal Industry?" *Mountain Life and Work.* (December): 6.

Lewis, Helen. 1978. *Colonialism in Modern America: The Appalachian Case.* Boone: Appalachian Consortium Press.

Lewis, Oscar. 1961. *The Children of Sanchez.* New York: Random House.

Lewis, Oscar. 1966. "The Culture of Poverty." *Scientific American,* 215 (October): 19.

Lewis, Ronald L. 1979. *Coal, Iron, and Slaves: Industrial Slavery in Maryland and Virginia 1715-1865.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.

Looff, David. 1971. *Appalachian Children: The Challenge of Mental Health.* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.

MacClintock, S.S. 1901. "The Kentucky Mountains and Their Feuds." *American Journal of Sociology,* VII: 1-28, 171-187.

MacDonald, L. 1928. *Southern Mill Hills: A Study of Social and Economic Forces in Certain Textile Mill Villages.* New York: Alex L. Hillman.

McCauley, D. V. 1995. *Appalachian Mountain Religion: A History.* Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Michaux, F. A. 1802. "Travels To The West of the Allegheny Mountains." In Thwaites, R. G. *Early Western Travels 1748-1846.* Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark. 1904.

Miller, Jim W. 1978. "Appalachian Values/American Values. III: Appalachian Values and Sociological Models." *Appalachian Heritage,* 6 (spring): 11-19.

Mitchell, Robert D. 1977. *Commercialism and Frontier: Perspectives on the Early Shenandoah Valley.* Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.

Moore, Arthur K. 1957. *The Frontier Mind: A Cultural Analysis of the Kentucky Frontiersman.* Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.

Photiadis, John D. 1967. *Rural Southern Appalachia and Mass Society, An Overview.* Morgantown: West Virginia University.

Photiadis, John D. and Schwarzweller, H.K. 1970. "The Individual, Appalachia and the Larger Society." *Change in Rural Appalachia.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Poe, Edgar A. 1845. "Minor Tale" quoted in Horace Kephart, *Our Southern Highlanders.* New York: Outing Publishing Co. 1913.

Raine, James W. 1924. *The Land of Saddle-Bags: A Study of the Mountain People of Appalachia.* New York: Council of Women for Home Missions.

Riddel, Frank S. 1971. "Related Aspects of the Social and Economic Problems, Cultural Tradition, and Education System of Rural Appalachia." PhD Dissertation, Ohio State University.

Roberts, Bruce and Roberts, Nancy. 1970. *Where Time Stood Still: A Portrait of Appalachia.* New York: Crowell-Collier Press.

Russell, Robert M. 1965. "The Regulation and Supervision of Banking in West Virginia." Master's thesis, Marshall University.

Ryan, William. 1971. *Blaming the Victim.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Salstrom, Paul. 1994. *Appalachia's Path to Dependency: Rethinking a Region's Economic History 1730-1940.* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.

Schwarzweller, Harry K. 1971. *Mountain Families in Transition.* University Park: Penn State University Press.

Semple, Ellen C. 1901. "The Anglo-Saxons of the Kentucky Mountains: A Study in Anthropogeography. *Geographical Journal*. 17 (June). Reprinted in Bulletin of the American Geographical Society 42 (1910): 561-594.

Shapiro, Henry. 1978. *Appalachia On Our Mind: The Southern Mountains and Mountaineers in the American Consciousness, 1870-1920.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Spaulding, Arthur W. 1915. *The Men of the Mountains.* Nashville: Southern Publishing Association.

Stephenson, John. 1968. *Shiloh: A Mountain Community.* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.

Thompson, Samuel. 1910. *The Highlanders of the South.* New York: Eaton and Mains.

Tindall and Shi. 1989. *America: A Narrative History.* New York: Norton.

Toynbee, Arnold. 1948. *A Study of History, Vol. II.* London: Oxford University Press.

U. S. Census Bureau. 1975. "Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970. Bicentennial Ed.

Valentine, Charles A. 1968. *Culture and Poverty.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Vincent, George E. 1898. "A Retarded Frontier." *American Journal of Sociology*, 4 (July): 1-20.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1979. *The Capitalist World-Economy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1982. "Crisis as Transition." In *Dynamics of Global Crisis,* edited by S. Amin, pp. 11-54. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1991. *Geopolitics and Geoculture: Essays on the Changing World-System.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1983. *Historical Capitalism.* London: Verso Editions.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1974. *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century.* New York: Academic Press.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1980. *The Modern World-System II: Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600-1750.* New York: Academic Press.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1989. *The Modern World-System III: The Second Era of Great Expansion of the Capitalist World-Economy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1991. *Unthinking Social Science: The Limits of Nineteenth-Century Paradigms.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Walls, David S. 1974. "Three Models in Search of Appalachian Development: Critique and Synthesis." Montreal: Paper presented to Rural Sociological Society.

Walls, David S. 1977. "On the Naming of Appalachia." In J.W. Williamson, *An Appalachian Symposium:* Essays Written in Honor of Cratis D. Williams. Boone, NC: Appalachian State University Press.

Walls, David S. and Dwight Billings. 1977. "The Sociology of Southern Appalachia." *Appalachian Journal*, 5: 131-144.

Waxman, Chaim I. 1983. *The Stigma of Poverty: A Critique of Poverty Theories and Policies.* New York: Pergamon Press.

Weller, Jack E. 1966. *Yesterday's People: Life In Contemporary Appalachia.* Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.

Williams, Cratis. 1961. "The Southern Mountaineer in Fact and Fiction." PhD Dissertation, New York University.

Williamson, J.W. 1977. *An Appalachian Symposium: Essays Written in Honor of Cratis D. Williams.* Boone, NC: Appalachian State University Press.