The Illusion of Unity in Cold War Culture

Alan Brinkley

n 1987 the University of Minnesota hosted a lecture series on the Cold War in Amercian culture. Lary May, the organizer, wrote in his printed introduction to the subsequent book that "after 1945 Americans entered a new phase in their history" and that the United States had experienced "a paradigm shift of major proportions" in the framework of its culture.[1] He was not the first to make so bold a claim. In 1952 Mary McCarthy read a harsh critique of American society by Simone de Beauvoir and, characteristically, dashed off a sharp, somewhat overdrawn response:

> The society characterized by Mlle. De Beauvoir as "rigid," "frozen," "closed," is in the process of great change. The mansions are torn down and the real estate "development" takes their place: serried ranch houses, painted in pastel colors, each with its own picture window, and its garden, each equipped with deep freeze, oil furnace, and automatic washer, spring up in the wilderness. Class barriers disappear or become porous; the factory worker is an economic aristocrat in comparison with the middle-class clerk; even segregation is diminishing; consumption replaces acquisition as an incentive. The America invoked by Mlle. De Beauvoir as a country of vast inequalities and dramatic contrasts is ceasing to exist.[2]

Mary McCarthy was more defiantly jubilant (and more overtly polemical) than most commentators of her time. She was certainly more credulous of the claims of the new culture than later scholars have been. Yet she too saw the Cold War

era as a fundamentally new time in American history. Her description captures some of the central qualities that many contemporary observers liked to attribute to American culture at the height of the Cold War, a society in which class divisions and fundamental social conflict were disappearing, in which even segregation was "diminishing." It was a culture that reflected an essential unity of interests and values widely shared by Americans of all classes, regions, races, and creeds.

If historical scholarship has done nothing else in the four decades since Mary McCarthy wrote those words, it has challenged and largely shattered the smug assumption that the United States in the 1950s—or at any time in its history—was a culturally unified nation. It has made visible the enormous range of social and cultural experiences within American society and the substantial, still unresolved conflicts that lay at its heart. But the fact remains that many Americans in the 1950s and the early 1960s believed in this effusive image of themselves. How was it possible for so many Americans to believe in something that now seems so clearly untrue? How did this illusion of unity become so important a part of American culture during the Cold War?

Critics of American culture in the 1950s and many scholars since have given much of the credit to the Cold War itself: to the political repression that accompanied the rivalry with the Soviet Union, to the pressures that rivalry created to celebrate American society and affirm its right to leadership of the "Free World." That was what Lary May meant in 1987 when he spoke of a "paradigm shift"—a new sense of the national self, driven in large part by the imperatives of the Cold War. Such observers are surely correct that the Cold War played a significant role in shaping the culture of its time. The official and unofficial repression of political belief, the pervasive fear among intellectuals and others of being accused of radical sympathies, the ideological fervor that the rivalry with the Soviet Union produced: all had a powerful effect on the way Americans thought about themselves and their culture and on what they dared do, say, and even think. It would be hard to overstate the degree to which the ideology and rhetoric of the Cold War shaped the public discourse of the time, hard to exaggerate the pervasiveness of its influence and the oppressiveness of its demands.[3]

Archibald MacLeish was one of a number of skeptical intellectuals of the time who noted with dismay the degree to which anticommunists had come to dominate and, he believed, corrupt American life. "Never in the history of the world," he wrote in 1949, "was one people as completely dominated, intellectually and morally, by another as the people of the United States were by the people of Russia in the four years from 1946 to 1949."[4]

And yet, hard as it is, many contemporaries and many scholars have overstated

the role of the Cold War in shaping postwar American culture, indeed have suggested that it was virtually the only significant factor in shaping that culture. The Cold War provides a partial explanation of the character of postwar culture, but it is only one—and perhaps not the most important one—of several causes. Other social and cultural transformations had at least as much to do with the shaping of what we now call "Cold War culture" as did the Cold War itself.

The most obvious of these changes was the remarkable expansion of the American economy in the postwar years. It was, quite simply, the greatest and most dramatic capitalist expansion in American history, perhaps even in world history. It was often described at the time, not without reason, as the American "economic miracle." One economic historian, writing in the early 1960s, said of it: "The remarkable capacity of the United States economy represents the crossing of a great divide in the history of humanity." Through much of the twentieth century, particularly during the economic crises of the 1930s, substantial numbers of Americans had retained some skepticism about industrial capitalism. But during and after the war—as the prosperity rolled on and on and the new depression that so many had predicted in 1945 never came—it became possible for many Americans to believe that there were no limits, or at least no restrictive limits, to economic growth, that capitalism was capable of much greater feats than most Americans had once believed possible.[5]

The economist John Kenneth Galbraith, hardly an uncritical defender of capitalism through his long career, published a small book in 1952 entitled simply *American Capitalism.* In it he expressed some of the wonder and enthusiasm with which intellectuals and others faced this new discovery. About capitalism he had one succinct, almost breathless comment: "It works!" More than that, it obviated many of the principal dilemmas that had frustrated the reformers of earlier eras:

> In the United States alone there need not lurk behind modern programs of social betterment that fundamental dilemma that everywhere paralyzes the will of every responsible man, the dilemma between economic progress and immediate increase of the real income of the masses.[6]

Increasing the income of the masses, in other words, did not have to come at the expense of investment; the two things would reinforce one another. Poverty could be eliminated and social problems could be solved—not through the ideologically unattractive and politically difficult task of redistributing limited wealth, as many Americans had once believed would be necessary, but simply through growth. Or, as a member of the Council of Economic Advisers wrote

in the late 1950s, somewhat more prosaically: "Far greater gains were to be made by fighting to enlarge the size of the economic pie than by pressing proposals to increase equity and efficiency in sharing the pie."[7]

A generation earlier economists, policymakers, and much of the public had despaired of ever seeing dynamic growth again. Many had talked of the arrival of a "mature economy" that had reached something close to the end of its capacity to grow, an economy whose fruits would have to be distributed more equally and perhaps more coercively given that those fruits seemed unlikely to expand. Now the same men and women were celebrating their discovery of the secret of virtually permanent economic growth. They were trumpeting the ability of economic expansion to solve social problems without requiring serious sacrifices, without the need for redistribution of wealth and power. When compared with what had come before, this was a paradigm shift of major proportions.

The belief that economic growth was the best route to a just society was part of a larger set of ideas, often called the "consensus" and associated most prominently with scholars and intellectuals. Consensus theorists promoted a set of ideas that, together, described America as a nation not only liberated from economic scarcity but also—and partly as a result—liberated from social conflict. That argument is associated most prominently with the sociologist Daniel Bell, the title of whose 1960 book *The End of Ideology* has become something of a label for American intellectual life in the 1950s. More revealing is the book's subtitle: *On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties.* In the absence of heated battles over scarce economic resources, Bell argued, Americans had run out of grand ideas:

> Ideology, which once was a road to action, has come to be a dead end. . . . Few serious minds believe any longer that one can set down "blueprints" and through "social engineering" bring about a new utopia of social harmony. . . . In the Western world, therefore, there is today a rough consensus among intellectuals on political issues: the acceptance of a Welfare State; the desirability of decentralized power; a system of mixed economy and of political pluralism. . . . The ideological age has ended.

And that, Bell concluded, was a good thing because, he wrote, "the tendency to convert concrete issues into ideological problems, to color them with moral fervor and high emotional charge, is to invite conflicts which can only damage a society." It was much better, in short, to live in a culture in which most people rejected great moral visions and broad social crusades and concentrated instead on the more prosaic, less exalted but also less dangerous business of competing for material advancement.[8]

The "end of ideology" idea helps explain why in the early and mid-1950s there was something of a decline in liberal activism, why many people had difficulty sensing great urgency in addressing social problems or launching new initiatives. For a time, at least, consensus ideology helped make American liberalism cautious, passive, even conservative. It was a worldview that sometimes seemed to rest on fear of what might happen if society embarked on any great crusades: a fear of class conflict, a fear of "mass irrationality, a fear of the dark passions that fanaticism could and had unleashed in the world." A distinguishing characteristic of the "consensus" liberalism was its fundamentally unradical, even antiradical quality.

Complacency would be too strong a word to describe the social outlook of consensus intellectuals. Many of them were harshly critical of American society and culture, even highly critical of the consensus itself. "A repudiation of ideology, to be meaningful," Daniel Bell wrote, "must mean not only a criticism of the utopian order but of existing society as well." The historian Richard Hofstadter, one of the first and most prominent spokesmen for the consensus idea, wrote scornfully in his classic 1948 study of a series of political leaders, *The American Political Tradition:*

> The sanctity of private property, the right of the individual to dispose of and invest it, the value of opportunity, and the natural evolution of self-interest and self-assertion . . . have been staple tenets of the central faith in American political ideologies. . . . American traditions also show a strong bias in favor of equalitarian democracy, but it has been a democracy in cupidity rather than a democracy of fraternity.[9]

Yet the concerns that Bell, Hofstadter, and other intellectuals expressed about the moral quality of the consensus did not alter their belief in the strength of the economic successes that supported it. Nor did it alter their essential (if slightly jaundiced) faith in the ability of the system to thrive. As they viewed their world, they concluded—to overstate things slightly—that there was no need to worry any longer about corporate power. Capitalism, after all, had proved that it worked. There was no need to worry about inequality; economic growth and social mobility would take care of that. Hofstadter, for example, wrote of the unemployed of the Great Depression: "The jobless, distracted, and bewildered men of 1933 have in the course of the years found substantial places in society for themselves, have become home owners, suburbanites, and solid citizens." Bell argued that "in a politico-technological world, property has increasingly lost its force as a determinant of power, and sometimes even of wealth. In almost all modern societies, technical skill becomes more important than inheritance as a determinant of occupation, and political power takes precedence over economic.

What then is the meaning of class?" The problems of American life, consensus theorists believed, were less those of inequality and injustice than of shallowness, banality, and alienation that modern culture produced.[10]

And yet, for all the criticism that consensus intellectuals often directed at their culture, there was also an unmistakably smug tone in some of the intellectual discourse of the 1950s: a tendency for writers to refer to their audience as "we," confident that the reading public was a homogeneous entity that shared their own values and assumptions. The great critic Lionel Trilling, for example, wrote with somewhat uncharacteristic ebullience that there comes a moment "when the tone, the manner and manners of one's own people become just what one needs, and the whole look and style of one's culture seems appropriate." Prosperity, abundance, consumerism, and the loosening of cultural prejudices that once would have barred Trilling, Bell, and other Jews from a place at the center of American life shaped this new view of the nation's culture. The Cold War simply reinforced it.[11]

These ideas—the assumption of increasing and virtually universal abundance, the assumption of shared values and goals, the belief in the end of conflict—reflected the experiences of members of the white middle class and of educated white middle-class men in particular. That suggests another set of changes of considerable importance to the shaping of postwar culture: changes in the size and character of the American bourgeoisie.

Definitions of the middle class are subject to dispute. Yet by almost any reasonable definition, the American middle class was expanding dramatically in the postwar years. It was expanding occupationally. In 1956 for the first time in American history, government statistics showed that white-collar workers outnumbered blue-collar workers in the United States. It was expanding economically through a rapid growth in the number of people able to afford what the government defined as a "middle-class" standard of living. In 1929, 31 percent had achieved that standard. In 1955, 60 percent had achieved it. It was expanding educationally. The percentage of young people graduating from high school rose from just under 47 percent in 1946 to over 63 percent in 1960, and the percentage of young people attending college rose from 12.5 to 22 over the same period. In terms of consumption patterns, things traditionally considered middle-class attributes were becoming more common. Home ownership rose from 40 percent in 1945 to 60 percent in 1960. By 1960, 75 percent of all families owned cars; 87 percent owned televisions; 75 percent owned washing machines. Owning such things did not by itself make someone middle class, any more than attending college or holding a white-collar job did. But such changes in the material conditions of life tended to transform the self-image of

many people, helping them to consider themselves part of the great middle class, beneficiaries of what has now come to be called the "American Dream" of education, home ownership, material comfort, and economic security. They were the products of what the sociologist William Whyte called the "second great melting pot," a process of socialization that helped men and women transcend not ethnicity but class, that created a new and more pervasive American bourgeoisie. The newcomers to the middle class, Whyte wrote, "must discard old values" and adopt new ones.[12]

The middle class was not simply becoming more numerous in these years. It was also becoming more homogeneous and more self-conscious. One reason for this was the growing pervasiveness of middle-class images, ideas, and values in American popular culture, a result in part of changes in the media in the 1950s. The most important of those changes was the emergence of television, which within a decade moved from being a curiosity to being a central fact of life for virtually everyone in America—the most powerful force in American culture. Far more than newspapers or magazines or even radio or movies, television linked society together and provided a common cultural experience.

What, then, was that cultural experience? What message did television convey? There were many messages, then as now. But after a brief period in the early 1950s of diverse and innovative programming, television began to succumb to its own economic imperatives and for many years studiously avoided controversy and conflict. It offered instead a relatively homogeneous image of American life, dominated by middle-class lifestyles and middle-class values. This was, to use the Marxist phrase, "no accident."

Television programming in the 1950s was dominated by a very few people—the executives of the three major networks and the commercial sponsors they were attempting to attract. It was a very different programming world from the one Americans came to know in later decades. The power of sponsors over television programming today is relatively limited. Most shows are produced long before sponsors are even approached; advertisers simply buy time slots and only rarely have anything to say about program content. But in the 1950s the network had to court advertisers. Each program was generally supported by a single sponsor who exercised considerable and often direct and prior control over program content.

Many televsion programs in the 1950s actually bore the names of their sponsors: the Pepsi Cola Playhouse, the General Electric Theater (whose host, Ronald Reagan, helped launch his political career through his identification with the company and its programming), the Dinah Shore Chevy Hour, Alcoa Presents, the Camel News Caravan, and others. Corporations whose identities were tied

up so directly with particular programs were reluctant to permit them to become controversial, divisive, or even unusual. That was a reflection in part of the advertising assumptions of the 1950s: effective advertising tried to appeal to everyone and to alienate no one. Network executives believed, probably correctly, that to attract sponsors they needed to provide programs that were consistently uncontroversial. One executive, responding to a proposal for a television series dealing with problems of urban life, wrote: "We know of no advertiser or advertising agency in this country who would knowingly allow the products which he is trying to advertise to the public to become associated with the squalor and general down character of this program."[13]

From such assumptions emerged the characteristic programming of the late 1950s and early 1960s: westerns, variety shows, quiz shows, and above all situation comedies, the quintessential expression of the middle-class view of American life. Popular situation comedies—The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet, Father Knows Best, Leave It to Beaver, Dennis the Menace—were set in virtually interchangeable suburban houses, with virtually interchangeable families, in virtually interchangeable situations. Almost everyone was upper middle class. Almost everyone was white. Almost everyone lived in a stable nuclear family. Most situation comedies reinforced prevailing notions of gender roles: women did not work outside the home, or if they did they were unmarried and were working principally as secretaries and teachers. Men left the house in the morning to go to nameless white-collar jobs in the city.

The world of television entertainment programming was, with only a very few exceptions, a placid, middle-class world. Even the exceptions—shows such as The Honeymooners or I Love Lucy or The Life of Reilly—which revealed elements of working-class or ethnic life or presented women as something more than contented housewives, took images of difference and domesticated them, so that in the end they too reinforced rather than challenged assumptions about the universality of middle-class ideas and experiences. Middle-class Americans, seeing such constant confirmation of their own world on television, could easily conclude that this was the world in which virtually all Americans lived.[14]

Another development that played an important role in shaping the distinctive outlook of the American middle class was the rise of the new, or at least newly expansive, suburban culture in the 1950s. Suburbanization isolated many Americans from the diversity and abrasiveness of urban life. It also provided them with what were at first stable and relatively homogeneous communities. All suburbs were not alike; but within most suburbs, particularly within many of those that grew up in the 1950s, there was a striking level of uniformity and

conformity. The most obvious effect of suburbanization, therefore, was a standardizing of the outward lives of those who lived in the suburbs.[15]

This was visible even in the architecture of suburbia. Most suburban developments tended to be built all at once, by a single developer, often designed by a single architect or no architect at all, many characterized by similar and often identical houses. The most famous examples of this are the Levittowns, which became models for other, relatively inexpensive suburban developments. Relatively few suburbs were built by the same kind of mass production that the Levitt family pioneered for their developments. But many were built in ways that produced a similar homogeneity. Even the more expensive suburbs used elaborate zoning and building codes to ensure that homes would not diverge too radically from the community norm. In almost all suburbs, homes were designed to thrust the focus of the family inward on itself, not outward into the community. Suburbanites used their back yards, not their front yards, for recreation. They built back, not front, porches. They valued privacy more than interaction with the neighborhood.[16]

There was a cultural uniformity as well within many suburbs. Sociologists and others who studied suburban communities in the 1950s were often highly critical of the overpowering conformity they found there. David Riesman wrote, "The suburb is like a fraternity house at a small college in which likemindedness reverberates upon itself." William Whyte, who studied a suburb outside Chicago, found there what he called "a belief in 'belongingness' as the ultimate need of the individual." Riesman and Whyte were only half right. Suburbs did not create a pressure to conform as much as they were products of a desire to conform—a desire of men and women to gather in communities of likeminded people, of common class and often common ethnic and religious characteristics. But whatever the reasons, suburbs insulated their residents from social and cultural diversity.[17]

The suburban population as a whole was highly diverse—economically, ethnically, even racially. There were working-class suburbs, ethnic suburbs, black suburbs. Yet few individual suburban communities were diverse; few were places where white Anglo Americans lived alongside African Americans or Hispanic Americans or other minorities. One of the reasons for the massive movement of middle-class whites into suburbs—although not the only reason—was the desire to escape the racial and class heterogeneity of the cities. "Suburbia . . . is classless," William Whyte wrote in 1956, "or at last its people want it to be." There was in most suburbs, another social critic observed, "no elite, no wealthy, prestigious upper class. There were no shanty families, no clusters of the ethnically 'undesirable.'"

But in the larger world, of course, there were wealthy elites, there were poor people, and there were racial and ethnic minorities. The growth of suburbs did

not reduce their numbers. Instead it protected the middle class from contact with them, even from active awareness of them. It was not so much a force for homogenizing American society at large as it was a force for dividing it. But in the process it helped make possible an increasingly uniform middle-class culture and an increasingly common middle-class view of the world.[18]

Another of the large social forces that were forging a distinctive middle-class culture in the postwar era was the increasing bureaucratization of white-collar work, the growing proportion of middle-class men and a slowly increasing number of middle-class women whose lives were embedded within large-scale corporate and government organizations that created pressures of their own for conformity and homogeneity. Some of the same social critics who attacked the suburbs as stifling and alienating launched similar attacks on the "organization." Employees of large corporate organizations, according to their critics, were becoming something close to automatons. They were pressured to dress alike, to adopt similar values and goals and habits, to place a high value on "getting along" within the hierarchical structure of the corporation. The organization, its critics argued, posed a challenge to the capacity of individuals to retain their psychological autonomy. It was creating alienated conformists afraid to challenge prevailing norms; people who would take no risks; people who feared to be different.[19]

In his 1956 book *The Organization Man,* William Whyte criticized the bureaucracy in much the same way he criticized the suburb. Corporate workers, he argued, faced constant pressures to get along by going along; they were victims of a social ethic "which makes morally legitimate the pressures of society against the individual." David Riesman's 1950 book *The Lonely Crowd,* one of the most influential works of postwar sociology, argued that the modern organizational culture was giving birth to a new kind of individual. In earlier eras, most men and women had been "inner-directed" people, defining themselves largely in terms of their own values and goals, their own sense of their worth. Now the dominant personality was coming to be the "other-directed man," defining himself in terms of the opinions and goals of others, or in terms of the bureaucratically established goals of the organization. This new form of character was blind to distinctions of class, Riesman argued. "Both rich and poor avoid any goals, personal or social, that seem out of step with peer-group aspirations." And it was debilitating to true freedom. "Men are created different," he lamented; "they lose their social freedom and their individual autonomy in seeking to become like each other."[20]

The sociologist C. Wright Mills offered a more radical critique, which described the way in which modern organizations created dangerous centers of power, remote from popular will. Later, that helped make his books—*The*

Power Elite and *White Collar*—influential documents within the New Left. But Mills's work was at least as notable for its devastating portrait of the way in which large organizations stifle the individuality of those who work in them, both by creating expectations of conformity and by exercising coercive authority through remote and inaccessible systems. This kind of power was more dangerous and more difficult to challenge than even the most arbitrary forms of authority in older, less bureaucratized social settings. "In a world dominated by a vast system of abstractions," he wrote, "managers may become cold with principle and do what local and immediate masters of men could never do. Their social insulation results in deadened feelings in the face of the imprisonment of life in the lower orders and its stultification in the upper circles."[21]

The stifling uniformity of modern suburban and organizational life was a common theme in the work of literary figures of the 1950s. Writers such as John Cheever, Norman Mailer, John Updike, Saul Bellow, J. D. Salinger, and Walker Percy wrote novels that centered around lonely, frustrated, white, middle-class, male protagonists struggling to find some way to bring meaning and fulfillment to empty, rootless, unsatisfying lives. The Beat poets whose critique of modern society was far more sweeping and more radical in its implications than those of mainstream middle-class writers nevertheless shared their fear of the stifling quality of bureaucratic life. "Robot apartments. Invincible suburbs. Skeleton treasuries. . . . Spectral nations," Allen Ginsberg wrote in his searing poem *Howl*, which became an anthem of the Beat generation. These were not new themes in the 1950s, certainly. But they were newly directed toward suburban life, toward the corporate work place, toward the facelessness and homogeneity of bourgeois society.[22]

Such critiques are striking in retrospect because they almost entirely overlooked what later history has made clear was the most frustrated group within the middle class: not the men but the women. They are striking, too, because they say very little about the vast numbers of Americans outside the middle class altogether, barred from its successes either by economic circumstance or by active barriers of discrimination. And they are striking because almost nowhere in these diagnoses of the character of middle-class society, or of the angst it created among some of its members, was there any significant discussion of the Cold War. What shaped the world of the American bourgeoisie, both its critics and its celebrants were suggesting, were the cultural, economic, and demographic forces of a rapidly evolving industrial society and only incidentally the pressure of the struggle against communism.

The smooth surface of postwar middle-class culture—and the discontents festering below its surface, which would in the 1960s challenge and even shatter it—parallel the smooth surface of postwar American foreign policy and the critiques

that would shake it, too, in the 1960s. American culture and American foreign policy reinforced one another in countless ways in the age of the Cold War. Yet they did not cause one another. American society and culture would likely have looked much the same in the 1940s and 1950s with or without a Cold War.

Yet the Cold War remains a powerful metaphor for describing that culture. The architects of the Cold War came to view a diverse and rapidly changing world through the prism of a simple ideological lens, smoothing out the rough spots and seeing a uniformity of beliefs and goals that did not in fact exist. The architects of postwar middle-class culture looked at a diverse and rapidly changing society in the United States through a similarly limited, self-referential perspective. They constructed and came to believe in an image of a world that did not exist. America did, as Mary McCarthy and many others claimed at the time, enter a "new era in its history" in 1945. But it was not the era they thought it was, and it did not produce the history they expected.

Notes

1. Lary May, "Introduction," in Lary May, ed., *Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 14.
2. Jackson Lears, "A Matter of Taste: Corporate Cultural Hegemony in a Mass-Consumption Society," in May, *Recasting America*, 38–39; Mary McCarthy, "Mlle. Gulliver en Amérique," *The Reporter* (January 22, 1952), 36.
3. See, for example, Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).
4. Archibald MacLeish, "The Conquest of America," *Atlantic Monthly* (1949; reprinted March 1980), 37–38.
5. Godfrey Hodgson, *America in Our Time* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976), 78–83; William Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 112.
6. Kenneth Galbraith, *American Capitalism: The Concept of Countervailing Power* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952), 12–16.
7. Hodgson, *America in Our Time*, 81.
8. Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (New York: Free Press, 1960), 393–94, 402–3.
9. Bell, *End of Ideology*, 16; Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), viii.
10. Richard Hofstadter, "The Pseudo-Conservative Revolt (1955)," in Daniel Bell, ed., *The Radical Right* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1963), 75; Bell, *End of Ideology*, 398. Among other important statements of the consensus idea are Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1955), and David Potter,

People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954).

11. Lionel Trilling, *A Gathering of Fugitives* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1956), 67–76; Thomas Bender, "Lionel Trilling and American Culture," *American Quarterly* 42 (1990), 340–41.

12. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1975), I:289–310, 379, 383; William H. Whyte Jr., *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1956), 299–300; James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945–1974* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 311–42; Richard Polenberg, *One Nation Divisible: Class, Race, and Ethnicity in the United States since 1938* (New York: Viking Press, 1980), 129–39; Chafe, *Unfinished Journey,* 111–22.

13. James Baughman, *The Republic of Mass Culture: Journalism, Filmmaking, and Broadcasting in America since 1941* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 48–75; Hodgson, *America in Our Time,* 137–52.

14. Karal Ann Marling, *As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 129–35, 210–17; Patterson, *Grand Expectations,* 348–55.

15. Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 231–35.

16. Herbert Gans, *The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 3–44; Zane L. Miller, *Suburb: Neighborhood and Community in Forest Park, Ohio, 1935–1976* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981), 46–96.

17. David Riesman, "The Suburban Sadness," in William M. Dobriner, ed., *The Suburban Community* (New York: G. P. Putnam), 375–402; Whyte, *Organization Man,* 32–46, 330–81; Polenberg, *One Nation Divisible,* 133–37.

18. Whyte, *Organization Man,* 298, 307–10; Polenberg, *One Nation Divisible,* 141.

19. See Daniel Horowitz, *American Social Classes in the 1950s* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1995), 1–26; Whyte, *Organization Man,* 63–167.

20. Whyte, *Organization Man,* 392–400; David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), 13–23, 306–7.

21. C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956); C. Wright Mills, *White Collar* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), 110–11.

22. Gene Feldman and Max Gartenberg, eds., *The Beat Generation and Angry Young Men* (New York: Citadel Press, 1958), 164–74.