



Emotional Attitudes and Political Choices

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There are two main reasons for studying emotional attitudes in the public. The first is that emotional attitudes are likely to determine the political behavior of individuals, most particularly during a crisis, when traditional ways of making decisions break down. In a period of rapid social change, such as the present time, there are likely to be many times when people respond with their hearts and guts rather than with their heads. In some situations, even material or class interests may give way to emotional attitudes.¹

Second, understanding the nature of emotional attitudes is essential to the analyses of new plans for the society. Proposals for political strategies and blueprints for new institutions should be evaluated not just in terms of ideals but also of the emotional attitudes they tend to mold and reinforce over a long time period, and of the kinds of people they attract.

The study reported here is a preliminary attempt to establish a scientific basis for the study of emotional attitudes in relation to political positions in America. It deals mainly with theory, methods, and establishing evidence that a psychological polarity, that of *biophilia versus necrophilia*, is a key dimension in understanding politics in the United States. One pole, biophilia (love of life) describes an attraction to what is alive, growing, and free. The other pole, necrophilia, describes an attraction to what is dead, mechanized, or controlled. The study employs a questionnaire technique, developed by Erich Fromm and this writer, which has been tested out on samples of the American public from 1966 to the present.²

Life-loving vs. Anti-life Attitudes

In determining which emotional attitudes to study, we were guided by the following question: What are the deep-rooted emotional attitudes in the

1. The first study of emotional attitudes and political choices was directed by Erich Fromm at the Institute for Social Research, Frankfurt, in 1930. Fromm studied the emotional attitudes of German factory workers and employees. He found that while practically all of the workers were consciously anti-Nazi, a minority (fifteen percent) with authoritarian attitudes could be expected to support Hitler actively if he came to power, while only ten percent had deep democratic attitudes which would lead them to fight the Nazis. The majority (seventy-five percent) had mixed attitudes and could be expected to go along with the prevailing opinions. Fromm contrasted opinions or ideology on the one hand and convictions or emotionally rooted beliefs on the other.

2. Rolando Weissmann has aided in the testing and data analysis.



American public which tend to support the growth of a technocratic-repressive megamachine? And what are the attitudes—the emotional bases for convictions—that would oppose the megamachine and support political solutions that increase hope and preserve freedom?³

On the basis of both theoretical considerations and clinical experience, Fromm and I hypothesized that the crucial psychological dimension is live-loving versus anti-life tendencies; at the extreme, the latter implies love of what is dead (necrophilia). This dynamic factor describes two poles which represent contrasting *psychospiritual solutions* to existence. There are both life-loving and anti-life elements in everyone. In some people, strong biophilic and necrophilic tendencies clash with each other and may cause deep conflict and painful symptoms. Very few, if any, people are either totally biophilic or necrophilic.

The concept of biophilia versus necrophilia, one of Fromm's most important contributions to psychoanalytic theory, is described in his chapter on "Love of Death and Love of Life" in *The Heart of Man*.⁴ We can summarize the two orientations as the extremes of a continuum which represent the deepest pathology or perversion of life on one pole and mature individuation of the self on the other. It should be made clear to begin with that the formulation of the necrophilic orientation is different from the theory of a death instinct proposed by Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. According to Freud in his later work, there is an inborn instinct to destroy which can be directed either against the self or against others. Freud, like Empedocles, conceived of two basic instincts, love and unity versus destructiveness and strife, warring in man. In contrast, Fromm's theory of necrophilia describes a pathological syndrome which may be determined by childhood experiences and which can be either favored or opposed by the dominant currents in society. In terms of Freud's theory, the impulse to destroy can be sublimated or repressed, but seldom if ever overcome. In terms of Fromm's theory, necrophilia can be diminished and dissolved, if a person becomes conscious of anti-life attitudes, confronts them, and strengthens the life forces through a radical change in his practice of life. Furthermore, Fromm points out that what matters most in determining behavior is which trend is stronger, and this may be decided by the work we do, the people with whom we associate most intimately, and the crucial decisions we make that determine the course of our lives.

The differences between life-loving and anti-life attitudes may become clearer, by describing the extremes of the two. The extreme biophilic is

3. The analysis of the megamachine as a system in which man is dehumanized has been made by Lewis Mumford in *The Myth of the Machine*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967.

4. New York: Harper & Row, 1964.



attracted to and respects what is alive and growing, and he feels united to all life. To him, the world is not an alien place. Rather, he feels at home here. The biophilic does not have a possessive attachment to things, but neither does he reject things as evil. He enjoys the world more because he is free from anxious attachments. Similarly, love between the sexes for the biophilic person expresses a joy in union rather than possessiveness. In his relationship with others, the biophilic person wants to mold and influence by love and reason, by example, and not by force. The biophilic person is also in touch with his feelings and emotions because he does not fear his impulses to touch others and to stimulate life. The biophilic tries to imitate the God who breathes life into clay; each act for him should have “soul.”

The biophilic orientation represents an aim, the goal of all humanistic religions: the Jewish rejection of dead idols and worship of the living God who cannot even be named, because a name makes a thing out of “I am”; the Zen Buddhist goal of unity with all life; and the Christian vow of poverty interpreted by mystics such as St. John of the Cross as freeing the self from greed in order to experience joy. An extremely biophilic orientation is difficult to achieve, because it requires discipline, the ability to let go, and the willingness to be fully vulnerable, to feel deep pain as well as joy, to relate oneself to life and to death, without the need for illusions. However, while there are few saints, there are many people whose orientation to life is mainly or moderately biophilic. One may note that those individuals with a stronger biophilic tendency than the average stimulate people around them to enjoy life more. Their biophilia is expressed not just in one particular trait (and not necessarily in their ideology!) but in their whole physical and emotional attitude, and perhaps most of all, in their responsiveness to what is most alive and creative in others. A biophilic mother or teacher responds more to a child’s creative work than to his failures or mischief. A biophilic physician follows the medical philosophy of Paracelsus. He tries to strengthen the patient’s healthy forces and does not put all his faith in drugs and surgery; he responds to the patient as a person with intelligence and emotions and not as a machine to be serviced. A moderately biophilic president, such as Franklin D. Roosevelt, responded to national despair by trying to create a climate of hope and to dispel gloom. Another, Dwight D. Eisenhower, resisted pressures toward violence and adventurism.

When I have spoken about love of life to some groups, especially professionals and students, someone usually remarks that biophilia is all very well, but extremely biophilic people are probably shortsighted, irresponsible, and undisciplined. This belief is so common that it requires analysis. In some instances, it may represent a rationalization for the individual’s fear of opening himself and becoming more vulnerable. But I suspect more commonly it represents the conventional wisdom in which biophilics are seen as the greedy grasshoppers in the famous fable where the ant works and eats



while those who enjoy life starve. In fact, there is probably no simple correlation between the life-loving versus anti-life variable and responsibility versus irresponsibility, or for that matter, success versus failure. Many unproductive receptive individuals are probably more life-loving than misers; the main point is, however, that both are emotionally underdeveloped. In contrast, the most well-known biophilic figures of our times, such as Albert Schweitzer, Albert Einstein, and Bertrand Russell were highly disciplined and productive as well as intelligent (which is not to say they did not have faults or make errors). To be responsible in the sense of being able to respond to others and care about them, Fromm points out, one must love life. In contrast, a mechanical concept of duty may be based on self-control and fear.

In dealing with these issues, Fromm has emphasized that life requires *structure* in contrast to rigid mechanical order, often based on control and repression. He writes that "living substance has a tendency to integrate and unite; it tends to fuse with different and opposite entities, and to grow in a structural way. Unification and integrated growth are characteristic of all life processes, not only as far as cells are concerned, but also with regard to feeling and thinking." Where there is no structure, no internal discipline, life-loving tendencies often degenerate, sometimes into regressive expressiveness. Instead of the highly individuated union with nature that characterizes the discipline of Zen Buddhist masters, biophilic goals without structure can degenerate into the infantile dependency and passive consumerism that characterizes many hippies. The development of a biophilic solution to life requires breaking through one's narcissistic shell and developing an active relatedness to life and its manifestations in society, nature, art, and science. A biophilic solution requires integrated growth, consciousness, and reason. Although this means hard work, the individual gains in joy and spontaneity. There are many examples that in old age, highly biophilic individuals are likely to flower rather than to dry up and disintegrate. Their years of centered, structured development allow them to unite thought and feeling in their creative spontaneity.⁵

The opposite pole of biophilia is necrophilia, the love of what is dead, rigidly ordered, decaying, and mechanical. The most extreme necrophilic orientation characterizes people who are very depressed, likely to be psychotic and suicidal because of their deep attraction to death and their inability to feel the difference between what is alive and what is dead. Fromm writes that they are people "who are attracted to and fascinated by all that is not alive, all that is dead; corpses, decay, feces, dirt . . . who love to talk about sickness, about burials, about death. . . ." They are people so dead

5. For a discussion of teaching discipline for biophilia development, see M. Maccoby, "The Three C's and Discipline for Freedom," *The School Review* 79: no. 2 (February 1971).



inside that pain, strife, and frantic excitement may actually be the only emotions that animate them. Yet paradoxically their necrophilic solution is a way of avoiding that deep feeling which is not mechanically exciting. Although the necrophilic lives in his dead world, he is anesthetized to the tragic experience of death (as he is to the joy of life) because he has blurred the frontier between life and death.

The less extreme tendency in this direction can be seen in the fascination many people have for newspaper accounts about accidents, in the way people have of relating to others by telling them troubles, or by collecting injustices done to them as if they were valuable possessions. In general, the necrophilic tendency is expressed in a more normal way in all those actions that reflect the belief that what is troublesome, painful, or destructive, is most real and important.

In describing the necrophilic person clinically, Fromm writes further,

All that is away from or directed against life attracts him. He wants to return to the darkness of the womb, and to the past of inorganic or animal existence. He is essentially oriented to the past, not to the future which he hates and is afraid of. Related to this is his craving for certainty. But life is never certain, never predictable, never controllable; in order to make life controllable it must be transformed into death; death, indeed, is the only certainty of life.

The necrophilous tendencies are usually most clearly exhibited in a person's dreams. These deal with murder, blood, corpses, skulls, feces; sometimes also with men transformed into machines or acting like machines. An occasional dream of this type may occur in people without indicating necrophilia. In the necrophilous person dreams of this type are frequent and sometimes repetitive.

The highly necrophilous person can often be recognized by his appearance and his gestures. He is cold, his skin looks dead, and often he has an expression on his face as though he were smelling a bad odor. (This expression could be clearly seen in Hitler's face.) He is orderly, obsessive, pedantic. This aspect of the necrophilous person has been demonstrated to the world in the figure of Eichmann. Eichmann was fascinated by bureaucratic order and death. His supreme values were obedience and the proper functioning of the organization. He transported Jews as he would have transported coal. That they were human beings was hardly within the field of his vision, hence even the problem of whether he hated or did not hate his victims is irrelevant.⁶

6. This analysis of Eichmann is in contrast to that of Hannah Arendt who classified him as merely a banal petty power seeker who "never realized what he was doing."



But examples of the necrophilous character are by no means to be found only among the inquisitors, the Hitlers, and the Eichmanns. There are any number of individuals who do not have the opportunity and the power to kill, yet whose necrophilia expresses itself in other, and, superficially seen, more harmless ways. An example is the mother who will always be interested in her child's sicknesses, in his failures, in dark prognoses for the future; at the same time she will not respond to the child's joy; she will not notice anything new that is growing within him. We might find that her dreams deal with sickness, death, corpses, blood. She does not harm the child in any obvious way, yet she may slowly strangle his joy of life, his faith in growth, and eventually she will infect him with her own necrophilous orientation.⁷

What makes an individual either extremely life-loving or anti-life? Although we have only begun to study this question, evidence suggests that social factors, as well as early experiences, probably are most important, although constitutional factors also may play a role.

Whether or not a person develops in a biophilic or necrophilic direction seems to depend mainly on the practice of life from childhood on. A life of creative activeness, freedom, and deep relatedness with others is likely to strengthen biophilia. In contrast, there are modes of life which strengthen necrophilic tendencies. This is the case for the authoritarian, bureaucratic person who identifies himself with power and treats other people as things. Less obviously, anti-life tendencies may be strengthened by those people who seek to be protected and cushioned against the realities of the world and the pain of feeling, to be fed and entertained without any effort on their part. Such people are driven by what one might call the "phantasy of the mechanical womb." Their goal is to live in a shelter in which modern technology gives them the possibility of pressing buttons to satisfy every need, whether it be for frozen foods, heat, exciting TV entertainment, electronic rock music, or effortless drug-induced ways of putting them to sleep and waking them up. When they leave the home, they feel secure only in a mobile mechanical womb that hurtles them to their destination. A solution to life governed by such a phantasy-reality makes people into powerless consumers, alienates them from reality, and destroys their critical ability. Such a person is more likely to sacrifice freedom for the illusion of security. He is unlikely to resist the seductions of those who offer total security based on force against those who try to change the system.

Bruno Bettelheim, in the well-known case of "Joey: A Mechanical Boy," has described a deeply disturbed mechanized child with many symptoms of necrophilia—including the feeling that the whole world was a mire of

7. *The Heart of Man*, op. cit., pp. 42-43.



excitement. Bettelheim considers the mother's indifference and lack of feeling the most important cause of Joey's condition, and he writes, "By treating him mechanically, his parents *made* him a machine."⁸

Possibly a child with a particularly strong biophilic constitution might resist a less extremely dehumanized environment, struggle against it, and in the process, affirm a biophilic attitude. Such a child's chances would be greater if help could be found from at least one biophilic adult in the environment. But, more frequently, necrophilic parents tend to shatter a child's faith. In an environment without love and respect, individuals are likely to harden their hearts to avoid further suffering.

Emotional attitudes that are shared by classes or groups of people—social character—are of course largely molded by social conditions, such as the way work is organized, the dominant technologies, and cultural patterns.⁹ The American culture has from the start combined strong life-loving and anti-life tendencies. The biophilic trends have been expressed in the love of freedom, participant democracy, utopian goals and experiments. The necrophilic trends energized the drive for manifest destiny, racism, war against Indians, gold fever, and fascination with the technology of killing. American novelists, from Hawthorne, Melville, and Poe to Hemingway, Faulkner, and Mailer have sensed the importance of necrophilia to the American character.

Methods of Studying Biophilia and Necrophilia

Studying necrophilia and biophilia in large populations presents formidable methodological difficulties. Obviously, one cannot merely ask people how biophilic or necrophilic they are. Few of us lack necrophilic tendencies, but these are often unconscious. They may be expressed in terms of concern for efficiency or "law and order," although these attitudes do not necessarily indicate necrophilia. They may be based on fear. Even those individuals with particularly strong necrophilic tendencies are usually indignant at the idea that they love life less than anyone else; they consider that their love of possessions, institutions, abstract justice, or even their love of risk, force, and power should be interpreted as love of life.

The most effective method of studying biophilia and necrophilia is through psychoanalysis where these tendencies can be interpreted based on extensive intimate knowledge of the individual and on the analysis of dreams. In working with large populations, however, a different technique is needed. Projective measures, particularly the Rorschach, also provide excellent

8. In *Frontiers of Psychological Research*, ed. Stanley Coopersmith (San Francisco and London: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1964).

9. See E. Fromm and M. Maccoby, *Social Character in a Mexican Village* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970).



material for the interpretation of biophilia and necrophilia, but these tests generally require too much time and a staff of specially trained people.¹⁰ Since large-scale psychoanalysis is impossible, we have tried out different forms of interpretative questionnaires to use with large populations. Long questionnaires, which elicit essay-type answers provide rich information, but like the Rorschach they require large investments of time for interpretation. For very large populations it is more practical to use pre-formed interpretative questions which do not require trained administrators or interpreters. The question is whether they do the job sufficiently well. Can pre-coded questions elicit emotional attitudes rather than ideology? In trying to answer the question, we are aware that for any particular individual, practically any single question may elicit a response that is ideological rather than rooted in character. Although a questionnaire that is foolproof or ideology-proof for all individuals is unlikely to be found, we tried to construct a scale of pre-formed questions which in certain populations would elicit the emotional attitudes that express life-loving or anti-life tendencies. The questions Fromm and I designed were based on our clinical observations from psychoanalytic practice as well as on theoretical expectations. We pretested the questions from 1965 to 1968 and discarded those which did not correlate positively with each other according to statistical tests of significance. We retained twelve questions that tend to cluster together statistically and also make sense theoretically.

It needs to be emphasized however that pre-formed interpretative questions may be useful only within a given culture or class and then perhaps only for a brief time. A certain question may at one point of history elicit an underlying emotional attitude, but a few years later it will express no more than a conventional point of view, one that has been accepted in the national consensus or become part of the national ideology. An example of this is a question used in earlier testing: "Suppose a man whose family is poor and starving is caught stealing food. What do you think the judge should do? Let him go; sentence him; reprimand him; or help him get food and a job?" In 1965, only fifty percent of the people queried in a sample of sixty people representing different social classes in Ithaca, New York, thought that the judge should "help him get food and a job." In 1968, this number had risen

10. For example, one individual came to analysis because of his feeling of depression. The analyst discovered necrophilic tendencies which were clearly expressed in his Rorschach responses. To Card IX, he gave the following two responses:

"1) This seems to me the head of a dead vulture and the other side is the same but seems more a decaying skeleton.

2) I was trying to imagine that this was a penis. But no, it is a sword." In the latter response, necrophilia is expressed by transforming the potentially stimulating and vulnerable penis into a symbol of destructive penetration and power.



to ninety percent for samples of both white and black people in California and New York. The change may have been brought about by the growing movement for social justice, which, among other results, has created a new national consensus concerning the responsibility of the community to provide work for all who want it and need it.

There will also be cases in which the answers to a particular question have a very different meaning for some individuals than for the majority. An example where the meaning for a few people was the opposite to theoretical expectation occurred in relation to the question: "How many times should one visit the cemetery where loved ones are buried?" Statistically as well as clinically, there is evidence that necrophilics are more likely to be attracted to cemeteries. However, in Harlem we found that some extremely life-loving people like to go to the cemetery in order to get away from what they felt a concrete wasteland and to visit the only place closeby with trees and flowers. It turned out that this question was one of the few which did not indicate necrophilic tendencies in the black study while it did so statistically for white adults and students throughout the country. Given the possibility that any one question may be interpreted in a special way, one needs to ask enough questions so that a trend can be established which can be measured by the general consistency of responses to a number of questions.

A final problem is that for a particular group, the questions will elicit mostly ideological issues rather than deep-rooted emotional attitudes. In the current study, this is a particular danger when one gives the questionnaire to people in a university community or any other place where there are large numbers of people who both read books on psychology and who listen to radical rhetoric. Some people express biophilic ideals, when in fact they try to force others to support their positions on issues, are attracted to power, and are contemptuous of those who disagree with them. To study the emotional attitudes of such individuals would be particularly difficult, and might be possible only if they agreed to take the Rorschach and reported their dreams.

These problems illustrate the difficulty of studying emotional attitudes or elements of social character. Unlike the behaviorists, the psychoanalyst who studies social phenomena does not consider that the answers to his questions are identical to the dynamic tendencies that are being studied. For us, the questions are a means, sometimes a rather crude instrument, to study emotions which can never be measured directly, even by behavior in most experimental situations, since a dynamic tendency or emotion may be blocked by conflict, or compensated for. These questions provide an approximation of the distribution of life-loving versus anti-life attitudes in the population at the time they were given.

Below the twelve questions used to score life-loving versus anti-life attitudes are reproduced, followed by the scoring key.



Life-Loving versus Anti-Life Scale

1. Would you, in general, agree or disagree with the statement: Cleanliness is next to godliness?
2. What are the three worst evils: murder for gain, murder out of passion, robbery, homosexuality, rape, treason, adultery, drunkenness, dirtiness, greediness, dope-selling, cruelty to children, betrayal of a friend?
3. Have you given thought to how you wish to be buried: much, some, none?
4. What are the three greatest virtues: discipline, love, obedience, defense of honor, patriotism, joy of life, cleanliness, punctuality, charity, consideration of others, honesty, sincerity?
5. Which is a better quality for a wife to have: to cook well or be able to keep a house neat?
6. How many times a year should one visit the cemetery where loved ones are buried? (Note: this question is not correlated with the scale for black responses.)
7. Are you in favor of capital punishment? (Death penalty for crimes.)
8. What annoys you most: a person who is too messy or one who is too neat?
9. How important do you feel it is for those who break laws to pay for their crimes: very important, somewhat important, not important?
10. Assume you saw a burglar running away from your house with some of your valuables. Would you: shoot him to wound him or kill him if you could, shoot to scare him, let him go and call the police, do nothing?
11. If you were to buy a new car and soon after found a scratch on the door, how upset would you be: very upset for quite a while, somewhat upset but not for a long time, little upset, not upset?
12. Is it irresponsible for a person to spend most of his income on food, pleasure, and travel and not save any money except for life insurance?

Scoring Code

1. Yes = 1 point.
2. 1 point if adultery, robbery, drunkenness, dirtiness, homosexuality, dope-selling are chosen. Add points.
3. 2 points for much, 1 point for some, 0 for none.
4. 1 point for each if obedience, defense of honor, cleanliness are chosen.
5. "Keep a house neat" = 1 point.
6. 0=0, 1-4=1, 4 or more = 2.
7. Yes = 1 point.
8. "Too messy" = 1 point.



9. Very important = 2 points, somewhat important = 1 point, not important = 0.

10. Shoot to wound or kill = 3 points, shoot to scare = 2 points, call police = 1 point, nothing = 0.

11. 2 points for “very upset,” 1 point for “little upset” or “somewhat upset,” 0 for “not upset.”

12. Yes = 1 point.

Add points for the total score. A low score indicates live-loving attitudes. A high score indicates anti-life attitudes.

The theoretical rationale for these questions was as follows:

Question 1. Many people who believe cleanliness is next to godliness are attracted to rigid order. Furthermore, even though they say what concerns them is cleanliness, they are also looking for dirt. This principle holds in the case of the rigid, obsessively clean housewife, who in fact spends more time looking for dirt, touching dirt, and thinking about dirt than does a less compulsive person.

Question 2. Necrophilic individuals tend to see the worst evils as adultery, robbery, drunkenness, dirtiness, homosexuality, and dope-selling. This reflects a rigid moralism and, in the case of choosing robbery as most important, the fact that they consider the protection of property more important than crimes against life and love. There is a particular hostility against drugs and liquor in those people, not all of them necrophilic, who worry about self-control. The more biophilic individuals consider greediness as one of the worst evils, since they are aware that greed is an emotional attitude which underlies many crimes. Biophilic individuals also consider cruelty to children and betrayal of a friend to be worse than robbery, homosexuality, or adultery, which in some cases are motivated by vital interests.

Question 3. Necrophilics frequently think a great deal about what they want done with their cadavers. The more grandiose want impressive tombs. This is not to say that a rather biophilic person might not at some time think about how he wants his remains disposed, nor that he represses all thoughts of death. But thinking about his corpse would not be attractive nor interesting for him; quite the contrary.

Question 4. Those on the anti-life side tend to consider the greatest virtues to be obedience, defense of honor, and cleanliness. Theoretically, we expected that they would also consider mechanical punctuality a great virtue, but in fact, we did not find very many Americans who considered punctuality a great virtue. Perhaps, it is taken for granted in the United States, in contrast to Latin countries, although in the counterculture there is a certain rebelliousness against punctuality. The biophilic considers love, joy of life, and charity as the most important virtues.



Question 5. Although some who prefer neatness are hoarding and obsessive and not necrophilic, in general the attraction to order as the greater pleasure than good food trends toward the anti-life pole. In some cultures, however, the response to this question may mean something very different. We found that some non-necrophilic blacks and some middle-class Mexicans take good cooking for granted, but they place a particular emphasis on order and neatness in order to emphasize not being messy, receptive, and lower-class.

Question 6. The necrophilic orientation is expressed in attraction to what is dead, which may be rationalized in terms of respect or devotion. (For example, one individual with an extremely necrophilic orientation visited his mother's grave more frequently and devotedly than he visited his mother when living. This person is also a rigid moralist and a gun collector.)

Question 7. Individuals with anti-life attitudes tend to favor the death penalty, just as in general they are attracted to killing as a solution to social problems.

Question 8. Individuals with strong biophilic tendencies dislike sterile, rigid order in a person who is overly neat. (Of course, this does not imply that a messy person is any more life-loving than one who is neat.)

Question 9. The anti-life attitude usually includes the feeling that it is very important for people to *pay* for their crimes. While more biophilic individuals speak in terms of rehabilitation of criminals or of protecting society from criminals, they do not think in terms of retribution. Nor do they consider that the problem of crime will be solved by prison.

Question 10. This question touches the feeling that property is more important than life.

Question 11. This question was based on the clinical observation that individuals with strong anti-life tendencies become very upset when their property is damaged.

Question 12. This question was also based on clinical observation that those with anti-life attitudes resent and even hate those people who use their income to enjoy life. The question is put in a mild form, but it still elicits strong reactions.¹¹

These questions were given to samples of people in six different populations, including about 1200 individuals in all, during 1965 and 1968. Extensive statistical analyses were done on 1052 of the questionnaires representing samples of people from two parts of California, from Harlem, and students from the University of Chicago. (Sample sizes for each

11. Three questions that were used in the first three studies were subsequently dropped from the scale because the statistical analysis (factor analysis) indicated that they did not in fact measure biophilia-necrophilia (see Table 1 and below). They included the question about the man stealing food, a question concerning whether man is basically good or destructive, and a question about whether an individual would be justified to kill himself and his children, in case of Communist takeover of the country.



population are reported in Table 3.) The sample of 162 cases in Santa Cruz, California, was a random, stratified sample of people over twenty-one based on the voters' rolls, with stratification based on type of dwelling. The sample of Palo Alto, California, mothers included all the mothers in a middle-class school district. The Harlem sample was chosen by selecting blocks randomly from different areas of the city and interviewing a quota of individuals aged twenty-one and over. The interviewers were all black. The students from the University of Chicago comprised the members of various sections in a large lecture course.

Although these samples do not allow us to generalize about large populations with statistical confidence, the consistent patterns that emerge with continued testing suggest that they are roughly representative of the types of Americans who were interviewed.

The first page of the full questionnaire asked for the respondent's sex, age, education, and occupation. In the first two studies given in the summer of 1968, the individual's preference for president was also queried. Then came the biophilia-necrophilia questions which were introduced as questions on personal values. Finally, individuals were shown a list of about twenty of the most controversial political issues (more were added in later studies) and asked to "mark with an x all of the following issues that are important to you." This choice of issues was the basis for studying the relationship between emotional attitudes and political viewpoints. In the study of the Palo Alto mothers, data was also obtained on the television-viewing habits of the mothers and on attitudes to authority using questions taken from the *F*-scale.

In the Santa Cruz study, which was carried out by students from the University of California, interviewers also recorded their observations of the people who were filling out the questionnaire, including their appearance, their attitude to the study, and the way their house was furnished, in order to make clinical judgements to compare with the test scores.

Results: Emotional Attitudes and Political Positions

The essential findings tend to show (a) that the questions did measure life-loving and anti-life tendencies in the different populations, and (b) these tendencies were in fact significantly correlated with sociopolitical concerns at that time. We can review separately the evidence for these two findings. (a) Principle components factor analyses on results from three separate samples show that in general the responses correlated with love-of-life vs. anti-life factor according to theoretical expectations. (For an explanation of the factor analysis and a report of the findings, see Table 1.) The numerical score was finally determined by adding up the points from those questionnaire items that were correlated with the factor according to theoretical expectations. In each sample, the distribution of scores took the



shape of a normal curve, although the means and shape of the curves varied. The means and standard deviations of the samples are reported in Table 3.¹²

The original scoring proved more valid for the white samples, where none of the questions contradict theoretical expectations, than for the Harlem sample, where cultural differences change the meaning for some responses. In general, the blacks in Harlem, more than the whites, express a concern for cleanliness and order which is probably the result of campaigns to become more middle-class and to do away with the receptive, passive traits which characterized the submissive exploited Negro. However, on the items representing the most extreme anti-life orientation, whites appeared to be somewhat less life-loving than blacks. Thus, even though the mean score for blacks is higher, there is evidence to suggest that they are more biophilic than whites. It is notable that blacks, much more than whites, are concerned about love and joy of life as the most important virtues, while whites are more in favor of capital punishment and opposed to spending all of one's money for enjoyment (see Table 2 for percentages). On the other hand, in terms of the issues supported as well as the emotional attitudes, both whites and blacks with dominant life-loving tendencies are more like each other psychologically than they are similar to others of their own race with dominant anti-life attitudes.

What percentage of the populations we studied have clear-cut necrophilic orientations? There is no way to determine this exactly from the scores since they are distributed normally in the population. However, on the basis of an interpretative analysis of the questionnaires, we judge that about ten to fifteen percent of the samples interviewed would be dominantly necrophilic. These are the individuals who are not only concerned with neatness, order and cleanliness, but who also are deeply attracted to what is dead. They are the ones who state they would visit a cemetery very often and/or who constantly think about death. Interviewers noted a sterility about many such people and their houses. They live in a deadened, joyless atmosphere, often with plastic coverings over the furniture. Some have no interest in politics, but those who do would be likely to favor emotionally continuing the war or building up armaments, even when the president of the United States and the joint chiefs of staff were on the side of peace. Or they are people without much real interest in national policy whose desire is to get rid of people they don't like. Such an attitude can be found on the Left as well as the Right, and, in a sense, ignores conventional political groupings.

(b) What was the relationship between emotional attitudes and political positions? To find out, we calculated product-moment correlations between

12. The scores indicate only relative love-of-life versus anti-life attitudes, and it needs to be emphasized that the scale is an approximation—not an exact measure. Furthermore, none of the respondents received the maximum anti-life score of 22, the highest recorded score being 20.



the love-of-life-anti-life scale on the one hand and on the other, issues chosen as most important to the individual. When the correlations were sufficiently large to be considered statistically significant at the .01 level, we took this to indicate a relationship between the emotional attitude and a political position. In the earlier two studies, the scale was also correlated with presidential preference. In all of the samples, we found that anti-life tendencies were significantly correlated to political positions that supported increased military power and favored repression against dissenters. The following priorities were considered most important by individuals who have dominant anti-life tendencies: tighter control of rioters, tighter enforcement of anti-drug laws, winning the war in Vietnam, controlling subversive groups, strengthening the police, and fighting Communism throughout the world. (It may seem inconsistent that such individuals also favor lowering taxes, but many expect to save money by doing away with welfare and foreign aid.)

In 1968, when the study was done, people with strong biophilic tendencies were of favor of: stopping the killing in Vietnam, securing a guaranteed income for all Americans, and increasing the effort to end poverty and racism in America.

In order to study the relationship between biophilia-necrophilia and attitudes towards blacks, Rolando Weissmann carried out a supplementary study of 150 white individuals living on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. Although no factor analysis was done, Weissmann found significant correlations between biophilic tendencies and support of: efforts to give blacks more decision-making power, better housing in both the city and the suburbs, schools run by blacks in black communities, and financial support for black-owned businesses. In contrast, those New York whites with necrophilic tendencies supported none of these issues. Other findings on the Upper East Side sampling confirmed the California findings: Weissmann found that those on the anti-life side were the only New Yorkers likely to consider that stamping out radicals, fighting Communism, and winning the war were the most important priorities for America.

To return to the California and Harlem samples, some issues were favored by biophilic individuals in the white but not in the black populations. These included concern for conservation and support for laws against pollution which constituted a particularly salient issue for those individuals who were both biophilic and highly educated (meaning also richer). This was before the issue of ecology and pollution had reached national prominence.

Why is it that the biophilic individuals with less education were not concerned about environmental issues in 1968? One must keep in mind that an emotional attitude implies a *readiness to support a political issue which is consistent with it*. Whether or not an issue is important at any point depends in great part on the *experience* of the people involved. For many of the biophilic poor, issues of conservation and pollution are still secondary to



those issues having to do with economic survival and basic dignity. While opinion-polling traditionally shows what people are thinking about, polls of emotional attitudes can provide us with information concerning what people would support, once they become conscious of an issue as being of primary importance to them.

In May 1968, when the California stratified sample (representing three different social classes and four educational levels) was tested, we found that some interesting relationships existed between emotional attitudes and support of different candidates. The statistical analysis resulted in two main factors, one based on social class and the other based on love-of-life-anti-life attitudes. In terms of the income factor, the rich in general favored Richard Nixon or Nelson Rockefeller and conservative positions, while the working class favored Hubert Humphrey or Robert Kennedy and welfare issues. However, in terms of the psychological factor we found that *the most biophilic individuals of each class and both parties* tended to favor Eugene McCarthy for president. In contrast, those Democrats on the anti-life side of the scale favored Hubert Humphrey, while Republicans with these tendencies favored Ronald Reagan and Richard Nixon. The candidates who most attracted the necrophilic voters were George Wallace and Ronald Reagan.

These findings might have been somewhat different in other parts of the country. The Michigan Survey Research Center later reported that twenty-four percent of the McCarthy supporters in fact voted for George Wallace. However, in California we found that twenty-five percent of the McCarthy supporters had anti-life tendencies. This does not imply, of course, that such people are necrophilic. In the Midwest during the summer of 1968, some farmers told me they would vote for either McCarthy or Wallace, because they admired both men for having the courage and the toughness to oppose the powers in the East. Furthermore, while there was a general tendency for the most extremely biophilic individuals to support the candidacy of McCarthy in the white community, this was not the case in Harlem. There we found that after Robert Kennedy's death, the most extremely biophilic people were for "nobody." There are three possibilities to consider in interpreting this finding. One is that the blacks felt that McCarthy was not sufficiently concerned about them, that they could not trust him. A second is that some of those who love life the most felt it dangerous to put their hopes in any leader, after the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Senator Kennedy. Some said to us, "Anyone we support is going to be shot." Another explanation is that some individuals felt that none of the candidates represented them, or that Presidential politics was irrelevant to the ghetto.

It is interesting to note that some issues are significantly associated with neither the life-loving nor the anti-life poles, because they mean different things to different people. One such issue is that of "protecting free



enterprise in the United States.” Different character types might support free enterprise for opposite reasons. A life-loving individual may think of free enterprise in terms of independence and individual freedom, the chance to develop his own way of life free from large organizations that control him. For him, free enterprise means doing his own thing. In contrast, for those with controlling and hoarding tendencies, protecting free enterprise means no more than protecting privileges and material possessions.

After completing the studies done in the summer of 1968, Rolando Weissmann and I carried out further studies on emotional attitudes and political convictions of college students.

Weissmann administered the questionnaires to 167 undergraduates at the University of Chicago and correlated their love-of-life-anti-life scores with the students’ descriptions of their political positions which they gave before filling out the questionnaire, along with a statement of how concerned and active they were in both university and national politics. On the basis of this description, Weissmann divided them into six categories. (1) the *radicals* included twenty-two percent of the students: they described themselves as radical, leftist, socialist, Marxist, or anarchists. Almost all of them described themselves as quite interested and active in political activities, both within and outside the university. They included individuals active in SDS, in black community groups, and in the anti-draft movement. (2) The second group of *liberals* included thirty-five percent of the students, who described themselves as liberal, left of center, non-radical left, and left-moderates. The liberals tended to be more interested in politics outside of the university than inside and to be moderately active. (3) The *conservatives* included only four percent of the University of Chicago population tested. (4) The *independents* included seven percent. (5) Sixteen percent of the population had no political position or were outside of traditional politics or *apolitical*. This group included a wide spectrum, ranging from very intellectualized students who felt superior to all politics and politicians, to hippies, such as one who stated, “I am apolitical; I believe in tribal communities.” (6) The final group characterized as *other*, included those individuals who did not identify with any group, but had their own style of politics and characterized themselves as interested in national issues. This included one individual who called himself “a right-wing populist, non-isolationist, federal aid to education, socialized medicine (mental and physical),” a student who said, “I am a sometime Democratic anarchist, sometime social tyranny [*sic*].” And, on the other hand, students who said, “Brotherhood is the overriding orientation, goal and motive.” This category probably includes individuals who might in some circumstances join one of the political groups as well as some who might be most charitably called “individualists.”

One must be cautious in interpreting student results. Highly biophilic scores may reflect ideology rather than emotions for the following reasons.



First, many bright students are oriented to passing tests, and might be able to figure out the “best” answer. Some young people with an alienated “game character” are attracted to biophilic values, even though they tend to be compulsive competitors.¹³ Second, because their experience is more limited than that of older people, students may be more likely to answer some of the questions ideologically—such as those relating to saving money, buying a new car, or visiting cemeteries.

Given the need for caution, the results, summarized in Table 4, suggest that among students the radicals are the most life-loving group in terms of the scale. More will be said below about differences within the radical group. Of the other students, the liberals are about average for University of Chicago students, while the conservatives and independents tend more toward the anti-life pole.¹⁴

What does it mean to say that student radicals today tend to be more biophilic than the average student? Does this mean merely that they have intellectual values that are opposed to war and to the national security state? Although ideological considerations make the validity of the scale questionable for radicals, it is also the case that the scale did not include questions about the Vietnam War, the military-industrial complex, or the economic system of the United States. The results tend to indicate that the most life-loving individuals are the most likely to have deep convictions concerning these questions.

Does this mean that all students who *call* themselves radical and life-loving are in fact extremely biophilic? Obviously not. The majority of the radicals, the most biophilic students, were the ones who made a point of characterizing their methods as nonviolent. However, the radical movement attracts students of many different types, including those who are ambitious and rebellious, those who are alienated and hostile, and those who want to die rather than live for their ideals. Such students may pick up the biophilic rhetoric of the radical movement and use it to justify their actions. In analyzing the questionnaires and the comments of the radicals, we found in about twenty-five percent of the cases there strong anti-life tendencies. This is a sizable number, who might sway a group under certain conditions in the direction of destructiveness.

Does this mean that individuals with strongly biophilic character traits will always be pacifists? Since this question nearly always comes up when the issue of emotional attitudes is discussed in groups, it is important to make as clear as possible the distinction between destructiveness as a preferred solution to social problems versus violence as a defensive reaction to a real

13. For a description of the game character as it applies to college students, see M. Maccoby, “A Psychoanalytic View of Learning,” *Change Magazine*, Winter 1971-72.

14. Weissmann retested a sample of students on the questionnaire nine months later and found that over ninety percent scored essentially the same.



threat. While there are a few true martyrs who would rather die than kill, many individuals with extremely life-loving orientations, perhaps the majority, would defend themselves against a direct threat to their lives.¹⁵ However, even though many, if not most, people with life-loving orientations would probably defend themselves against attacks on their lives and their liberties, they would not take any pleasure in destroying the enemy nor be exhilarated by the use of force. A biophilic attitude toward violence is illustrated in the biblical legend that, after God had caused the Red Sea to close over the Egyptians, some of the angels rejoiced. But God admonished them, saying there was no reason to be glad of destruction of his people, that, to the contrary, it was a reason for deep sorrow. A similar expression is to be found in the story of Jonah who was admonished by God for wanting the people of Nineveh to be punished, even after they had repented.

It should not be necessary to add the obvious point that extremely biophilic individuals can make mistakes about political as well as personal questions. Just as intelligence does not guarantee love of life, so love of life does not guarantee that an analysis will be correct, even if deeply felt.

To return to the findings on the students, it is interesting to note that the liberals are found squarely in the middle. This fits a common experience in group discussions about biophilia-necrophilia, when liberals suggest to me that it seems best to be somewhere in the middle, neither too necrophilic nor too biophilic. The liberal solution, as it has developed in the United States, has often been the most biophilic viable political alternative. Indeed, liberals tend to contrast themselves with conservatives, independents, and the apathetic who are more likely than they to support rigid order and entrenched privilege. However, the liberal solution is now being rejected by many of the most biophilic young people because traditional liberals have not been responsive enough to the crises of survival and freedom. From the radical point of view, while the liberal position may represent some hope for the future, it is simply not active, conscious, or life-loving enough to meet the challenge of this moment in history. A deeper love of life is needed, if man is to survive.

Our studies have also produced some general findings concerning the relationships between biophilia-necrophilia and social variables.

a. Younger people, adolescents, and those under thirty generally scored as more life-loving than older people. This is particularly the case among males

15. One of the points stressed by those who have from the start opposed the war in Vietnam is that the Vietnamese nationalists and Communists are not a threat to our lives here in America, but, rather, our policy is a mistaken and immoral interference in the rights of others to determine their own destiny. From this perspective, the war is seen as either an ideological crusade based on mistaken abstract principles, or a foolish defense of United States economic interests which has cost more in life and property than it could possibly gain.



where there is a statistical difference in emotional attitudes under and over thirty. In contrast, there is no significant difference for women. What is the reason for this difference? The obvious explanation is that young men are more biophilic because their practice of life includes learning, exercise, and the pursuit of love, while older men, in their work and their need to adapt to less flexible conditions in order to make a living, tend to become progressively disillusioned, harder, and less open to life. In contrast, women who are more likely to work with children and in the home where much of the time they can set their own schedule, are likely to remain more open and responsive to life. Although all this may be true in general, there are other possible interpretations of the results. They may be due to a generational difference, with older men less life-loving because they grew up in a generation of war and depression rather than affluence and anxiety. Another explanation is that the questions tend to show the anti-life tendencies of older people more than of younger ones. Younger males with necrophilic tendencies are less likely to visit cemeteries, for example. Rather, their attraction to death might be expressed more in fascination with machines, weapons, and in their fantasies of sexual conquest. Anti-life attitudes may also be expressed in the lyrics of rock music and in the attraction to a world of electronic and chemical stimulation from hi-fis and drugs.

b. The college-educated white people tended to score as more biophilic than those with just grade school or high school education. This is not true of blacks in our sample. Again, this may be explained by the greater freedom, leisure, and possibility to develop individual interests among the more educated and affluent. Poor whites tend to fall into submissive bureaucratic or industrial jobs where they have little freedom. Furthermore, possibly as a result of this, their culture stresses toughness and self-protectiveness. In other words, both work and culture might reinforce anti-life attitudes.

c. A finding bearing on this is the relationship we found in the Palo Alto study between life-loving-anti-life tendencies and television viewing.¹⁶ Seventy-three percent of the women who were scored as more biophilic watch television no more than 7 hours a week. In contrast, sixty-one percent of the women scored as tending toward necrophilia watch television from 8 to 56 hours a week. We found that necrophilia is correlated with television viewing *true for individuals with a college education as well as high school education*, even though in general individuals with more education watch television less.

The second finding was that the more biophilic prefer different programs from those favored by the more necrophilic women, the former preferring

16. M. Maccoby, "Biophilia-Necrophilia and Television," in *Television Today: The End of Communication and the Death of Community*, ed. Ralph Stavins (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Policy Studies, 1969), pp. 333-336.



educational television, the latter favoring Western and spy programs and tragic soap operas.

Why are the less biophilic people attracted to television? Is it because they lack interest in life and look for a vicarious world? Is it just that they are more lonely? Or, is it that watching television tends to dehumanize people? Necrophilic people feel lonely and bored. They tend to exist in a culturally barren environment and they seek vicarious thrills by watching television. This description is consistent with the studies by Professor Harold Wilensky of Berkeley which describe the sterile, television-oriented culture of many factory workers with reactionary political attitudes.¹⁷

On the basis of our studies, how can the more biophilic Americans be described? What do they look like? Are they all student radicals, like those from Stanford University who in the spring of 1969 “sat in” against the weapons research at the university and wore buttons reading, “Research for Life—not Death”?¹⁸ The answer, of course, is that we live in a large country and there are more than a few life styles and cultures which include biophilic individuals. To judge character on the basis of style alone reflects the narcissism of youth. There are many essentially life-loving people who would seem “square” and “uptight” to young people. The study carried out by Professor Albert Braun of San Jose State College of five hundred Palo Alto mothers revealed that life-loving individuals may differ even on issues of authority. In planning that study during the spring of 1969, we wished to find out whether there were conservatives as well as radicals who were basically biophilic. Together with the questions on love-of-life-anti-life, we asked the following eight “yes or no” questions to see whether or not the individual had a traditional attitude of respect for authority or not:¹⁹

1. Although today’s youth sometimes have rebellious ideas, they ought to get over them and settle down as they grow up.
2. When you try to change things they usually get worse instead of better.

17. It should be pointed out that television programs often express liberal values. However, in a sense somewhat different from that of Marshall McLuhan, the medium is the message. The medium of television is one of passive addition to vicarious thrills and pseudo-intimacy. Those who feel lifeless tune in to be turned on.

18. The atmosphere of that “sit-in, teach-in” was on the whole biophilic. Students had done research exposing falsification in faculty descriptions of their research. They discussed the issues with members of the faculty. This is in contrast to later protests involving threats, invective, and trashing.

19. The questions were taken from a factor-analysis from the “F and D Scales of the Authoritarian Personality” by Fred Kerlinger and Milton Rokeach, “The Factorial Nature of the F and D Scales,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 4 no. 4 (1966): 391-399. In this analysis, items of the authoritarian personality which express other tendencies, such as dogmatism, religiosity, contempt, masochism, etc., are separated into various factors. We used items that we considered reflected traditionalism rather than sado-masochism.



3. One of the most important things children should learn is when to disobey authority.
4. Sometimes disobedience to the government is justified.
5. Things are pretty good in our country and we should not try to change them.
6. Nowadays children have it too easy, especially from their parents.
7. Among the most important virtues for children are obedience and respect for authority.
8. It is a responsibility of intelligent leadership to maintain the established order of things.

The results of the study showed that in general, as expected, those who support traditional authority and oppose radical change are also, on the average, less life-loving, while the more biophilic also tend to be more radical. However, we did find that about ten percent of the population, or about thirty percent of the traditionalists, could be characterized as “humanistic conservatives.” This meant that although they tended to live a conservative life style and to be afraid of change, they were also dominantly biophilic. While some of these life-loving conservatives may be convinced that they can preserve their values in this way, others may have the illusion that negative changes are not taking place. If this is so, we would predict that increased knowledge of threats to life and freedom would result in their being drawn to support radical change to preserve these values, leading either to new behavior or to inner conflict.

How much can deep-rooted emotional attitudes change? According to Freudian theory, character is determined in childhood and is unlikely to be modified without psychoanalytic intervention. However, Freud did not consider sufficiently the role of social structures in the formation and maintenance of character. It is Fromm’s and my view that:

The importance of childhood experiences by no means excludes later changes in character. This is to say, while the character under the influence of early experience (plus constitution) is formed in the first years, the structure is normally flexible enough so that changes may occur at a later period. In principle, we would not even set an age limit to the possibilities of such changes, for the better or worse. However, there is a good reason why one might conceive a completely inflexible character. The character of the child, as we believe with Freud, develops as a result of dynamic adaptation to the family constellation. Since the family represents the spirit of the society into which the child enters, the same influences which have been the main determining influences from the beginning continue to mold the adolescent’s and adult’s character structure. Institutions of schooling, work, and leisure do not differ essentially from the way of life transmitted to the child in his family. Thus the character



structure acquired in childhood is constantly reinforced in later life, provided the social circumstances do not change drastically. Since this is not normally the case, the impression arises that the character is definitely formed at the age of six and not subject to any later change.²⁰

There is evidence showing that systematic restructuring of social conditions can lead to changes in the emotional attitudes of children and adolescents.²¹ It remains to study further the kinds of social changes that are necessary to develop life-loving attitudes in grown people.

Much more comprehensive study is necessary if we are to say more about the social character of people in different groups to be able to inform a fuller sociopolitical analysis of the possibilities for change. At present, under a grant from the Harvard Program on Technology and Society, a group of us are studying the character of managers and research engineers in those industrial organizations which are in the forefront of developing new technology. One of the central questions we are asking is how the organization and content of work requires certain types of people and, in turn, influences character. We have already begun to see differences among organizations in terms of life-loving versus anti-life attitudes. Where work is project-oriented and there is an atmosphere of cooperation and respect, biophilic tendencies appear to be called for as well as strengthened among managers and industrial scientists. During the past generation, a trend has begun to develop toward changing the organization of work from the basically hierarchical, pyramidal chain of command organization which tended to reinforce the bureaucratic-authoritarian character to a more project-oriented innovative organization which can develop an environment where more creative work is possible. Indeed, in some organizations one can note a conflict between the old and the new styles which is sometimes reflected in a conflict in the managers between authoritarian and democratic attitudes. However, the requirements of the market and of capital including the need for continual growth, competition, and profits appear to constrain biophilic tendencies even in the most progressive industrial managers.

How does a whole social class move in an anti-life direction? The answer probably must take account of historical change as well as the mode of work. A class that has lost its productive function and therefore its natural leadership may seek revenge and be attracted to necrophilic leaders. This is particularly the case when the mode of work favors hoarding and hierarchical traits. The obvious example is the loss of function and independence by lower middle-class shopkeepers and farmers to the corporations. The small grocer

20. Fromm and Maccoby, *Social Character in a Mexican Village*, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

21. See the description of the orphanage "Los Pequeños Hermanos" in Fromm and Maccoby.



and hardware dealer who are gobbled up by A&P or Sears have lost their once vital social function and are likely to seek revenge against the corporate managers and their “pointy head” intellectual cohorts. A society which ignores victims of socioeconomic change and gives them no opportunity for a productive contribution may, in the end, pay a heavy price for its lack of compassion.²²

In conclusion, the studies indicate that the majority of Americans have both biophilic and necrophilic tendencies. There is some evidence to support the judgment that Americans are becoming more biophilic, particularly as to a greater concern for the poor, and opposition to militarism. However, the anti-life tendencies in the population still provide strong emotional support for repression and militarism and they may be fed by social forces which deprive people of their dignity and productive roles.

These studies will perhaps be most valuable if they lead to greater consciousness on the one hand and on the other more realistic planning for the future based on psychological knowledge of the American public. Greater consciousness will involve being more sensitive to our own emotional attitudes and also to those of individuals who seek positions of leadership. Greater awareness involves both learning and waking up. One can fairly state that the process of waking up would be somewhat painful for many of us, because it would demand that we confront not only deadening elements in our culture but that part of ourselves which has hardened. It would sensitize us to be critical of those cultural forms which often seem exciting and progressive but which do not in fact allow us to be compassionate and joyful.

More realistic planning would mean, in part, to support those institutions, experiments, and political movements which encourage greater individual responsibility and activeness, in contrast to those which make individuals into passive consumers of formatted parts of a megamachine. This will require a long-term effort to humanize work in such a way that all workers have the right to have a job that allows them responsibility and decision-making powers and that calls for craftsmanship and continual personal development. At this point, it also requires an all-out political effort to control nuclear weapons and polluting agents, while there is still time to do so in an atmosphere not yet dominated by panic. In fact, there are many people

22. A fuller understanding of the relationship between social structure and emotional attitudes will require further empirical study. However, it is relevant to note that Marx's critique of capitalism can be understood in terms of biophilia and necrophilia. In an essay on Marx's psychology, Fromm develops this point, maintaining that “the most decisive question in Marx's psychology is whether a man, class, or society is motivated by the affinity to life or to death. His enmity against capitalism, as his love for socialism, as far as their emotional background is motivated by the affinity to life or to death. . . . [T]he rule of capital is ‘the domination of living men by dead matter.’” *The Crisis of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p. 55.



among the young and the old who are today working to create new institutions or to modify old institutions which by allowing greater freedom and participation stimulate greater activeness, and there are people who are putting their energies into curbing the national security state and creating the conditions where it might be possible to solve the problems of survival without repressive controls. For these people, this study will serve a purpose if it sensitizes them to distrust rhetoric, including biophilic rhetoric, to take account of character in choosing their colleagues, and in planning new projects, analyzing all solutions in terms of the underlying emotional attitudes they tend to reinforce over the long run.

Love of life - Anti-life Factor Loadings

Explanation of Factor Analysis

Factors are most accurately described in mathematical terms. However, for our purposes, it is sufficient to point out that one of the uses of factors is to explain the correlations among a large set of variables (indices, items, etc.) in terms of a small set of variables called factors. The psychological meaning of the factors is not automatically explained by the factor analysis, but must make sense in terms of theory; factors must be interpreted. The factor analyses we undertook on the biophilia-necrophilia questionnaire resulted in a number of factors. In each case, however, the most important factor (the first factor) that emerged described the dimension that we have theoretically called love of life (biophilia) versus anti-life tendencies (at the extreme, necrophilia).

A factor summarizes variables. This is done in terms of the correlations between the original variables and the new summary variable which is called a factor. The original variables are the responses to each question scored according to theory in the sense that a higher score means stronger anti-life attitudes (e.g., in favor of capital punishment=1; not in favor=0). Included in the analysis also are some variables which were theoretically considered neither life-loving nor anti-life (e.g., patriotism, honesty, charity as the most important virtues). The factor is a new variable which accounts for a maximal portion of the variance among all the original variables. Each original variable is correlated with the factor, and these correlations are called (factor) *loadings*. Each original variable will have a positive loading, a negative loading, or a zero loading on each of the factors. An item with a high loading (about plus or minus .30 in this particular case) should be considered a main element in the factor. Variables with loadings of less than .30 may also be considered as relating significantly but in a secondary way to the factor. When the loadings are on the order of plus or minus .15, they are, strictly speaking,



statistically significant but of less importance. The decision on whether or not to consider them as important depends a great deal on their theoretical significance. A low-grade but still significant finding with a high-grade theoretical expectation is important and should be as fully understood as possible. This is different from a low-grade statistical finding combined with a low-grade theoretical expectation which should be considered as less important. All of the factor loadings for the first factor that emerged from the principal component analysis for three separate samples are reported in Table 1.

The evidence that the questionnaire items in fact relate to the same factor can be summarized as follows. In each of the three independent factor analyses, the loadings were predominantly in the predicted direction. In the first California sample, 22 of 25 loadings were significantly correlated with the factor as expected. Three items were not significantly correlated with the factor. No items were significantly correlated with the factor in a way which would contradict theoretical expectations. For the University of Chicago sample 16 of 20 loadings were significantly correlated with the factor in the expected direction, while four items were not large enough. Again, none of the loadings significantly *contradicted* theoretical expectations. As noted before, the scale seemed somewhat less valid for the black sample. However, 17 of 25 loadings were still significantly correlated to the factor according to theoretical expectations. Six loadings were not large enough. In the case of the blacks, three items contradicted theoretical expectations. One of these was the concept that “dirtiness” is one of the greatest evils. This fits the concern of biophilic blacks to erase the old image of the sloppy, receptive Negro. The other was in response to a question that was subsequently dropped from the scale: “Some philosophers and thinkers say that man is basically destructive, a wolf. Others say that man is basically good or could be so. Which of the two viewpoints would you agree with? How strongly do you agree?” We expected that those who “strongly” believe man is basically destructive would tend to be more necrophilic. In fact, the more biophilic blacks tended to consider man as basically destructive, which may be the result of their experiences as victims of racism and their view of “the man.”

TABLE 1

PRINCIPAL COMPONENT LOADINGS

| <i>Variable Description</i> | <i>White Sample</i> | <i>Black Sample</i> | <i>Student Sample</i> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Cleanliness next to godliness* | .68 | .70 | .47 |
| 2. Worst evils | | | |
| a. Murder for gain | -.05 | -.37 | -.37 |



Table 1 – Con't.

| <i>Variable Description</i> | <i>White Sample</i> | <i>Black Sample</i> | <i>Student Sample</i> |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| b. Murder out of passion | -.02 | -.11 | -.09 |
| c. Robbery* | .16 | .39 | -.00 |
| d. Homosexuality* | .21 | .37 | .24 |
| e. Rape | .04 | -.22 | .13 |
| f. Treason | .40 | -.18 | .27 |
| g. Adultery* | .19 | -.12 | .28 |
| h. Drunkenness* | .02 | .06 | .16 |
| i. Dirtiness* | .18 | -.15 | Not included |
| j. Greediness | -.41 | .04 | -.29 |
| k. Dope-selling* | .45 | .63 | .30 |
| l. Cruelty to children | -.41 | -.18 | -.04 |
| m. Betrayal of a friend | -.33 | -.38 | -.13 |
| 3. Thoughts about burial* | .25 | .19 | .06 |
| 4. Greatest Virtues | | | |
| a. Discipline | .06 | .16 | .39 |
| b. Love | -.15 | -.36 | -.17 |
| c. Obedience* | .22 | .13 | Not included |
| d. Defense of honor* | .28 | .33 | Not included |
| e. Patriotism | .42 | -.04 | Not included |
| f. Joy of life | -.63 | -.19 | -.02 |
| g. Cleanliness* | .20 | .12 | Not included |
| h. Punctuality* | .05 | -.03 | Not included |
| i. Charity | -.17 | .04 | .16 |
| j. Consideration | -.09 | .20 | -.17 |
| k. Honesty | .18 | .03 | -.09 |
| l. Sincerity | -.02 | -.25 | .01 |
| 5. Cook well - House neat* | .25 | .42 | .44 |
| 6. Cemetery visits* | .34 | .02 | .36 |
| 7. Capital punishment* | .53 | .39 | .59 |
| 8. Messy - Neat* | .36 | .10 | .43 |
| 9. Paying for crimes* | .59 | .54 | .35 |
| 10. Reaction to burglar* | .46 | .15 | .53 |
| 11. Scratch on car* | .20 | .21 | .35 |
| 12. Irresponsible spending* | .43 | .35 | .29 |



Table 1 – Con't.

| <i>Variable Description</i> | <i>White Sample</i> | <i>Black Sample</i> | <i>Student Sample</i> |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Original Questions Dropped from Questionnaire</i> | | | |
| A. | | | |
| 1) Man is good - somewhat | -.04 | .39 | -.01 |
| 2) Man is good - very much so | .09 | -.05 | -.10 |
| 3) Man destructive - somewhat | -.09 | -.27 | .01 |
| 4) Man destructive - very much so* | -.00 | -.21 | .21 |
| B. Suppose a man whose family is poor and starving is caught stealing food. What do you think the judge should do? Help him get food and a job. Let him go = 1 point Reprimand him = 2 points Give him a heavy sentence = 3 points* | | | |
| | .11 | -.01 | .13 |
| C. Suppose the Russians were to conquer America and set up a Communist dictatorship. Confronted with this a man and wife kill themselves and their small children. Do you feel they were right to kill themselves? And their children? (Score 1 point for each Yes)* | | | |
| | .14 | .03 | .05 |
| Latent Roots | 3.74 | 3.18 | 5.10 |

*These questions were expected to elicit necrophilic responses in terms of theory and clinical experience.



TABLE 2
 PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES TO LOVE-OF-LIFE-ANTI-LIFE
 QUESTIONS

| <i>Item</i> | <i>Sample</i> | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| | <i>Santa Cruz- 1968 (N = 162)</i> | <i>Harlem- 1968 (N = 220)</i> | <i>Univ. of Chicago freshman- 1969 (N = 167)</i> | <i>Palo Alto, mothers- 1969 (N = 505)</i> |
| 1. Cleanliness-Godliness | | | | |
| Agree* | 52 | 68 | 10 | 46 |
| 2. Worst evils | | | | |
| Murder for gain* | 73 | 52 | 76 | 70 |
| Murder out of passion | 14 | 13 | 15 | 16 |
| Robbery* | 2 | 11 | 5 | 2 |
| Homosexuality* | 3 | 6 | 1 | 4 |
| Rape* | 22 | 40 | 21 | 22 |
| Treason* | 29 | 8 | 7 | 21 |
| Adultery | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| Drunkenness | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| Dirtiness | 4 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| Greediness | 15 | 12 | 15 | 15 |
| Dope-selling* | 40 | 55 | 13 | 45 |
| Cruelty to children | 62 | 57 | 67 | 72 |
| Betrayal of a friend | 21 | 20 | 58 | 21 |
| 3. Burial thoughts* | | | | |
| Much | 17 | 12 | | 9 |
| Some | 54 | 31 | | 61 |
| None | 30 | 56 | | 31 |
| 4. Greatest virtues | | | | |
| Discipline | 20 | 15 | 15 | 16 |
| Love* | 51 | 65 | 69 | 77 |
| Obedience | 10 | 12 | | 4 |
| Defense of honor* | 6 | 11 | | 3 |
| Patriotism* | 17 | 4 | | 9 |
| Joy of Life* | 24 | 43 | 59 | 37 |
| Cleanliness* | 7 | 14 | | 3 |
| Punctuality* | 1 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| Charity* | 19 | 9 | 12 | 18 |
| Consideration | 52 | 52 | 43 | 57 |



Table 2 – Con't.

| Item | Sample | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| | Santa Cruz- 1968 (N = 162) | Harlem- 1968 (N = 220) | Univ. of Chicago, freshman- 1969 (N = 167) | Palo Alto, mothers- 1969 (N = 505) |
| Honesty* | 60 | 40 | 49 | 49 |
| Sincerity | 31 | 26 | 48 | 23 |
| 5. Cook well* | 61 | 31 | 78 | 77 |
| Neat house | 39 | 69 | 22 | 19 |
| 6. Cemetery visits* | | | | |
| 4 or more | 17 | 17 | | 9 |
| 1 to 4 | 55 | 63 | | 40 |
| None | 28 | 20 | | 51 |
| 7. For capital punishment | 50 | 33 | 11 | 37 |
| 8. Annoyed by messiness* | 64 | 81 | 38 | 56 |
| Annoyed by neatness | 36 | 19 | 62 | 44 |
| 9. Paying for crimes | | | | |
| Very important | 70 | 61 | | 62 |
| Somewhat important | 21 | 34 | | 34 |
| Not important | 8 | 5 | | 4 |
| 10. Reaction to burglar* | | | | |
| Shoot to kill or wound | 25 | 30 | | 3 |
| Shoot to scare | 19 | 38 | | 8 |
| Call police | 51 | 27 | | 88 |
| Do nothing | 5 | 5 | | 1 |
| 11. Reaction to scratch | | | | |
| Very upset | 4 | 11 | | 6 |
| Somewhat upset | 77 | 60 | | 83 |
| Not upset | 18 | 29 | | 12 |
| 12. Irresponsible to spend for pleasure | 54 | 40 | 30 | 52 |

*Difference between Santa Cruz, California, and Harlem significant ($p < .05$) with age and social class held constant.



TABLE 3

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR FACTOR-BASED
LOVE-OF-LIFE-ANTI-LIFE SCALE

| <i>Sample</i> | <i>N</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>S.D.</i> |
|---|----------|-------------|-------------|
| Santa Cruz, California (stratified sample) | 162 | 9.51 | 3.59 |
| Harlem, New York | 220 | 10.44 | 2.95 |
| Chicago students | 167 | 5.90 | 2.41 |
| Palo Alto, California, mothers | 505 | 7.36 | 2.49 |

TABLE 4

POLITICAL IDENTIFICATION AND EMOTIONAL ATTITUDES

University of Chicago Students

(N=167)

| <i>Political Identification</i> | <i>Percent of Students</i> | <i>Mean Love of life-Anti-life Score</i> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Radical | 22 | 4.1 |
| Liberal | 35 | 6.0 |
| Apolitical | 16 | 6.5 |
| Other | 16 | 6.6 |
| Conservative | 4 | 7.0 |
| Independent | 7 | 7.6 |
| Total | 100 | 5.9 |