POPULISM TO FASCISM:
A LOOK AT THE POLITICAL MIND OF MILFORD HOWARD

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A thesis presented to the Graduate
Faculty of the University of Virginia
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts

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May, 1985

Acknowledgements

> Every life is interesting; if not the personality, then the environment, the country, the life itself is interesting. Man likes to enter into another existence, he likes to touch the subtlest fibers of another's heart, and to listen to its beating.
>
> Alexander Herzen
> My Past and Thoughts

Examining the life of Milford Howard was a fascinating experience. I cannot deny that I have gained an admiration and affection for the man. Through Howard I have also gained a very personal and informative view of Populism and the early New South. This is certainly not to say that Howard was important and influential in the general scheme of Southern politics and society, he was not. I do suggest, however, that Howard's concerns and actions, like those of any thoughtful, sensitive individual, are worthy of note and investigation. As much as the perceived "successes" of his time, Howard's life helps us understand the historical era in which he struggled.

I have many people to thank for their assistance. Mr. James Kuykendall and Mrs. Elizabeth Howard of the Landmarks Historical Society of Fort Payne, Alabama were invaluable in collecting and relaying information on Milford

Howard. I found their enthusiasm for Howard contagious. Professor David Shannon has provided expertise, encouragement, and kindness from the beginning of my endeavor. Fellow graduate students Bill Irwin, Richard Horner, Mark Buchanan, Fergus O'Donnell, and John Allman have consulted and commiserated with me when I needed it most. And Professor Edward Ayers was a dependable and able advisor as always. Finally and with the most gratitude, I thank my mother, father, and brother for their support and their examples. Whatever affection I have developed for history has undoubtedly come from my mother.

Mike Milligan
October, 1984

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Few episodes in American history have been studied more than the Populist revolt of the 1890s. The Populist movement in the late nineteenth century South has, in fact, been the subject of extensive analysis from such distinguished historians as John Hicks, Richard Hofstadter, and C. Vann Woodward. The publication of several recent studies indicate that historians are still keenly interested in Populism.[1] Yet while historians have probed vigorously into the issues behind Populism for several generations, a great deal is still not known about one of the most popular and intriguing protest movements the Republic has experienced. James Turner points out in a 1980 article on Populism, for example, that the basic features of the voter base of the movement have not been plausibly explained.[2] As a general rule, moreover, the study of Populism has suffered from subjective, moralistic judgments. From Hofstadter's deluded, authoritarian "cranks" to Norman Pollack's proto-socialists to Sheldon Hackney's alienated "losers" to Lawrence Goodwyn's democratic crusaders, historians have all too often confined Populists and their movement to a simplistic melodrama between "good" and "bad guys."[3] Oscar Handlin's advice voiced in 1965 calling for more of an effort "to understand rather than to defend or attack populists" remains appropriate.[4]

The method used to study Southern Populism can partly explain the inefficacy of historical analysis. One understandable, yet recurring, flaw in the study of Populism has been to examine the narrow time period of Populism as a political phenomenon in the 1890s.[5] Fortunately, recent emphasis on the Farmers' Alliance and other cultural and political roots of Populism have lessened the problem of simple time-specific analysis.[6] It is significant to note, however, that while historians have concentrated on the period before political Populism to broaden their approach to understanding the movement, they have generally neglected to study the life and transformation of Populist ideas and Populists after the turn of the twentieth century.[7] Furthermore, scholars of Populism, excited by Hofstadter's controversial The Age of Reform, have tended to investigate the movement's ideas before its leadership; or, in other words, ideology and rhetoric before individual Populists. There are, for instance, only a handful of strong biographies of Populists.[8] Historians, indeed, have been less than thorough in examining both Populist leadership and the fate of Populism in its wane. A study of the concerns and ideas of a lesser-known Populist leader, Milford Howard, offers insight into these neglected areas of Populist study.

The life of Milford Howard was certainly a full and active one. Although Howard was noted primarily as an

Alabama Populist politician and congressman in the 1890s, politics occupied only a portion of his life and his thoughts. Politics, he maintained, could not be examined in isolation. Indeed, Howard thought in grand terms, viewing the total picture of society. Howard's interests in addition to politics were those vital to any society--religion, health care, science, education, leadership, literature, and economic organization and development. He was a writer and an orator because he felt those were his gifts and was an educational reformer because he felt that was his mission.[9] In his various capacities, Howard was a tireless worker for social justice and had a passion for a crusade. Changing circumstances and perceptions as well as chronic overzealousness involved Howard in countless projects, many of which were doomed to fail from their inception. Nevertheless, whether a booster for the development of his home community of Fort Payne, Alabama, an opponent of birth control and "race suicide," or traveling in Italy to examine the Fascist experiment in person, Howard approached each cause and task with an abundance of vigor and commitment.

Howard was not a renaissance man out of indifference or boredom, but was motivated by a fundamental concern for the people and the world around him. As the contents of his life and the reflections of his Autobiography indicate, Howard did undoubtedly feel an obsession to help

others. As he grew older, Howard's humanitarianism became more self-enslaving and comprehensive. As a young lawyer and family man, Howard felt compelled to "make life more beautiful and easier" for his family.[10] With economic depression in the 1890s, the welfare of the "producers," the impoverished, and Christianity in America became the object of his labors. In the 1920s, Howard's constituency expanded to include the Anglo-Saxon race as he became caught up in the eugenics vogue. Logically enough, the very future of civilization itself in a world of communist threats, fascist coups, and democratic failures was the burning concern of the aged Howard. Indeed, selflessness was Howard's chosen path for personal fulfillment, one that appeared more elusive and demanding with time. In his Autobiography, Howard admitted that he was animated by "a Divine urge in me" that,

> was never satisfied with any achievement . . . Perhaps this is why I would plunge into some new line of activity . . . with a hope of coaxing that bigger self to come forth and give something to the world that I could not.[11]

I. A Short Personal History

Milford Wriarson Howard was born on December 18, 1862 in the poor north Georgia county of Floyd. Like his parents, Milford was born and raised in an environment of poverty and hard, meagerly rewarded work. Unsuccessful as a tenant farmer and a blacksmith in Georgia, Milford's father moved the family to Arkansas when Milford was a small boy, only to meet with even less success and greater burdens. Milford's childhood saw his body overcome with physical labor and his mind and spirit severely suppressed. Although anxious for formal education, Milford, by his mid-teens, had spent less than six months in school because of the demands and limitations of his family.[12] Characteristic of much of the Southern frontier of the time, the religious climate in the Howards' predominantly Baptist community was stifling and horrific to the boy.

His father, Stephen Howard, was as repressive an influence on Milford as the environment of the rural South. Embittered by his failures and rheumatism, Stephen apparently vented his anger on his family. He demanded complete obedience from family members and enforced such obedience in a dictatorial and brutal fashion. Stephen took pride in being a stern disciplinarian and on occasion

for example, "conquered" his children by continuously striking them until they behaved to his liking.[13] Nowhere was Stephen more uncompromising and prepared to "sacrifice anything for a principle" than in his and his family's adherence to the Baptist faith. As an ordained preacher, Stephen exercised his spiritual duties deliberately and the wrathful Baptist God young Milford feared assumed a central place in his home life.[14]

The love and kindness of Milford's mother, Martha, soothed much of the boy's pain and anguish. Milford felt extremely close to his mother as a child and throughout his life. In his "Autobiography", Howard claimed that the thought of his mother inspired all of his actions and ideas.[15] To Milford, his mother was the embodiment of virtue; the possessor of the "sweetness of a garden of roses" and "the purity of a Madonna." Undoubtedly, Howard gained much of his passion to serve humanity from the "intensely spiritual" and "super-sensitive" qualities of his mother.[16] In contrast to Stephen's doctrinaire Baptist views, Martha's faith was simple and characterized by a benevolent, personal God that was very appealing to Milford. Unlike Stephen, Martha encouraged Milford to dream freely and to aspire after his dreams.

Since his early teens, Howard's dream was to become a lawyer. The family's return to Georgia in 1876 aided his cause as he was able to attend school more regularly

for several years. In the spring of 1881, with the guidance and reluctant encouragement of Joseph Blance, a lawyer from a nearby county, Howard got his chance to read law.[17] His aptitude for law was remarkable and after a brief apprenticeship and further study, Howard "passed the examinations and took the oath of an attorney" several weeks before his nineteenth birthday.[18] His family's move to DeKalb county in northeastern Alabama was a fortunate one for Milford. Not only was Howard able to practice law with a respected lawyer, Colonel L. A. Dobbs, but he managed in a few years to attain a full partnership with Dobbs in the young and growing town of Fort Payne.[19]

Howard's success and fortunes rose rapidly with those of Fort Payne. In 1887, with a flourishing law practice, Howard became involved in a large-scale development scheme for Fort Payne with a number of New England industrialists. A local "boom" was the result, a boom in which Howard's real estate investments and other risky financial moves reaped immediate and hefty personal dividends. Howard believed that his hand in capitalism was charmed as "everything" he "touched turned to money."[20] On the board of directors of five companies and able to purchase a substantial farm for his family and a goods store for his brother, Howard valued his personal fortune in the late 1880s at approximately $100,000.[21]

The Democratic party was the only political route open to a respectable Southerner such as Howard. The traditions of the Howard family were clearly mapped out for Milford and he was expected to abide by them. Howard wrote of his predicament, "I was born a Baptist, and a Democrat, just as most people are born with their religious and political beliefs already cut out for them."[22] Furthermore, Howard reasoned that his financial prowess necessitated involvement in the party. In little time, Howard became an influential local figure in the Democratic party. Serving as the first chairman of the Democratic executive committee of DeKalb county from 1888 to the early 1890s, Howard worked hard for the Democratic establishment, particularly after the defection of Reuben Kolb's "Jeffersonian" Democrats in late 1891 and early 1892. Howard called himself a "shouting" Democrat because of the tactics he used to drown out the protest of his Jeffersonian opponents, as he campaigned for the incumbent Democratic governor, Thomas G. Jones, and the local Seventh Congressional district Democratic nominee, William Denson, in the fall of 1892. At the Democratic national convention in Chicago, delegate Howard was one of Grover Cleveland's "most enthusiastic supporters" and marked himself as a "bright" prospect in the state Democratic party.[23]

A bursting of the Fort Payne bubble in the fall of 1890 and, in particular, severe personal financial reversals caused Howard to re-evaluate his political views.[24] Seeing his economic ventures go bankrupt and the roof over his family in jeopardy because of debt, Howard shifted to the free silver wing of the Democratic party in the summer of 1892 in the belief that the scarcity of money was depressing Southern communities such as Fort Payne.[25] As an inflationist advocate, Howard supported Cleveland in Chicago under the inaccurate understanding that he might remove the tight limits on the coinage of silver if the South supported his candidacy.

Within a matter of months, Cleveland's tight money sentiments were painfully clear to Howard, and Howard replied by declaring that he had been betrayed by Cleveland and the Democratic party. Howard's first novel, If Christ Came to Congress, written in the summer of 1894, evidenced his disgust for the two established political parties and the degree of economic and social crisis that he felt existed in the America of the day. Encouraged to seek the nomination for the Populist candidate in the Seventh district by several close friends, Howard completed his shift to Populism by gaining the party's nomination in September 1894. With the exception of his support of a protective tariff, Howard campaigned along standard Populist lines in advocating the "free coinage of silver

at sixteen to one," the issuance of a circulating medium by the federal government, and "a free ballot and a fair count."[26] In an extremely violent and chaotic contest, Howard's election was assured when the Democrats divided over whether to support their own candidate, Denson, and the Republicans chose to endorse Howard.[27]

As a representative in the Fifty-Fourth Congress, Howard agitated for greater popular control of the government and the economy. Reflecting on his days as a Populist congressman, Howard wrote in 1929, "I fancied that if the people were given the right to initiate and pass laws they would right all wrongs and bring about a millennium here on earth."[28] He viewed an expanded, government-controlled money supply as a means both to bring the nation out of economic depression and to ensure "that every man shall enjoy the fruits of his labor."[29] Howard's support of several free silver bills and the proposal of numerous resolutions of his own to investigate into the recent sale of government bonds were designed to serve his inflationist objective. Howard also sought to aid the cause of popular government by inquiring into the accountability of the civil service to the people and by introducing a bill "intended to allow the voters of the United States to vote directly" for more offices.[30] Re-elected on basically the same Populist program in 1896, Howard's conduct in Congress was still marked by a keen

sympathy for farmers, labor, and the unemployed.[31] Perhaps the most noted incident in Howard's two term career as a congressman occurred in May 1896 when he introduced a resolution impeaching President Cleveland for unethical financial dealings and behavior "detrimental to the people's welfare."[32]

While a congressman, Howard wrote his second novel. Published in 1895, The American Plutocracy did not differ from If Christ Came to Congress in the author's general appeal to the rank-and-file to act decisively to save the nation from demise. Both novels provided a gloomy picture of the contemporary state of political and economic affairs in America. "Plutocrats" and their trusts were said to command the economy and the government; they influenced the people's representatives to legislate against the wishes and welfare of the vast majority. An underlying belief that American democracy could and would triumph with vigilant, common action, however, runs through Howard's writing. In the introduction of The American Plutocracy, Howard stated,

> I have an unwavering faith in the honesty and patriotism of the masses and believe when the critical moment arrives they will exhibit the spirit of our ancestors when they declared that 'all men are, and of right ought to be, free and equal.'

The question of the future of America, he declared, was

to be decided by the ballot; voters would determine if wealth or the people would rule.[33]

Howard's exit from politics was slow, but deliberate. A sense of frustration and disillusionment concerning reform in politics and a desire to "make money" again prompted Howard to decline the Populist nomination for the Seventh district in 1898.[34] From 1900 to 1904, he remained involved and interested in the Populist party, attending national conventions and campaigning for Populist presidential candidates. In 1910, Howard was coaxed out of political retirement to accept his district's Republican nomination in a battle over the issue of prohibition. Reacquainted with the political world he detested, Howard viewed his election defeat as a great "blessing".[35]

Business occupied most of Howard's time in the first fifteen years of the twentieth century. As before, Howard speculated heavily in marginal investments that ultimately brought disastrous results.[36] His legal practice, health, and state of mind suffered with each business failure. After a nervous breakdown in 1916, Howard gave up the practice of law for the more serene life of farming and writing.[37] In a short time, however, restlessness set in and the now full-time writer moved to southern California to seek his fortune in the infant movie industry. Two of Howard's novels written in the early 1920s, Peggy Ware and

The Bishop of the Ozarks, were intended as photoplay scenarios. In 1923, The Bishop of the Ozarks was made into a silent movie by the respected Cosmopolitan Film Company. Howard, much to his delight, played the starring role in the production.[38]

Howard found his life as a writer neither fruitful nor satisfying. Although he rejected politics as a viable means to effect desired change, Howard did not abandon his populistic concern for his community and his nation. Indeed, Howard's concern appeared to heighten with his various failures. In particular, Howard sought to put into action the dreams he had expressed in his recent novels. In the summer and fall of 1923, Howard and his cousin, Stella Vivian Harper, established the "Master School" for underprivileged children near Fort Payne, modeling the school after one developed in Peggy Ware.

The conducting of a school that provided free education for those mountain children who were prepared to work for it, designed to "inculcate the principles of patriotism, Christian religion, and the ideals of the Anglo-Saxon founders of this Government," was perceived by Howard to be the ultimate goal of his life.[39] With the school in financial trouble from its inception, Howard stressed the significance of the Master School concept by linking its educational principles to the popular eugenics movement. In a promotional article written in the Birmingham News in

1924, Howard stated that the "ambitious purpose" of educating Southern mountaineers was "so that they in turn may save the Anglo-Saxon race in the United States."[40] The Master School promised to provide for its students both the spiritual guidance too often neglected in the nation and the sense of race consciousness needed to salvage Anglo-Saxon civilization. Although the Master School was forced to close because of a lack of funds in 1925, white racial homogeneity and supremacy and spiritual education remained pressing concerns of Howard for the rest of his life.

A trip to Europe in the fall and winter of 1927, largely financed by the sale of his last piece of property, influenced profoundly Howard's thoughts and attitudes. In a maelstrom of competing communist, democratic, and fascist ideologies, Europe proved to be a useful testing ground for Howard's old and new ideas. Intrigued by fascism while in America, Howard became an unqualified booster of Italian fascism after experiencing a trip through Italy and a personal interview with the Italian premier, Benito Mussolini.[41] In various newspaper articles and his book, Fascism: A Challenge to Democracy, sympathetically explaining Italian fascism, Howard repudiated the democratic philosophy.

Democracy, he maintained, was grossly inefficient, highly unstable, and prone to elevate private interests over those of the public. Science and experience taught

Howard that the "voice of the people" contained the seeds of disintegration and dissolution; faith in the masses was little more than faith in hopeless anarchy. He praised fascism because it was concerned with the totality of society and chiefly because it got things accomplished. It was not straitjacketed by the dogma of democracy. The men who participated actively in government did so because of their ability, not the mere fact of their citizenship. Italian fascism, moreover, was impressive to Howard because of the "divine" leadership of its master, Mussolini.[42] If a selfless, benevolent leader could act effectively on behalf of the common good, could look beyond individual interests and defend the integrity and welfare of society as a whole, Howard asked what was the need for democracy? From late 1927 to his death in 1937, Howard was enthralled by the gospel of Italian fascism. Even the Italian-Ethiopian war did not dampen his enthusiasm for the new Italian "renaissance."

Several significant questions arise with Howard's conversion to Italian fascism. First, what motivated him to repudiate democracy and his time as a Populist? Second, can Howard's Populism be reconciled with his defense of Italian fascism, or were they two distinct, antagonistic ideological and philosophical stages in his life? The rest of this paper will address these questions.

II. Frustration, Disillusionment, and Despair

The career of Georgia's Tom Watson is the most renowned story of a Populist turned sour. C. Vann Woodward's Tom Watson: Agrarian Rebel provides an excellent account of Watson's perverse transformation. Called by Woodward "the first native white Southern leader of importance to treat the Negro's aspirations with the seriousness that human strivings deserve" for his Populist insistence upon "political equality" for the black in the 1890s, Watson, less than ten years later, advocated a policy of black subjugation "so severe and so firm" that "'the great masses of negroes would reconcile themselves to a condition of recognized peasantry.'" According to Woodward, Watson's turnaround was complete. Negro political rights defended in the 'nineties demanded constitutional disfranchisement in the next decade, and lynch law condemned in Populist days was commended as a "good sign . . . that a sense of justice yet lives among the people" at the eve of World War One.[43] In Watson's mind, the Negro changed from being the most reliable friend of the common white working man to the single greatest threat to the Republic.

Both Watson and Woodward contended that the question of race tyrannized Watson's political thoughts. Woodward writes, "There is no doubt that Watson thought of the Negro

problem as the Nemesis of his career." Apparently, Watson genuinely tried to solve the race question with the magnanimity of his Populism. When the Democrats manipulated the black vote for their own gain, Watson concluded angrily that the Negro had betrayed his support. Thus, the frustration of political failure, unfulfilled reform aspirations, and pent-up agrarian discontent is Woodward's explanation for Watson's degeneracy. "Frustration, 'like a dark thread' . . . seemed 'woven between the warp and woof' of his life, and it never seemed to tire of repeating the same pattern." The "heaviest personal loser" in the Populist party, Watson along with his dissatisfied rural constituency blamed the Negro and the Catholic Church for their own failings.[44] Undoubtedly, in the opinion of Woodward, Watson's unyielding commitment to Southern white farmers and his failure to deliver for them eventually poisoned his mind.

Several historians of Populism have commented on the nature of the leadership in the movement. Reference has invariably been made to Watson and his sharp mid-life swing to the right to support historians' assessments of Populist leaders. In support of his basic contention that Populism "seems very strongly to foreshadow some aspects of the cranky pseudo-conservatism of the time," Hofstadter portrays most Populist leaders as failing, narrowminded opportunists. He is quick to cite Watson as a typical

Populist leader and his writings as illustrating typical Populist themes. Populist leaders, Hofstadter maintains, were, on the whole, reactionary Jacksonians who, having "failed to find a place for themselves within the established political machines," jumped on the reform bandwagon in the 1890s in search of elusive personal success.[45] Hackney, similarly, sees Populist leaders as restless losers with basically conservative, "provincial" roots and inclinations. In his study of Populism in Alabama, Hackney notes that most former Populist leaders joined the Republican party or the right wing of the Democratic party with the demise of the People's party around the turn of the twentieth century.[46]

The careers of Tom Watson and Milford Howard were at odds with many of the conclusions of Hofstadter and Hackney. Neither was a political or social failure when he became a Populist. Both were well established, respected citizens in their respective communities and influential members in their local Democratic organizations during the time of their conversions. Watson had, in fact, served as a Democratic state congressman in the late 1880s. Watson and Howard as Populists, moreover, exhibited a degree of sympathy for the plight of the rural, small town white Southerner that extended well beyond their own depression-time problems. "A deep passion for justice" animated both men in their Populist activities and

afterward and was a compelling force behind their inconsistent, temperamental behavior.[47] At least in the case of Watson and Howard, Woodward's description of the Populist leadership in Alabama, Georgia, and North Carolina in Origins of the New South is probably closer to the reality than either Hofstadter or Hackney. Woodward writes that "neither patricians nor plebians, they were all . . . literate, informed, and capable citizens."[48]

A recognition that a great many Populists did not think or behave in a reactionary fashion after the political death of Populism offers alternatives to the Watson model.[49] The lives of two Populist leaders who were associates of Howard in Alabama, Joseph Manning and William Skaggs, provide two examples of mainstream Populists who remained mainstream. Both one-time Democrats, Manning and Skaggs showed themselves as insightful and sensitive men in their conduct and writing.[50] In particular, a confident, thoughtful re-assertion of Populist democracy was common to Manning's Fadeout of Populism and Skaggs' The Southern Oligarchy. Indeed, the need for democratic electoral reform was the central message in both these 1920s treatises. The will of the people in the Southern states, both argued, could no longer be frustrated by Democratic corruption and selfishness. Reiterating the thrust of their Populist

agitation, Manning and Skaggs viewed the establishment of meaningful popular participation in government as the best security of the nation's welfare.[51] It is important to add that Skaggs in The Southern Oligarchy presented a rather sophisticated Progressive critique of the South in the 1920s. He advised the Southern states to make a greater commitment to education and condemned child labor, lynching, the convict lease system, and debt peonage as products of a barbaric society.[52]

A preoccupation with personalities was a significant character trait shared by Watson and Howard. In many respects, the directions in Watson's political career were marked by personality clashes and communions. Watson's severe criticism of American involvement in World War One, for example, was predicated largely on his intense dislike of President Wilson. It was not surprising that Watson's paper during the first two decades of the twentieth century, the Jeffersonian, was noted more for its "vituperative attacks on personalities" than its treatment of the issues.[53] From Jesus Christ to Grover Cleveland to Benito Mussolini, leading figures had a powerful influence on Howard's thoughts and actions. Like many Populists, including Manning and Skaggs, Howard admired enormously Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln. Beyond respecting the clear thinking political legacies that these statesmen left behind, Howard was, throughout

his life, captivated by the personal integrity and courage of the two men.[54] In a similar fashion, Watson expressed an extraordinary debt to Andrew Jackson for the inspiration behind many of the reforms he advocated as a Populist.[55]

A desperate and necessary search for a scapegoat was one manifestation of Watson's and Howard's emphasis on personalities and the personal. Both Watson and Howard invariably needed "a hated enemy" to define their approaches to political and social questions. Whether the scapegoat was Watson's "Wall Street bankers," Negroes, or Jews, or Howard's "plutocracy," materialism, or communism, both men reasoned that something or someone had to be singled out and cut down to size for their constituency to gain.[56] A major axiom of Populist thought, Bruce Palmer points out in Man Over Money, was a stress on "the personal as opposed to the impersonal"; a "belief that society was basically, and properly, a network of individual relations in which personal morality and responsibility continued to play a central role."[57] Howard's habit of personalizing the nation's struggle and institutions was evidenced in his Populist writing. In If Christ Came to Congress, for example, Howard described industrialization as an all-consuming demon, while in The American Plutocracy he claimed that the financial system was composed of "modern brigands."[58] Personalizing enabled Howard "to understand that suffering caused by the way the system worked was as

immoral and as personal as the suffering caused by individual acts."[59] He generally presented the evils in the system in terms of hardships experienced by the commonplace individuals, the Jennie Harmons and Mary Blanks of America.[60]

A fundamental difference between Watson and Howard was the former's consistent infatuation with politics and political office and the latter's rather early rejection of personal political involvement. A party politico as a young man, Watson was to have his hand in Georgia and later national politics for the rest of his life.[61] In the quest for office and power to promote his constituency's interests, Watson was extremely skillful in playing the two-faced, underhanded game of political demagoguery. In 1905, a skeptical Northern reformer described Watson as a "professed politician merely out for his own advantage." Concerning Watson's political opportunism, Woodward writes,

> If he must . . . grapple with the Browns and Smiths and Joneses of an office-greedy world for the restoration of the Golden Age, he was ready to do it. If scruples, and dignity, and what some considered honor stood in the way of the necessary votes, they might have to be doffed, like a frock coat in a combat of catch-as-catch-can.[62]

Demagoguery and winning-at-all-costs tactics were precisely what offended Howard about politics in the South

and in the nation. Widespread corruption and fraud, empty promises and playacting, back scratching and back stabbing, all effectively used by the Democratic party, made politics unbearable for, and unresponsive to, the honest, upright man. While campaigning for the Populist presidential ticket in 1900, Howard declared that, "Democracy [the Democratic party] in the east is an organized appetite for office, and Democracy in the south is a thing opposed to everything . . . it is bourbonism."[63] In a similar vein, Skaggs concluded that the Democratic party was motivated by no principle other than self-interest. Skaggs wrote that the Democrats in the South had for seventy-five years "been willing to form a coalition with any dissatisfied element in the North provided that element is strong enough to assure victory."[64] The politics of Tom Watson did not escape Howard's eyes. "Self-centered," "cold-blooded," and "lacking in moral qualities" was the manner in which Howard described Watson in his "Autobiography".[65] In general, Howard did not view the world through Watson's narrow lens of politics and political rewards. Howard's world view had social, spiritual, and idealized perspectives to which Watson paid little attention.

Without a doubt, the sense of frustration that Woodward claims deeply disturbed Watson also deeply disturbed Howard. Political frustration and disillusionment were

both the causes and consequences of Howard's involvement in Populism. Howard, for example, left the Democratic party primarily because he was disgusted with the party's dishonesty and insensitivity. He was aware that Reuben Kolb was denied "his rightful victory" in the 1892 Alabama gubernatorial election by the Democrats' abuse of black-belt votes.[66] Moreover, according to Howard, the South was "desperate" by the time of the fall elections of 1892 and pleaded for the Democratic party to effect favorable "change." Not only did President Cleveland turn his back on his friends in the South by proceeding as if "we were suffering from a redundancy of currency," but deceit was used by the party to garner the Southern vote in the first place. In particular, Howard claimed in his Autobiography that party politicians at the Chicago convention falsely led the Southern delegates to believe that "if we put him in," the South could influence Cleveland to remove the limit on the coinage of silver.[67] Howard felt personally affronted by the Democratic administration's conduct during the depression and simply could not watch while the Democracy bit the faltering Southern hand that fed it.[68]

A Populist candidate in the deep South in the 1890s, Howard experienced a horror show that he was not to forget. In a solidly white supremacist society in which social and political conformity was valued almost as highly as a

faith in God, the Populist movement was viewed by most as a direct threat to Southern values and the Southern way of life. Populist supporters suffered from ostracism at the least, while Populist candidates were subjected to the most intimidating tactics the Southern establishment could muster. The treatment of Howard was no exception.[69] His campaigning in 1894 was marred by numerous threats on his life and on the lives of family members and by countless defamations of his character.[70] Once elected, the abuse directed at Howard diminished little. His law partner incurred permanent brain damage in a beating that he received because of his association with Howard and the Howard family was forced to move out of their home in Fort Payne to Cullman because of the threat of arson.[71] Howard found campaigning for Congress in 1910 to be not much better than in the Populist days of the 'nineties, claiming that his electoral defeat was the result of age-old Democratic corruption.[72] While the unethical moves of political opponents spurred Watson to fight fire with fire, Howard's reaction was to withdraw. Manning and Skaggs also withdrew from politics shortly after the Populist era, but, unlike Howard, they still maintained their faith in the efficacy of the conventional political route. The hostility and bitterness that Howard weathered while in politics impressed upon him that American democracy was far from healthy.

Trying to implement policy on what he felt was a non-partisan concern for society, Howard concluded that factionalism blocked his way every time. Furthermore, it was the intensity with which factional and party conflicts were waged that brought Howard to doubt the effectiveness of America's democracy. As a congressman, Howard learned quickly that legislation in Congress was passed not according to its ability to serve society, but because of its partisan label. Truly national issues did not exist in America's political world, all issues were special to one region or a party establishment.[73] Howard felt that President Cleveland was deserving of impeachment, but saw that his impeachment resolution was treated by his congressional peers as little more than a bad joke. He concluded that parties were absent of ideological and human integrity and were simply vehicles to get politicians into positions of power.[74] As early as 1895 in The American Plutocracy, Howard referred to George Washington's farewell address on the dangers of "party worship" to the nation's welfare.[75] At the root of factionalism and party corruption was base selfishness on the part of politicians. Demagoguery, Howard maintained, was becoming more prevalent in American politics and was the logical outcome of the selfishness of democratic factionalism. Politicians exploited, rather than represented, mass support to serve their own private

interests. Worse still for the nation, Howard claimed, self-interested behavior by politicans encouraged selfishness among the electorate.[76] It is significant to note that charges of factionalism and demagoguery most frequently arose when a Howard-backed project or policy was defeated.[77]

Indeed, sour grapes brought sour evaluations of the American political system. Mounting political disillusionment and failure of various kinds gave Howard a declining estimation of American democracy. By the late 1920s, Howard proclaimed that he "saw everything upside down" as a Populist. Democracy was not government by the people, but another form of dictatorship; democratic politics were iconoclastic and divisive, intent upon tearing down, rather than building up, society.[78] Howard frankly could not believe that all the infighting in democratic politics he had observed and suffered from was in the best interest of America. In an article in the Birmingham News deploring the bitterness of the 1928 presidential campaign, Howard wrote,

> I have done with politics, with partisanship, with bitterness, with the shouting, the tumult, the fury of political upheavals. Whatever mission I have in this world is not a political one . . . If I were in politics all those who did not belong to my political party would think and say all kinds of hard things about me and my party . . . I have chosen to keep my hands clean of partisan politics for the remainder of my days.

Howard's advice from the Bible for candidates Herbert Hoover and Al Smith revealed his profound weariness: "let all bitterness and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another."[79] To Howard, Italian fascism appeared to take all the bitterness, infighting, selfishness, and pettiness out of politics. Cries of "the state," "Italy," and "the Motherland," were welcome changes from Democratic, Republican, Populist, North, and South.

Howard's life was marked by disillusionment and despair well beyond just the political kind. His Autobiography portrayed an individual in constant turmoil, waging life's "uphill struggle" and forever losing. Feelings of "empty realizations," "utter desolation," "impenetrable darkness," and "hopeless despair" pervaded his life story. The world was facing the "battle of Armageddon" and Howard took it upon himself to prevent a catastrophe. Fundamentally, Howard was a psychologically unstable man, who was caught in a personal dilemma that tormented him. He wanted, more than anything else, to engage in "some worthy undertaking for humanity," but society conspired against his service and his success. For example, Howard's plan of building a "scenic highway" through the mountains of northern Alabama and southern Tennessee failed, in his opinion, only because of "the envies and jealousies" of

those who were determined to "wreck" him."[80] The legal profession, politics, and business were all infected with dishonesty and greed in spite of Howard's righteous involvement. A man generally optimistic that society would become better, Howard experienced genuine pain and fatigue when it did not.

Howard's spiritual turmoil, his search for God, was the most significant struggle in his life. Spiritual tranquility was the answer to all of Howard's questions and the foundation of his political, social, and economic ideas. He was "convinced that no man could live without religion, and that no nation can survive that forgets God." Clearly stated, Howard maintained that religious faith "is the greatest organized force for good in the world."[81] While Howard's religious faith often simplified and stabilized his view of the world, his regular bouts of religious uncertainty more often brought prolonged chaos and disillusionment instead. Howard was certain that America yearned for spiritual fulfillment, but was never quite sure how it could be achieved. Indeed, religious doubt complemented political doubt, and Howard's passion for harmony and progress in society, which eventually drove him to fascism, was generally defined in religious terms.

As was the case with William Jennings Bryan, Howard believed that the great political questions were "in the final analysis great moral questions."[82] Politics was

one of several avenues in which Howard tried to create "a great big portion" of "heaven right here on this earth."[83] Religious images and concerns gave form to Howard's Populism. References to Christ, His suffering, and His simple virtue were common in Howard's writing and speeches. His involvement in political protest, moreover, was motivated by a disturbing realization that American society was drifting further away from a deference for the just laws of God. The disgraceful treatment that Christ received by the authorities and the public in If Christ Came to Congress and The American Plutocracy as He sought to end America's suffering, was an attempt by Howard to shame Americans into religious and moral fidelity. Howard's efforts to restore Christianity in America paralleled the work of the social gospelers who also "attempted to bring the teachings and being of Christ into modern daily life" in the 1890s. In an extremely popular social gospel novel, In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do?, author Reverend Charles Sheldon also reached Howard's horrific conclusion that America was "a nominal Christian country."[84] Howard's infusion of Christian values in his Populist thought was characteristic of the movement in general. The pervasive influence of Protestantism in the rural South made "the language of Zion" the natural idiom of Populism.[85]

The theme of anti-materialism was central to Howard's Populist message. It was "the spirit of avarice . . . devouring the great heart of the nation" that created widespread hardship in America. Passionately, Howard contended that materialism, the desire for material possessions, and Christian brotherhood were irreconcilable; either the "Money God" or the spiritual, just God would rule man's soul and society. In particular, he argued that America in the 1890s was an immoral and unjust society because the commanding plutocrats were "money mad."[86] Extremes in wealth brought not only physical suffering, but, more important, religious and moral deprivation as well. In If Christ Came to Congress, for example, poverty drove Jennie Harmon to barter her virtue for employment in the civil service and caused starving children to doubt God's love. While the poor abandoned God out of want and despair, the power and pride of wealth convinced the rich that they themselves were more important than God.[87] In Howard's opinion, faith in the teachings of Jesus had to be restored for social and economic justice to become a reality. To this end, in both If Christ Came to Congress and The American Plutocracy, Howard called for a "Moses" to lead America out of its present darkenss.[88]

Spiritual turmoil and disillusionment shook the confidence of Howard's Populist pronouncements. Since he was a young boy, Howard questioned the established religion of his father and his community. The Baptist God appeared too harsh and angry to offer the love his mother lived by. The failure of his Populist millennium to come about only intensified Howard's search for a benevolent, personal God and his disrespect for fundamental Protestantism.[89] As religious tenets seemed less applicable in American life, as his perception of what faith ought to be became more amorphous and confused, Howard depended increasingly upon religion to help in his life and world. This feverish "quest for for truth," however, led him into further "agnosticism, doubt, fear and unbelief." Torn with "spiritual agonies" and "burdens" in his later life, Howard called himself a "born Hamlet."[90]

Howard's embracing of spiritualism illustrated the severity and sincerity of his religious crisis. A rather young religion that was strongly criticized by the religious establishment in America, early twentieth century spiritualism was characterized by a simplistic and egalitarian approach. In <u>The Bishops of The Ozarks,</u> Howard explained his spiritualism: "man is not body, not flesh and blood, he is spirit, just as God is spirit. In fact, he is the very essence of the spirit of God as the drops of rain are of the ocean."[91] Spiritualism offered

Howard the same religious goals he sought as a Populist in a more straightforward and extreme form. First, the battle lines between the material and the spiritual man were clearly drawn.[92] The kindness and forgiveness of God was stressed and the religious dogma that shackled man's ability to love and receive the Lord was avoided. The comprehensive nature of the spiritualist creed, Howard believed, would enable Christian religion to be the purveyor of economic plenty and social harmony as it was intended. Howard's spiritualism, moreover, carried with it an extremely bitter denunciation of religious fundamentalism in America. Well-fed, wealthy ministers were leading the march of gross materialism that was devastating the nation by way of their depictions of an uncaring God and a sinful man.[93] It is significant to note that Howard's final rejection of established religion in the mid-1920s occurred at approximately the same time as his final rejection of established American political traditions.[94] A common sense of disillusionment and a desperate search for answers inspired both his religious and political rebellion.

As with politics, Italian fascism seemed to meet the straining spiritual needs of Howard. Italian fascism impressed Howard because it appeared to be the only form of government that was actively concerned about the moral and spiritual nature of man. While Howard viewed communism

as the godless "executioner of Christians," or "militant Atheism," he also looked on American democracy unfavorably because of its indifference towards matters of morality and its basic "spiritual emptiness."[95] In Howard's view of fascist Italy, the state stood for God and the immortality of man's soul. It defended the integrity of the Roman Catholic Church and promoted the "spiritual homogeneity" of the nation.[96] In Fascism: A Challenge to Democracy, the fascist education system under the direction of education minister, Giovanni Gentile, received particular praise from Howard. Elitist in design and committed both to the spiritual development of the student and patriotic service to the nation, the fascist education system closely resembled Howard's work in the Master School.[97] Heading the fascist vanguard of morality and spirituality was Il Duce, the unifying force in the "spiritual renaissance" of Italy.[98] Mussolini was Howard's long-awaited Savior; he was Italy's "Bishop of the Ozarks."

III. Contemporary American Attitudes Toward Italian Fascism and Mussolini

Evidence of the horrors and despicable tyranny of European fascism has been made abundantly clear to the post-1945 world. Yet, for contemporary observers of fascism, particularly observers of the early stages of fascism in Italy, it was a different and considerably less clear story. In general, Mussolini's fascism was seen as an innovative political development uncolored by prejudice. Its virtue was, in fact, its newness, the apparent freshness of the fascist approach. In the first chapter of Fascism: A Challenge to Democracy, Howard enthusiastically portrayed Italian fascism as a new direction, a totally unique form of government that carefully avoided the pitfalls of other forms. Another contemporary American observer noted that, "The fascist revolution is infinitely more interesting than the Russian revolution because it is not a revolution according to preconceived type."[99] Thus, what Italian fascism actually was in reality is not terribly important. What is important, however, was how Howard and other Americans interpreted fascism at the time. Indeed, Howard's sympathy for fascism should not be viewed outside of its historical context--it cannot be seen as simply a

succumbing to the evil we are now aware transpired. Nor were his pro-fascist sentiments a bizarre, isolated personal phenomenon. An examination of contemporary American attitudes towards Italian fascism and Mussolini is necessary to place Howard's opinions in context. For Howard was far from the only American who was captivated by the apparent magic of fascism and the charm of Mussolini.

In Mussolini and Fascism: The View from America, John Diggins contends that America in the 1920s and the early 1930s generally viewed Italian fascism in a favorable light. Furthermore, many Americans hoped that certain features of fascist Italy could be applied at home.[100] Much as it filled a void during a period of crisis in Howard's life, the Italian fascist ideology appeared in America at a time when the nation's traditional order was in disarray and alternatives seemed few. America was vulnerable to the appeal of a superstructure with answers and fascism seemed to offer something for everybody.

More than anything else, it was "the intense fear of the red specter of international Communism" that motivated Americans to defend the aims and means of Italian fascism. Howard's attraction to fascism as a "bulwark" against communism was evident in much of his later writing.[102] Particularly with the start of the Great Depression, fascism was believed by many to provide order and efficiency

in liberal capitalism without the tyranny of socialism or the revolutionary tyranny of communism. Fascist corporatism and aristocratic authoritarianism were seen as updated variations of the American system with due respect for individual enterprise, nation, and the sanctity of law and God. In the winter of 1925, an article in the New York Times claimed that the fascist concept of power "has many points in common with that of the men who inspired our constitution--John Adams, Hamilton, and Washington."[103] Progressive Herbert Croly equated fascist-type corporatism with "Hamiltonian nationalism."[104] The broad anti-communist appeal of Italian fascism in America is described by Diggins,

> In contrast to Russia's apparent war on property, its atheism and classlessness, its subversive internationalism, and its destruction of 'marriage, the home, the fireside, the family,' Fascism seemed to stand for property and filial values, social mobility within a social order, and for God and country. To businessmen especially, Italy's corporatism displayed all the benefits of coherent national planning without the threat of wholesale collectivism.[105]

In explaining the American infatuation with Italian fascism it must be kept in mind that, "on the whole, the American people were poorly informed about the meaning of Italian events." With the Italian press acting as a tool of the state and American reports from Italy heavily

censored, the power of fascism propaganda was considered infrequently by American observers.[106]

While the American right certainly found a great deal to like about Italian fascism, pro-fascist opinion in America was not confined to the right. Anti-communism and authoritarian leadership ensured that the right's support of fascism was basically solid.[107] Nativists, such as Lothrop Stoddard, were anxious to see the hierarchical, anti-democratic fascist experiment succeed. William Randolph Hearst was one of many "100% Americans" who were excited by Mussolini's tough, no nonsense approach to politics. Most pro-fascist journals were conservative, although some were former muckrakers.[108] While Fortune magazine was indicative of strong business support for Italian fascism, the decidedly pro-fascist stand of The Saturday Evening Post implied popular American sympathy for Mussolini's leadership.

The response of the American left and liberal center to fascism was characterized by divided opinions. There was no unified condemnation of fascism made by the left as many wishfully thought that fascism represented the last decaying stage of capitalism. "Cautious curiosity" is the manner in which Diggins summarizes the liberal reaction to Italian fascism. Undoubtedly, even in the 1920s, the majority of American liberals were not taken with fascism. Prominent liberals like John Dewey and Walter Lippmann, for

example, perceived the dangerous anti-liberal foundations of Italian fascism from the beginning. Diggins maintains that there was, however, a "pragmatic liberal defence of fascism." In the mid-1920s, fascism seemed appropriate to a significant number of liberals who had come to question the effectiveness of mass democracy.[109]

Fascism, for instance, was an appealing alternative to American Progressivism. Italian fascism appeared as a tempting destination for the Progressive "search for order" that Robert Wiebe describes.[110] The Progressive push for "unity, cohesion and stability" in society was, in fact, a reaction to the same general sense of directionlessness and decline that spawned fascist authoritarian corporatism. Moreover, the Progressive stress on pragmatism, efficiency, and the common good paralleled several of the major goals of Italian fascism.[111] Dewey Grantham's study of Southern Progressivism, in particular, reveals fascistic traits in the Progressive political approach. Racial considerations and a "deep distrust of the masses" and the mass democratic process, Grantham argues, led Southern Progressives to adopt a limited, elitist concept of "democracy." Like Italian fascists, "Southern Progressives demonstrated a proclivity towards paternalistic solutions" in dealing with social problems and in defining political leadership.[112]

One of Progressivism's leading spokesmen, Herbert Croly, was philosophically quite akin to Milford Howard. In The Promise of American Life, Croly defended "realistic" corporatism on approximately the same grounds that Howard praised Italian fascism twenty years later. The tradition of Jeffersonian individualism and "unlimited personal freedom" was severely attacked and declared to be no longer operative in American society. What Croly viewed as the most utilitarian political and economic form of organization was a centralized, corporate order with a strong national leadership. Croly, like Howard, was "openly cynical" of efforts to make democracy more direct; direct government by the people would probably only damage the political process by making government less workable. Croly and Howard were equally adamant in their call for disciplined individual subordination to the goals of society and in their rejection of socialism. Furthermore, both felt that the regeneration of society must ultimately follow along moral and religious lines.[113] In general, a commitment to government by the talented was shared by Howard, American Progressives like Croly, and Italian fascists.

It was the dynamic personality of Benito Mussolini probably more than the particular nature of the fascist ideology, however, that brought many Americans to look at fascist Italy with interest and a degree of admiration.

Liberal, conservative, and socialist alike in America viewed Mussolini as an "outstanding leader" and a capable, achieving man. His popularity was enhanced by a spectacle-seeking American press that played, without regret, Mussolini's game of buffoonery and image-building. Mussolini was the "human pseudo-event" to Americans, making fascist Italy seem more like a personal sideshow than an authoritarian regime.[114]

While Mussolini's popularity was largely a "product of the press," Diggins maintains that Mussolini the political leader projected many images that were "distinctly peculiar" to the American value system and political tradition. His humble beginnings and dramatic rise to power, for example, made Mussolini the quintessential Horatio Alger. The roles of "redeemer" and "spiritual savior" were assumed by Mussolini for his rescuing the Italian nation from the throngs of materialistic anarchy and atheistic communism. Pragmatic, results-oriented statesmanship allowed fascist Italy to run smoothly and efficiently.[115] Ezra Pound in Jefferson And/Or Mussolini expressed particular admiration for Mussolini's "direct action" and his "will for order." Although dotted with half-baked personal phobias and incidents, Pound's 1933 pamphlet set out to explain the "fundamental likeness" between Jefferson and Mussolini. Pound maintained that Mussolini's leadership was in

the Jeffersonian mold of responsible, able, and intelligent government. "The heritage of Jefferson, Quincy Adams, old John Adams," and "Jackson," he wrote, "is HERE, NOW in the Italian peninsula."[116]

Diggins argues, furthermore, that "America's fascination with Mussolini" was "a reflection of the social and cultural context of the period and the psychic needs of the American people."[117] In a time in which the old and the new were in collision, Mussolini seemed to integrate harmoniously old and new ideas in his leadership and his fascism. In a time in which "the nostalgic ideal of the rational individual" was under enormous strain, Mussolini offered the cult of the irrational State. Diggins adds that while "it was true to say that Mussolini was America's answer to Communism," he was "the American answer to many other things that were 'wrong' with the modern world." If one agrees with the observation of Max Weber that "an age of hero worship is an age of instability," the American reception of Mussolini in the anxious 1920s was certainly a case in point.[118]

A look at American attitudes towards Mussolini and Italian fascism shows Howard's support to be typical of many of his contemporaries. Howard's perception of a profound crisis in American society was shared by a great many Americans, as was his vulnerability to comprehensive solutions. Whether it was the decline in religious faith

and morality among the American people, a faltering belief in the efficacy of democracy, or a dissatisfaction with the injustice and gross materialism of capitalism, Howard's concerns were popular and popular intellectual American concerns in the 1920s and 1930s.

What was unusual about Howard's support of Italian fascism was the determined degree to which he maintained it. Howard's defense of fascism strengthened with time in the 1930s, motivated by his belief that the communist threat was becoming more real in Europe and America. In a series of articles in the fall of 1935 written for the Fort Payne Journal, Howard, in a perverse twist of logic, excused both Italy's initiative in the Ethiopian war and Adolf Hitler's execution of "a few Communistic Jews" as efforts necessary to check the tide of "Russian militarism" and serve human civilization. He claimed that Ethiopia was "benighted, slave-ridden, diseased" and "cursed" and would gain "the virtues of a reborn civilization" by Italian annexation. Decidedly pro-communist and anti-fascist opinion among the international community was the result, Howard maintained, of blinding Russian propaganda. In particular, the generally critical line of the international press concerning Italy's conduct in the Ethiopian war was "largely directed by Communism that has set out to conquer the world."[119] In addition to his rampant anti-communism, Howard's intense support for fascism

can be attributed to his hero worship of Mussolini (the man who overawed Howard in his interview with him could not let him down) and the resolve of a disillusioned loser who at last had found a formula for success.[120]

IV. Populism to Fascism

To evaluate the degree of continuity or discontinuity (or evolution) between Howard's Populism and his support of fascism, it is necessary to outline the features of Italian fascism that he found particularly appealing. In addition to the perceived spiritual well-being of fascist Italy, Howard was very much impressed with the political and economic organization of the regime. According to Howard, fascist politics and economics placed a premium on efficient, orderly, and constructive action, action that benefited the whole of society, rather than one or two constituent parts. It was the nature of the relationship between the nation's leadership, populace, and society that enabled Italian fascism to work and flourish. Howard realized, like many observers of the Italian experiment, that the term "fascism" defined primarily a particular kind of bond between the leader and his followers.[121] He believed that the fascist concept of leadership was, quite simply, the key element in the nation's success. "The spirit of one man," the moral, selfless guidance of Benito Mussolini, gave life to fascism. Furthermore, fascism recognized the need for the rule of the natural aristocracy in governing and administering the Italian state. Or as Howard preferred

to put it, "those best qualified have a divine right to rule."[122]

The corollary of political control by an elite was a general lack of faith, on the part of Italian fascism, in the masses. Sharing an observation made by Howard, fascism maintained that the people had proved themselves incapable of governing effectively and intelligently. Popular sovereignty was rejected for state sovereignty because "the great mass of citizens is not a suitable advocate of social interests." Indeed, fascism was not burdened by a far-reaching commitment to the concerns and rights of the individual. Italian fascism was uniquely progressive, Howard argued, because the rights of the public, rather than the individual, were considered paramount: "all things are possible to a nation that has learned to order its strength in the interests of all, rather than those of the individual." The progress of society was the end in fascist ideology, as benefits would go to the individual when society as a whole benefited. The last major feature that attracted Howard to Italian fascism was that the regime had apparently ended the industrial conflict between capital and labor. Fascist syndicalism, through the state organization and recognition of capital and labor on an equal basis, had enabled economic groups to work together for the welfare of the nation, rather than in conflict for separate group gain.[123]

Any attempt to sift out the fundamentals of the Populist "plan" faces enormous difficulties. In the first place, unlike fascism in Italy, Southern Populism never achieved political power and control to any meaningful degree. Schemes for reform and regeneration were rarely effected or even attempted by Populist proponents.[124] The goals and aspirations of Populism, thus, generally were rather intangible and deliberately vague and emotional. The major debate in Populist historiography over whether the movement's participants were rational or not is, in fact, animated by the amorphousness of Southern Populism as an ideological plan.[125] As Palmer notes, what Populism stood for was very much determined by how individual Populists viewed themselves and their world.[126] Populism had distinct regional character and compelling non-ideological objectives that prevent the use of a single pervasive ideological classification to describe the movement.[127] The long-time battle over the rationality of Populists, J. Rogers Hollingsworth pointed out in 1965, has been due largely to a narrow and insensitive intellectual historical approach.[128] He adds that "the Populist movement was extremely complex and heterogeneous, enabling historians to marshal evidence to demonstrate that the Populists were either rational or irrational, socialistic or capitalistic, jingoistic or peace-loving."[129]

The most revealing features of the Populist protest were the motivations behind it. Born out of a sense of social and economic crisis, Populism was created more to serve the psychological and cultural needs of its supporters, than to articulate particular reforms for the nation. An emphasis on community and community and individual respect and dignity, grounded in a re-affirmation of shared values and norms, was crucial to the Populist endeavor.[130] Populism, moreover, provided for the Populist the profound satisfaction of knowing that his discontents and frustrations were being addressed in a constructive way. Whether anxiety, failure, or a "consciousness" of one's condition was the source of the Populist's restlessness, the degree of economic hardship and social flux in the 1890s South attested to the legitimacy of his concern.[131] Before commenting on the rationality of Populism, Pollack counsels, the historian must keep in mind that Southern (and Northern) society was responsible for creating popular discontents, not the Populists.[132]

The reasons behind Milford Howard's conversion to Populism were largely psychological. Like most Populists, Howard became a Populist because he was angry with the depressed state of his life and his community. In his own words, he felt a "burning resentment in my heart against conditions that oppressed" him.[133] Howard knew

that he and his community were being cheated and was convinced that some form of injustice was denying him of success and his rightful gains. Populism, therefore, was attractive to Howard not because it offered a persuasive and coordinated package of reforms (which it did not), but simply because it protested as well that world that had done him wrong. Populism did not so much provide Howard with a new agenda to rebuild society, as it commiserated with him on the existing flaws in society. In a sense, Populists such as Howard were iconoclastic as he later suggested--they were often more intent upon destroying the Democratic ascendancy, than in developing a distinct Populist alternative. Skaggs' The Southern Oligarchy, for example, reveals a straightforward political backlash to anything Democratic.[134]

Contradictions and ambivalence within Southern Populist thought reveal a protest movement that was "anxious to change things but not quite certain how."[135] What was apparent in Populist policy and rhetoric was a recurring tension between Populism's contemporary experience with a fruitful, yet uncontrolled, capitalist system and its treasured pre-industrial Jeffersonian heritage.[136] Southern Populists, for example, were anxious to accept the prosperity of industrial development in their home region, but were unwilling to accept the productive and social organization that industrialism entailed.

Committed to restoring a society of small entrepreneurs but equally partial to receiving the benefits of industrial capitalism if some came their way, Populists tried to have "their cake and eat it too." Palmer clearly states this basic dilemma in Southern Populist reform,

> how to retain the benefits of industrial development while preserving from their rural experience and their Jeffersonian, Jacksonian, and evangelical Protestant heritage the values they felt would prevent the social disaster industrial capitalism so obviously represented for them and many others.[137]

The Populist concept of the role of the government was particularly strained between Jeffersonian and humane capitalistic alternatives. Although Populism counselled the federal government to wrestle control of the economic system from the Eastern moneylords on behalf of the common folk, the movement was extremely fearful that government interference would upset the opportunity for individual initiative which its supporters had always sought. Although the National Populist platform in 1892 confidently declared that, "We believe that the powers of government . . . should be expanded as rapidly and as far as the good sense of an intelligent people and the teachings of experience shall justify," Populist legislators at the state level generally voted in support of negative government.[138] Populists appeared "unable to relinquish either their Jeffersonian heritage or their commitment to

a government that acted in the interests of the producers," the disadvantaged laborers of capitalism.[139] Moreover, as Hackney points out, Populists were fundamentally more concerned with who should control government, than with the actual form which government should take.[140]

A confused stand on the role of government was one ambivalence in Howard's Populism. In The American Plutocracy and while campaigning for the party, Howard backed the Populist platform advocating the government ownership of railroads, telephone and telegraph lines.[141] In the foreword to Fascism: A Challenge to Democracy, Howard admitted that he had supported the "collective ownership of the means of production" as a Populist. Yet a small, economical Jeffersonian state led by virtuous men emerged as the governmental solution to the current malaise in If Christ Came to Congress. In particular, Howard wrote of "the criminal recklessness in the expenditure of money by our law-makers" and argued that the federal bureaucracy was "one of the biggest frauds and shams yet perpetrated on the American people."[142]

In Populism to Progressivism in Alabama, Hackney maintains that Howard's support of Italian fascism repudiated his "Populist heritage of equality" and "materialistic reform."[143] Ignoring the fact that Populism served at least as much a psychological role as a reformist role for its participants and that the Populist

ideology itself was marked by a basic tension, Hackney's claim of ideological reversal on the party of Howard is inaccurate. As Populism sought to provide for the disaffected a feeling of belonging and "somebodiness," so did Italian fascism. Both movements appealed primarily to members of the vast middling segment of society who were "uneasy about their eroding position" and "about their declining ability to control their own destinies." Both movements aspired to "a restoration of what they considered artificially disrupted social bonds" and economic autonomy.[144] Populism and fascism were, in fact, similarly desperate grabs for self-esteem and order in what was perceived to be an anachronistic hell; both reactions to a state of crisis more popular for knowing what was wrong with the world than what could be right. Indeed, the ambiguous and psychic nature of the Populist protest appears to have been fertile soil for the seed of fascist sympathy. Italian fascism was particularly attractive to protests and protesters without specific prescriptions for reform and yearnings for change without the tangible means. At the very least, the ambivalence and uncertainty of Populism left room for the assertiveness of Italian fascism.

To be specific, on the issue of leadership, Howard's concerns as a Populist were strikingly similar to those as a supporter of fascism. Leadership, particularly the moral

integrity of leaders, was a fundamental political consideration of Howard in the 1890s when he joined the Populist party and entered Congress. As mentioned earlier, the apparent misconduct of Cleveland in 1892 and 1893 concerning aid to the South was a major factor in Howard's decision to leave the Democratic party.[145] Moreover, condemning the leadership of President Cleveland and other political establishment figures was an integral activity in Howard's Populism. As a congressman-elect in November 1894, for example, Howard promised his constituents that his first task in Congress would be to investigate into Cleveland's recent business dealings in order to carry out his impeachment.[146] Howard's claim in The American Plutocracy that the "modern degeneracy" of the nation's leaders was the force behind the rise of plutocratic oppression and the ultimate decline of the Republic indicated his extraordinary stress on political leadership.[147]

The issue of the virtue of the nation's political leadership assumed the forefront in If Christ Came to Congress as well. The novel was a stinging indictment of the moral bankruptcy of Washington's officials, complete with detailed references to their evil and disgusting drinking, sexual, and business practices.[148] Although exhibiting many of the most distasteful features of yellow press journalism, If Christ Came to Congress

also voiced the author's genuine worry about the quality of leadership in American politics. The last words of the novel offered revealing advice, "Give us purity among our law-makers and public officials and then our people will once more be prosperous and happy." It is significant to note that over thirty years later in his Autobiography, Howard's repudiation of If Christ Came to Congress as a "filthy" book was on the same grounds of the morality of leadership as his original Populist message.[149]

The standard view of Southern Populism has been that of a movement adamantly in defense of direct democracy, or the "rule of the people."[150] Palmer observes that the theme of government as the simple embodiment of the people, a political condition in which there is no distinction between the people and their government, was a common one in Populist rhetoric.[151] "The competence of the common man . . . to deal adequately with the problems of life," Handlin suggests, was the crucial article upon which the Populist faith rested.[152] The objective of broad-based, popular democracy in the reform advocated by Manning and Skaggs bolsters the standard view. Manning wrote in Fadeout of Populism, for example, that "far reaching general benefit" could only be achieved when "the life of the average American" was applied to the conduct of government.[153] In light of his approach to the significance of leadership, Howard's concept of democracy

was not as orthodox or as direct as that of Manning, Skaggs, or the historians' standard view of Populism.

Indeed, the inordinate influence that Howard granted political leaders in his Populist novels casts doubt on the egalitarian, participatory democracy "heritage" that Hackney refers to. In seemingly atypical Populist fashion, Howard argued that it was primarily the character of the political leadership, rather than the character of the populace, that determined the character of the nation. While it can rightly be said that good leaders had to be elected by good people in a democracy, in Howard's opinion, the people were much more dependent on the leadership for their nature than vice versa.

In particular, in <u>If Christ Came to Congress,</u> leaders commanded the authority to either instill virtue in, or deny virtue from, the people by their own conduct. Howard wrote that, "If the rulers are pure the people will be pure; if the rulers are corrupt and licentious the people will be corrupt and licentious." Leaders, Howard felt, set the example for the people of the nation--"corrupt moral principles" among the leaders will "blight and ruin out people." The example of "fraud, lasciviousness, drunkenness, bribery and debauchery" is "set by our great leaders and the people may be expected to follow."[154] While a Jeffersonian in his approach to the size of government, Howard clearly believed that through its leadership government had an active role to play in ensuring the moral

quality of its citizenry. According to Howard, good government was not equated simply with the adage of "rule by the people," but meant, moreover, the elevation of especially virtuous men who could bring out and direct the potential virtues in all men.[155] Thus, when democracy involved the election of a morally pure leadership so that the leadership could, in turn, mould the rank-and-file to their liking, Populist "democracy" was more elitist than democratic. The aristocracy of the naturally talented of Italian fascism was, in fact, predated by Populism's aristocracy of the morally well-endowed.

Whether or not the bulk of Populists were prepared to go as far as Howard in their assessment of leadership's influence, the great majority counted political leadership as a key factor in their formula for "government of the people." Just as the American government should be ruled by the average man, Manning also demanded that government regain its "Lincoln characterization."[156] In his attack on the Southern Democratic oligarchy, Skaggs lamented how powerful political leaders had sapped "the civic and political initiative" of the people. He noted, furthermore, that popular movements for the cause of liberty were ineffectual without "capable leaders."[157] "Most of the time, and for most Southern Populists," Palmer writes, "the basic concern

of governing was a question of the personal morality and background of their elected officials."[158]

The rise of a series of demagogues in the South during the first three decades of the twentieth century suggests that the rural polity's captivation with leadership grew substantially from Populism. Leaders such as Tom Watson, Jeff Davis, and Cole Blease fused decisively the Populist link between the leadership and the "common people." The selling point of the Southern demagogue was his unprincipled, yet highly effective, ability to appeal to, and empathize with, simple white rural folk. Demagogues made the "poorest and humblest feel at home" in a quest for community and self-respect that was as needed as in Populist times.[159] In his study of Arkansas governor, Jeff Davis, for example, Ray Arsenault labels Davis "a successful mass leader" because he addressed and soothed the cultural tensions of his poor white constituency. What was characteristic of the Southern demagogue, Arsenault argues, was the disproportionate amount of energy the leader expended on making "the people feel better," rather than in reforming their impoverished environment.[160] Overall, what is revealing about the era of demagogues in the South was that the ameliorating psychological role that the Populist movement once offered the rural masses was now being assumed entirely by the leader himself. This occurrence

resembled closely the hero worship of Italian fascism.

From his days as a Populist to his final years, Howard remained remarkably consistent in the criterion he used to evaluate leaders. As he imagined himself to be selfless, Howard demanded selflessness from his leaders. The slightest indication that a public official was pursuing a private interest or concern alerted Howard that unforgivable corruption and demagoguery were afoot. Indeed, his rather simple-minded morality held that a leader's private interests and those of the nation were necessarily antagonistic. Officials in If Christ Came to Congress who came to Washington to make money and "have a good time" met with Howard's wrath. President Cleveland and Senator John Sherman were favorite targets of Howard because the two men had apparently amassed great personal fortunes in office when they should have been attending to the welfare of the nation.[161] In 1935, Howard charged former Louisiana governor Huey Long with the same crime of selfishness and personal greed. In the Fort Payne Journal, Howard wrote that "while Long was preaching to the masses he was feathering his own nest," accumulating "a fortune of millions while in office." In the same article, Howard looked to "materialism" to explain both Christ's virtue as a leader and the dangerous failings of Long and Vladimir Lenin. It is crucial to note, he observed, that while Long and Lenin lay in "grand tombs" paid for by the people's

labor, Christ was buried by His disciples in a meager plot by the light of a borrowed torch.[162] Thus, throughout his life, Howard despised leaders who sought material possession and accumulation, perceiving this interest as a fundamental diversion from service to society.

Howard's ideal leader, the most unselfish man in the history of mankind in his opinion, was Jesus Christ. According to Howard, Christ was able to live by the Christian ideal of love and brotherhood because He rejected the material world completely. "By his striking, unheard-of abandonment of all earthly possessions," Christ "went forth into the world just to do good." Jesus was forever trying to "take all the pain away" from the hearts of others before his own.[163] Significantly, Howard's concept of Christ did not change with time. Whether in If Christ Came to Congress, The Bishop of the Ozarks, or in a series of articles written for the Fort Payne Journal in 1935, Christ was described as a humble, extraordinarily virtuous and caring friend of the poor and the suffering. The only American figure, Howard contended, who approached Christ in selflessness and personal sacrifice was Abraham Lincolin. In several calls for a "messiah" in The American Plutocracy, for example, the names of Lincoln and Christ appeared almost interchangeably.

Predictably, Howard likened Mussolini's character and leadership to that of Christ. Like Christ, Mussolini saw himself as a common man, a simple blacksmith, and a close friend to all Italians.[164] Howard believed that Mussolini also was able to live in a world free of materialism and rise above his own private interests to rule Italy for the sake of Italy. Il Duce was the antithesis to what Howard declared in 1929 was the "greatest danger today," "the self-seeking politician."[165] In no uncertain terms, Howard, in Fascism: A Challenge to Democracy, proclaimed Mussolini as the only leader who was capable of turning back the tide of materialism as Christ had done many centuries ago. "I hail Mussolini," he wrote, "as the one man in all the world today who is unafraid to hold high the torch of civilization in a darkening, storm-tossed world and point the way to a new renaissance."[166]

Judging from his emphasis on strong, moral leadership and a malleable, impressionable populace, Howard viewed the masses and popular government with ambivalence. Howard's attitude toward the efficacy of popular government and the capability of the people appeared directly dependent upon his assessment of the prevailing political leadership. In the foreword to Fascism: A Challenge to Democracy, for example, he explained that "as the quality of our leadership at times seems to decline, the theory of the

equality of man no longer thrills thoughtful minds." While popular government was undeniably a major objective of Howard until well into the 1920s, he believed that unwatched, unprincipled democracy would deteriorate quickly into the tyranny of the selfish few.[167] "Liberty," Howard counselled the reader in The American Plutocracy, "is a tender plant and requires constant watching and careful culture."[168] He reasoned that the people in the 1890s did not watch the plant of liberty closely and oppressive plutocratic rule was the result. Worse still, the plutocrats used the apparatus of democracy to mislead the electorate into legitimizing the former's stranglehold on the political system. Howard wrote that the people were "blind followers" of the money power during the economic crisis, voting for men at every election who would "rivet more closely upon them the fetters of slavery."[169] This, Howard contended, was the age-old problem of popular government--the people were often less than careful in watching over their own political liberty and in preventing the plutocrats and demagogues from using the common man's vote as a tool to consolidate undemocratic, anti-social power. In general, Populists had to acknowledge that the people were sometimes politically irresponsible and apathetic for the obvious reason that their present oppressors were popularly elected. Most Populists, in fact, "learned to accept

the distinction between the people as they were and as they should be."[170]

An occasional lack of vigilance among the people was precisely the reason Howard looked to the nation's leadership to secure democracy for the people. The energy behind the agitation of Populists such as Howard, Manning, and Skaggs was their notion that they were somehow uniquely informed about the machinations plaguing America. The enlightenment of an unaware public, the inspiration of the people "with incentive," was their hope.[171] Howard's political novels in the 1890s, for instance, were designed primarily to enlighten. Howard felt that it was the task of perceptive, selfless leaders such as himself "to arouse in our people the spirit of our ancestors who refused to submit to unjust taxation and unwholesome laws." It was the task of the leadership to scold the populace for not attending to the political system that was their own, to remind the people that if they "voted together" they could "easily wrest this land from the robber money barons." We need not be "moral cowards," he informed his readers, if we just stand up "at the ballot box" and "assert our rights as freemen."[172] Therefore, it was not as if the people were considered entirely incapable of promoting their interests in government, the leadership simply had to impress upon the populace the seriousness and responsibilities of their

political role. In Howard's mind, even as Populist, the masses were like well-meaning children, hoping and striving to do good but needing the timely hand from a parent to achieve good.

In If Christ Came to Congress and The American Plutocracy, Howard's account of the masses was neither flattering nor totally sympathetic. In The American Plutocracy, for example, Howard attacked the fatal vanity of the American people. People did not want to be associated with the "freakish" Populists; the American people would rather look "respectable" than be "right," they "would rather be respectable and be slaves than to bear the scorn and ridicule and be free." Respectability, Howard warned, had crucified Christ. Scathing criticism was directed at the American voter in particular for foolishing surrendering his "political power into the hands of the trusts and moneychangers," for "never thinking" and "never caring" about his political preferences and liberty. Labor was censured for its weak-kneed acceptance of a subservient role to capital. Howard demanded that workingmen "no longer crawl" upon their "bellies and lick the dust at the feet of capital."[173] The Washington prostitutes and mistresses in If Christ Came to Congress, Howard maintained, were partly to blame for their own sexual exploitation because of an intoxication for social influence and material possession. These fallen women were,

in reality, as shrewd as their male exploiters. Even the tragic fall from virtue of young Jennie Harmon was not wholly the evil work of her seducer, Congressman Snollygoster. It was "ambition" and "vanity" that prompted Jennie to pass up the idyllic (yet poor) life in the country for the "fame and fortune" of the city.[174]

Howard's assessment of the nature of man was both ambivalent and unsettling. As he later admitted, Howard generally believed as a Populist in the primacy of environment in shaping man's personality.[175] Like most Populists, he felt that material condition was largely responsible for influencing man's moral and spiritual condition. In If Christ Came to Congress, Howard observed that "each one of us possesses a good and evil nature." He added, however, the important qualification that man's two tendencies were constantly battling one another for ascendancy and that "either evil or good will come to command every man's soul." The local environment of Washington and a national environment of tyranny and economic suffering prompted Howard to view the liberation of Jennie's evil side as possibly representative of the turn of the American people as a whole. In a pessimistic note, Howard declared that Jennie "possessed only those tendencies to evil which is implanted in the breast of every son and daughter" in America.[176]

Howard's pessimistic forecast for man and his stress on enlightened leadership differed greatly from the political views of William Jennings Bryan. Unlike Howard, Bryan exhibited a clear, unqualified devotion to the common man and the wisdom of the popular will. Throughout his life, Bryan perceived his political leadership role as simply that of an accurate reflection of the ideas of the common folk. The inherent goodness and morality of the people could successfully govern a just and free society if they were only given the chance.[177] Predictably, Bryan's and Howard's political paths converged only briefly, for one held a persistent faith in the goodness and rightness of the common man with an obedient leadership, while the other embraced an ambivalent, often negative view of man with an active, influential leadership.[178]

Although a liberated, developed individual was perhaps the major objective of Populist agitation, the Populist battle was not waged for the individual or for individual rights per se. The Populist protest in the 1890s was effected on behalf of cultural groups, cultural groups based approximately on the disaffection caused by a heightened country-town economic division.[179] Rebelling against the gross inequities of unregulated market capitalism, a substantial portion of Populists implored that fundamental economic functions be carried out with the collective good foremost in mind.[180] Collective

schemes, such as the government ownership of railroads, were proposed in an effort to dismantle oppressive economic concentrations that were the products of excessive individualism. Indeed, it was a basic contention of Populism that the individual would be free to achieve and grow only in a just, equitable society. As Hofstadter notes, Populism was, in fact, "the first modern political movement of practical importance in the United States to insist that the federal government has some responsibility for the common weal."[181]

The Populist reformist notion of viewing political and economic questions through the perspective of the common good was not easily arrived at. Southern rural supporters were used to dealing with their society in personal terms. Populist supporters, moreover, traditionally had maintained a "commitment to a competitive market society . . . driven by material self-interest."[182] Their contemporary experience with capitalism, however, drove most Populists to the painful conclusion that widespread economic oppression and change had transformed a society of moral personal relations into a nation with distinct economic classes. In changing the basic rules of society, plutocrats had clearly exposed the divergence between the Jeffersonian ideal and the capitalistic reality. Many Populists adopted a corporate, "social dualism" view of America in self-defense.[183] Significantly, the begrudging

Populist tendency to frame society in a corporate, group fashion was an approach that was openly embraced by Italian fascism. In both political movements, "atomized man gave way to social man."[184]

Like many Populists, Howard perceived that the decline of America resulted in the formation of two economic classes. In the introduction of The American Plutocracy, Howard argued that the nation was divided into "two classes of people"--"the abject poor" and the "excessively rich," the "producers" and the "plutocrats," and the toilers and the exploiters. As the terms "producers" and "plutocrats" implied, the class division was based on a distinction between labor and capital, a distinction that Howard viewed in a particularly one-sided manner. He noted that despite the fact that labor produced all wealth and "is prior to and above capital," plutocrats were manipulating the nation's capital in such a way as to subvert the natural economic order.[185] Not only did plutocrats create exploitative economic class relations, but avarice pushed them to seek to "widen and deepen the chasm" between the rich and the poor. America in the 1890s, Howard believed, was in the midst of a full-scale war between labor and capital, a war that was taking its toll in countless victims of poverty and oppression. While the laboring people were striving to end economic conflict with the "common ground" of an "equal" economic

footing for all, the plutocrats were committed to the industrial enslavement of the masses.[186]

Howard supported the producers in their aspirations to achieve economic harmony and an "equal footing." His Populist advocacy of class legislation, such as the subtreasury plan for farmers and higher tariffs on manufactures to protect workers' jobs, was designed to restore economic balance in the nation. Similarly, state railroad ownership and trust regulation, he hoped, would destroy capital's unnatural advantages. Howard's urge to solve the problem of industrial conflict between labor and capital lasted for many years beyond his Populist days and was finally satisfied, in his opinion, in the form of Italian fascist syndicalism. As sincerely as he feared that the nation's social fabric was threatened by industrial conflict as a Populist, Howard applauded the "peace and accord" of syndicalism as a fascist supporter. Indeed, the horrible economic division and suffering that Howard battled in the Populist era drove him to embrace the extreme industrial solution of fascist syndicalism to gain a long sought "surcease."[187] What had changed in his formula for industrial balance in the 1920s was that the state and "vast combinations of capital" were now on the side of harmony and progress, instead of labor.[188]

Howard's Populism, above all, was aimed at reconstructing the American nation along "the teachings of Christ."[189] As was common with many Populists, Howard utilized the "Biblical image of the millennium" for his discussion of social change.[190] He, moreover, was encouraged by his Christian commitment and optimism to believe that the establishment of the millennium was both necessary and attainable. In chapter eleven of The American Plutocracy, Howard informed his readers that Populist protesters were "fighting the same battle" as Christ. What was at stake in the Populist struggle with the plutocracy was nothing less than the dream of the "brotherhood of man" and "the emancipation of the human race."[191] Indeed, the goal of Howard's Populism was the same type of national renaissance he later felt Mussolini had achieved in Italy. While the individual was said to flourish in his new Christian order, it is difficult to believe that Howard would have placed individual rights and freedoms before his hope of attaining an anti-materialistic millennium.

In sum, much of what impressed Howard about Italian fascism as an older man had direct links back to his Populism as a younger man. An ambivalence toward the masses and mass democracy grew with time and disillusionment into a lack of faith in popular government and popular

responsibility. A Populist stress on an enlightened, morally upright leadership that would direct the people for the betterment of society became a worship of strong leadership in and of itself. Support for the "permanent" economic order of fascist corporatism was the result of an old Populist desire for economic harmony and cooperation. Moreover, Howard's Populism was motivated by a collective vision, a grand way of viewing society as a single entity, that also characterized Italian fascism. At the foundation of Howard's dream of a Christian millennium were aspirations and concerns that were universal to almost any ideology; basic social and political objectives that were an integral part of any dedicated reformer's quest.

* * *

In the final pages of his "Autobiography," Howard tried desperately to secure peace for his "stormtossed soul." Upon reflecting on the events of his life, disappointment and disillusionment tyrannized his thoughts. Howard admitted that he had always wanted to be a "success," but failure had appeared to meet him at every turn. The old man then searched for excuses to explain his ill-fortune. It was other people that ruined his plans, Howard suggested; no one of "all the great throng" cared about "me or my dreams." His next idea was that he had attempted too much, "the burdens I have borne" were too heavy for one man. Honestly, Howard returned to himself and his character and concluded vaguely that he had lacked "something." The most important thing he lacked, Howard lamented, was oneness with the Lord. All his life he had tried, but failed, to capture the divine love of Jesus. At the age of seventy, however, Howard declared his struggle to be over, "I accept the yoke of the Master . . . I surrender all to the Divine will . . . I have found peace." At last, Howard had experienced a dream come true, at least in his writing.[192]

Howard's dreams were not passing fancies, but serious endeavors that often involved nations, races, and civilizations. As he moved from Populism to eugenics to

Italian fascism, Howard's dream of a better, purer society changed little. As Howard once wrote, "no real dream ever fails" because a "real dream" is one that is founded on "love and service to humanity."[193] What had changed with time were the means he was prepared to use, the means he was prepared to let society use, and his hope for the future. Echoing the truth about himself, the seventy year old Howard wrote that he had "no fixed opinions," just a few strong principles for mankind.[194] In an age in which the world seemed to be breaking apart, it was not unusual for a sensitive man to have lost his spirit and perspective in trying to keep it together.[195] What was truly unusual about Howard was the depth of his melancholy and the caring that inspired his sorrow.

Endnotes

1. Two exciting new studies are Bruce Palmer, Man Over Money, (Chapel Hill, 1980) and Steven Hahn, The Roots of Southern Populism, (New York, 1983).

2. James Turner, "Understanding the Populists," Journal of American History, v. 67, September 1980, p. 354.

3. The relevant books for these historians of Populism are: Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, (New York, 1955); Norman Pollack, The Populist Response to Industrial America, (Cambridge, Mass., 1962); Sheldon Hackney, Populism to Progressivism in Alabama, (Princeton, 1969); and Lawrence Goodwyn, The Populist Moment, (New York, 1978).

4. Oscar Handlin, "Reconsidering the Populists," Agricultural History, v. 39, April 1965, pp. 68, 74. On a promising note, Palmer's and Hahn's respective studies move away from making subjective judgments on the virtues and flaws of Populists.

5. In a similar vein, Hahn observes that the study of Populism has shown a tendency for "a static view of the movement." Hahn, p. 270.

6. Robert McMath, The Populist Vanguard, (New York, 1975); Goodwyn and Hahn also do an excellent job in examining the roots of Populism. Interestingly enough, John Hicks, The Populist Revolt, (Minneapolis, 1931), probably the first influential study of Populism, examined the Farmers' Alliance in some detail.

7. Exceptions include Hackney; Morgan Kousser, The Shaping of Southern Politics, (New Haven, 1974); and James Green, Grassroots Socialism, (Baton Rouge, 1978). Hackney's book is particularly useful in examining the fate of Populism and Populists in the Progressive era.

8. There are few outstanding biographies beyond C. Vann Woodward, Tom Watson: Agrarian Rebel, (New York, 1977) and Martin Ridge, Ignatius Donelly, (Chicago, 1962).

9. Milford Howard, "Autobiography," Auburn University, pp. 223-24.

10. Ibid, p. 82.

11. Ibid, p. 84.

12. David Harris, "The Political Career of Milford W. Howard, Populist Congressman from Alabama," (M.A. thesis, Auburn University, 1957), p. 2.

13. Elizabeth Howard, The Vagabond Dreamer, (Huntsville, Alabama, 1976), pp. 14-15. Another story describing Stephen's harsh disciplining of Milford was mentioned in chapter one of "Autobiography." As a young boy, Milford was compelled by his father to eat a whole dish of butter in one sitting. The design of Stephen's forced indulgence was to break Milford of the habit of eating butter. Howard added that the tactic did not work.

14. "Autobiography," p. 30.

15. Ibid, p. 97.

16. Ibid, p. 6.

17. Blance initially counselled Howard against studying law because he felt the young man's lack of education and financial support would have made the legal profession almost impossible for him to succeed. (Elizabeth Howard, p. 30).

18. Harris, p. 7.

19. Howard gained full partnership with Dobbs in 1885. (Harris, p. 8).

20. "Autobiography," p. 92.

21. Howard was on the board of directors of the following companies: the Fort Payne Coal and Iron Company, the Journal Publishing Company, the Fort Payne Basket and Package Company, the Forth Payne and Eastern Railroad, and the Fort Payne Bank. (Harris, p. 23; Elizabeth Howard, p. 87).

22. "Autobiography," p. 48.

23. Harris, p. 12, 19; "Autobiography," pp. 103, 104.

24. According to Howard, Fort Payne's "boom" busted in October 1890. ("Autobiography," chapter 5; Harris, p. 20.)

25. "Autobiography," p. 103.

26. Harris, pp. 40, 51.

27. Denson was a source of conflict in the Democratic party because of his sympathies for free silver and his failed attempt to secure the Populist nomination. (Harris, pp. 37-46).

28. Birmingham News, February 3, 1929.

29. Fort Payne (Alabama) Journal, September 4, 1895.

30. Howard's resolutions were in reference to moves made by Cleveland early in his second term as President which were designed to shore-up the gold standard. Cleveland felt that a stable currency would be the best means of ensuring that the depression would die out. With this in mind, Cleveland instructed Congress to repeal the Sherman Silver Act of 1893 (which Congress did) and the Secretary of the Treasury, John Carlisle, to sell government bonds to tighten the money supply. As an advocate of an expanded money supply and a foe of the gold standard, Howard was very annoyed by Cleveland's actions.

As well, in his first term in Congress, Howard introduced a bill to establish an inheritance tax in order to bring about "a more equitable distribution of wealth." (Harris, p. 75)

31. Howard, for example, in March 1897 supported the Dingley Tariff bill as a responsible effort to protect American labor and industry and introduced several bills to allow the federal government to issue its own currency in large quantities. (Harris, pp. 114, 117)

32. The specific charges in Howard's resolution to impeach Cleveland were as follows: (1) Cleveland directed the sale of bonds without having the authority to do so; (2) he aided in the sale of bonds at less than their market value; (3) the proceeds of the bond sales were misappropriated; (4) he directed the Secretary of the Treasury to disregard a law making United States Treasury notes redeemable in coin; (5) he refused to enforce the anti-trust laws; (6) he sent United States troops into Illinois (to break the Pullman strike) in violation of the Constitution; (7) he used the appointive power of the Presidency to influence the passage of laws which were detrimental to the people's welfare. (Harris, pp. 80-81)

33. Milford Howard, The American Plutocracy, (New York, 1895), pp. 5, 198-99.

34. "Autobiography," pp. 146-47.

35. Howard and Alabama state Republicans had campaigned successfully to reject a state constitutional amendment in favor of prohibition less than a year before the Congressional elections of 1910. The elections of 1910, thus, revolved around the prohibition issue as well with the Democrats supporting state prohibition and the Republicans and Howard opposing it. ("Autobiography," pp. 141+17-20)

36. Failed enterprises included, among others, a mine in Mexico and a salmon canning factor in Alaska. (Elizabeth Howard, p. 114)

37. This breakdown was his second, he experienced a nervous breakdown during his first term in Congress. ("Autobiography," p. 141+1)

38. Elizabeth Howard, p. 118.

39. Milford Howard, The Master Builder, v. 1, issue #3, (April, 1924); "Autobiography," pp. 223-24.

40. Birmingham News, October 26, 1924.

41. Howard's interview with Mussolini was arranged by the Birmingham News. Howard's trip to Europe was partly financed by the News in return for Howard writing a series of articles on Italian fascism for the newspaper.

42. Milford Howard, Fascism: A Challenge to Democracy, (New York, 1928), pp. 155, 15, 182-83.

43. Woodward, Tom Watson, pp. 221, 402, 432.

44. Ibid, pp. 220, 460, 418-19.

45. Hofstadter, Age of Reform, pp. 20, 21, 62, 82, 83, 101, 102.

46. Hackney argues that "withdrawal" from politics may have been "the most popular option" exercised by former Populist leaders. Hackney, chapter 1 and 14, chapter 6, especially p. 111).

47. Watson's genuine concern for his white rural constituency and how this concern moulded Watson's political behavior is a basic theme in Woodward's biography, see

pp. 129-135 for example. Also see Hofstadter, Age of Reform, p. 102.

48. C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, (Baton Rouge, 1951), p. 246.

49. In Grassroots Socialism, Green notes a close relationship between populism and the later socialist movement in the Southwest. Although the two movements "represented significantly different constituencies on the basis of rather different ideologies," there was a high degree of continuity in leadership from the People's party to the socialist party. (Green, pp. xii, 24)

50. In the first decade of the twentieth century, William Skaggs moved to Chicago to continue his agitation for reform on behalf of "the pure people." Hackney notes that Skaggs worked closely with socialists and had strong socialist leanings himself. (Hackney, p. 115)

51. William Skaggs, The Southern Oligarchy, (New York, 1924), chapter 8; Joseph Manning, Fadeout of Populism, (New York, 1928), p. 68.

52. Skaggs addressed Southern "evils" throughout the book. Entire chapters are devoted to each specific evil, see chapter 12 for example. In commenting on Skaggs' book, George Tindall writes that, "Skaggs handed down one of the most thorough indictments of Southern villainy ever published." (George Tindall, The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945, (Baton Rouge, 1967), p. 211)

53. Woodward, Tom Watson, pp. 451-53, 433.

54. There were numerous instances when Howard referred most favorably to Lincoln and Jefferson in his writing, more so to the former than the latter. See chapters 1 and 12 in The American Plutocracy and chapter 2 of Fascism: A Challenge to Democracy for examples. Manning and Skaggs also engaged in this idolization of Jefferson and Lincoln. See Manning, pp. 97, 115; Skaggs, chapter 7.

55. Hofstadter notes that Watson wrote a very complimentary biography of Andrew Jackson entitled, The Life and Times of Andrew Jackson that was published in 1912. (Hofstadter, Age of Reform, pp. 62-63)

56. G. Jack Gravlee, "Tom Watson: Disciple of 'Jeffersonian Democracy'" in Cal Logue and Howard Dorgan edited, The Oratory of Southern Demagogues, (Baton Rouge, 1981), pp. 95, 106. In The Age of Reform, Hofstadter

suggests that the search for a "villain" was characteristic of Populist thought. (Hofstadter, Age of Reform, p. 73)

57. Palmer, pp. 4-5.

58. Milford Howard, If Christ Came to Congress, (New York, 1894), pp. 54-56; Howard, Plutocracy, chapter 8.

59. Palmer, p. 5.

60. Jennie Harmon and Mary Blank are two characters in If Christ Came to Congress. Both are women who fall prey to the evils and corruption of Washington and its immoral officials.

61. In fact, Watson died in 1922 while serving as a United States Senator.

62. Woodward, Tom Watson, pp. 380, 409.

63. Elizabeth Howard, p. 111.

64. Skaggs, p. 27.

65. "Autobiography," p. 141+19.

66. Howard later called the episode "one of the greatest rapes of the ballot box ever committed in a civilized country." ("Autobiography," p. 115)

67. Ibid, p. 103.

68. Howard was convinced that Cleveland himself was largely responsible for the Democratic party's betrayal of the South and of Howard. An indication of this feeling was that If Christ Came to Congress was dedicated specially to the "President of the United States, and his drunken, licentious cabinet and certain members of Congress."

69. Howard gave the reader an idea of the bitterness directed at him because of his defection to Populism. "My own father would not hear me speak and said he would rather make my coffin with his own hands and bury me than to have had me desert the Democratic Party. This has been more than thirty years ago but some of the old feeling still slumbers and I have never been and never will be forgiven for my fall from grace." ("Autobiography," p. 122)

70. Concerning the conduct of the Democrats towards Howard during the 1894 campaign, Howard wrote that "they charged me with every crime known to the law and proved all their charges by disreputable whites or irresponsible blacks." ("Autobiography," p. 120)

71. Ibid, pp. 120-27.

72. Ibid, p. 141+18.

73. As part of his scathing attack on the deplorable influence the Democratic oligarchy was on the South, Skaggs lamented that "political thought in the South has no conception of nationalism; it is essentially provincial and partisan." (Skaggs, p. 27)

74. Howard's condemnation of party and politician did not exclude the People's party and Populist leaders. In his "Autobiography," Howard severely chastised Populist "politicians" for supporting the "suicide" of national fusion with the Democrats in 1896 simply because they felt it would improve their own personal chances to retain or gain office. ("Autobiography, chapter 7)

75. Plutocracy, chapter 17. Howard referred to Washington's address on factionalism once again in a newspaper article written for the Fort Payne Journal, September 19, 1935.

76. Furthermore, Howard added that demagogues incited a "peculiar mob psychology" that by its very nature acts against the best interests of society. Another quality of demagogues, he noted, was insincerity that was used to cover over selfish motives. About himself, Howard wrote in 1929, "I don't believe I ever was a demagogue for I was sincere." (Birmingham News, February 17, 1929)

77. For example, Howard called Democratic candidate John Burnett a "demagogue" for no apparent reason other than he had defeated Howard in the congressional election of 1910. ("Autobiography," p. 141+20)

78. Birmingham News, February 17, 1929; Fort Payne Journal, September 19, 1935.

79. Howard's advice to the presidential candidates was taken from Ephesians 4; 31-32. (Birmingham News, November 4, 1928)

80. Milford Howard, "Vagabonding at Seventy," Auburn University, 1932, p. 52; "Autobiography," pp. 59, 291, 288.

81. Milford Howard, The Bishop of the Ozarks, (Los Angeles, 1923), p. 191; "Vagabonding," p. 36.

82. Statement made by William Jennings Bryan. (Richard Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition, (New York, 1974), p. 247)

83. Birmingham News, January 3, 1928.

84. For more information on Charles Sheldon see Brian Homet, "Reverend Charles M. Sheldon In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do?: A social gospel response to the social transformation of 1890s America," unpublished undergraduate thesis, University of Virginia, 1984; and John Ripley, "The Strange Story of Charles M. Sheldon's In His Steps," Kansas Historical Quarterly, v. 34, Autumn, 1968, pp. 241-265.

85. McMath, p. 62.

86. Howard's condemnation of a materialistic America did not diminish in his later life. A central theme in both The Bishop of the Ozarks and his defense of Italian fascism was the primordial conflict between materialistic aspirations and a Christian order. Of particular interest was Howard's attempt in his "Autobiography" to reconcile his early affluence and desire to "make money" with his general critique of American materialism. Howard presented his "thrill" for financial success as naive and innocent and maintained that he cared "nothing for the money," but was just pleased with his achievement and his ability to provide for his family and friends. ("Autobiography," chapter 5; Plutocracy, pp. 32, 88)

87. If Christ, pp. 10, 184.

88. Ibid, p. 296; Plutocracy, p. 127. Palmer suggests that it was quite common for Populist leaders and platforms to make appeals for a Populist messiah. (Palmer, pp. 244-45)

89. In his "Autobiography," Howard claimed that he was "born a heretic." In describing the God of the Baptist Church, he wrote, "He was so angry with man, his creation, because man possessed the same virtues and vices that were God's attributes that He had to send His son to earth to shed more blood, so his anger could be appeased." ("Autobiography," pp. 29, 337-38)

90. Milford Howard, "Prayer," Auburn University, p. 3; "Autobiography," p. 329.

91. The Bishop of the Ozarks, p. 106.

92. In fact, the spiritualist rejection of the material (and physical) world was total. The Bishop of the Ozarks, for example, declared that, "Jesus taught that man is not body but spirit, and that God is spirit . . . we must be wholly spiritual or wholly material. There is no compromise." Earlier on in The Bishop of the Ozarks, Howard claimed that, "only if men realize they have a spiritual nature, souls, will the world have hope and will the march of materialism be turned back." (The Bishop of the Ozarks, pp. 190, 102)

93. Ibid, pp. 80, 95, 102, 111-15.

94. Like Howard, Manning saw a close relationship between religious crisis and the crisis of democracy in 1920s America. In Fadeout of Populism, Manning wrote that, "the passing of Democracy in our government is accompanied with the passing of the spirit of the democracy of human brotherhood in the church." (Manning, p. 103)

95. John Diggins, Mussolini and Fascism: The View from America, (Princeton, 1972), p. 271; Fort Payne Journal, September 26, 1935.

96. Birmingham News, January 8, 1928; Fascism: A Challenge to Democracy, p. 144.

97. Fascism: A Challenge, chapter 6; Reinhard Luthin, in his 1951 article, "The Flowering of the Southern Demagogue," listed as one characteristic of the Southern demagogue a tendency to promote and tightly control a certain type of state education. Luthin cited Huey Long's "interference" in the affairs of Louisiana State University as one example. A former Progressive governor of Georgia wrote, "And yet the Southern demagogue can no more leave the educational system alone than can his European equivalent. It is in the nature of the demagogue. Reading and writing are the two enemies he fears most." It is significant to note that what was probably a major consideration in the interest and involvement shown by Southern demagogues and Italian fascism in state education, a desire to discourage dissent and strengthen the base of support and power, was not felt by a genuinely reform-minded, but powerless, Howard. (Reinhard Luthin, "The Flowering of the Southern Demagogue," American Scholar, v. 20, April 1951, pp. 194-95)

98. Mussolini's strong condemnation of birth control also attracted Howard to fascism. A vocal opponent of birth control, or as he preferred to call it, "race suicide," Howard lamented the decline of traditional family values in America in the 1920s and 1930s. To his mind, fascism in Italy appeared to defend old family values such as the virtue of motherhood and large, propagating families.

99. Ezra Pound, Jefferson And/Or Mussolini, (London, 1935), p. 24.

100. Diggins, chapters 1 and 4.

101. Ibid, p. 31.

102. In an article written in the Fort Payne Journal in 1935, Howard called fascism "the last bulwark that stands against and can check the rising tide of communism." Later on, he suggested that the fascist system was leading the fight between the philosophies of Karl Marx and Jesus Christ, on the side of the latter. (Fort

103. Diggins, p. 32.

104. Arthur Ekirch, The Decline of American Liberalism, (New York, 1955), pp. 185-87.

105. Diggins, p. 37.

106. Ibid, pp. 42-55.

107. Diggins points out that "the most extreme xenophobes, right-wing evangelists and Southern Klansmen . . . continually attacked Mussolini as an anti-Christ and Fascism as a foreign ideology." (Diggins, p. 19)

108. Ibid, pp. 207, 48, 28.

109. Ibid, pp. 213, 216, 231, 228, 235, 50-52, 223.

110. Robert Wiebe, The Search for Order, (New York, 1967), see second half of the book, especially chapter 7.

111. Richard Pells, Radical Visions and American Dreams, (New York, 1973), pp. 3, 4; Dewey Grantham, "The Contours of Southern Progressivism," American Historical Review, v. 86, December 1981, p. 1044.

112. Grantham, pp. 1044-45.

113. Croly's concern for the "spiritual reconstruction of society" was articulated in the early 1920s while he was the editor of The New Republic. Croly, as Diggins outlines, was a keen and vocal supporter of Italian fascism up to his death in 1929. (Diggins, pp. 230-31; Ekirch, pp. 185-87; Pells, p. 6)

114. Diggins, pp. 68, 70, 55-57.

115. Ibid, pp. 24, 59-60.

116. Pound, Jefferson And/Or Mussolini.

117. Diggins, p. 69.

118. Ibid, pp. 71, 69.

119. Fort Payne Journal, October 10, October 17, 1935. Howard's wholehearted support for fascist imperialism was a radical departure from his stand against American imperialism as a Populist in Congress. Indeed, Howard was part of a small but vocal anti-imperialist group that called for a "free and independent" Cuba in 1896. In fact, in December 1896, Congressman Howard introduced a resolution to recognize the independence of Cuba. Howard's later support for Italian imperialism was particularly confusing in light of his steadfast opposition to the "internationalism" of Russian communism. (Harris, p. 113)

120. During the interview, Howard felt he was "standing in the presence of a man destined to make world history." (Fascism: A Challenge, chapter 2)

A review of Fascism: A Challenge to Democracy severely criticized Howard's analysis of Italian fascism as little more than an exercise in the "'great man' tradition of Carlyle." Howard's praise of Mussolini, the reviewer felt, was immoderate and unnecessary. (W.Y. Elliott, American Political Science Review, v. 23, 1929, p. 478) In contrast to Elliott's review, the DeKalb (County, Alabama) Times wrote in reference to Howard's book that, "It is considered today by many scholars as the best book that has been written on the great Fascist movement that has re-created Italy." Concerning Mussolini, the Times said about Fascism: A Challenge, "Colonel Howard got an insight into the soul of the man, and in his book reveals him to his readers, and time has proven him right." (DeKalb Times, September 12, 1935)

121. Allan Brinkley, Voices of Protest, (New York, 1982), p. 277.

122. Birmingham News, December 30, 1927; Fascism: A Challenge, p. 55.

123. Fascism: A Challenge, chapter 7; Birmingham News, December 18, 1927.

124. In commenting on the meager reform legislation effected by Populists, Hahn writes that "quite simply, the Populists had precious little time or room in which to move." (Hahn, p. 287)

125. The leading protagonists in the debate over the rationality of the Populists are Richard Hofstadter, who made popular the charges of Populist irrationality and paranoia and anxiety in The Age of Reform, and Norman Pollack, who defended the rational foresight of the Populists in The Populist Response to Industrial America and "Fear of Man: Populism, Authoritarianism, and the Historian," Agricultural History, v. 39, April 1965, pp. 59-67. Since Hofstadter and Pollack, many historians have entered the debate on one side or the other. Hackney and Turner, for example, are on the side of Populist irrationality, while Goodwyn enthusiastically takes the side of Populist rationality.

126. Palmer, pp. xiv, xv.

127. Goodwyn in The Populist Moment, for example, draws the distinction between "real" Populism, Populism in regions where a broadly-based cooperative Alliance organization operated before political Populism as in Texas, and "shadow" Populism, the political Populism of Nebraska that was simply free silverism. (Goodwyn, chapter 5)

128. The insensitivity and narrowness of the rationality debate is seen, for instance, in Hofstadter's and Pollack's tendency to use modern-day political ideologies to evaluate the views of Populists.

129. J. Rogers Hollingsworth, "Commentary--Populism: The Problem of Rhetoric and Reality," Agricultural History, v. 39, April 1965, pp. 81-82.

130. There are several good accounts of the cultural roots and objectives of Populism and Southern populistic politics. The most recent is Raymond Arsenault, The Wild Ass of the Ozarks: Jeff Davis and the Social Bases of Southern Politics, (Philadelphia, 1984), see introductory chapter. Also good are Hahn; Goodwyn, Introduction, chapters 2, 3, and 9; and Turner, pp. 359-373.

131. Still the best description of the economic ills that the rural Southerner faced in the late nineteenth century is Woodward's Origins of the New South, see especially pp. 175-263. The belief that "anxiety" and "failure" were sources of Populist agitation is articulated by Hofstadter and Hackney; individual and group "consciousness" as a source of Populist agitation is the explanation of Goodwyn, see introduction and chapter 9.

132. Pollack, The Populist Response, p. 7.

133. "Autobiography," p. 103.

134. In The Southern Oligarchy, Skaggs displayed an extraordinary hatred for the Democratic party. For example, Skaggs called William McKinley "a godsend for the South" simply because his administration was not Democratic. (Skaggs, pp. 27, 426, chapter 7)

135. Hackney, p. 327.

136. The significance of the tension between the rural experience, the reform producer ideology, and the Jeffersonian tradition in Populist thought is a key argument in Palmer's Man Over Money, see pp. 3-49. Hackney and Hofstadter have commented on the confused Populist adherence to Jeffersonian ideals. (Hackney, chapter 4; and Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, chapter 1)

137. Palmer, pp. 30, 46, xviii.

138. Hahn observes that members of the Farmers' Alliance elected to the Georgia legislature in the late 1880s and early 1890s abandoned Populist schemes that were considered radical once they were in the legislature. (Hahn, p. 276) Preceeding quote in the text was part of the Omaha Platform. (Hackney, p. 83)

139. Palmer, p. 46.

140. Hackney, p. 133.

141. Plutocracy, p. 200.

142. If Christ, p. 134.

143. Hackney, p. 117.

144. Victor Ferkiss, "Populist Influences on American Fascism," Western Political Quarterly, v. 10, June 1957, pp. 350, 353; Brinkley, pp. 164, 279.

145. In his "Autobiography," Howard wrote that he had placed all of his faith in Cleveland to help the South, "and in a short time came to realize that Cleveland had failed me." ("Autobiography," pp. 103-105)

146. Fort Payne Journal, November 21, 1894; Harris, p. 80.

147. Plutocracy, chapter 13.

148. Chapter 26 was the most controversial chapter in If Christ. In this chapter, Howard provided a detailed list of the brothels in the "Division" district of Washington--giving addresses, the number of girls available, and the name and color of the proprietress of each establishment.

149. Howard wrote, "I realize that the effect of the book is to cast a cloud of suspicion on the men whom the people elect to serve them in high places, and to cause a wide-spread distrust of our public servants, it seems to me worse than a blunder--almost a crime." (If Christ, p. 364; "Autobiography," pp. 132-33)

150. See Goodwyn, introduction and chapter 9; Hackney, p. 137; and Woodward, Origins, chapter entitled "Southern Populism."

151. Palmer, pp. 40-41.

152. Handlin, p. 72.

153. Manning, p. 110.

154. If Christ, pp. 187, 189, 285.

155. It is interesting to note that Howard's view of leadership is very similar to Hackney's characterization of the Progressive view of leadership. (Hackney, p. 137)

156. Manning, p. 101.

157. Skaggs, pp. 107, 215, 144.

158. Palmer, p. 49.

159. Rupert Vance, "A Karl Marx for Hill Billies: Portrait of a Southern Leader," Social Forces, v. 9, October 1930, p. 181.

160. Arsenault, introduction.

161. In If Christ, Howard looked at Cleveland's personal financial affairs at the time to explain the President's insensitivity to the nation's suffering during his second administration. Howard wrote, "When Cleveland was first chosen President of the United States he was a poor man, and today he is a multi-millionaire . . . Is it any wonder that he favors such conditions as will keep on piling up his millions?" (If Christ, pp. 293, 338-39; Elizabeth Howard, p. 55)

162. It seems that as well as the materialistic qualities exhibited by Long, Howard feared the socialistic program that Long advocated. (Fort Payne Journal, September 26, 1935)

163. "Vagabonding," pp. 7-8; Plutocracy, chapter 9.

164. Fascism: A Challenge, p. 23.

165. Birmingham News, November 17, 1929.

166. Fascism: A Challenge, p. 18, Epilogue.

167. The belief that democracy could deteriorate into tyranny or "dictatorship" was a major reason Howard abandoned democracy for fascism in the mid-1920s. He observed that by that time democracy had already fallen into demagoguery and the fascist route was the most efficient of all the political dictatorships--communism, fascism, and democracy.

168. Plutocracy, chapter 10.

169. Ibid, pp. 101, 103.

170. Handlin, p. 72.

171. Skaggs, p. 107.

172. If Christ, pp. 4, 292; Plutocracy, p. 128.

173. Plutocracy, chapter 11, pp. 106, 103, 107.

174. If Christ, pp. 30, 34, 223.

175. "Autobiography," chapter 1.

176. If Christ, pp. 299-300. Perhaps more unusual than Howard's relatively pessimistic view of man in the 1890s was his wild-eyed, grandiose optimism in the later years of his life. Confident that man's salvation lay with the

rule of "the elect," Howard wrote in 1932, "heaven" is not "some far off place," we can attain "ideal conditions here on this earth" ("harmony, happiness, peace, joy") right "now." As implied earlier, Howard's later optimism was motivated largely by feelings of desperation and wishful thinking on the part of a long-time frustrated reformer. ("Vagabonding")

177. Hofstadter, Political Tradition, p. 247.

178. In fact, Howard only concerned himself with Bryan in 1896 when the latter as Democratic presidential candidate influenced the Populist Convention by his declaration of support for free silver. Vehemently opposed to fusion and concession to the Democrats, Howard, not surprisingly, exhibited his enormous personal dislike for Bryan. Howard viewed Bryan as an unprincipled political opportunist. (Harris, p. 90)

179. Arsenault, introduction.

180. Pollack, Populist Response, pp. 12-13; Palmer, pp. 10, 32-34.

181. Hofstadter, Age of Reform, p. 61.

182. Palmer, p. 10.

183. "Social dualism" is a term used by Hofstadter in The Age of Reform. The Populist view of social dualism, Hofstadter explains, is one in which a complexly classed society is considered "for all practical purposes" as having "only one simple division"--a division between the "robbers and the robbed," (Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, p. 64; Palmer, p. 10)

184. Pollack, Populist Response, p. 24.

185. It is significant, Hahn notes, that Populist leaders focused on the financial system to explain the exploitation of farmers. Rural supporters of Populism rarely worked directly with an employer. In spite of the growth of commercial agriculture, most farmers worked only with family members. Populists, thus, "located exploitation in the sphere of exchange rather than at the point of production and looked directly to credit and money, not the land, question as a solution to their predicament." (Hahn, p. 286; Plutocracy, chapter 10)

186. Plutocracy, introduction, chapters 10 and 12.

187. Fascism: A Challenge, pp. 106-107.

188. In 1929, in an article written for the Birmingham News, Howard declared that the day of "constructive" corporatism had arrived. He wrote that, "the old order has changed, this is a day of vast combinations of capital fitted to carry on gigantic undertakings, determined by reason rather than passion." Corporations have "souls" and are dedicated to improving the lives of Alabama's people. (Birmingham News, November 17, 1929; Fascism: A Challenge, chapter 7)

189. Plutocracy, p. 188.

190. Palmer, p. 131.

191. Plutocracy, pp. 118, 199.

192. "Autobiography," chapter 17.

193. Birmingham News, May 6, 1929.

194. Ibid, p. 339.

195. In reference to Willa Cather's observation that "the world broke in two in 1922 or thereabouts." (Diggins, p. 70)

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