

# WAR ON VIRTUE

[War on Virtue: How the Ruling Class Is Killing the American Dream](#), published today by Sophia Institute Press, is about the making of the American dream and attempts to thwart it by the ruling class. The book addresses why virtue matters and the attacks on it, as well as chapters on racism, the family, the poor, education and crime.

Having studied why some people are a success, as measured by educational and economic achievement, I came to the conclusion that cultural factors are the key to understanding success. Virtue matters.

People do not do well in school or in the workplace because they are lucky, or even smart. They come out on top because they possess the three most important virtues that make for success: self-discipline, personal responsibility and perseverance. I call them the “vital virtues.”

There are four demographic groups that embody the vital virtues, par excellence: Asians, Jews, Mormons and Nigerians.

These groups succeed in school and in the workplace because they exercise self-discipline, personal responsibility and perseverance. The source of the vital virtues is the same in every case: they all come from intact two-parent families. Those who come from one-parent families can succeed, but their chances are slim compared to those who come from homes where there is a father and a mother.

The social science evidence on this is overwhelming. Why, then, does the ruling class—the elites who run our institutions—not do more to nurture the vital virtues? Worse, why are they increasingly doing everything they can to undermine them?

No group has suffered more at the hands of the ruling class

than African Americans. It is not white supremacists whom they need to fear—it is the mostly white, well-educated elites who claim to be on their side. They are the real menace. They are the ones who promote policies that subvert the inculcation of the vital virtues.

Well-educated white people who claim to be on the side of blacks—but are in fact their real-life enemy—are not new.

George Fitzhugh was America's first sociologist. He is the author of the 1854 book *Sociology of the South*. Like many of those on the Left today, he railed against what he perceived to be the exploitative nature of capitalism. He was also a strong proponent of slavery.

Why would a “progressive” support slavery? He said blacks were not capable of competing with white people in a capitalist economy, and it was therefore preferable for them to remain as slaves.

In his work “The Universal Law of Slavery,” written in 1850, Fitzhugh explained his view that “the Negro is but a grown up child and must be governed as a child, not as a lunatic or criminal. The master occupies toward him the place of parent or guardian.” He noted that slavery had a positive effect. “The negro slaves of the South are the happiest, and, in some sense, the freest people in the world.” Everything was taken care of for them.

Fitzhugh said something that the white “allies” of blacks would never say today, though their thinking and their behavior toward them suggests a similar outlook.

“The negro is improvident [and] would become an insufferable burden to society. Society has a right to prevent this, and can only do so by subjecting him to domestic slavery. In the last place, the negro is inferior to the white race, and living in their midst, they would be far outstripped or outwitted in the chaos of free competition. Gradual but

certain extermination would be their fate.”

Fitzhugh was not an anomaly. During the Progressive Era in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Richard T. Ely was one of the most prominent leaders in the social-justice crusade. What he said was similar to what Fitzhugh said. “Negroes, are for the most part grownup children, and should be treated as such.”

Fast forward to 1988. That is when the astute social scientist, Charles Murray, wrote a classic essay wherein he predicted the “coming of the custodial democracy.” His prediction has come true. He said “what is now a more or less hidden liberal condescension toward blacks in general, and toward the black underclass in particular, will have worked its way into a new consensus.”

Murray maintained that liberal intellectuals and policy makers would come to terms with their view that “inner-city blacks are really quite different from you and me, and the rules that apply to us cannot be applied to them.” Therefore the best that can be done is to generously supply them with “medical care, food, housing, and other social services—much as we do for American Indians who live on reservations.” This is the face of custodial democracy, treating inner-city blacks as “wards of the state.”

If the members of the ruling class truly believed that black people were just as capable of exercising personal responsibility, self-discipline and perseverance as white people, they would never give up on them. They have, which is why they are America’s most notorious racists.