

SOCIETY AND THE SUPPRESSION OF VICE:  
THE SOCIOLOGY OF MORAL INDIGNATION

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## ABSTRACT

This study is an exploration of the nature and formation of moral sentiments concerning what constitutes deviance and how deviants should be treated. These sentiments establish the general climate of moral tolerance or intolerance within which reactions to particular instances of deviance take shape. The study is based upon the assumption that differences between people in terms of such moral sentiments reflect further differences in other areas of their lives, in the roles in which they find themselves and the distinctive ideologies to which they adhere.

The thesis starts from an examination of the work undertaken in this area by Ranulf in developing his theory of moral indignation. This holds that a repressive morality embracing hostility towards hedonism and punitiveness towards deviants is characteristic of the lower middle class as the indirect result of the restraints forced upon its members by their position in the class structure. The present thesis employs the critical appraisal of Ranulf's theory as an opportunity to draw together evidence which serves as a means of elaborating a more comprehensive theory of moral indignation. This evidence is culled from the examination of a number of studies taken from the fields of sociology, social psychology and social anthropology. A study of three "moral crusades" - the Responsible Society, the Nationwide Festival of Light, and the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association - is undertaken to investigate the nature of moral indignation in a contemporary setting. The study concludes by setting forth an explanation of the nature and origin of moral authoritarianism as the product of social constraints.

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## ) CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
Notes	15
CHAPTER 1 MIDDLE CLASS MORALITY AND THE DISINTERESTED TENDENCY TO INFLICT PUNISHMENT	16
I. Moral indignation and middle class psychology	16
II. The jealousy of the gods (i)	39
III. The jealousy of the gods (ii)	58
IV. Aspects of Puritanism	78
V. The absence of moral indignation	88
VI. Reactions to Ranulf	101
Notes	106
CHAPTER 2 THE SOCIOLOGY OF MORAL INDIGNATION	110
I. The origin and development of moral ideas	110
II. <u>Ressentiment</u>	119
III. Durkheim on restitution and repression	128
IV. The social and cultural dynamics of morality	142
Notes	154
CHAPTER 3 THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF MORAL INTOLERANCE	158
I. The authoritarian personality	158
II. Alienation and moral conformity	175
III. The breastplate of righteousness	180
IV. Repression and prosocial aggression	183

V.	The open society and the open mind	186
VI.	Constraint and co-operation in the development of moral judgment	193
	Notes	206
CHAPTER 4	THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE AND THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL CONTROL	210
I.	The comparative anthropology of public justice	210
II.	Social control and control of the body	225
III.	The civilizing process	234
IV.	Technology and the moral order	244
	Notes	252
CHAPTER 5	THE PERILS OF PERMISSIVENESS: MORAL INDIGNATION AND CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN SOCIAL CONTROL	255
I.	Subterranean values and the ethos of productivity	255
II.	Structural origins of contemporary developments in morality	264
III.	Continenence and accumulation: the Victorian background	281
IV.	Three contemporary moral crusades	285
V.	Middle class cleavages and the defence of righteousness	300
VI.	Moral indignation and the retardation of rationality	305
	Notes	307

CHAPTER 6	CONCLUSIONS	311
I.	The moral authoritarian: a portrait	311
II.	An analysis of moral authoritarianism	316
III.	Repressive institutions and repressive sentiments	326
IV.	Moral indignation: towards a sociological explanation	329
V.	Ranulf revisited: an appreciation	339
VI.	Breaking the bonds	342
	Notes	344
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	345

## INTRODUCTION

"What is the effect of the spectacle of others who, though their activities do not manifestly damage our own interests, are morally undisciplined, who give themselves up to idleness, self-indulgence, or forbidden vices? What effect does the propinquity of the wicked have on the peace of mind of the virtuous?"<sup>1</sup> This study seeks to answer these questions. It is an exploration of how certain social conditions shape beliefs concerning what constitutes crime and immorality and how those who deviate from such standards should be dealt with. It is particularly concerned with the problem of explaining why people differ from one another in terms of a disinterested desire to have the wicked made to pay for their sins through punishment.

What is meant by speaking of such a "disinterested" desire to inflict punishment? Cohen captures something of the notion when he refers to those deviants whose "activities do not manifestly damage our own interests". Clearly this excludes the direct victim of an offence. This leaves the rest of the community, which might be thought of as siding with the victim against the offender on the grounds that he is an "enemy of society". History reveals, however, numerous examples of societies where those who committed acts which are now regarded as the very essence of crime, acts such as rape, murder, abduction, robbery and theft, were clearly not held to be public enemies, but enemies only of their victims. As Max Radin remarks on attitudes towards those who committed such acts

within certain ancient Mediterranean societies:

Such persons were taken to be merely enemies of their victims, against whom these victims must protect themselves as best they may with varying amounts of neighborly and kindred assistance. Further, let us note that neighbors and kindred could not be taken in so large a sense as to include the whole community or any considerable portion of it. The victim had to rely for assistance on a sharply limited group. If the persons who made it up were too weak, too timid or too indolent, he had no other redress. By letting him down, his kinsmen had done him a wrong, but that, too, and more emphatically was no one's business but his own. 2

We shall later look in some detail at the social changes which underpinned the transformation in such beliefs. Such a transformation vividly illustrates the wide differences which can be found concerning the place groups allot to punishment as a means of dealing with deviance. For a further illustration of such differences, consider the example of the Navaho. As Ladd observes:

The Navahos have no conception of punishment similar to ours - at least in the retributive sense which involves the notion of desert. Punishment and blame are frowned upon by the Navaho moralist as forms of aggression, although he admits that they may be taken into account as inevitable (though perhaps unjustifiable) consequences of one's crimes. Sanctions, as morally approved aggression, are not condoned in the Navaho culture. 3

Differences in the intensity and direction of the tendency to punish can also be found within societies. What accounts for such internal differences? One source can be arrived at fairly quickly through examining more closely the notion of disinterested punishment.

Just as those who suffer direct loss or injury from an offence can be excluded from our consideration of disinterested punishment, so too those who stand to make a direct material gain from the punishment of offenders must be recognised as having a not altogether undiluted



disinterestedness in the enforcement of justice. In explaining the zeal of this particular group in such matters we must clearly bear in mind the part such interests play in shaping their actions, however "disinterested" is the rhetoric in which they seek to clothe them. Witchcraft prosecutions in continental Europe during the Renaissance, for example, created and sustained the livelihoods of a large number of people through the confiscation of property from both the accused and the convicted. The absence of such a direct confiscation of property into the hands of those charged with the prosecution and punishment of witchcraft in England during the same period in part accounts for its much lower level of executions of witches in comparison with the continent.<sup>4</sup> Demands for the expansion of the criminal law to penalize acts previously unpunished may, on occasion, be fuelled by the material interests of those employed to implement the law, to increase the demand for their services and the resources made available to them. Such interested involvement in punishing offenders can be seen in the Federal Bureau of Narcotics campaign for the prohibition of marihuana in the United States, a campaign which was conducted partly through inspiring a large number of unfavourable press articles on the subject which were aimed at arousing and harnessing disinterested indignation amongst the public at large.<sup>5</sup>

Putting aside such people with a direct interest in the punishment of offenders we can label as "disinterested" any desire to punish crime and immorality which is to be encountered amongst

the general population. Such desires are not, however, spread equally throughout the population, but vary in scope and intensity between different individuals and groups. Why is this so? Several lines of thought suggest themselves. One such has been outlined by Jackson Toby, who proposes that a start can be made in disentangling the various sources of the urge to punish by distinguishing between a desire which is rooted in an individual's identification with the victim of an offence and one which flows from the nature of his identification with the offender.<sup>6</sup>

Considering first the role of identification with the victim it may be suggested that those who are more vulnerable to criminal attacks themselves, are more likely to identify with actual or potential victims and hence feel a greater urge to punish criminals than those whose manner of life, such as living in a more crime-free and secure environment, renders such identification less vivid and immediate. Such an approach stresses that the "disinterestedness" of the zeal for justice encountered amongst the public is a matter of degree: some members of the public have a greater stake in the prevention of crime than others and this is reflected in their attitudes. Another example of such an approach would be the argument that those whose interests are more tied to the perpetuation of the prevailing social order are likely to be more punitive than those without such commitments.

Attempting to account for variations in punitiveness solely by reference to such factors as these is not, however, without its difficulties. Perhaps the very meagreness of the possessions of the

poor, for example, render them more valuable, giving them a greater stake in their protection from theft than people whose total wealth is not so easily removed at one stroke? Research in contemporary America reveals that the poor have the greatest fear of crime for they face the highest risk of victimization. Concern with crime as a political issue, however, is concentrated in the low crime areas inhabited by the middle class.<sup>7</sup> Greater victimization and its attendant fear are not the only misfortunes suffered by the poor and oppressed. Consequently more pressing problems and alternative political priorities do not allow concern with law and order to thrust itself forward as such a dominant issue as it has amongst those living in less deprived circumstances.

Concentration upon the role of identification with victims in conditioning attitudes towards crime also offers little guidance when we come to consider offences such as those discussed by Schur as "crimes without victims": drug abuse, homosexuality and abortion.<sup>8</sup> In the case of abortion, it is true, contemporary opponents of the legalization of abortion argue that the foetus should be accorded rights which render it a clear victim of such practices. Why some are prepared to accept such an argument and others reject it clearly, however, cannot be accounted for by any reference to the similarity in characteristics or interests between those who are held to be the victims and those who take it upon themselves to punish those seeking and administering abortions.

To fully understand the nature of the response to such crimes we must adopt another approach. Let us start with Toby's suggestion

that we consider not only the contribution of identification with the victim, but also the nature of identification with the offender.

What he has in mind here can best be conveyed in his own words:

If "the good die young and the wicked flourish as the green bay tree," the moral scruples which enable conformists to restrain their own deviant impulses lack social validation. The social significance of punishing offenders is that deviance is thereby defined as unsuccessful in the eyes of conformists, thus making the inhibition or repression of their own deviant impulses seem worthwhile. Righteous indignation is collectively sanctioned reaction formation. The law abiding person who unconsciously resents restraining his desire to steal and murder has an opportunity, by identifying with the police and courts, to affect the precarious balance within his own personality between internal controls and the temptation to deviate.<sup>9</sup>

Cohen has in mind much the same idea when, speaking of the moral source of indignation, he remarks: "The dedicated pursuit of culturally approved goals, the eschewing of interdicted but tantalizing goals, the adherence to normatively sanctioned means - these imply a certain self-restraint, effort, discipline, inhibition."<sup>10</sup>

How are we to employ this perspective in understanding variations in the intensity of the disinterested urge to punish? Both Toby and Cohen seek to support this approach to the problem of explaining disinterested punishment by reference to the work of the Danish sociologist, Svend Ranulf, entitled Moral Indignation and Middle Class Psychology.<sup>11</sup>

The central subject of Ranulf's work is what he refers to as the sociology of moral indignation. It is important to bear in mind the way in which the term "moral indignation" is employed by Ranulf, for, given the centrality of Ranulf's work to the present study, it

is in the sense, which the term will be used here, except where an alternative use of the term by another author is clearly intended.

It is not possible to convey in a few words the precise meaning which this term takes on within the context of Ranulf's theory, as will become clear from the discussion in the following chapter.

Nevertheless, it can be noted here that Ranulf identifies the presence of moral indignation not only from evidence of a punitive reaction to immorality, but also from evidence of a particular desire to penalize those who stray from rigid standards of ascetic restraint on the allowable level of sensuality, self-indulgence and bodily abandon. Thus conceived, moral indignation embraces both a punitive attitude towards deviants in general and hostility towards a certain type of deviance in particular. This use of the term springs from Ranulf's explanation of moral indignation, which sees coercive asceticism and punitiveness as inextricably interwoven. In this view moral indignation is not seen as a passing mood, an isolated response, but a chronic condition ever on guard to ensure that those who give way to the temptation to indulge their impulses are forced to pay the price. It is viewed as a means of giving acceptable expression to feelings of envy provoked in members of the lower middle class by the restraints and deprivations forced upon them by their position in the class structure.

Embedded in such an explanation, Ranulf's use of the term moral indignation takes on a meaning that differs from some of the ways in which it is commonly employed, being in some ways narrower, in others

broader. It excludes, for example, the indignant condemnation of oppressors by the oppressed, even where this is couched in terms of appeals to moral principles. For Ranulf is concerned above all with "disinterested" indignation - indeed, he often employs the term "the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment" to refer to the same cluster of moral sentiments to which he refers when speaking of moral indignation. This term is instructive, for it also captures the enduring quality of the sentiments in question through its reference to the "tendency" to punish. "Disinterested" also recalls the particular direction in which this punishment flows with greatest force, towards those victimless offences which overstep the bounds of moderation. That it is a tendency to "punish" also indicates that Ranulf saw as an essential quality of moral indignation the desire to punish and degrade those held responsible for social problems, rather than seeking other solutions such as prevention or reconciliation. Nevertheless, neither title is able to fully capture and convey all that the phenomenon embraces. Given its nature this is not at all surprising and is, perhaps, inevitable. There are, as we shall see, several other portraits of temperaments which bear a close resemblance to that which Ranulf presents us with in his discussion of moral indignation. Some of these bear titles which may well seem in some respects more appropriate to refer to the cluster of traits under consideration, although all accentuate some aspects at the expense of others in accordance with their main focus of interest and the nature of the explanation they propose.

Ranulf's work cannot be faulted for lacking boldness. The origin and growth of penal sanctions and their application to victimless crimes, as well as similar developments in respect of the severity and scope of more informal sanctions, are to be accounted for more or less entirely in terms of the moral indignation harboured by the lower middle class. The strength of the disinterested tendency to punish within a community, both in terms of moral sentiments and social practices, varies directly with the extent of the influence of this class within it. Where it is absent, moral indignation is absent; where it is weak, weak; where it is strong, strong. Such a short summary must, of course, do violence to Ranulf's work, as we shall see in Chapter 1 below, yet it will serve to convey an initial impression of the main thrust of his argument.

Ranulf clearly must be credited with demonstrating the extent of the impact of the lower middle class upon a wide range of moral sentiments and social practices. His work has, as we shall see, all too often been uncritically accepted by some, rejected altogether in an offhand fashion by others, or simply misunderstood. His work has not received the critical attention it deserves and sociology, seen as a cumulative enterprise, has been the poorer for it. In Chapter 1 a start is made towards remedying this situation.

Given Ranulf's manner of presenting his argument, what it entails can only emerge from a careful analysis of his work. Wherever it has appeared useful I have introduced comments from other writers into the discussion to illuminate more fully the nature of the moral sentiments and social institutions to which Ranulf refers. The discussion does not, however, confine itself to uncovering the content of the theory developed

in Ranulf's work, but begins the task of assessing its worth so that it may serve as a starting point for the elaboration of a more comprehensive theory of moral indignation. Apart from assessing the difficulties introduced by certain inconsistencies and ambiguities to be found in Ranulf's work, this critical appraisal will principally involve the introduction of evidence from other sources, such as the investigations of sociologists whose work touches upon the issues involved. For it is one of the contentions of the present study that our knowledge of the sociology of moral indignation is, potentially, far more advanced than is at first sight apparent. By drawing together studies hitherto unrelated from diverse fields within the realm of sociology - a realm conceived broadly to embrace within its boundaries both social psychology and social anthropology - it is hoped to realize this potential, consolidating, complementing or correcting each contribution in the light shed upon the subject by the others.

There is, as we shall see, clear evidence that Ranulf was right concerning the proclivity of the lower middle class towards moral indignation. Yet his reliance upon this as the only force capable of producing moral indignation, and his assumption that it is moral indignation alone which gives rise to and sustains the criminal law, clearly goes too far. We shall be concerned with assessing which factors contribute towards shaping the social institutions which administer justice, including whether the strength of moral indignation is prominent amongst them. Greater space, however, will be devoted to examining the social conditions and cultural beliefs and values which



produce and nourish moral sentiments, rather than tracing the impact of such sentiments back upon the social structure. What will be argued here is not that Ranulf was wrong in identifying lower middle class conditions of life as fertile ground for the growth of moral indignation, but that he failed to see that those aspects of lower middle class experience responsible for this could be reproduced in other social locations with the same consequences in terms of the formation of moral intolerance.

Chapter 2 introduces an examination of some major sociological investigations into the sociology of morality in order to further consolidate and complement what was gleaned from the initial appraisal of Ranulf's work. Consideration is given to the works of Westermarck on the origin and development of moral ideas; Scheler on ressentiment; and Durkheim on the social origin of the collective conscience. From these some idea can be gained of what had been achieved in discovering the origins of moral indignation before the appearance of Ranulf's work. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the work of Sorokin on the social and cultural dynamics of morality and the impact of social conflict upon the amount of punishment in society.

Chapter 3 approaches the explanation of moral indignation from the perspective of social psychology. It begins with an examination of studies into the mass psychology of fascism, such as those conducted by Reich. The authoritarian personality portrayed

in such studies closely resembles the portrait of the morally indignant mentality to be found in Ranulf's work. This resemblance extends, in some cases, to the explanation advanced for the development of this temperament in terms of the social psychology of the lower middle class. Such similarity is, as will be discussed, not surprising given that these works shared a common origin in a time and place overshadowed by the rise of National Socialism. After discussing other contributions of social psychology relevant to our enquiry, such as the frustration-aggression hypothesis and the social psychology of open-mindedness, the chapter moves on to an examination of Piaget's work on the influence of social constraint upon the formation of morality.

Chapter 4 is principally concerned with the development of retributive justice and the evolution of social control in pre-industrial societies. Ranulf thought that he had revealed an explanation of moral indignation capable of accounting for its strength within any society, whatever its level of development. As a result he applied his theory to explaining aspects of the culture of societies from the most primitive to the most complex, and to both ancient and modern civilizations. This chapter is partly an attempt to test whether his theory does in fact possess such a level of generality. It goes on to further develop the theory concerning how the experience of social constraint fosters particular moral sentiments, which has by this stage begun to take shape from our discussion. It does this primarily through drawing together the anthropological work of Douglas on social

control and the control of the body with the evidence of Elias on the civilizing process and the development of manners in Europe since the Middle Ages. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the contribution to our understanding of moral indignation to be gleaned from some of the studies which have centred upon the Dionysian-Apollonian polarity.

Chapter 5 is an attempt to further develop our understanding of the nature and sources of moral indignation through an enquiry into the growth of moral permissiveness in contemporary Britain. After examining evidence from secondary sources on the nature of this change, and discussing its structural sources, the chapter turns to primary sources gathered for the purpose of this thesis from a study of three contemporary moral crusades - the Responsible Society, the Nationwide Festival of Light and the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association. This material is intended to show that moral indignation is not the spent force that it is considered to be by some. While not in any way intended as an exhaustive test of the theories discussed in the preceding discussion, this evidence does demonstrate in concrete terms those configurations of values and beliefs in which moral indignation is enmeshed and provides further information concerning the social sources from which it springs. In addition an attempt is made to interpret the function served by the ideology shared by these groups in the light shed by the sociology of moral indignation.

The final chapter presents the conclusions which can be drawn from the argument unfolded in the preceding chapters. Both the evidence upon which these conclusions rest and the nature of the concepts employed here are to be found in this earlier discussion. The final chapter starts with a portrait of the morally indignant in terms of characteristic values and beliefs. It moves on to discuss the relationship between repressive sentiments and repressive institutions, then presents an explanation of the origin and development of moral indignation.

This study, then, is concerned with how social conditions shape the general climate of opinion towards deviance in a community, the general level of tolerance or intolerance within which reactions to particular cases of crime or immorality take shape. It is a study of indirect sources of hostility towards deviants in general and victimless forms of deviance in particular. It seeks to trace the development of such moral intolerance to the experience of social pressure generated by certain social relationships. Particular positions within the class structure are particularly likely to expose their occupants to such experiences. This study, then, attempts to demonstrate some of the hidden or less obvious costs of social inequality in terms of its brutalizing and cramping effect upon human development. But the conclusion cannot be drawn that the removal of such inequality is in itself sufficient to remove such moral intolerance. As we shall see, similar

consequences can arise from "horizontal" sources of social pressure from within a group wherever the ability of individuals to break and re-make social contacts and relationships is held in check.

#### Notes

1. Cohen (1965), p.6.
2. Radin (1936), p.331.
3. Ladd (1957), p.53.
4. See the discussion by Currie (1968).
5. See Becker (1963), p.135ff., and Dickson (1968).
6. Toby (1970), pp. 363ff.
7. Furstenberg (1971), pp.603ff.
8. Schur (1965).
9. Toby (1970), p.365.
10. Cohen (1965), p.6.
11. Ranulf (1964).

## CHAPTER 1

### MIDDLE CLASS MORALITY AND THE DISINTERESTED TENDENCY TO INFLICT PUNISHMENT

#### I. Moral indignation and middle class psychology

Our study of the nature of moral indignation starts with a return to the "locus classicus of the theory of moral indignation",<sup>1</sup> to a consideration of what has been described as the "brilliantly developed thesis"<sup>2</sup> unfolded by Svend Ranulf in his study, Moral Indignation and Middle Class Psychology.

Why, Ranulf asks at the outset of his enquiry, are some people more disposed than others to punish deviants who have not directly injured them? Variations in such disinterested zeal to enforce justice can be seen, for example, reflected in the varying degrees of enthusiasm with which people assist in the punishment of criminals. The explanation of such involvement cannot be adequately provided, Ranulf insists, in terms of the rational appeal to enlightened self-interest of extending protection to the life and property of others in the expectation that they will reciprocate such protection.<sup>3</sup> In the case of crimes without victims, punishable acts which do not directly threaten any citizen with injury, such an argument takes the form that these acts nevertheless threaten the interests of all, because it would weaken the whole fabric of society if they were tolerated. Yet why, Ranulf asks, should such purely intellectual considerations concerning the importance of punishment to society be more apparent to some communities than to others? For some societies inflict punishment more widely and with greater ferocity and zeal than do others.

Questions concerning the scope, severity, and aims of punishment are today debated usually in terms of, and appeals to, utilitarian calculations of the consequences for society of adopting a given policy. On closer examination, however, it will be discovered that the various opinions expressed in this idiom are not equally represented in all classes or groups. In the light of the lack of conclusive evidence upon which to base such arguments, we may suspect that non-rational forces are at work in determining their acceptance. What is needed is an investigation of the prejudices, feelings and passions which predispose people to introduce or adopt one policy rather than another, irrespective of the rationalizations put forward by those involved. It is just such a study which Ranulf embarks upon in Moral Indignation and Middle Class Psychology when he sets about tracing the hidden sources of the tendency to inflict punishment. Putting aside attempts to explain disinterested punishment by reference to the purely rational arguments put forward in its defence, he proceeds straight to a series of cross-cultural and historical studies to examine whether the strength of this tendency is associated with the occurrence of certain other social facts.

The conclusion which he draws from these studies is that the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment is an expression of moral indignation associated with an envious disposition rooted in the resentment felt by the lower middle class. This resentment is a result of the self-restraint and frustration of natural desires forced upon

them by the conditions under which they live. At first glance this might seem straight-forward enough, but as soon as we attempt to bring evidence to bear upon this solution, the complexity of the concepts employed becomes apparent. Ranulf is of little assistance here, supplying no clear set of defining characteristics for the key terms employed in his argument. The specific meanings which he attaches to terms such as "lower middle class", "the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment", and "envy", can only be gleaned from a close examination of the findings he puts forward in defence of his thesis. A survey of this evidence will help us to more clearly ascertain the nature and worth of Ranulf's theory, as well as providing an opportunity to fill out the bare bones of his theory sketched above and consider some of the many related hypotheses which he introduces in addition to those which form the central core of the theory.

Let us start with a consideration of the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment, a phrase which Ranulf employs as synonymous with the term moral indignation. We find Ranulf beginning his investigation of this tendency with a study of attitudes towards the criminal law. In his opening chapter he seeks to demonstrate a link between the tendency in question and the lower middle class through their support for the National Socialists in Germany on the basis of the criminal law policy of that party. As expressions of a disinterested tendency to inflict punishment he cites proposals for the introduction of sterner penalties, including the greater use of capital and corporal punishment;



limiting extenuating circumstances; and the extension of the criminal law to punish acts hitherto unpunished, including penalising acts not specifically outlawed which are nevertheless "commonly felt to be criminal".<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the Weimar regime was attacked for not suppressing irreligious and unpatriotic art and literature, while its supporters were condemned for advocating the legalization of abortion.

Before the chapter is completed, however, we find Ranulf contrasting the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment with "moral tolerance",<sup>5</sup> a broader notion extending beyond the realm of criminal law. It is this expanded notion of the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment which Ranulf takes up in the next chapter, where he equates it with a "strong desire to see others punished for their immorality", in his contrast between the Catholic Church - "hard upon heretics, but mild with sinners" in the words of Max Weber<sup>6</sup> - and Calvinism. Against the attitude of Catholics towards the sins of their neighbours stands the uncompromising stance of the Calvinist, a stance which Weber describes as not based upon "indulgence and a willingness to help, owing to the knowledge that we are all weak, but it was hatred and contempt for him as an enemy of God, who is marked with the sign of reprobation".<sup>7</sup>

Not only, however, are we to take a general inclination to punish the immoral as a sign of moral indignation, but also a greater emphasis on the importance of a certain set of norms, those aimed at suppressing the hedonistic enjoyment of life, also indicates the same tendency. Ranulf, drawing heavily upon the description of the

"inner-worldly asceticism" of Calvinism to be found in the works of Weber, cites as examples the suppression of all amusements on the Sabbath, noting that even at other times play and sport are frowned upon except when employed as means to keep healthy for the unstinting industry incumbent upon the faithful. Art and literature are to be shunned, elegant dress forbidden, and sex repressed.<sup>8</sup>

Here, then, we have a further extension of this concept, which begins to appear as a set of associated traits or attitudes, corresponding more closely with the "middle class psychology" referred to in the title, to a temperament or personality type than to the more limited connotations of the name it bears. We shall later consider whether the traits which it encompasses do tend to occur together, but clearly such a complex variable is likely to generate problems of measurement and comparison, problems which are never squarely faced by Ranulf.

The expansionist progress of our concept is, however, soon somewhat checked. For Ranulf makes it plain that the appeal to moral indignation at the transgressions of others is not sufficiently "disinterested" to qualify those expressing such sentiments as having the tendency in question if it is merely a spurious piety employed to cloak self-interest. Such is the case when it is used in the service of personal economic enrichment, political security, or by one class against another with which it is in conflict.<sup>9</sup> The presence of such interests casts doubts upon the sincerity of those invoking them, although we may infer from the very existence of such an appeal that they have sincere adherents within the community who are likely

to be swayed by them. It is not, therefore, only the direct victim of an offence whom we must exclude from the ranks of the disinterested enforcers of justice, but also those who stand to make a direct material gain from championing particular moral standards.

At this point we must pause for a moment to take up our aim of considering the elaborations which Ranulf introduces into his theory. For having described the manifestations of the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment outlined above, and having related these to the lower middle class, he next asserts that we may expect to find a greater harshness towards the poor as an integral part of such a petty bourgeois mentality. As evidence for this assertion he cites the attitudes of Calvinists in the sixteenth century, as well as those of their spiritual heirs of the seventeenth century, the Puritans - both identified by Ranulf as essentially movements of the lower middle class. Indiscriminate almsgiving was condemned by these movements, and aid refused to those who did not practice their ascetic way of life. The poor were regarded not as victims of circumstance but of their own idle, irregular and wicked courses.

This link between the lower middle class and the lack of any charitable concern for the poor is in conflict, however, with the evidence that Ranulf presents from the work of Valdemar Vedel, which portrays the medieval burghers of pre-Reformation Europe as displaying characteristic symptoms of the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment, both in terms of severity towards offenders and ascetic prohibitions, at the same time as engaging in charitable activities.<sup>11</sup>

Ranulf attempts to reconcile the inconsistency between Vedel's testimony and his own conclusions by denying that such a charitable inclination was a true, spontaneous expression of middle class morality, but one imposed upon it by the preaching of the Catholic Church. But the reasons which he puts forward in defence of this interpretation are weak in themselves and inconsistent with the methodological assumptions he employs elsewhere in Moral Indignation and Middle Class Psychology as a basis for assessing the studies he presents as evidence. He argues, for example, that the Catholic Church only retained its hold over the petty bourgeoisie where it modified its character to accommodate itself to the peculiar mentality of this class, including "the development of a disinterested tendency to inflict punishment almost as strong as that which is normal to Calvinism".<sup>12</sup> But why, then, did it not also accommodate itself to their disinclination towards treating the poor charitably? Ranulf further states that a disinterested tendency to inflict punishment tends "to agree better with a rigorous than a charitable attitude towards the poor".<sup>13</sup> This is essentially the same sort of argument which he has earlier rejected in dealing with attempts to associate moral tolerance with belief in predestination:

An attitude of moral indifference is alleged to be the inevitable consequence of the idea of predestination....Yet these attempts at logical deduction do not alter the fact that Calvinists found no practical difficulty in combining belief in predestination with severity against sinners.<sup>14</sup>

We cannot assume that people will not entertain attitudes which, when looked at from one perspective, appear logically contradictory, for from another they may well appear quite compatible. Nor can we

assume that everybody will be aware of, or troubled by, such contradictions as do exist, as we shall see Ranulf demonstrating in his study of Puritan literature.

In dealing with the hostile evidence of Vedel, Ranulf has at least attempted, however unsuccessfully, to account for the distortion of the hypothesized relationship between an unwillingness to be charitable and the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment. The evidence he adduces in support of this hypothesis is taken from Tawney's Religion and the Rise of Capitalism. Now Ranulf states in reference to his use of secondary sources:

In the preceding pages all the facts alleged by the authors quoted have been taken for granted, and we have been concerned only with their interpretation and explanation.<sup>15</sup>

This, however, gives no indication of the procedure he intends to adopt when faced with rival descriptions of the same situation. He notes, for example, evidence that the Puritans were not as harsh towards the poor as Tawney maintained, as well as referring to other material casting doubt on the generosity of medieval Catholicism, but then, without any attempt to reconcile these views, simply proclaims the one favourable to his own thesis to be correct.<sup>16</sup> In addition, we may note that the upper bourgeoisie, who are specifically stated to have freed themselves from a concern with the ascetic prohibitions that are part of the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment, are admitted to be severe towards the poor and to ascribe their poverty to a lack of foresight and thrift. This Ranulf does attempt to account for by stating that such sentiments may merely be a justification for a reluctance to give alms - but all groups may be imputed to possess a similar self-interested concern when being called upon to give up a proportion of their income.

We have needed to devote some attention to this issue because if Ranulf is correct in assuming, as he is eventually led to do, that the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment is a disguised form of sadism, then we might indeed expect those entertaining such an approach towards their fellows to do little or nothing towards eliminating poverty. As we have seen, in terms of the standards he sets himself and the evidence he presents, Ranulf fails to establish this point.

As Ranulf points out, there had been a bourgeois class in Europe for several centuries before the rise of Protestantism. Evidence concerning the culture of the petty bourgeoisie during this period indicates that it embraced a variety of traits which Ranulf evidently regards as expressions of the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment. These include sumptuary legislation limiting the size and times of entertainments and gifts, together with injunctions to lead a regular, orderly, parsimonious, and industrious life. God is believed to frown upon disorder and disordinate passion in both monetary and household affairs. The petty bourgeoisie were scandalized by the open display of concubinage by the upper class, as well as condemning the literature of chivalrous love. Their lawgivers fought drunkenness, vice, gambling, and wasteful luxuries, extending the criminal law to cover acts which no one had previously thought of punishing or which had previously been left to the jurisdiction of the Church. Prosecutions were undertaken with less importance than before being attached to whether the injured party would or would not prosecute himself, while harsher punishments were introduced with the approval of public opinion.

In post-Reformation Europe, as noted above, Ranulf claims that the Catholic Church has tended to modify its teachings in those areas where it has sought to retain the adherence of the petty bourgeoisie. This it attempted through an emphasis on the virtues of thrift, industry, order and honesty. Jansenism, for example "is nothing but Calvinism so disguised as to be tolerated within the Catholic Church".<sup>18</sup> Their moral rigorism was such that extenuating circumstances for sin or crime were dismissed, dancing and the theatre were condemned, and idly enjoying watching the world go by was decried as sinful. Further examples of a petty bourgeois moral rigorism, drawn from a later period in French history, include a characteristic sexual prudery, found, for example, in the shielding of women from art and literature touching upon sex.<sup>19</sup>

A similar mentality is held to have emerged from petty bourgeois environments outside the circle of Christianity. Drawing upon Sombart's study of the way in which the ethics of Judaism were related to the origins of capitalism, Ranulf argues that this reflected the lower middle class nature of their occupations. In this he shares Sombart's opinion that there is nothing particularly Jewish about these beliefs and values. On the contrary:

Middle class respectability is, both among Jews and among Christians, simply a product of life that is lived in the crafts and the shops.<sup>20</sup>

This is held to result in shaping Judaism in directions similar to those of other petty bourgeois religions, such as Puritanism. Under these conditions the Jews come to emphasize the transformation of a natural, impulsive, animalistic existence into a regular, purposeful, moral life. The highest purpose in life is seen as residing in strict

unquestioning observance of the commands of God. Enthusiasm is to be discouraged as leading to inappropriate actions, unscrutinized as to their righteousness. Similarly, acting from sympathy detracts from the virtue of a rational implementation of the "idea of goodness". Eating and drinking are not to be enjoyed in themselves, but administered in a controlled fashion to satisfy bodily needs; while sex within marriage is not to be indulged in spontaneously.<sup>21</sup>

An idea of the signs which Ranulf regards as clear instances of the absence of a disinterested tendency to inflict punishment can be gleaned from his account of the psychology of the upper bourgeoisie. As noted above, this class has, as a result of its wealth, succeeded in freeing itself from the moral rigorism characteristic of the lower echelons of the bourgeoisie. This is reflected in their religious doctrines by a refusal to believe in a God who punishes the innocent, rejecting ideas such as those of the Jansenists concerning the eternal damnation likely to befall the majority of mankind. Collective responsibility for sins is denied; and cure, not punishment, prescribed as the appropriate remedy for those not responsible for their sins. God is thought to be ever inclined to err on the side of mercy in his judgements. Man is moreover considered good by nature, thus rendering Divine interference somewhat superfluous. And there is a decline in the belief in Hell.<sup>22</sup>

We can, then, separate those possessed of a disinterested tendency to inflict punishment from others by the following signs. They are likely to condemn as immoral a greater number of acts and to judge transgressions as more immoral, with less willingness to recognize extenuating circumstances.



Culprits identified as responsible for such misconduct should be severely punished. It is clear that Ranulf attributes these attitudes to a factor underlying and linking them, to a desire to increase the suffering inflicted upon delinquents. This punitive stance is further enhanced through cultivating a belief that deviants are fundamentally and inherently different from the righteous; and reflected in beliefs concerning the punitive nature of divine justice.

A further distinctive characteristic of those driven by a disinterested tendency to inflict punishment is that their moralization of the world proceeds in certain directions with particular rigour. First, we may note their support for the censorship of art and literature expressing unpatriotic and blasphemous sentiments, or anything offensive to sexual modesty. Second, we find an opposition to the liberalization of abortion laws. Third, we find them attempting to impose a severe asceticism upon others, stigmatizing carefree self-indulgence. To have one's fellows exhibiting gaiety and uninhibited sensuality is hardly likely to find favour in the jaundiced eye of "a social class living under conditions which force its members to an extraordinary degree of self-restraint and subject them to much frustration of natural desires".<sup>23</sup>

This, at least, is the interpretation put forward by Ranulf to account for the association between the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment and the lower middle class. How do we identify this class? It is to a consideration of this problem which we next turn.

Despite the centrality of this category to his theory, Ranulf offers no explicit definition of what constitutes the lower middle class and we are forced back on the examples he provides to attempt to discern what he regards as the distinguishing characteristics of this class. He evidently accepts the contrast which Schumann draws between the petty bourgeoisie and other classes when dealing with the rise of National Socialism. This excludes aristocrats, soldiers and the upper bourgeoisie on the one hand; and the proletariat and debt-ridden peasants on the other. Ranulf also cites the description of the lower middle class advanced by Lasswell when dealing with the same movement. This embraces shopkeepers, preachers, lawyers, doctors, farmers and craftsmen, all occupying a position intermediate between the working class and the upper bourgeoisie.<sup>24</sup>

Ranulf's acceptance of Lasswell's inclusion of a rural element within the petty bourgeoisie is somewhat surprising in view of his emphasis upon the urban roots of innerworldly asceticism. In this it seems likely that he was influenced by Weber's description of the affinity between ethical religions and the urban lower middle class, although he pressed this link much further than Weber was prepared to.<sup>25</sup> In dealing with cross-influences between the classes, for example, Ranulf specifically excludes farmers, fishermen and peasants from having any affinity with innerworldly asceticism.<sup>26</sup> At another point he summarizes with approval Sombart's conclusion that petty bourgeois morality "is a product of the life that is lived in the crafts and in the shops".<sup>27</sup> It is clearly an urban class engaged in

trade and industry which is in the forefront of his mind when discussing the petty bourgeois roots of Calvinism and Puritanism.<sup>28</sup>

Above the petty bourgeoisie is the upper middle class, with its own distinctive world view and style of life touched upon earlier. This class includes "prosperous merchants", the "business leaders of the commercial patriciate" in contrast with upwardly mobile artisans developing into manufacturers.<sup>29</sup> The way in which innerworldly asceticism found its strongest voice amongst parvenus whose origins were often extremely modest, rather than amongst those enjoying inherited commercial wealth, had earlier been recognised by Weber in his study of the spirit of capitalism.<sup>30</sup>

Wherever the petty bourgeoisie as a whole or individual members of it attain greater prosperity and prestige their characteristic moral rigorism is diluted - diluted that is, eventually, as the transition is unlikely to be immediate. In the case of individual mobility, for example, adaptation may well be delayed until the second generation.

Ranulf concentrates upon the traditional petty bourgeoisie of independent artisans and small traders in his contrast between the upper and lower middle class, offering no discussion of the position of the professions and semi-professions included by Lasswell amongst the petty bourgeoisie: teachers, preachers, lawyers and doctors. Whether the members of these professions who are highly rewarded are to be excluded from being classified as belonging to the lower middle class, Ranulf does not say, although such an exclusion seems consistent with his discussion of the effect of wealth upon morality. For what the petty bourgeoisie

lack in contrast with the upper middle class is discussed by Ranulf principally in terms of prosperity. While he acknowledges the influence of prestige, in actual practice differences between the two classes are accounted for by references to changes in class, not status. <sup>31</sup>

But if it is an inferiority in terms of class and status which gives rise to the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment, why do we not find it springing with still greater force from amongst those still further down the social scale? At points Ranulf does seem to follow the logic of his argument by claiming that the lower classes do spontaneously develop, or have an affinity for, the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment, although even here he is quick to qualify this by adding that it is nevertheless stronger in the lower middle class. <sup>32</sup>

In general however, his position on this point is different, as we can see from his discussion of cross-influences between the classes: "In general it seems that the people, i.e. the social strata which rank beneath the small bourgeoisie, are disposed to accept whatever moral standards may be in vogue amongst their betters". <sup>33</sup>

Why this should be Ranulf does not explain. The sort of explanation which he might have provided, if pressed, can be inferred from other remarks in Moral Indignation and Middle Class Psychology, but it is important to stress that he does not himself feel the need to justify this stand. This is surprising in view of the wealth of material indicating that the ability and inclination to elaborate distinctive subcultural solutions to the different problems faced by different classes does not end at the lowest rungs of the lower

middle class. The case of the very lowest classes in Puritan New England failing to adopt the ideology adhered to by the bourgeoisie, which he cites as an isolated exception, is clearly not so.<sup>34</sup> To take but one of the many discussions of this topic, albeit a particularly apt one in the present context for its elaboration of Weber's ideas concerning the affinity between certain religions and social classes in the light of subsequent research concerning the characteristic norms, values and beliefs of these classes, we may refer to the work of Collins.<sup>35</sup> Offering a view of petty bourgeois mentality similar to that advanced by Ranulf, he then proceeds further down the social scale to describe the characteristic cultures of the working class and lower class, both (but particularly the lower class) embracing views of the world incompatible with much of lower middle class morality.

Yet it is also clear that the subordinate class within society is not free from ideological influences emanating from the institutions controlled by its dominant class.<sup>36</sup> This view of the social sources of beliefs and values is summed up by Ranulf as the assumption - which he evidently shares - that "the traditions acknowledged as normative by a human community are always in harmony with the psychology of the ruling class in this community".<sup>37</sup> In an important extension of his theory, made in an attempt to account for the absence of "innerworldly asceticism" in the Orient, Ranulf argues that although those aspects of lower middle class life conducive to a disinterested tendency to inflict punishment were present, this failed to emerge. This is attributed to the powerlessness of this group, a powerlessness which prevented the bourgeoisie

"from asserting itself politically and spiritually with such vigour as to produce an independent and genuine bourgeois culture".<sup>38</sup>

This in its turn is explained by reference to the underdevelopment of a capitalist economy, with a corresponding underdevelopment of the lower middle class numerically, economically, socially and politically. Clearly this has implications for an extremely weak class deprived of political power and access to, and influence over, its own ideological institutions. Such a class faces great difficulties in formulating and disseminating any abstract moral ideology independently from the dominant class.

This could have been an argument advanced by Ranulf to account for the ideological passivity and imitativeness of those classes beneath the petty bourgeoisie, for it is in agreement with his remarks on the conditions favouring the spiritual subservience or independence of the lower middle class. But clearly this broad group beneath the petty bourgeoisie is not at all homogenous. It varies not only in terms of urban-rural differences which, as we have seen, Ranulf considers of some importance but also in terms of its power and influence. This should be reflected in a degree of freedom from ideological domination, allowing it to develop some "spiritual independence" similar to that enjoyed by the petty bourgeoisie under similar circumstances. Ranulf is, however, adamant that the European and American working class of the inter-war period were as apt as any other subordinate class of peasants or proletarians throughout history to passively imitate and accept the moral standards of the dominant class within their community.

Another solution might lie in employing a more elaborate notion of class than he uses in his discussion of the distinction between the upper and lower middle class. His distinction, as we have seen, revolves principally around prosperity as the crucial distinguishing characteristic. But this is a very narrow conception of the nature of class, excluding such important factors as security of employment and opportunities for individual mobility. Clearly the position of the petty bourgeoisie differs from the working class in these respects, as it does in various aspects of the work situation revolving around the nature of the task and the exercise of authority.

Such an investigation would lead into areas left unexplored by Ranulf. We are left, then, with a theory which focuses primarily upon explaining differences between the morality of the petty bourgeoisie and those classes ranked above it. This concern is evident from his study of Puritan morality during the period of the English Civil War.

Using a selection of Puritan documents from the period of the English Civil War, including such material as the Directory for the Publique Worship of God (the replacement for the Book of Common Prayer), sermons, religious and moral tracts, political pamphlets, and a weekly paper Ranulf illustrates what he sees as distinctive Puritan "prejudices and passions". These encompass a ~~disinterested~~ punitiveness, which he detects reflected in their entertaining, and feeling edified by, belief in a cruel and unjust God.

This God not only punishes men for sins committed knowingly and deliberately, but also applies the principle of collective responsibility, punishing those, otherwise innocent, who are considered to share some sort of community with the guilty. God is also seen as leading the person who is to be punished on to further transgressions before retribution overtakes him. Even the innocent may be forced, enticed or tempted into sin. Yet the Puritans evidently felt some qualms about attributing to God responsibility for bringing about the misconduct which He then punished, qualms which were solved by the simple expedient of self-contradiction. Thus they both affirm and deny that God would do such a thing, confirmation and rejection of this idea appearing side by side in the same publication and even interwoven in the same passage without acknowledgement or resolution.

The Puritan God is also generally affirmed to inflict suffering on the innocent, though this, too, is occasionally accompanied by the same sort of contradiction touched upon above, reflecting, Ranulf feels, a similar uneasiness about attributing such dubious qualities to God. The Puritans also held that God will cast down men who are not humble or who entertain immoderate desires. This Ranulf interprets as divine jealousy of humans exceeding the bounds of self-indulgences and aggrandisement, reflecting a similar disposition on the part of His followers. The spirit of this belief is evident in the following excerpt from one of the publications quoted by Ranulf:



A full body and a full stomack would increase the humour:  
 So the Lord is a marvelous skilfull Physitian: we have proud  
 hearts and would have dainties; and if we should have riches  
 as we would, God should lose his honour which now he hath by  
 us being kept under hatches; therefore the Lord dyets us. -  
 Notheing would serve some if the Lord should not dyet them,  
 but they would be as proud and as saucie as ever they could:  
 therefore the Lord is compelled to dyet them. 39

It is, of course, conceivable that those who feel edified by  
 a belief in a God who displays a disinterested tendency to inflict  
 punishment may nevertheless feel that such a duty is not incumbent  
 upon them. That they did accept such an obligation is, however,  
 suggested by their belief that God holds it to be a human duty to punish  
 sinners, visiting retribution upon those who neglect to do so.

It is clear that some new factors associated with, rather than  
 indicative of, the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment, have  
 emerged here, although all share in common the imposition of suffering  
 or deprivation. First, there is the jealousy of God provoked by excessive  
 human success or self-indulgence; reflecting, Ranulf concludes, an envious  
 disposition amongst His flock. Second, there is the arbitrary and selfish  
 suffering meted out by God to those who have not done anything to deserve it,  
 either through sin or excess. This Ranulf depicts as pure sadism, suffering  
 imposed for the sake of it, reflecting a similar passion on the part of the  
 Puritans. Sadism is, however, perhaps too strong a term for what is often  
 more an indifference to the cost of human suffering incurred in the pursuit  
 of Divine objectives together with a stress on the positive benefits  
 associated with human hardship, rather than purposeless infliction of  
 suffering as an end in itself.

Furthermore, Ranulf goes on to claim such sadism as the fundamental  
 attitude underlying both a disinterested tendency to inflict punishment and

envy. But this is a rather gratuitous interpretation placed upon the facts by Ranulf, on the grounds that all entail suffering. The fact that this is as a means, not an end is dismissed as a mere pretext. It could, however, equally well be argued that envy is the basic factor underlying the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment and a general indifference towards, or willingness to see the benefits in, human suffering - and this, indeed, is the interpretation put forward in his earlier work, The Jealousy of the Gods and Criminal Law at Athens. There it is the envy provoked by the self-indulgent overstepping of the bounds set on human conduct that is identified as the psychological mechanism underlying the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment upon deviants. Similarly, envy of those enjoying security and freedom from anxiety on the part of those more precariously placed is held to underlie a belief in the arbitrary cruelty of the gods, stressing the dangers from which not even the virtuous are immune.

Yet Ranulf in neither case provides any reasonable grounds for according causal priority to one rather than another of these three attitudes: namely, the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment; envy; and an indifference or even delight, in human suffering. At best we can say that they are interrelated. But the exact nature of this association brings us up against a problem which we have hitherto delayed confronting, and which must now be settled.

As illustrated above, the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment is a complex variable composed of a number of dimensions. Of these, punitiveness for one, and ascetic prohibitions for another,

appeared as two major components. Now, either punitiveness and asceticism are two attitudes which we may expect to find together or they may well occur separately and it is only when we find them together that we have a disinterested tendency to inflict punishment. In the former case we have a hypothesis capable of refutation, in the latter a definition. As such the definition does, of course, remove itself from the possibility of falsification, but may nonetheless prove valuable for capturing a set of attitudes which, when they do come together, lend meaning to one another in such a way as to form a distinctive mentality which is specific to certain social conditions.

Ranulf, however fails to make clear which alternative he has in mind. This leaves him free to slip unselfconsciously back and forth between the two conceptions. If he were to openly opt for the definitional approach, he would have to provide evidence that all the aspects of the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment are present in each case he considers, whereas he is occasionally satisfied to cite just one or two, implying that the others are likely to be present also. But for this to be at all acceptable he would have to establish an empirical association between the attitudes which together form the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment.

Similarly, in dealing with his association between the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment, "sadism" and envy it is not at all clear whether he regards these traits as correlated, or just that where the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment is accompanied by the latter two, its support is likely to spring from different motives than when it occurs amongst a different complex of attitudes and interests.

Ranulf's theory may, then, amount only to saying that where these traits all occur together we have a distinctive mentality, together with the hypothesis that such a mentality is the monopoly of the lower middle class. Cases where individual traits appear in isolation or amongst unrelated or incompatible beliefs and values do not falsify his theory, as they take on a completely different meaning from the psychological and cultural context in which they occur.

The general drift of Ranulf's work is, however, towards what might be called the "hard" version of his theory: that is, that there is a positive correlation between the various dimensions of the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment, and between these and the traits touched upon above. But his own evidence introduces some difficulties here. In contrast to the literature of the Puritans, for example, Royalist literature of the same period portrays a God who "will cause men to suffer only under circumstances in which we too may find punishment reasonable, and there are no traces of sadism or masochism".<sup>40</sup> This suggests that the God of the Royalists also displays a disinterested tendency to inflict punishment, in which case we might expect, given the "hard" version of his theory, that sadism and envy would accompany it. This, as we shall see, is the approach adopted by Ranulf in his earlier work, The Jealousy of the Gods and Criminal Law at Athens.<sup>41</sup> Possibly Ranulf might have sought to rescue his argument concerning the moral indignation of the Puritans by asserting that a more rigid and stern imposition of penalties by the Puritan God displayed a stronger disinterested tendency to inflict punishment than is reflected in the more flexible and forbearing attitude attributed to their God by the Royalists. He does not, however, leaving this possibility unexplored

and the problem raised by evidence of a disinterested tendency to punish on the part of the Royalist God is left unresolved.

Despite such difficulties, however, Ranulf's study of the moral indignation of the Puritans as revealed through their religious beliefs and sentiments remains the outstanding study amongst those presented in Moral Indignation. This is not simply because he is not here dependent upon secondary sources, as in those other studies. It is, rather, due to the striking parallels he is able to demonstrate between the religious outlook and moral sentiments of the Puritans and those which he had previously revealed in The Jealousy of the Gods to be common amongst the citizens of ancient Athens. In order to examine these parallels more closely, we need to introduce some consideration of Ranulf's earlier work at this stage. Accordingly, the following section introduces the argument unfolded in The Jealousy of the Gods.

## II. The jealousy of the gods (i)

The Jealousy of the Gods is concerned with charting and explaining the emergence of the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment in a community where it had not previously existed. Before the time of Dracon the Athenian community seems to have assumed a perfectly neutral attitude towards attacks upon private citizens. Everybody had to defend himself to the best of his ability with the help of his kinsmen. Nobody came to his assistance if he and his family could not manage by themselves. After Solon's reforms the state was to interfere and punish at first a few and later on a great number of such encroachments at the request of any citizen, even if the sufferer neither defended himself nor complained of the wrong he had suffered.

For an example of a society in which the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment, if present at all, was much weaker than it was to become in the Athenian community, we need only turn back the pages of Greek history to examine what can be learnt about life in Homeric times from the Iliad and the Odyssey. No passage in these poems compels us to assume the existence of judges other than those to whom the parties freely subject themselves. To explain why the community did nothing to protect the individual through punishment of offenders it has been argued that it was not yet realized that such assaults on the individual are also contrary to the fundamental requirements of the community as a whole. But why was it not yet realized? Why were the Greeks of Homer's time less capable of realizing this than those of Solon's Athens? Ranulf insists that we look elsewhere for explanations of social institutions than to those which refer their origin and development to the immanent unfolding of human reason.

There is, however, some indication of an as yet still weak disinterested tendency to inflict punishment in the Odyssey. At Ithaca some public disapproval is expressed at encroachments of the suitors on the rights of Telemachus. But such public disapproval was not sufficiently forceful for society to interfere and punish the suitors. It is more difficult, if not impossible, to find traces of even such a weak expression of moral indignation in the Iliad, where not only do men not feel impelled to punish those who have wronged others, but also the gods fail to display any disinterested activity on behalf of the maintenance of justice.

The gods are only believed to punish misconduct in cases where they have suffered a personal offence, such as the breach of an oath to which they had been called as witnesses.

When the state takes sides in any quarrel between private citizens, declares one of the contending parties to be in the right and with its whole authority takes his part against his adversary, prohibiting the parties from taking the law into their own hands, this is not necessarily the outcome of a disinterested tendency to inflict punishment. Dracon's laws might be conceived to be dictated by an understandable wish to prevent private warfare between the noble families of the Athenian community. The lower classes might well feel induced to follow such a course whenever they had the power to compel the nobles. This explanation is plausible, although as yet unestablished and is not in itself, Ranulf argues, sufficient to explain why the Athenian community, from the time of Solon, introduced a new institution by virtue of which any citizen had the right to complain to the courts of crimes committed against citizens who were perfect strangers to him. What can have induced Athenian citizens thus regularly without benefit to themselves, to invoke the law to punish others who had not offended them directly? One explanation is that this innovation was introduced because of the emergence of a belief in the religious pollution befalling a community which allowed the perpetrators of certain crimes to go unpunished. Ranulf dismisses such an explanation as not solving the problem, but merely presenting it in a new form, for why were these crimes regarded as incurring such pollution after a certain date? Besides which, he notes, homicide was specifically excluded from the crimes which could be complained of under Solon's innovation in widening the complainant

constituency, the right of prosecution being limited to kin, even though homicide was thought of as involving dangerous pollution.

Another possible explanation is that Solon broke with the principle that only the injured party can complain in order to ensure laws laying down that a debtor cannot be sold as a slave by his creditors, and that fathers must not sell their children or brothers their sisters, would become more than mere idle words proclaiming pious ideals. But this, Ranulf argues, takes for granted what needs to be explained, for what is the use of giving every citizen the right to complain to the courts about crimes committed against others if there is no certainty that anybody will avail himself of this right? Why should Athenian citizens interfere with greater eagerness than Homeric princes in the quarrels of their fellows?

Perhaps Solon's laws were class war laws, enacted for the protection of the poor? The hatred against the rich may have been so strong that among the poor there would always be found men who, out of a feeling of solidarity with their fellows engendered by their sharing a common enemy, would appeal to the law courts for the pleasure of seeing a rich man prevented by law from benefitting from encroaching on the rights of the less privileged. But, Ranulf holds, such an explanation of the introduction, use and extension of the legal innovation introduced by Solon would only be applicable in the light of clear evidence of unusually intense class warfare and that it was employed solely as a weapon in this struggle.

Between the years 600 and 400 B.C. the right of citizens other than the victim or his kin to complain to the courts grew, the majority of crimes



being covered by this procedure by the latter date probably being brought within its scope about the middle of the 5th century. Before proceeding to investigate why the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment flourished in 5th century Athens we should note one other way in which it manifested itself in the criminal law of this period. As already noted, at Athens homicide was not amongst the offences indictable by those other than the victim's kin. With murders within the family, the normal course was for the offender to be expelled from their midst without the interference of the authorities. But if this did not happen it was possible to instigate an action against those refusing to act against the homicide. Also, if a woman was convicted of adultery her husband was obliged to divorce her. In these two cases, then, people incurred punishment at Athens not because they had committed wrongs against others, but because they had neglected their own honour and that of their family.

Why did the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment flourish in the 5th century Athens? From what source can we discover the thoughts and feelings prevalent at the time which might account for it? One place in which these were given expression is in the literature of the earlier parts of the 5th century, in the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Herodotus.

How, then, can one employ these sources in the search for the origin of the newly acquired zeal for enforcing justice? One possible approach which suggests itself arises from the observation, noted above, that in the Iliad not only men, but also the gods are portrayed as indifferent to the wrongs inflicted on others. When we turn to the

literature of 5th century Athens, however, we find a disinterested involvement in the execution of justice attributed to the same Gods an involvement which parallels that which men have now taken upon themselves. Perhaps an examination of other new characteristics which came to be attributed to the gods by the Athenians will furnish clues to the solution of the problem. This is the path which Ranulf sets out to explore.

In the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Herodotus, all the gods are presumed to be animated by a desire to punish immorality amongst men. Punishment may be meted out not only to the guilty individual, but also to his son, his kindred or his whole people. Furthermore, the gods often force or entice a criminal to commit fresh crimes before punishment overtakes him. This the gods do without any regard for the great damage done to honest citizens by these new crimes. It seems that it is less a regard for protecting the community that stirs the gods than a wish to inflict punishment on wrongdoers, even when this is thought to necessitate making the criminal still more culpable than he is already.

Indeed, so strong is their desire to find crimes to punish that, in the works of Herodotus and Sophocles, we find the gods provoking or making unavoidable transgressions by previously guiltless persons belonging to guiltless kin. Sophocles' Oedipus Rex is perhaps one of the best known examples of unintentional guilt brought about by the gods and culminating in the ruin of those involved. But it is clear from the comments and cautionary tales of Herodotus and from the comments which Sophocles puts into the mouths of his actors that both regard such activities on the part of the gods as altogether morally unimpeachable.

Men could also provoke divine anger and be made to suffer by the gods through exciting their jealousy as a consequence of great riches, power, fame or happiness. To be, or to boast of being exceptionally happy arouses the jealousy of the gods or may, through breeding hubris, lead one into sin - a belief similar to more recent ideas concerning the association of affluence and moral decay. According to Herodotus not only the gods, but men too, and especially the Hellenes were filled with envy towards others. If Herodotus is right in his characterisation of the Hellenes it becomes intelligible that they should feel edified by belief in jealous gods, for if envy forms so large a part of one's character that the thought of the stable happiness of others seems intolerable, what could be more comforting than the belief that there exist gods who are just so inclined themselves and who consequently provide a promise that there is a force powerful and willing enough to destroy any such provocative good fortune?

The gods, then, are portrayed as bringing ruin upon men for three types of reason: Type I is punishment for committing wrongs against other people; Type II is misfortune brought about for no particular reason; and Type III is misfortune resulting from divine jealousy.

In the Iliad there is no unmistakeable example of jealousy governing the conduct of the gods, nor any hint of disapproval by gods or men of arrogant boasting. While the gods do not display the traits they are later to acquire which were labeled Types I and III above, in Homer we already find the gods displaying a comprehensive involvement in bringing down ruin upon men as the result of pure caprice or for their own convenience. What Ranulf finds new in the works of Herodotus and Sophocles is their

peculiar approval of the arbitrary cruelty of the gods. Homer, for instance, has hardly anything corresponding to the fear expressed by Sophocles' chorus concerning the possibility of Oedipus evading his cruel fate, nor any hint of edification at the unscrupulous destruction of human happiness by the divine powers.

To the modern sense of justice it makes the greatest possible difference whether the gods punish men for wrongs they have committed, or whether they ruin innocent persons merely from capriciousness or jealousy. In the latter case their conduct provokes the accusation of cruelty and injustice, and the division of the three types of divinely ordained misfortune outlined above was made by Ranulf in accordance with the differing evaluations which they were likely to provoke in his contemporaries. In 5th century Athens, however, the intervention of the gods for any of the three types of reason was regarded as equally just and edifying. This is reflected in the literature by it evidently being found unnecessary to distinguish between the types in any coherent and consistent fashion. Divinely ordained destruction having been attributed to one cause, such as the wish to punish a criminal, reflection on the activities of the gods in that case very often become intermingled with comments which would only be appropriate if they were made concerning one of the other motives being the source of the gods actions, such as envy or capriciousness. Once one type has entered the author's mind it is usually accompanied by, and inextricably interwoven with, reflections which also relate the misfortune concerned to one or both of the other two types. As a result he proceeds to wander unconcernedly back and forth between the

types, as if any comment appropriate to one type is appropriate to any of the others.

There is, however, one exception to this general tendency, one situation where the authors under consideration do become alive to the conceptual and moral differences between the types. This is when they allow those characters who have fallen foul of the malice of the gods to assert that their misfortune is no fault of their own and that they therefore have a right to pity and forbearance. But other characters who are spectators to the tragedy of the victim of the gods do not condone forbearance for to leave sins unpunished is unthinkable, would endanger the community, and display that the power of the gods was waning, undermining faith.

Ranulf argues that a further link between the different motives behind divine intervention in human affairs is discernible in the way in which the three writers use the Greek phrase meaning "provocative of envy" not only literally, but also to mean "morally objectionable". Similarly, the phrase meaning "safe-guarded against envy" is sometimes used to stand for "morally unimpeachable".<sup>42</sup> The opposite usage, the use of terms applicable to immorality in describing envy and the jealousy of the gods, does not occur. This Ranulf interprets as suggesting that the idea of the jealousy of the gods preceded the idea of the justice of the gods. As the gods increasingly came to be thought of as jealous, reflecting the growing envy of their followers, their displeasure was likely to extend itself to those who sought to evade the moral boundaries under which their virtuous neighbours laboured.

While those who committed hubris, who were defiant, lacked restraint and were proud were the heroes of the Greeks, heroes whom they admired, sympathised with and enthusiastically applauded, they nevertheless never tired of hearing of their eventual downfall. To be able to defy the gods and men as the heroes of Aeschylus and Sophocles often do was no doubt the secret wish of their audience and yet they knew that misfortune was their inevitable lot should they try to step outside the narrow boundaries enforced upon them by their way of life. What a man most fervently desires and most bitterly feels the want of he cannot but begrudge others.

It appears, then, that the new conception of the gods emerged as a projection of, and to provide comfort to, an unusually strong propensity to envy. Given the close association of the newly acquired moral indignation of the gods with their jealousy, the rising tide of envy amongst Athenians can also be seen as the source of the newly acquired right of citizens to prosecute offenders in cases where neither they nor their kin have been wronged and even, in certain cases, against the person wronged if he does not retaliate against the offender. Ranulf sees such institutions as being introduced to cater to envious elements within the community who were ever ready to seek opportunities to drag down their fellows.

Before proceeding to examine the social climate which nourished such an envious disposition, are there any further changes in Athenian society which were associated with its growth and which might in some way be held to provide a further outlet for its expression? Such an interpretation can be placed upon Ostracism. Every year the Assembly voted as to whether Ostracism should be put into practice that year. If the

answer was in the affirmative, a poll of the whole people was taken to decide which citizen was to be condemned to go into exile for ten years. Ranulf comments that, considered in the light of later ideas concerning the nature of justice, the law of Ostracism appears indefensible, for it allows a condemnation to exile without any crime having been committed. But it does seem to harmonize excellently with the mentality of the Athenian people in the first half of the 5th century. For the edification of men, the gods, impelled by caprice or envy, bring down misfortune not only upon offenders but also upon the innocent. The citizens in their turn, like the gods they follow, can be seen as occasionally venting their envy or spite upon the innocent and employing Ostracism as an official form in which envy and malice could find expression. When the power, wealth and honour of a fellow citizen assumed too provoking proportions men were ever ready to come unbidden to the aid of the gods by seeing to it that the overstepping of the mean involved in such scandalous pre-eminence was counter-balanced. (This interpretation of Ostracism has a long history, perhaps finding its best expression in Plutarch's anecdote concerning a peasant who could not write. This peasant, coming across Aristides, whom he did not know by sight, asked him to write the name of Aristides on the potsherd. Aristides complied but expressed curiosity about what this statesman had done to deserve such a fate, to which the peasant replied: "I do not know him, but it annoys me to hear him cried up everywhere for his righteousness".)

As further evidence of envy, it might be recalled that Herodotus

explicitly remarks not only on the envious nature of the gods, but also attributes the trait to his fellow Hellenes. Perhaps the extant works of his contemporaries should be searched to see whether they agree with him in those of his remarks which purport to give an accurate description of the Greek character of the period? The trouble with adopting such an approach is that men's judgments of themselves stand in need of correction and support by criteria other than reliance solely upon what they will lay claim to, or admit to others. It is partly for this reason that Ranulf makes such extensive use of the indirect evidence on sentiments to be gleaned from literary sources.

What, then, are the conditions which created such intense envy that it coloured so much of Athenian life in the 5th century? Ranulf sees it as embedded in the economic hardship endured by the bulk of Athenians, conditions exacerbated by the unfavourable comparison of their fate with that enjoyed by the wealthy aristocracy of Attica. The envy provoked by these conditions finds expression in the reflections with which they seek to comfort themselves. Behind Herodotus's tales in which inevitable downfall and destruction accompanies such fabulous wealth as was possessed by the Lydian king Croesus, there lurks the desperate, laboriously suppressed recognition that the life of a poor Athenian citizen was empty and joyless in comparison.

There is, however, a point in the development of 5th century Athens when the disinterested tendency to punish and envy can be seen to have disappeared simultaneously in a definite social group. That group is the



upper class at Athens in the second half of the 5th century. More precisely, Ranulf argues, the change occurred in that part of the upper class which was of noble descent and possessed of intellectual culture, and which had taken advantage of the chances of enrichment offered by the growth of the Athenian Empire. It was in this social group that the Sophists found their public and which left its mark upon the works of Thucydides, Euripides and Aristophanes.

During the course of the 5th century the Delian League, formed as a defensive alliance of equals against the Persians, became transformed into an Athenian empire. At Athens the exercise of imperial power had a profound influence on the privileges and prestige enjoyed by the Athenian citizens. Up to the year 480 no Athenian citizen received any payment for work in the service of the state. Gradually, however, the state introduced payment for all public service, including jurors and rowers in the fleet, thus providing an important source of income to many poor Athenian citizens. When the Persian War came to an end in the year 448 the number of rowers needed declined, but Pericles procured compensation for the citizens who thus lost an important part of their income by starting public works at Athens - the building of the Parthenon being a case in point. All this expenditure by the state was sustained by the tribute offered or forced from the members of the Delian League, while further material advantages were obtained at their expense through the payment of law court fees, Athens monopolising the right to hear certain cases, and from the colonies established by Athenians on land taken partly from the "Allies".

The poorer citizens, whose chief source of hope of income was paid service for the state, constituted the dominant democratic party at Athens. Not only did these citizens derive material advantage from the Empire, they also gained prestige. Allies forced to come to Athens for a law suit, for example, were wise to accord their jurymen respect. To many of the upper class it also offered new opportunities for enrichment by trade and industry, and this part of the Athenian aristocracy now became very wealthy. However, that part of the aristocracy which had not taken advantage of such opportunities constituted, together with the peasants of Attica, a conservative party opposed to Athenian imperialism, as to them it only meant burdens and trouble.

It might be conjectured that the improved conditions of life were bound to weaken the tendency to envy. Yet from the evidence we have of the mentality of the poorer citizens it seems that the traditional outlook asserted itself with unimpaired vigour in these circles. And yet there is also evidence from the later part of the 5th century that the traditional Athenian view of life no longer commanded the consensus it once enjoyed.

Thucydides, for example, is critical of the mass of Athenians during the Peloponnesian War for adopting disastrous policies under the influence of prejudices and passions such as envy, suspiciousness, cruelty and anti-intellectualism which were part of the traditional Athenian view of life reflected in the literature of the earlier writers considered above. There is, however, a new development insofar as the Athenians as described by Thucydides no longer seem to regard mere envy as sufficient justification for bringing down ruin upon man.

There is now at least a desire to pretend to the belief that the person overtaken by misfortune has been guilty of some objectionable act. But so little is demanded in the way of proof, and so great is the credulity accorded to every suspicion, that in practice the result hardly differs from the old arbitrary cruelty. This modification in the traditional morality may well have been the result of a need felt by its adherents to justify their position faced with the rise of individualism.

One other thing that emerges from Thucydides' work is that a warring Greek state would attempt to involve neutral states in its struggle by depicting itself as the innocent victim of its enemy. In this way third parties were appealed to as disinterested guardians of justice. Such appeals, Ranulf contends, testify to a very rudimentary disinterested tendency to inflict punishment in the realm of foreign affairs, which was, however, only indulged when it coincided with interests of state. Disinterested punishment is far less likely to find expression against states than against individuals for, while within the boundaries of the state the disinterested onlookers constitute the vast majority in proportion to the offender, when a state offends their number is relatively much smaller. It is therefore more dangerous, difficult and expensive to punish the offender.

While there is some doubt that Euripides had any faith in the existence of gods, their actions and intervention in human affairs feature prominently in his drama, serving as vehicles for the expression of his opinions concerning traditional Athenian beliefs and values. These he opposed in two ways, either depicting the gods as less arbitrary, cruel and jealous than do Herodotus and Sophocles, or portraying them as indeed possessing their traditional characteristics,

but then condemning them for possessing them, denying that such gods are worthy of adoration and respect.

It would appear, then, that Euripides was free from moral indignation. But what, in that case, inspired him to his indefatigable attacks on the gods of traditional Athenian religion? Was it not indignation at what he regarded as their immorality? Clearly not in the sense of this term as used by Ranulf, for whom moral indignation is primarily a desire to inflict upon others suffering which they are considered to have deserved. Euripides' clearly cannot have been inspired by any such disinterested desire to invoke punishment upon gods in whose existence he doubted, nor upon the people who felt comforted by their belief in such gods. The whole trend of his writings is that men should be exposed to less, not more, suffering. Another sign that he was free from the disinterested desire to cause harm to others which was characteristic of the traditional Athenian mentality is provided by evidence of his humane attitude towards those classes of human beings that his contemporaries refused to acknowledge and treat as the equals of citizens, such as women, illegitimate children and barbarians.

When we come to the comedies of Aristophanes we find certain attacks on individuals and institutions which at first sight appear as expressions of disinterested indignation, but on closer examination it becomes clear that his is but a spurious piety, for he only appeals to the prejudices of the traditional Athenian mentality still prevailing amongst most of his audience when he wishes to undermine support for the democratic party.

Similar practices indulged in by those who were not his political enemies pass unremarked. Besides aspersions cast upon the morals of well-known democrats, Aristophanes also makes use of malicious remarks deriding them for unmerited misfortunes and infirmities. The delight of his audience at remarks of this kind can only have been a maliciousness akin to that which made it find the undeserved suffering meted out by their gods so satisfying. The sentiment which lay behind the traditional belief in the jealousy of the gods is also appealed to by Aristophanes. This belief originated in human envy feeding a desire to see those who enjoyed great prosperity or success cast down by the gods. But such envy can be equally satisfied by believing wealth and self-indulgence have a demoralizing effect of their own accord. And it is to this feeling that Aristophanes appeals in depicting a strict upbringing as necessary to produce virtue and heroism, and warning that a permissive attitude towards the young, leaving them to enjoy life, will foster cowardice and immorality.

Further evidence for the case that the traditional views were not as firmly rooted as they had been earlier in the 5th century can also be gleaned from an examination of the later works of Sophocles. In these Ranulf detects evidence that Sophocles had moved away from the views he held in his earlier years towards a position closer to Euripides, for he, too, comes eventually to disapprove of or to deny the tendency of the gods to persecute the innocent or those led to sin unwittingly.

A very early sign of the weakening of the traditional Athenian view of life occurs in another case involving a change of heart, this time on the part of Aeschylus. In the Eumenides, Orestes, forced by Apollo to murder his mother to avenge his father's death at her hands, is saved from divine wrath and destruction. This acquittal of Orestes seems to be a disavowal of all that Aeschylus had previously taught concerning the relations between gods and men. This play was produced towards the end of his life and it seems clear that he must have come to regard the divine persecution of Orestes as unjustified, reflecting an incipient individualism which could not sanction the unscrupulous sporting with the lives and fortunes of men.

But if the Eumenides, dating from the year 458, is our first indication of an emerging disagreement concerning the use of punishment by the gods and the community, it also contains evidence of a defensive response to this growing uncertainty by appeals to an idea which was previously of little or no importance. This entailed the attempt to justify punishment in terms of general prevention: criminals should be punished in order to discourage others from doing likewise, for only thus can the life and property of honest men be protected. The theory of general prevention, Ranulf argues, only develops where the need arises of defending an existing penal institution which is being questioned. This is true both in antiquity and in our own time. But for the origin and first development of the institution of punishment, the idea of general prevention seems to have been entirely without importance.

For additional material concerning the changing moral climate at Athens, a change which constituted part of what was to become known as the Athenian Enlightenment, Ranulf also makes reference to the writings of the Sophists. While only fragments of these are now available to us, several reveal a scepticism with regard to moral principles which is psychologically incompatible with moral indignation. The fragmentary nature of the evidence makes it impossible to decide in the case of some of these whether the opinions expressed are those of the author, but the fact that these views are discussed at all would seem to indicate that they were taken seriously somewhere in the author's environment.

The works of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Herodotus seem to give expression to a view of life which was common to the whole Athenian citizenry. At any rate it is incontestable that their works come much nearer to being an expression of the views of the average Athenian than do the works of Euripides and Thucydides. For both Euripides and Thucydides are continually aiming their attacks at a mentality which differs radically from their own and which they evidently found to be common amongst their countrymen. No trace is to be found of a similar polemical attitude before their time. The mentality which they challenged was, as we have seen, composed of sentiments celebrated in the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Herodotus.

But in which sections of the Athenian public had the feelings which underlay the traditional morality disappeared? There is evidence that the poorer citizens, who were the main source of support for the democratic party, continued to be dominated by the traditional outlook.

This can be seen, for example, in the demagogic methods which are described by both Thucydides and Aristophanes as being employed by Cleon. These consisted mainly of appeals to an easily excitable moral indignation which was not overscrupulous as to whether the accused had actually offended or not. In addition to the democratic citizens in Athens itself, the Athenian people comprised the farmers in Attica and the aristocrats. Aristophanes evidently found a sympathetic audience in both, and this is perhaps one reason why his attitude towards moral problems was so ambiguous, for the aristocrats of the oligarchic party had to appear as champions of the traditional religion and morality so as not to offend the old-fashioned farmers whose political support they required. The new aloofness from moral indignation must, Ranulf concludes, have been cultivated primarily within the Athenian upper class.

### III. The jealousy of the gods (ii)

The kernel of Ranulf's argument in The Jealousy of the Gods is then, much the same as we have encountered in discussing Moral Indignation and Middle Class Psychology: public condemnation and punishment of both predatory crimes against private individuals and victimless crimes, are part of a broader mentality and pattern of conduct rooted in lower middle class conditions of life.<sup>43</sup> It, also, begins with a rejection of arguments which attempt to explain the growth of the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment to the immanent unfolding of human reason and awareness; and, indeed, one has only to look at the vitiating effect of such an approach on the work of a writer such as Westermarck to grant that there are some grounds for such a criticism.<sup>44</sup>



Instead, as we have seen, Ranulf turns his attention to other aspects of Greek life which can be seen reflected in their religious beliefs. But care is needed here. Whatever the human motives, the hopes and anxieties, which may find themselves projected onto the stage of divine action, it cannot be assumed that when it comes to human practices such as punishment that human and divine justice closely resemble one another in terms of what is punished and the relative severity with which various offences are dealt with. As Mary Douglas notes, it is precisely at those points where human sanctions are weak that activity by supernatural forces is likely to be invoked to remedy, not duplicate, the deficiency.<sup>45</sup>

This is supported by Julia Brown's cross-cultural study of human and supernatural penalties for sexual offences, when she suggests that one of the distinguishing characteristics of those offences which were met only with supernatural punishment, was simply the difficulty of detecting violations. (Her explanation suggests interesting parallels within our own society, where the notoriously difficult to detect victimless crimes are often surrounded by beliefs concerning the illness likely to accompany them, unlike the predatory crimes.) Her results show that in 73.6% of the sexual offences she surveyed, punishment was undertaken by humans alone with no parallel activity on the part of the supernatural. In only 13.8% of the cases was punishment meted out by both supernatural and human intervention, while in 12.6% of the cases supernatural sanctions operated alone.<sup>46</sup>

Ranulf's claim to have tapped the temperament and conduct of the citizens of Classical Athens through an analysis of the actions they attributed to their gods must, therefore, be treated with some caution.

Turning to the treatment of the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment in The Jealousy of the Gods, we find Ranulf grading it in terms of intensity, contrasting the very weak form manifest in the expression of public disapproval unsupported by further action to punish the offender, with the situation in which it asserts itself more forcefully in the punishment of offenders by the community or its representatives. As he notes, however, the insistence upon, and monopoly of, adjudication by the state may have been attributable to the desire of weaker members of the community to protect themselves from the more powerful elements within it. He sees a somewhat less ambiguous indicator of the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment in the provision of opportunities for any citizen, not merely the injured party or his relatives, to prosecute offenders. In choosing to emphasize this feature of the law, Ranulf touches upon a factor of special importance in legal development, an innovation identified by Calhoun as marking the emergence of "true" criminal law:

The decisive step in the transition to true criminal law seems to have been taken in Athens at the beginning of the sixth century. At that time Solon, we are told, gave to every citizen a right of action in the prosecution of certain offences, including attacks upon individuals as well as upon the state. <sup>47</sup>

The essential characteristic of criminal law can be seen as residing in the provision for prosecution to occur without the request or implied permission of an interested party. <sup>48</sup>

In making this link between private sentiment and public policy, it is clear that Ranulf's theory allows for the fact that the state will not always reflect the views of the community as a whole, although it is true that he does not enter into any detailed discussion of this matter. The influence of the community on the state is seen as depending upon the power of different groups within its territory, so that in a democracy giving greater weight to the lower classes than they enjoy under more aristocratic regimes - and especially in a democracy dominated by a petty bourgeois class, as in fifth century Athens - we may expect to find the state adopting policies catering to the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment.

Such a policy was adopted by Solon and substantially extended in the fifth century. Ranulf assumes that such measures must inevitably reflect a widespread public desire and readiness to prosecute criminals. But this assumption neglects that the law is sometimes called upon to fulfill a principally symbolic role. As Rock notes:

Not all law is enacted in the expectation that rigorous enforcement will ensue. Some legislation is designed primarily to affirm values, and it is a largely expressive or symbolic display. <sup>49</sup>

Nevertheless, despite the questionable nature of the assumption upon which Ranulf rests his opinion, there is evidence that in Classical Athens there was a widespread - and approved - willingness to prosecute offenders.

As noted by Bonner and Smith:

Solon believed that the best governed state was that in which those who suffered no wrong were as diligent in their prosecution of the wrongdoers as those who had suffered no wrong. In a large measure Solon's hopes were justified....There were apparently no lack of prosecutors....Public opinion approved of those who served the city zealously<sup>50</sup>

Further on they add: "More substantial encouragement was offered volunteers by granting them a liberal share of the fines, confiscations, and moneys recovered for the treasury by prosecution in certain types of action".<sup>51</sup> These included the contravention of commercial regulations, guardians' mismanagement of their wards' property, and prosecution for the usurpation of citizenship. Bonner and Smith remark:

Such motives on the part of voluntary prosecutors as public spirit and the expectation of legitimate financial gain are highly praiseworthy. But, strangely enough, Athenian public opinion not only tolerated but approved political and personal motives as well. Prosecution in the courts was a well-recognized means of vengeance on one's enemies....It was only when men made a profession of prosecution for financial gain that public opinion was hostile.<sup>52</sup>

In these remarks can be discerned a number of possible sources for the tendency to inflict punishment other than those proposed by Ranulf; such as the growth of loyalty to the Polis, with the accompanying decline of tribalism; individual economic advantage; and the possibility for employing litigation in class conflict. The period to which Ranulf assigns the major expansion of what Calhoun defines as "true" criminal law, is also the period of expanding revenues from the Athenian Empire. This meant, for citizens, that "the state was able to offer abundant and varied means of adding to their income".<sup>53</sup> Through, for example, colonization, official posts, and jury service, juries being staffed mainly by the poorer classes attracted by the pay.<sup>54</sup> It is clear that these classes are not at all disinterested in using their political power to encourage the

expansion of prosecutions. The use of criminal justice as a source of revenue for the state is a well-attested occurrence throughout history, although the huge juries and democratic nature of Athenian society gave a broader section of the population than is usually the case a direct interest in this area.

Amongst the Ashanti, for example, it was the chiefs and elders who benefited from criminal litigation who were hostile to the peaceful arbitration of disputes, preferring legal adjudication because of the revenue to which it gave rise. It is, incidentally, interesting to note in reference to Ranulf's views on the relationship between gods and men, that the Ashanti who benefitted from these trials invoked their gods "not as of old to keep people from breaking the law and custom, but to encourage them to do so" to provide additional cases.<sup>55</sup> Here we have the element of divine temptation or infatuation (ate) associated with a tendency to inflict punishment, but one that was in no sense disinterested. Further illustrations of the influence of material interests in this area can be found in Punishment and Social Structure by Rusche and Kirchheimer, where the development of fines in the history of European criminal law from the Middle Ages is related to their value as sources of revenue.<sup>56</sup>

For the member of the Athenian courts of justice such considerations grew in importance towards the end of the fifth century, and litigiousness was further exacerbated by class conflict. Referring to the situation following upon the restoration of democracy to Athens in 410, Ferguson notes that:

So widespread was the feeling that "aristocrats" were at heart traitors, and so manifest the inability of the treasury to furnish jurors' allowances unless it was replenished by confiscations, that these tribunals gave ear to all kinds of charges against men of prominence and property.<sup>57</sup>

As noted above in discussing Moral Indignation and Middle Class Psychology, the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment as it is there portrayed, can be seen as consisting primarily of two major dimensions, punitiveness and asceticism. In The Jealousy of the Gods, however, the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment tends to be confined to punitiveness, excluding offences against an ascetic morality. Some forms of asceticism make their appearance as part of a separate, though associated, variable in the jealousy of the gods and its human equivalents, giving rise to warnings against too much happiness and self-indulgence and the perils of hubris.

As for the dimension of punitiveness, Ranulf, unlike the position he adopts in his later work, ignores severity of penalties, confining himself to a consideration of factors enhancing the probability of conviction as a measure of the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment. It must, however, be noted in relation to these two factors, the severity and probability of punishment, that we cannot necessarily expect that those who desire to increase the latter will at the same time support an increase in the former. Quite the opposite can occur through attempting to compensate for diminishing the severity of sentences by at the same time increasing the probability of punishment, in order to achieve or maintain a certain overall level of punishment. With this in mind, it should be recalled that Solon's strengthening of the likelihood of prosecution was matched by a reduction of the severity of penalties for "Solon, with full popular support, repealed all the laws of Draco except the homicide laws, because they were written in blood".

The history of penal reform in England during the early decades of the last century is also instructive in this respect, for influential support for the abolition of the death penalty for certain crimes came from those who, while very keen to have those responsible punished, feared that the severity of the law at the time made prosecution and conviction less likely. <sup>59</sup>

In dealing with the two other Athenian attitudes which Ranulf detects from the activities which they attributed to their gods, envy and a disposition to involve others in unmerited misfortune, a number of comments need to be made.

Consider first the way in which the gods mete out unmerited misfortune, inflicting what the authors of another study of the origin of beliefs about punitive rather than nurturant gods refer to as "noncontingent punishment", <sup>60</sup> It is clear that the preordained disasters which the gods engineer from mere caprice or for their own convenience are already to be found in the world of the Iliad. What Ranulf identifies as novel in this situation is a change in the tone in which these activities are described. Just what this change in tone is meant to consist of is left rather unclear by Ranulf, but it does appear to involve a new found ability to derive edification from these activities by the gods and an emphasis on the dangers inherent in attempting to offset them. This finds expression in warnings on the unpleasant consequences likely to be incurred from associating with those whom the gods are bent upon destroying, such as the danger of pollution.

While the concept of pollution appears in the Homeric literature it is, as Dodds emphasizes, neither infectious nor hereditary as it is to become by the fifth century, nor does it assume such importance. It is, as he states, a long step

from Telemachus' casual acceptance of a self-confessed murderer as a shipmate to the assumptions which enabled the defendant in a late fifth century murder trial to draw presumptive proof of his innocence from the fact that the ship on which he travelled had reached port in safety. We get a further measure of the gap if we compare Homer's version of Oedipus saga with that familiar to us from Sophocles. In the latter, Oedipus becomes a polluted outcast, crushed under the burden of guilt.... But in the story Homer knew he continues to reign in Thebes after his guilt is discovered, and is eventually killed in battle and buried with royal honours. <sup>61</sup>

Dodds also, identifies a change in religious feeling from the Homeric literature to that of the Archaic and early Classical Age, one which clearly has affinities with the change in tone which Ranulf attempts to capture. Describing this change Dodds states: "The doctrine of man's helpless dependence on an arbitrary power is not new but there is a new accent of despair, a new and bitter emphasis on the futility of human purposes" in the face of capricious gods, a pessimistic fatalism. <sup>62</sup> And, according to Pfister, there is "an undeniable growth of anxiety and dread in the evolution of Greek religion". <sup>63</sup> This complacent, unprotesting submission to the arbitrary imposition of suffering meted out by the gods may, perhaps, be as readily be interpreted as reflecting the masochistic self-denial and submission of devotees described by Berger in his discussion of theodicy, as it can be interpreted in Ranulf's fashion as a simple projection of the sadistic desire to see others suffer. <sup>64</sup>



To the warrior-heroes of Homer, who "bestride their world boldly" in the face of such divine meddling, and to his aristocratic audience, such uncourageous humility is likely, on the basis of Weber's characterization of the religious affinities of such classes, to have appeared utterly alien to their sense of honour.<sup>65</sup>

Turning now to the role attributed to envy by Ranulf, it is clear that he considers it can assume, under appropriate circumstances, a key role in social life in general and, of course, on the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment in particular. The first thing that needs to be noted is that Ranulf frequently employs the terms "envy" and "jealousy" interchangeably, obscuring the existence of different emotions attached to different types of relationships which can be illuminated by developing the different connotations for these two terms. The conceptual utility of pressing for such a distinction in this case will, I hope, be made clear from the following discussion of the nature of envy and jealousy.

In writing of the sociology of jealousy, Davis notes that "Descartes defined jealousy as a kind of fear related to a desire to preserve a possession".<sup>66</sup> Here, then we see the self-interested anxiety of an owner threatened with the loss of his property.

Schoeck, in his study of the nature, causes and consequences of envy, adopts a similar view of the attributes of jealousy. Envy, on the other hand, is "to feel displeasure and ill-will at the superiority of another person in happiness, success, reputation, or the possession of anything desirable".<sup>67</sup>

He goes on to discuss and illustrate the way in which the ill-will to which this displeasure gives rise manifests itself in a desire to see the envied person deprived of his enviable place or possessions, irrespective of whether these then pass to the envious. It is with just such gratuitous involvement in the lives of others that Ranulf is concerned.

Now, reflections on the influence of envy on social affairs has a long history, a history which includes Aristotle, Bacon, Kant, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. Their observations have provided us with some of our best insights into the less rational aspects of social action, and yet both term and topic are sadly neglected in contemporary sociology. Schoeck, one of the exceptions to this rule, suggests with ill-concealed malice that this blind spot amongst his colleagues is attributable to the disproportionate number of envious individuals drawn to sociology as providing an opportunity to exercise this trait, individuals who are subsequently unwilling to pursue an enquiry which might come too close to home.

Probably more acceptable is the explanation that the term "envy" is avoided because of its value-laden connotations and that sociologists continue to study the same phenomenon while employing different terms. Runciman, for example, advocated the adoption of the term "relative deprivation" on the grounds that it "retains the merit of being value-neutral as between a feeling of envy and a perception of injustice".<sup>68</sup> But it is important to notice that envy in the sense outlined above, is not relative deprivation, and that although the two are no doubt connected, this relationship is

contingent, not logical. Of relative deprivation, Runciman says: "If A, who does not have something but wants it, compares himself to B, who does have it, then A is 'relatively deprived' with reference to B".<sup>69</sup> But such a sense of deprivation may not give rise to envy, but to attempts to obtain what is desired by work, purchase, force or theft. Possibly it is only when such avenues to emulation are closed and attempts to obtain the coveted possession are frustrated that envy arises. Whether or not this proves to be so, there are alternative outlets to relative deprivation other than either emulation or a direct transfer of resources, and interesting and important questions concerning their interrelationship are obscured if the notions of envy and relative deprivation are fused.

One other probable reason why the study of the role of envy in social life has been neglected is that it has come to be considered such a disreputable motive or emotion that people are most unwilling to admit to entertaining it. It is, however, not everywhere equally difficult to unearth. As Gouldner notes:

Of all the sentiments that moderns may discern in the Greeks, perhaps the most seemingly alien is their unabashed envy; and envy all the more notable to us... because envy in our own culture tends to be repressed. To the Greeks, however, envy is a sentiment natural to men; if they have reservations about it, it is not on moral grounds but simply because envy made a man unhappy.<sup>70</sup>

Against this setting, Gouldner takes the opportunity to elaborate a conception of envy which has much in common with mainstream sociological thinking on subjective reactions to inequality.<sup>71</sup> There are, he notes, two basic ways in which men can appraise their rewards and position in society, one of which is in terms of their own

previous experience or of some set of general notions of propriety concerning what they deserve. Here it makes no difference what happens to others. The other way, however, is for men's satisfaction to be shaped by what happens to others in relation to themselves. When men evaluate their position in this manner they can rise relative to others either by raising their own absolute position and leaving others behind them; or by maintaining their own absolute position and pulling others down. It is in this latter response that Gouldner comes closest to the conception of envy adopted above - others are held back or pulled down with no direct material advantage passing to those responsible. Given a choice between the two, which tactic an individual adopts will depend upon his available resources and his assessment of these. As Claire and William Russell point out, "envy means a competitive attitude connected with an utter disbelief in one's capacity to succeed, and hence a complete concentration on bringing about the failure of others".<sup>72</sup> What of downward mobility? Following through the logic of the above argument it is clear that an individual's position may deteriorate not only materially, but also relative to others if his position remains unaltered while others move ahead. Indeed - and this is a point taken up by Bensman and Vidich in their study of the relationship of economic fluctuations to the psychology of social class - he may still decline relatively even if he advances materially in absolute terms, if his progress is outstripped by others. <sup>73</sup>

In all these cases there is the possibility of relative advance or recovery not only through objective improvement, but also through keeping others in their place.

There is, however, another response to relative deprivation which Gouldner does not include in his account of envy, although it occurs in his earlier discussion of the Greek contest system. Given barriers to the acquisition of what is considered desirable through the exercise of force on the one hand or productive activity on the other, men are, Gouldner hints, likely to make a virtue of necessity and alter their "value system, that is, their way of reckoning assets so that the kinds of things they value are not of the sort that are pre-empted by others and are of the sort that they do have means of achieving".<sup>74</sup> The approach suggested in these lines shares much in common with the classic sociological account of the "sour grapes" reaction in shaping beliefs and values advanced by Scheler.<sup>75</sup> In dealing with ressentiment, the transvaluation of values, which he sees as born of a union of envy and impotence, Scheler elaborates a theory which Ranulf acknowledges as coming close to his own theory at many points.<sup>76</sup>

Even without such elaboration, however, the interpretation of envy which Gouldner advances has much to recommend it, offering the possibility of linking the issues dealt with by Ranulf to contemporary investigations of the role of status deprivation in shaping social action, such as Gusfield's account of status politics and the Temperance issue.<sup>77</sup>

In Athens as in England of the Commonwealth, Ranulf holds that the

"social class that dominated the community...during the periods in question was the lower middle class"<sup>78</sup> - a class in both cases heavily imbued with the moral outlook associated with the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment.

Was Athens dominated by the class in question, and what were the characteristics which entitle it to be designated as lower middle class? Ranulf does not elaborate, although the material for such an elaboration is available in the literary sources he employs. This can be illustrated, Ranulf's interpretation examined and the situations to which he refers clarified, by reference to the work - based principally upon writing of Aristophanes, but also employing other sources from the same period - of Victor Ehrenberg.<sup>79</sup>

The first thing to be gleaned from the evidence presented by Ehrenberg is that the once-popular belief in a division of labour between citizens engaged in state service and agriculture on the one hand and metics monopolizing trade and industry on the other, is clearly untenable. Similarly, Weber's contrast between the political man of the ancient Polis with the economic man of later European urban history, cannot easily be applied to Athens in the period under consideration without distorting the fact that the bulk of the citizen body were employed in economic production and exchange of one form or another. Nor did the existence of slaves render the majority of the population into a leisure class divorced from direct engagement in such productive employment. Whilst widespread and important in their impact on the standard of living enjoyed by the citizens, most employed their personal slaves as domestic servants, and although use was also made of them in assisting the master in

workshop or field, their complementary role is captured in the words of Xenophon: "Those who can afford it buy slaves in order to have fellow-workers".<sup>80</sup> Slave labour was generally preferred in the large-scale workshops, but the conditions - notably the absence of any but the simplest machinery<sup>81</sup> - which favoured the survival of small scale, craft production, limited the economic importance of such establishments and sustained the size and importance of the petty bourgeoisie.

Turning our attention to the citizens, it is clear that there was, at the apex of the Athenian class structure, a wealthy landed gentry. This class formed, however, only a small section of those enjoying citizen rights, the bulk of whom Ehrenberg depicts as having to live by the work of their hands, producing and selling as traders, craftsmen and farmers. As he expresses it at one point: "It was the type of petit bourgeois whom we have recognized as peasants, tradesman or artisan, that predominated in the assembly."<sup>82</sup> This passage is of interest for two reasons: first, the use of the term petit bourgeois, which recurs throughout The People of Aristophanes, to identify the dominant class within the Athenian democracy; and second, the inclusion of the Attic farmers within this class.

The borders of the petit bourgeois class are left vague in Ehrenberg's account of it, although its main members are identified clearly enough - the craftsmen, traders and small-scale farmers. What is interesting to note is the similarity with Ranulf in the negative connotations which this term evidently holds for both, as does the barely implicit condemnation of the class to which it refers. Speaking of the emergence of the study of Greek social and

economic history from the 1870's Ehrenberg notes:

The outstanding importance of economics in the political and social life of their own day made historians suppose that economics had a like importance in antiquity. The details of economics in the ancient world were interpreted, and the general conception of its history was expounded, in the spirit and terms of contemporary circumstances.<sup>83</sup>

It would not do justice to this insight into historiography, if we were not to pay Ehrenberg the compliment of applying it to his own work, for this, like Ranulf's is no less a child of its time reading back into Greek history the contemporary situation with its prevailing concerns and beliefs. Nowhere is this clearer than in the final lines and concluding note (here in brackets) to The People of Aristophanes:

But no democracy, and no State whatsoever, is fit to live in if the ruling class is formed by the petit bourgeois, still less if these men are guided by misleading and demagogic propaganda. This also was not more true two thousand years ago than it is today. (I have left the last sentences as they stood in the first edition, although they have been open to misunderstanding. Therefore I better add that when in 1942 I wrote of the petit bourgeois misguided by propaganda I was naturally thinking of the Nazis and their followers).<sup>84</sup>

Ranulf, writing during the 1930's in a country bordering upon Germany is similarly both concerned with, and hostile towards, National Socialism, as is clear from an article in which he condemns those aspects of the work of Tönnies, Comte and Durkheim which he considers as providing unfounded beliefs favourable to such movements.<sup>85</sup> A further indication of his dislike of the National Socialist position is discernible in his comments on the political abuse of racial theories,<sup>86</sup> while the location of his treatment of the Nazis as Chapter One of Moral Indignation and Middle Class Psychology, hints at its importance in shaping the interpretations of other periods to be found in the other



chapters. Here was a movement, widely interpreted at the time as petit bourgeois, which mixed a record of brutality and intolerance with appeals for law and order and the praise of discipline, which clearly offended Ranulf's individualism, and could not but help influence him when he came to examine the appearance of these traits in other contexts. Nor were the related demagogic appeals and methods likely to commend themselves to the elitist sympathies of either Ranulf or Ehrenberg. In Ranulf, writing in the shadow cast by a contemporary Cleon, the disdain for populist demagogy which finds expression in the work of Thucydides and Aristophanes, received a sympathetic reception.

In turning to the second point raised by Ehrenberg's remark, we return to a matter touched upon earlier in discussing Moral Indignation and Middle Class Psychology: whether the petty bourgeoisie encompasses a rural element. Certainly the urban connotations of this term, unlike "lower middle class", render it somewhat out of place in a rural setting. <sup>87</sup> But Ranulf employs both terms interchangeably, and makes it plain in The Jealousy of the Gods that he considers the Athenian peasantry to have been firmly attached to the traditional morality. Given his theory, this must have been attributable to the lower middle class conditions under which they were living. But he leaves the class situation of this group unexplored. Possibly he thought of it as unimportant in the political and cultural life of Athens. Such an interpretation has an element of truth. As Tod notes,

In the determination of public policy the urban population often exercised a preponderating influence  
 .....In the later years of the century this influence is mirrored in the increasing political prominence of

representatives of the urban and industrial element - Eucrates, the tow-merchant, Lysicles the sheep-dealer Cleon the tanner, and the like.<sup>88</sup>

But this should not be exaggerated, and Ranulf himself obviously credits them with some importance through his interpretation of the "spurious piety" of Aristophanes as the result of those opposing the democracy seeking peasant support through pretending allegiance to an outlook consonant with traditional morality and beliefs.

Did the Attic farmers share a similar position to that occupied by the bulk of the urban population? Or were there radical differences between the two groups? Ehrenberg considers that the "ordinary, that is the small, Attic farmer was a petit bourgeois".<sup>89</sup> Although this group was subject to a gradual deterioration in its standard of living, proletarianization of the peasants did not get really under way until the fourth century, and most owned and worked their own land. Small scale production predominated in the countryside no less than in the towns.

There were some wealthy men whose estates were cultivated by slaves or tenants; but the large estates, in fact never very large, were not of decisive economic importance. The characteristic feature of Attic agriculture was a far-going partition of the soil rather than the reverse. The small peasant, though not oppressed by big landowners, was oppressed by poverty and the growing difficulty of living on the yield of his piece of land.<sup>90</sup>

In respect of their gradual economic decline, the peasant class of Attica, threatened with proletarianization, can be seen facing a fate more similar to that of the traditional petty bourgeois under industrial capitalism, than that encountered by the traders and craftsmen in the expanding urban economy of Athens.

The rural population was not engaged in mere subsistence farming, but was integrated into a market economy through their specialization on the cultivation of vine, olive and fig trees. And, like their urban contemporaries, even poor farmers were likely to have at least one slave.

There were, of course, differences between the lives led by the urban and rural lower middle class. Rural life was, as ever dominated by seasonal bursts of activity, punctuated by slack periods - which, as Hill argues, is not the most favourable conditions for the development of what have come to be thought of as the typical bourgeois virtues.<sup>91</sup> The decimation of the Attic countryside led the peasants to support a policy of peace which found less favour amongst the urban population. And while it won praise for its freedom from the immorality of city life, it also received ridicule for its inarticulateness, lack of education and unrefined manners in comparison with the townspeople.

Despite differences between them there are evidently some grounds for describing the farmers along with the traders and craftsmen as a middle class, placed between the wealthy aristocracy above and a servile class below. Even the term "bourgeoisie", with its historical associations of membership in a political community, seems not altogether inappropriate when the common privileges and identity bestowed by citizenship are brought to mind.

Yet for all their conservative attachment to tradition and membership of the lower middle class, there is evidence in Aristophanes, indicated by Ehrenberg and overlooked by Ranulf, of the existence of mutual antipathy between countrymen and those who frequent the courts as jurymen or litigants.

But given Ranulf's association of traditional values and membership of the lower middle class with just that disinterested zeal for justice which he sees as animating such involvement, this hostility is strange. If, however, we remember the more self-interested motives which could promote a concern with participating in the administration of justice, then the farmers' resentment might be interpreted as resentment typical of the bourgeoisie towards those pursuing employment which they view as parasitical and unproductive in comparison with their own.<sup>92</sup>

#### IV. Aspects of Puritanism

The evident similarities between beliefs and values prevalent in the fifth century Athens and the Puritan movement is attributed by Ranulf to the domination of both by the lower middle class. In dealing with the Puritans, however, he offers very little in the way of evidence to substantiate this view. Certainly, however, his ideas on the social composition of Puritanism appear to be not without foundation. Christopher Hill, for example, speaking of the main source of support for Puritanism, describes its followers as drawn from

the industrious sort of people ... yeomen, artisans and small and middling merchants... the economically independent men, householders, to the exclusion both of the propertyless and of the privileged classes. The latter might be landed aristocrats or members of the ruling oligarchies of the big cities, great financial magnates, monopolists, customs farmers, who would expect to be called 'gentlemen' and who might aspire to knighthood. They took no direct part in productive activity... and their interests lay with the rentier class into which they were rising, rather than with the industrious sort of people from whom they sometimes originated.<sup>93</sup>

The mainstay of Puritanism was, then, those "employing a handful of journeymen and apprentices, who were struggling (often with the aid of the Puritan virtues of thrift and industry)

to enrich themselves, to lift themselves above the mass of the population".<sup>94</sup> Hill clearly shares Ranulf's view that the value placed on such self-discipline springs from making a virtue of necessity: "Protestantism, then, and more specifically Puritanism, appealed especially to those small employers and self-employed men, whether in town or country, for whom frugality and hard work might make ~~all~~ the difference between prosperity and failure to survive in the world of growing competition".<sup>95</sup>

Hill's account of the structural sources of Puritanism in pre-revolutionary England lays stress on the cleavage in conditions and outlook between the lower middle class and the lower class. The fate of the latter was harsh and the possibility of upward mobility faint. In sixteenth century Exeter, for example, more than half of the population were suffering from poverty and were unable to either save for themselves or establish their children in a trade.<sup>96</sup> Such conditions give added point to the anxiety driving the petty bourgeoisie to secure their position and support the difference in outlook between its members and those of the lower class.

The religious affinities of the lower class, for example, are portrayed by Hill as standing in sharp contrast with the narrow predestinationism preached by the Puritan lecturers of the middle class. Now Ranulf points out that "some of the most conspicuous Puritan peculiarities observable in our documents are obviously derived from, if not identical with the doctrine of predestination".<sup>97</sup> As for the lower class, however, Hill claims that its members were, given freedom of choice, more inclined towards sectaries preaching schemes of "universal salvation much more acceptable for mass consumption".<sup>98</sup>

One incident recorded by Hill is particularly instructive in relation to a number of Ranulf's points: "In New England in the sixteen-twenties, when the servants of one settlement revolted against their masters and maintained (as it were) a school of atheism, on May Day they erected ("with the help of savages" with whom they were on friendly terms) a goodly pine tree 80 feet long as a maypole".<sup>99</sup> This revolt was broken by the rulers of the neighbouring settlement for fear they should be unable to retain their servants and the maypole cut down.

Clearly this does not fit well with Ranulf's treatment of the lower classes as passive imitators of the manners of their masters. As we noted above, and Hill remarks in his discussion of predestination, it is largely a matter of the extent to which they are accorded or have won freedom of choice whether or not their own culture finds expression; and in the above case the masters subjugation of their servants is accompanied by the denial of that freedom, with the suppression of their revival of boisterous pagan festivals.

The strict enforcement of Sunday observance by the Puritans is evidently regarded by Ranulf as simply an expression of their envious displeasure at witnessing the enjoyment of others, or, conversely, pleasure at rendering their lives uncomfortable. There were, however, diverse forces at work in shaping Puritan Sabbatarianism, to which it is difficult to accord priority. Having noted that all but the lowest and highest classes supported Sabbatarianism, Hill

surveys the sources from which this support flowed. He points, for example, to a more direct link between Sunday observance and the economic situation of the petty bourgeoisie than that posited by Ranulf. With the breakdown of guild regulation, competition increased. There was, under such circumstances, every inducement for the small producer and retailer to work long hours like "the small shopkeepers today who have the maximum of temptation and the maximum of opportunity to stay open on Sundays and early closing days", a situation necessitating the imposition of collective restrictions applying equally to all if one is not to steal the edge on his rivals.<sup>100</sup> Ranulf might - and Schoeck undoubtedly would - attribute this to envy of their neighbour's earnings, but Hill evidently has in mind more material considerations, such as fear of losing customer loyalty and being left with a diminished share of a finite market.

The new found emphasis upon austere Sunday observances was accompanied by the persecution of witches on a larger scale than hitherto. It is somewhat surprising that Ranulf did not embrace witch-hunting, with its aura of scapegoating and persecution, into his theory. This is, perhaps, because of the element of heresy involved, which is punished for self-interested reasons on the part of church authorities. Such a reason for its omission would be consistent with his treatment of the persecution of heretics by the Catholic Church, but fails to account for popular support and participation in witch-hunts, quite apart from the problem of why the zeal of the Puritans in this sphere exceeded that of the Catholics. The answer might well lie in Hill's interpretation of Sabbatarianism, with its assault on pagan festivities, as part of a broader Puritan attack on magic and pagan survivals; an attack stemming in part from the clash between urban and rural ways of life and thought, reinforced by

divisions between the middle and lower classes.<sup>101</sup>

As for the middle class Calvinist view of the necessity of subjecting the unregenerate to discipline - a view reflecting the longing of employers for a disciplined labour force - "There is no evidence that the lower orders had ever shared their betters enthusiasm for the Calvinist discipline".<sup>102</sup> Instead we have the lower class sectarian view that one must separate from the unregenerate when spiritual censure fails, rather than resort to force. In the voluntary communities of the sects "the emphasis moved away from discipline to social services and communal self-help, just as the theological emphasis shifted from the eternal decrees to the perfectability of man".<sup>103</sup> Ranulf depicts similar optimistic notions about human nature as alien to the mentality of the morally indignant who are likely to dismiss such beliefs as absurd.<sup>104</sup>

In concluding his study of the Puritans, Ranulf utilizes Puritan war propaganda to extend his theory to encompass the sociology of moral inconsistency. This involves him in an exploration of why some people are more prone than others to indignantly denounce in others the very behaviour that they themselves are prepared to indulge in with a good conscience. Before looking more closely at this part of Ranulf's work, however, it will be necessary to distinguish between such moral inconsistency on the one hand and hypocrisy on the other, for it is for want of such a distinction that he is led into drawing some conclusions which are not warranted by the evidence he presents.



Hypocrisy we may take as meaning the public praise of virtue mingled with the surreptitious practice of vice. Moral inconsistency on the other hand, involves people openly condoning in themselves conduct which they condemn in others as beyond the bounds of decency. The former is revealed by comparing a person's behaviour with his expressions of opinion; the latter by comparing one opinion with another to uncover moral inconsistencies.

Turning to Ranulf's findings we find that one interesting association is suggested - and, given the paucity of Royalist documents which Ranulf had available as a basis for comparison, a less tentative status cannot be claimed. What emerges from the documents is that the Royalists' accuse their adversaries of numerous crimes and atrocities but they do not, to any considerable extent, boast of having committed similar acts themselves. The Puritans not only, however, condemn such deeds in their opponents, but also celebrate them when they are inflicted by their own side upon the enemy. Here, then, is evidence of double-standards indicative of moral inconsistency on the part of the Puritans, a case of the indignant denunciation of others for committing acts which those denouncing them complacently or boastfully admit to having undertaken themselves. Ranulf holds that the difference between the Royalists and Puritans is attributable to such moral inconsistency being particularly characteristic of those prone to intense moral indignation.

Ranulf, however, goes on to press conclusions about hypocrisy from these findings which they in no way warrant. He states, for example: "So it appears that the Puritans as a group, in

contradistinction to the Cavaliers, were characterized by a strong disposition to indulge in a number of those kinds of sin which they indignantly denounce in others".<sup>105</sup> But such a conclusion is not at all apparent from the findings he presents. While the Royalists were less likely to display double-standards in their writings, they may well have committed the atrocities with which they charge their opponents, but had the good sense to keep quiet about it - to have been, in a work, hypocrites. The evidence which Ranulf has extracted from the literature of the period offers no grounds for a decision on this matter.<sup>106</sup>

Yet clearly the difference between Royalists and Puritans to which his findings point on the issue of double-standards do stand in need of explanation. It is obviously not attributable to their belief in the righteousness of their cause, nor, probably, to the justification of retaliation for former atrocities, which they sometimes advanced. The former belief was naturally common to both sides, so cannot be held to account for differences between them. As for the latter possibility it is likely, given the human tendency to "punctuate" a series of interactions in ways favourable to themselves, that one side's "atrocities" would be the others "revenge", whether Puritan or Royalist.<sup>107</sup> Besides which, there is, Ranulf concludes, little evidence to indicate that the Puritans felt any great need to explain or excuse their inconsistencies, of which they were quite probably unaware.<sup>108</sup>

Finally, before leaving the subject of Puritan morality, the problem of the typical attitude of Puritanism to charity, touched upon at an earlier stage in this discussion, stands in need of resolution. Ranulf, it will be recalled, considers that the lower middle class are not only characterized by an inordinate desire to see that the sinner suffers, but also by being ill-disposed towards those in need. These tendencies exhibit their affinity with one another, and with the petty bourgeoisie, through both being encompassed within the doctrines and practices of Calvinism and its spiritual heir, Puritanism. While such an association may exist, the arguments which Ranulf advances on its behalf are, as we observed, inconclusive. Fortunately, since Ranulf completed his work, Jordan has provided us with an excellent study of the relationship between Puritanism and other religious persuasions to charity in England between 1480 and 1660, together with material displaying the class composition of those donating to the various charitable causes.

From this it is evident that Puritanism did not manifest the hard-heartedness towards those in need which Ranulf sees in it. The period 1480-1660 produced "an enormous literature, principally comprised of sermons, in which the clergy and the moralists laid before men with ever-mounting emphasis and conviction the Christian obligation of charity... Most of these sermons were preached by clergymen of stalwart Puritan persuasion".<sup>109</sup> While the Protestant clergy, being Calvinist, could not argue that good works were necessary to grace, nevertheless "they did hold with a most persuasive and sustained vehemence that good works were an authentic

and a necessary fruit of grace categorically demanded of His saints by God".<sup>110</sup> The Puritan clergy tended to overcome orthodox qualms in their zeal to promote charity, coming close to enunciating a doctrine of the merit of works. Thus it became possible for one Presbyterian divine to argue, in terms redolent of the counting-house, that "charity to the poor 'tis your bill of exchange; pay down your money here, and you will receive it again in glory".<sup>111</sup> In short, "the great strength of the charitable impulse, at least in its social aspect, was to be found in the Puritan party".<sup>112</sup>

It appears, then, that Puritanism, contrary to Ranulf's views on the matter, managed to embrace not only its own peculiar emphasis upon the enforcement of morality, but also a concern to alleviate the suffering of others. More generally, Jordon classified the Protestant Ethic as one of the great moving impulses behind the growth in measures to relieve poverty, misery and ignorance.

It might, however, be possible to refine Ranulf's theory on this point to enable it to accommodate such evidence. In a passing reference to the Puritans' dislike for those regarded as the "unworthy" poor, Jordon suggests that this dislike was stronger than the general prejudice against those regarded as "idlers" and the "professional poor".<sup>113</sup> Exhibiting similarities to two tendencies which we have seen as central to Ranulf's notion of the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment, harshness towards, or readiness to classify people as belonging to, the undeserving poor, might well be a Puritan trait.

This would be compatible with the replacement of the casual and indiscriminate distribution of alms characteristic of medieval Catholicism by the more systematic approach one would expect of those imbued with the Protestant Ethic. While Jordan demonstrates that this latter approach, paying more rational attention to the present need and future fate of recipients, was more effective, such concerns inevitably promote impersonal administration of resources and classification of cases. Today, attitudes of hostility towards the "undeserving" poor can be found in expressions of indignation at the numbers believed to be receiving unmerited social security benefits.

As it stands, however, Ranulf's crude association of Puritanism with tardiness in devoting resources to charity is evidently untenable. If, then, Puritanism is to be accepted as embracing the praise and practice of moral rigorism, this is clearly not incompatible with a charitable impulse, however much the theory advanced by Ranulf might incline one to expect it. As for the relationship of philanthropy to social class, Jordan offers direct evidence which removes the necessity of resorting to the rather unsatisfactory expedient of deducing the attitudes of social classes on this issue from the statements of movements which only partially covered the class in question, while also embracing and appealing to members from other levels of society. With no neat superimposition of class upon religious affiliation, the advocacy of charity within Puritanism may have sprung from, or been directed towards, groups other than the lower middle class.

From Jordan's account of the class background of donors, it emerges that the peerage, the class which Ranulf sees as not at all disposed toward moral indignation, in the period 1480-1660 left little of their wealth to charitable purposes.<sup>114</sup> In connection with the role of the urban-rural division, it may be noted that the urban classes of merchants and tradesmen (corresponding respectively to Ranulf's division between the upper - and lower - middle class) bequeathed considerably larger proportions of their estates to charitable uses than the rural classes of the upper and lower gentry, yeomen, and husbandmen. Amongst these rural groups only the upper gentry exceeded the contribution, in such percentage terms, of the urban artisans, despite the latter's modest means. For all these classes, "broadly speaking", as we descend in the social scale for both urban and rural groups, concern for the needs of the poor increases in a most marked fashion".<sup>115</sup> The bourgeoisie was also in the forefront of efforts to relieve the plight of prisoners, although interest in their fate was directed mainly towards those imprisoned for debt - a condition evoking ready identification amongst merchants and traders accustomed to speculative undertakings and the potential threat of creditors.

#### V. The absence of moral indignation

The second part of Moral Indignation and Middle Class Psychology is given over to an examination of social and cultural contexts alien to moral indignation. Ranulf starts by arguing that the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment did not exist in the

European aristocracy of the Middle Ages, nor in the nobility of later centuries while they continued to enjoy their traditional economic and social privileges.<sup>116</sup> This much is to be expected from his emphasis on the privileges and prestige of upper classes being inimical to the development of moral indignation.

Similar effects of power and privilege can be traced in the changing policies of the medieval Catholic Church.<sup>117</sup> From the eleventh century, contemporaneously with the emergence of an indifference towards moral laxity, there occurred a substantial rise in the political independence, influence and prestige of the Church. Together with this came greater centralization, so that the policies of the Church towards the repression of immorality came to reflect the values and dispositions of its higher dignitaries. It is, Ranulf holds, by virtue of the power and privilege enjoyed by this group that the general drift of the Church away from a pristine punitiveness in dealing with moral lapses towards a greater tolerance, took place. Clearly this attempt to account for the changing policy of the Church by reference to changes in social structure has more to recommend it than casual references to fear of scandal concerning the hypocrisy of the clergy or love of money to be gained from the sale of indulgences, for there is no evidence that scandals were less inconvenient or the clergy less covetous before the growth in leniency and tolerance.

There were, it is true, a number of factors which at first sight appear to run counter to the claim that moral indignation was not characteristic of the Catholic Church in the later Middle Ages.

Utterances of indignation at the immorality of the times can be found, together with the advocacy of, or belief in, the visitation of severe sanctions upon offenders. Apart from the more genuine - and unrepresentative - of these attacks, a frequent motive was simply to strengthen the fear of damnation for financial exploitation by the Church.

Within the Roman Catholic Church the insistence on clerical celibacy grew stronger at the same time as the Church relaxed its severity towards the laity. Is this not a transfer of moral indignation from one target to another, rather than an indicator of its disappearance ? It seems, however, that within the Church the desire to monopolize the lives and allegiance of the clergy was at work - those pontiffs most forward in enforcing celibacy were also those most noted for their assertion of papal supremacy. There was also strong support for maintaining the celibacy of the priesthood amongst the laity, although Ranulf is at some pains to point out that this is not attributable to any disinterested tendency to impose asceticism upon others, but to a self-interested concern to safeguard the ritual efficacy of sacraments.

The severity of the early Church was not, moreover, altogether lost. The Church, its God, its saints, and the Virgin Mary could, while becoming more lenient with sins committed against others, nevertheless display a pristine harshness when they were themselves victims, being quick to defend their dignity when this was directly impugned. The foremost expression of such an interested tendency to inflict punishment, including a disregard for the rights of suspects,



can be found in the resources devoted to the Inquisition. The energies of the Church were bent upon enforcing uniformity of faith, once the threat of heresy began to grow, while sin and crime were regarded as relatively insignificant except as sources of revenue through the sale of absolution. Those suspected of heresy were not saved by being models of virtue, while those who did not challenge the authority of the Church could purchase immunity from the consequences of their immorality at a cheap rate.

The culture of the Teutons, constitutes the next sociocultural context in which Ranulf seeks to establish the absence of moral indignation. <sup>118</sup> He notes that the German tribes took no initiative in punishing offenders, although a chief when called upon for assistance was likely to involve himself if he felt it necessary to protect his honour or to avoid raising doubts about his power.

There existed, amongst the Teutons, public pressure on the offended party to retaliate against those deemed responsible. Ranulf, following Gronbech, <sup>119</sup> interprets this public interest as not reflecting any common concern to see the guilty suffer, but with weighing the worth of the injured party according to his ability to rehabilitate himself. It should be noted, however, that other interpretations of such public concern are possible, and that it cannot be assumed without enquiry that no element of a desire to see the offender suffer is present. Westermarck's views on this matter, for example, agree with those of Ranulf only up to a point. In discussing such public pressure under a system of private revenge, he states that: "It is of course

the man on whom the duty of revenge is incumbent that is the immediate object of blame, when this duty is omitted; and the blame may partly be due to contempt, especially when there is a suspicion of cowardice". Yet he goes on immediately to qualify this by adding: "But behind the public censure there is obviously a desire to see the injurer suffer ".<sup>120</sup> This argument he supports by reference to cases where the community assists the avenger in exacting revenge. He is thus led to formulate the relationship between the institutions of revenge and punishment in a very different fashion from that encountered in the argument advanced by Ranulf:

Thus public indignation displays itself not only in punishment, but, to a certain extent, in the custom of revenge. In both cases the society desires that the offender shall suffer for his deed.<sup>121</sup>

After considering the culture of the Teutons, Ranulf turns next to the Orient for further examples of environments hostile to the development of moral indignation. That only a few rudiments of a bourgeois-Puritan ideology were ever developed in India is attributed by Ranulf to the insignificance of the Vaisyas relative to the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas.<sup>122</sup> Hence the disinterested tendency to punish did not normally exist within Indian civilization. The doctrine of karma, for example, is associated with the attribution of suffering to the deeds done by an individual in this or a previous existence, and not with any attempt to locate the blame for evil in the malice or folly of others. At first sight this might seem to have something in common with the self-effacing masochistic subservience to divine fate enjoined by Sophocles. It must, however, be recalled that, while the general community insisted upon their

cruel fate being fulfilled, the victim-heroes of these dramas were allowed to voice their hurt bewilderment at the injustice of their lot.

There have, however, been periods in Indian history when ideas concerning the importance and necessity of punishment have arisen. These Ranulf accounts for by reference to the growing intensity of class exploitation at the time, so that the dominant class was not at all disinterested in seeking to protect its interests. This variable however, introduces one of the strongest alternative explanations of variations in punitiveness into the heart of Ranulf's theory - the assumption that these may be accounted for by reference to the search for security against predation for oneself and those with whom one identifies, in the light of changing social circumstances. Admitting the notion that punishments can be introduced and changed in the interests of a class introduces a whole new dimension into the discussion, a dimension which is, as a source of punitiveness, left unexplored by Ranulf for whom the power of classes vis-a-vis each other only enters into his explanation in accounting for the extent to which this tendency will find expression.

The attitude prevalent in the Occident in which disgust for the sinner can find no peace until he has been forced to share in holy ire against his weakness, is completely foreign to Buddhism as passion and infatuation incompatible with the understanding and goodwill of one who has mastered himself. This stands in contrast, for example, to the Christian attitude described by Westermarck: "Christian writers have laid much stress upon the circumstance that Jesus enjoined men to forgive their own enemies, but not to abstain from resenting injuries done to others".

Westermarck, however, interprets some references in Taoism, Brahmanism and Buddhism to transcendental retributive justice as reflecting essentially the same demand that wrong should be resented in an impartial manner. 124

It is true, as Ranulf indicates, that modern Buddhism, like Puritanism, contains contradictory reactions and beliefs towards the fate of transgressors. There is, for example, a belief in Hell, which, as we saw considering Ranulf's treatment of the Jansenists and the subsequent reaction to their beliefs by the upper bourgeoisie, he takes as an indicator of the disinterested tendency to punish. Unlike the Puritans, however, where expressions of belief in the love and mercy of the Lord are outweighed by references dwelling upon the wrath of God, Ranulf claims that the general tenor of Buddhist doctrines runs counter to any aggressive imposition of morality.

As Ranulf notes, however, there were also cities and a bourgeois class in India, and the makings of a petty bourgeois ideology can be seen within Jainism.<sup>125</sup> The Jains, like the Puritans, combined views favourable to the acquisition of wealth with an ascetic compulsion to save. There was insistence on business probity, and emphasis upon the dangers of cheerful attachment to the pleasures of this world. Their ascetic outlook was not confined to those who cared to adopt it, but was to be enforced.

In China there is little trace of any idea of a god who would protect morality and punish sin. Nor does the asceticism of Taoism or the etiquette of Confucianism find expression in unconditional ethical commands.<sup>126</sup>

Taoism, Ranulf holds, is primarily concerned with the pursuit of personal advantage through the avoidance of the unclean, whereas the only 'sin' known to the Confucianist is failure to conform to the rules of pious deference appropriate to his position and the preservation of his good conscience as a gentleman.

Japan, bereft of a powerful bourgeois class, also did not develop any conspicuous disinterested zeal for punitive justice.<sup>127</sup> There existed no posthumous retaliation, and in place of a concern with ethical sin, great importance was accorded to strict prescriptions for the avoidance of ritual pollution.

Such an interpretation of the role of ritual impurity is most interesting in the light of Ranulf's earlier discussion of this matter. As can be seen from his dismissal of the expansion of the activities thought to entail pollution as an explanation of the growth in community involvement in punishing criminals in ancient Athens, what he refers to as superstitious beliefs in the dangers of pollution are relegated to the status of mere epiphenomena. In Pareto's phraseology they are derivations, fanciful embellishments woven to justify basic emotional predispositions. Ranulf does feel, however, that the imagination does not have complete free-play in constructing such rationalizations, but is guided by the cultural heritage in which it can rummage for such excuses.<sup>128</sup>

Yet Ranulf is quite prepared to appeal to such beliefs in an attempt to exclude evidence which suggests the presence of moral indignation in situations unfavourable to his case. This is particularly evident in his treatment of primitive societies and the evidence

of ethnology. Here evidence of communal social sanctions applied to remove the source of pollution from an individual or group are interpreted as expressing genuine egoistic fear on the part of those who carry them into effect, rather than any disinterested desire to see others suffer as a result of their misdeeds. The evidence which he adduces in support of this interpretation is worth some consideration.

His first step is to claim that "there is generally in primitive societies no organized punishment for such acts as murder and theft, but only for crimes which are considered to be sacrilegious, such as sorcery or breach of sexual taboo".<sup>129</sup> In such cases "It is expected that... disasters will primarily overtake those who are guilty of having violated the taboo but if this does not happen, the entire people will feel threatened, and men will substitute themselves for the supernatural powers in carrying out the expected punishment, hoping thus to avert disaster".<sup>130</sup> Hence, no fear of contagious pollution should match by no community action against offenders.

The next step in his argument is to note that in primitive societies misfortune is regarded as proof of guilt and consequently deserved. Furthermore, no distinction is made between intentional and unintentional guilt - "the doer suffers". And the divine powers themselves may ensnare men into sin. The explanation that this is attributable to the wish to avoid any imputation of impious criticism of the supernatural powers, which Ranulf advances in defence of his case, is incompatible with his earlier argument in which the absence of the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment in Euripides is

deduced from his rejection of such beliefs or criticism of those deities depicted as indulging in such practices. He does, however, provide evidence that such community action involves passive and sad withdrawal from interaction rather than the aggressive persecution of culprits.

We come now to consider two cases where moral indignation, once absent, later developed in response to specific social changes. Consider first the case of the Israelites, a culture which, unlike those considered in the cases of India or China was largely, following the foundation of the kingdom, the product of an "oppressed and exploited" class.<sup>131</sup> Consequently it displayed marked symptoms of moral indignation absent from an earlier period when there were no class divisions amongst the Israelites. Note that here there is no emphasis upon the middle, albeit lower-middle, class as the bearer of moral indignation, but a simpler division between a dominant and subordinate class, with the latter class displaying the tendency in question.

Before their political and social degradation under the royal houses of Israel and Judah the religious beliefs and social practices of the Israelites concerning immorality paralleled those of the Homeric Greeks. With the growth of class divisions a new attitude towards the sins of others emerged in a process described by Pederson as the supersession of the principle of restoration by that of retaliation.

The latter

does not place the point of gravity in the offended and his claim to have a breach healed. The point of gravity lies outside or, rather, above the parties in a power maintaining justice for its own sake. Every action which deviates from the right must be balanced; it is just as necessary for the sake of justice that he who commits injustice should suffer a loss, as that he who suffers an unjust loss should receive satisfaction.<sup>132</sup>

There is, then, a new insistence that the sinner suffers, whether or not it does any good to the wronged. It is, as Pedersen remarks,

a kind of negative restoration for the injured. The offender has lessened the other, and now himself is to be made just as small. Instead of the positive object of the old law, i.e. that the righteous is to be made whole, stress is laid on the opposite, i.e. that the unrighteous is to be broken.<sup>133</sup>

Under these new conditions, as Ranulf points out, Yahweh was seen as visiting suffering upon men not merely as retribution, but also in a quite groundless fashion or simply for the glorification of his own majesty. But the imposition of unmerited misfortune is also perpetrated by the old god of war with the inconstant heart of the earlier epoch. Similarly it was a trait common to the gods of Homeric Greece as well as fifth century Athens. What Ranulf needs to establish but fails to consider is whether there was a change in attitude towards such activity in Israel similar to that encountered amongst the Greeks. In other beliefs, however, parallel changes to those traced in The Jealousy of the Gods did occur, with God becoming the neutral guardian of justice and the extension of the dangers of pollution, which came to adhere to moral offences as well as ritual faults. And the envy of the people found reflection in the jealousy of God. In ~~Max~~ Weber's words "The pride and arrogance and the boasting of their own power, in which kings and warriors indulged, was an abomination and the sin above all others to the god of those plebians who were under the spiritual guardianship of the teachers of the torah and of the prophetic circles".<sup>134</sup>

The final case considered by Ranulf is the emergence of the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment within Russia.<sup>135</sup> During the first decade of Bolshevist administration this tendency



was noticeably absent. Barring political offences, crime was considered the outcome of faulty social organization and bad environment, with the criminal being regarded not as wicked, but as unfortunate, suffering from a sickness which needed to be remedied. Sentences were short, with automatic suspension of those less than one year, and no stigma hindered the readmission of criminals into the community. Corporal punishment of criminals was condemned, as was its use by parents and teachers. There was no punishment for incest or homosexuality. Abortion was legal, and there was no public disapproval of the use or advocacy of contraceptives. Sexual intercourse was regarded as a matter of personal choice, taken within a climate of general permissiveness.

After this initial period, however, puritanical restrictions on the form and freedom of sexual relations began to emerge.

Public opinion is said increasingly to emphasize the importance of stability of marital relationships. At least in the Communist Party and among the Consomols, sexual promiscuity, like all forms of self-indulgence, has come to be definitely thought contrary to communist ethics, on the grounds that it is a frequent cause of disease, that it impairs the productivity of labour and that it is disturbing to accurate judgement and inimical to intellectual acquisition and scientific discovery, besides frequently involving cruelty to individual sufferers.<sup>136</sup>

Concerning the consumption of alcohol and tobacco, temperance, and even complete abstinence, is enjoined; while lavish expenditure is decried. Homosexuality and abortion were made punishable offences. Divorce was made subject to more stringent regulations.

Given the general tenor of Ranulf's argument, one might, as he admits, expect such a leaning towards moral indignation to be more likely to arise from the general misery endured in the first years

of the revolution, rather than in the subsequent period of economic improvement. "Furthermore, at the time when the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment was conspicuously absent there was for some years a class of small bourgeoisie in Russia, and now, after this class of Nepmen has been entirely suppressed, the tendency in question is emerging".<sup>137</sup> Where, then, does it spring from?

In answer to this question, Ranulf locates the source of moral indignation in the conditions of life of the dominant social class in the Soviet Union, conditions which imbue them with the mentality elsewhere observed in the petty bourgeoisie. The dominant class in question he identifies with the membership of the Communist Party. In general, they enjoyed some extra privileges, although their prosperity was not striking. Members were subject to severe surveillance and control. Expulsion was a constant threat to those who failed to live up to the exacting standards demanded of them including those relating to asceticism. As with the conditions experienced by the traditional petty bourgeoisie, these pressures impelled those subject to them to be industrious and self-restrained.

Yet the question remains as to why the expected tendency did not emerge at an earlier date. Ranulf's conclusion, which introduces one final amendment to his theory, is that this can be accounted for by the attitude of indifference and tolerance towards sin and crime produced by the social disturbances arising out of wars and revolutions. Under such circumstances the association of moral indignation with the presence of a petty bourgeois milieu may be suppressed, except in the case of revolutions conducted by and for the lower middle class.

## VI. Reactions to Ranulf

The above discussion, as indicated at the outset, has been primarily intended to clarify Ranulf's theory and the concepts employed in its construction, a task made necessary by its complexity, as well as by the vagueness with which it is expressed and the contradictions it encompasses. Given these features, it is not, perhaps, surprising that subsequent commentators have misunderstood and misrepresented various aspects of his work, although their slips appear on occasion to be more the result of a lack of familiarity with the texts than purely as the consequence of Ranulf's ambiguity. This has occurred even amongst those writers who have sought recognition for his work.

To illustrate this point, we may turn first to the work of Robert Merton. Merton, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, recommends Moral Indignation and Middle Class Psychology as the locus classicus in the field, as well as referring his readers to The Jealousy of the Gods. Yet Ranulf does not, as Merton contends, make it "abundantly plain" that "his own work derives, in direct sociological descent, from the fundamental theory about the workings of moral indignation advanced... by Emile Durkheim".<sup>138</sup> On the contrary, despite praising the methods advocated by Durkheim, Ranulf ignores Durkheim's explicit treatment of variations in punitiveness and moral outrage. Indeed, on certain key points their theories stand in direct opposition to one another, as will become evident when we come to consider Durkheim's work in this area.

Other writers, equally fulsome in their praise of Ranulf, have nevertheless ignored the importance attributed by him to his dichotomy of the middle class into an upper and a lower bourgeoisie, with the

former being free of the moral indignation characteristic of the latter. Duster, for example, in his summary of Moral Indignation and Middle Class Psychology, speaks of an undifferentiated "middle class" as the bearer of the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment, and ignores such internal divisions within the bourgeoisie in his subsequent elaboration of Ranulf's thesis in relation to changing attitudes towards drug abuse.<sup>139</sup> Fromm in Fear of Freedom, cites the same work by Ranulf as "an important contribution to the thesis that moral indignation is a trait typical of the middle class, especially the lower middle class".<sup>140</sup> The emphasis placed upon the lower middle class is clearly in accord with Ranulf, but the suggestion that it merely exhibits in exaggerated form qualities common to the middle class as a whole, is dubious.

Paul Rock, in his account of Ranulf's work, similarly neglects his distinction between the upper and lower middle class.<sup>141</sup> Furthermore, Rock's discussion of the "disinterested" nature of the tendency to inflict punishment takes place in the context of his treatment of how "the coercive face of power is masked or partially replaced by a set of legitimations which exact a more or less willing compliance from the ruled".<sup>142</sup> Claims to disinterestedness, as well as to moral superiority and representativeness, are represented as the principal means employed in industrial societies to justify what are in reality sectional interests and to disarm opposition. "Disinterestedness" becomes a quality of ideological gambits attempting to justify an activity, and not at all of the activity itself. But in Ranulf's hands, "disinterestedness" is applied to denote those who desire to see offenders punished even though they themselves are not the victims

of the offence, nor stand to gain income from any penalties inflicted upon offenders. Claims to disinterestedness are not the criteria to be employed in designating behaviour by this term.

Such treatment of the disinterested nature of moral indignation as is presented in the works of Gusfield and Ranulf, is criticised by Stanley Cohen on the grounds that their distinction between interested and disinterested reactions to deviance is not viable. This attack, however, resolves itself into a rather unprofitable terminological quibble about the "much too narrow a conception of interest and threat",<sup>143</sup> and does not challenge the possibility of distinguishing between the two tendencies, nor the explanatory value of such classification in the works of Gusfield or Ranulf. It might be equally well argued that to employ too broad a conception of "interests" and "interestedness", renders these terms somewhat valueless, with people invariably being discovered to be defending or advancing their interests by dint of definition.

References to The Jealousy of the Gods are somewhat less frequently encountered. Dodds, whose work on the irrational aspect of Greek culture we have already had reason to mention, refers to this work when cites "the elaborate but monomaniac book of Ranulf" as an example of the interpretation of divine jealousy as a reflection of the resentment felt by the unsuccessful towards the eminent.<sup>144</sup> Further reference to The Jealousy of the Gods can be found in Sorokin's study of changes in morality and the criminal law, where he commends Ranulf's analysis of the social background and content of the Greek literary sources, but questions his explanatory hypothesis.<sup>145</sup>

Sorokin dismisses the importance which Ranulf attaches to the role of envy "because this theory is purely psychological, it does not explain why jealousy and envy appeared just in the sixth and fifth centuries".<sup>146</sup> Yet this is not true, for Ranulf relates the source of envy and belief in the jealousy of the gods to the changing social structure of Greek society, and not to the emotions of individuals isolated from their social context.

More sympathetic treatment of The Jealousy of the Gods can be found in Joan Rockwell's investigation of the use of literary sources in sociological research.<sup>147</sup> In Fact in Fiction she takes up and elaborates Ranulf's reference to the popular nature of Greek drama, and discusses the important religious and moral role it occupied in Athenian life. In support, for example, of the argument that the plays were composed with the Athenian public at large in view, rather than an esoteric minority, she notes the influence of audiences upon the distribution of awards to playwrights. Furthermore:

The theatre itself was...paid for from the public funds... a subsidy of two obols was paid to the poorer citizens from a special fund, the 'theoric fund', said to have been established by Pericles in the fifth century. Any attempt to use this fund for any other purpose, even in time of war, met furious resistance: such was the importance of the theatre to the city... There seems to have been something approaching 100 per cent attendance, including women and children: a surviving fragment complains that the Furies in the Eumenides of Aeschylus were so horrific in appearance that women miscarried and children were frightened into fits... And the experience of the drama was not confined to the cities: after three days of playing at the city festivals plays were taken on a tour of the provinces.<sup>148</sup>

Some commentators, such as Harold Lasswell, have questioned the relevance of Ranulf's theory to contemporary conditions. In his

preface to the 1964 edition of Moral Indignation and Middle Class Psychology, Lasswell suggests that moral indignation is "slowly vanishing as a source of support for public order".<sup>149</sup> A less sanguine view is offered in the review of Moral Indignation by Manfred Rehbinder who, citing German penal policy and attitudes towards it, dismisses Lasswell's opinion on this point as utopian.<sup>150</sup>

No attempt has been made to make this account exhaustive, the works referred to above having been chosen partly to illustrate the diverse range of reactions to Ranulf's theory and to correct some errors in its interpretation. Perhaps the most generous of these occurs when Scott attributes to Ranulf's theory a refinement from which it would doubtless benefit, but does not possess. Speaking of Ranulf's "fascinating theory of moral posture", with its "truly Weberian spread of comparative evidence", Scott claims that: "Ranulf argues that the lower middle classes are morally repressive toward others, pursuing a policy of 'disinterested punishment' which offers them no direct gain, because their precarious status permits them no chance to indulge in the 'institutionalized evasions' of institutionalized norms available to those of secure status, that is, the aristocrats and the disreputable poor".<sup>151</sup>

Such an explanation of differences in moral righteousness accords well with Scott's own theory of moral commitment, for "the disreputable poor have no status to lose and enjoy their vice because its consequences are not punishing to them; and the middle classes, for whom the consequences of vice would be status-degrading and therefore punishing, remain indignant, sanctimonious, and committed".<sup>152</sup>

It also helps to make sense of the different moral outlooks of the middle and lower classes in Puritan England touched upon above.

It is not, however, accurate to credit Ranulf with having set forth such an interpretation of his findings.

In his conclusion to Internalization of Norms, Scott, in touching upon the sources of variations in what he refers to as the "propensity to sanction", suggests that: "Ranulf's views about the determinants of the 'disinterested tendency to inflict punishment' are probably not entirely satisfactory to present-day social scientists, but his question remains an interesting and pre-eminently sociological one".<sup>153</sup> Just how satisfactory it proves to be in comparison with the work of other sociologists in this area is the task addressed in the next chapter.

#### NOTES

1. Merton (1968), pp. 209-210, n.40
2. Duster (1970), p.viii
3. Ranulf (1964), p.1
4. Ibid., p.11
5. Ibid., p.12, n. 1
6. Quoted in Ranulf (1964), p.12
7. Quoted in Ranulf (1964), p.13
8. Ranulf (1964), p.13f
9. Ibid., pp. 15 and 32
10. Ibid., p.14
11. Ibid., pp. 18-20
12. Ibid., p.18
13. Ibid., p.20
14. Ibid., p.16
15. Ibid., pp. 59-60
16. Ranulf (1964), p.14f
17. Ibid., p.18f
18. Ibid., p.21
19. Ibid., p.23f
20. Ibid., p.26
21. Ibid., pp.24ff
22. Ibid., p.30
23. Ibid., p. 198
24. Ibid., p.8



25. Cf. Weber (1965), particularly chapters 6 and 7
26. Ranulf (1964), p.40
27. Ibid., p.26
28. Ibid., p.16f
29. Ibid., pp. 27-29
30. Weber (1958), p.65
31. The conception of class and status intended here is that developed by Weber, although Ranulf is in practice rather insensitive to the complexities of class thus conceived.
32. Ranulf (1964), p.46
33. Ibid., p.37
34. Ibid., pp. 35-36
35. Collins (1975), pp. 69ff
36. See the discussion of this issue in Parkin (1972), pp. 79ff
37. Ranulf (1964) p.40
38. Ibid., p.157
39. Ibid., pp. 67-68
40. Ibid., p.76
41. Ranulf (1933-1934)
42. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 106
43. The term "predatory crime" is applied by Glaser to those acts that "we most commonly think of as crime. They are acts in which a person deliberately takes or injures someone else's person or property". (Glaser, 1972, pp. 2-3) on "victimless crimes", see Schur (1965).
44. Westermarck (1906) See for further discussion of this work Chapter 2 below.
45. Douglas (1970), p.157
46. Brown (1952)
47. Calhoun (1972), p.6
48. Cf. the discussion of the criminal law in Gibbs (1966)
49. Rock (1973), p.134
50. Bonner and Smith (1970), vol. 2, p.39
51. Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 40-41
52. Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 41-42
53. Tod. (1964), p.5
54. Ibid., p.11
55. Hoebel (1968), pp. 233-234
56. Rusche and Kirchheimer (1939),
57. Ferguson (1964), p. 349
58. Bonner and Smith (1970), vol. 2, p. 303
59. Hibbert, (1963), p. 80
60. Spiro and D'Andrade (1958),
61. Dodds (1956), p.36
62. Ibid., p.30
63. Quoted by Dodds (1956), p.44
64. Berger (1973), pp. 63ff
65. Weber (1965), p. 85
66. Davis (1949), p.176
67. Schoeck (1969), pp. 12-13
68. Runciman (1972), p.10
69. Ibid.
70. Gouldner (1967), p. 43
71. Ibid., pp. 55ff
72. Russell and Russell (1961), p. 159

73. Bensman and Vidich (1971), Relative decline in the economic sphere, they argue, gives rise to status defensiveness. This finds expression in emphasising a newly discovered superiority of breeding, taste, dress and morality. (Ibid., pp. 68ff)
74. Gouldner (1967), p.50
75. Scheler (1961), This work is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 below.
76. Ranulf (1964), pp. 199ff
77. Gusfield (1966),
78. Ranulf, (1964), p. 76
79. Ehrenberg (1951)
80. Quoted in Ehrenberg (1951), p. 181
81. Tod (1964), p.15
82. Ehrenberg (1951), p.149
83. Ibid., p.2
84. Ibid., p.373
85. Ranulf (1939),
86. Ranulf (1964), p.54
87. On this point, see Cole (1955), pp. 78ff
88. Tod (1964), p. 4 Cf. Ehrenberg (1951), p.84
89. Ehrenberg (1951), p.92
90. Ibid., p.89
91. Hill (1964), pp. 131-132
92. Similar bourgeois resentment recurs in the Reformation, where: "Idleness, unproductive consumption, is the count against monks, retainers and beggars alike". (Ibid., p.273)
93. Ibid., pp. 133-134
94. Ibid., p.235
95. Ibid., p.134
96. Ibid., p.274
97. Ranulf (1964), p.76
98. Hill (1964), p.122
99. Ibid., p.185
100. Ibid., p.152
101. Ibid., pp. 145ff. See also Hill (1967), p.89f
102. Hill (1964), p. 251
103. Ibid., p.249
104. Ranulf (1964), p.131
105. Ibid., p.94
106. On one issue, that of mendacity, the findings presented by Ranulf do suggest that the Puritans were hypocrites when it came to spreading false reports. There is, however, no evidence presented on Royalist practices to enable comparison. Given the war situation it seems quite likely that they too would be inclined to embellish the truth and invent news favourable to their cause while at the same time denouncing the practice of spreading false propaganda.
107. For a discussion of such egocentric "punctuation" of social interaction, see Watzlawick, et al. (1967), pp.54ff
108. Ranulf (1964), p.91f
109. Jordan (1959), p.215
110. Ibid., p.152
111. Ibid., p.201
112. Ibid., p.197
113. Ibid., p.198f

114. Jordan (1959), p.332
115. Ibid., p.344
116. Ranulf (1964), pp. 96ff
117. Ibid., pp.101ff
118. Ibid., pp. 145ff
119. Gronbech (1931).
120. Westermarck (1906), vol. 1, p.176
121. Ibid., p.177
122. Ranulf (1964), pp. 147ff
123. Westermarck (1906), vol. 1, p.77
124. Ibid., p.78
125. Ranulf, (1964), pp.152ff
126. Ibid., pp. 155ff
127. Ibid., p. 158f
128. This, at least, is his position in The Jealousy of the Gods - one somewhat at odds with his attacks on the poverty of appeals to cultural loans and historical influence to explain social facts in Moral Indignation.
129. Ranulf (1964), p.160
130. Ibid., p.161
131. Ibid., p.174
132. Pederson (1926), pp. 392-393
133. Ibid., p.395
134. Quoted in Ranulf (1964), p.184
135. Ranulf (1964), pp.186ff
136. Ibid., p.189
137. Ibid., p.192
138. Merton (1968), p.146, n.105
139. Duster(1970), pp. viii-ix
140. Fromm (1960), p.82
141. Rock (1973), p. 148
142. Ibid., p.144
143. Cohen (1972), p.197
144. Dodds (1956), p.62, n.108
145. Sorokin (1937), vol, 2, p.490 n.7
146. Ibid., p.518, n.79
147. Rockwell (1974), pp. 48 and 142 -143
148. Ibid., p.55
149. Preface to Ranulf (1964), by H.D. Lasswell, p.xiii.  
See also the comments on Ranulf by Salvador Giner, who points to the possible weakening of moral indignation amongst the lower middle class as the result of their participation in a general rise in standards of living. (Giner, 1972, p.157)
150. Rehbinder (1965), Cf. the review by Simon (1965-1966)
151. Scott (1971), p.112, n.10
152. Ibid., pp. 111-112
153. Ibid., p.216

## CHAPTER 2

### THE SOCIOLOGY OF MORAL INDIGNATION

#### I The Origin and development of moral ideas

Ranulf was not, of course, the first to seek to locate the origin of moral ideas in shared emotions, nor the first to link their development with social change. Both themes can be found in earlier works, some of which Ranulf was acquainted with, such as Edward Westermarck's exploration of the nature and causes of moral indignation.<sup>1</sup>

Westermarck's point of departure is that acts are not good or bad in themselves, but only in relation to the public response they elicit. Such an understanding that deviance is not a quality inherent in an action, but one conferred upon it by others, is an observation to be frequently encountered in much contemporary sociological reflection on the matter.<sup>2</sup> Yet the adoption of such relativistic view of morality is not at all common, the usual tendency of groups being to objectify their moral standards into absolute verities. This tendency Westermarck attributes in part to the comparatively uniform nature of the moral consciousness, particularly prominent in primitive societies, and in part to the centrality and importance assumed by morality in the life of the "moral enthusiast".<sup>3</sup> The recognition and acceptance of moral relativism is clearly foreign to the "moral enthusiast" portrayed by Ranulf, although he identifies such immunity to relativism with particular positions within the class structure, and does not direct his attention to the influence of a widespread and unchallenged consensus as the basis for moral absolutism.<sup>4</sup>

For Westermarck, the moral emotions are of two kinds: moral disapproval, or indignation, and moral approval. Both are "retributive"

emotions: moral indignation forming a sub-species of resentment, of an aggressive attitude of mind towards a cause of suffering. Such resentment can also manifest itself in non-moral forms, in straightforward anger or calculating revenge. Moral resentment, on the other hand, expresses itself in the practice of punishment. By punishment Westermarck means not "every suffering inflicted upon an offender in consequence of his offence, but only such suffering as is inflicted upon him in a definite way by, or in the name of, the society of which he is a permanent or temporary member".<sup>5</sup>

But what lies behind such a disinterested public concern to condemn immorality and to punish wrongdoing? First, Westermarck claims, there is the disinterested resentment felt on account of an injury inflicted upon a person with whom we sympathize and in whose cause we take a kindly interest. Second, moral indignation is contagious: punishment or expressions of moral condemnation are likely to arouse and instil similar emotions in others towards their object. This is particularly important in the case of "disinterested antipathies" towards those whose offence resides in their differing tastes, habits and opinions:

When a certain act, though harmless by itself (apart from the painful impression it makes upon the spectator), fills us with disgust or horror, we may feel no less inclined to inflict harm upon the agent, than if he had committed an offence against person, property, or good name. And here, again, our resentment is sympathetically increased by our observing a similar disgust in others. We are easily affected by the aversions and likings of our neighbours.

Society, however, does not only diffuse moral sentiments - it can also be said to have created them. It is this social origin, Westermarck claims, which give moral sentiments characteristics which

distinguish them from opinions based upon the non-moral retributive emotions. Westermarck discusses three such distinguishing characteristics. The first of these is disinterestedness: there is the implied admission on the part of the person passing judgement that the rule is equally binding upon himself, or would be if he were to find himself in the same circumstances. The second characteristic of moral judgements is a claim to impartiality: moral praise or condemnation is claimed to be roused purely by the act in question without reference to the particular relationship between the judge and the actor in question. Lastly, moral judgements have an air of generality, they are associated with a feeling that they are, or should be, shared by others.

The source of these characteristics "lies in the fact that society is the birthplace of the moral consciousness; that the first moral judgements expressed, not the private emotions of isolated individuals, but emotions which were felt by the society at large; the tribal custom was the earliest rule of duty".<sup>7</sup> Public indignation at the infringement of custom, is, then, the origin of moral disapproval. Not isolated individual consciences, but public codes and sanctions give rise to morality. With the weakening of consensus individual challenges to traditional morality arise, but these are couched in the language of morality, often seeking to demonstrate that rules and rulers are not as disinterested or impartial as they purport to be. Furthermore:

Though, perhaps, persecuted by his own people as an outcast, the moral dissenter does not regard himself as the advocate of a mere personal opinion. Even when standing alone, he feels that his conviction is shared at least by an ideal society, by all those who see the matter as clearly as does himself, and who are animated with equally wide sympathies, an equally broad sense of justice.

Thus the moral sentiments retain their air of generality, their supra-individual quality in the consciousness of those experiencing them. While seemingly out of step, such moral dissenters are marching to the sound of a more distant drum, to the call of a different reference group.<sup>9</sup> Non-conformists, held by Merton to be those led into deviance through moral dissent, clearly differ from such deviants as most criminals. In contrast to the latter they do not seek to hide their departures from the norm, but proclaim them. Furthermore, they challenge the legitimacy of rejected norms, going far beyond the expedient rule-breaking of most crimes, and seek to replace them with their own. Such conformity is largely disinterested, with nonconformists being ready to sacrifice their own immediate comfort or advantage for the sake of principle. Merton, like Westermarck, sees in such moral dissent an air of generality in that, unlike much crime, there is the prospect, however remote, of obtaining the assent of others. "His nonconformity is not a private dereliction but a thrust towards a new morality (or a restoration of an old and almost forgotten morality)".<sup>10</sup>

Despite many similarities which exist between the moral ideas of mankind, radical differences can also be encountered. "A mode of conduct which among one people is condemned as wrong is among another people viewed with indifference or regarded as praiseworthy or enjoined as a duty".<sup>11</sup> How does Westermarck - who expresses himself discontent with mere analysis, seeing in the attempt "to find an answer to the question, Why? - the ultimate aim of all scientific research"<sup>12</sup> - account for these variations? Differences between groups in terms of their prosperity and differing means of securing their livelihood account

for some differences in moral values. For example, in discussing the influence of economic factors in societies where infanticide is permitted or even enjoined by custom, Westermarck notes: "Urgent want is frequently represented by our authorities as the main cause of infanticide; and their statements are corroborated by the conspicuous prevalence of this custom among the poor tribes and in islands whose inhabitants are confined to a narrow territory with limited resources".<sup>13</sup> The long and arduous treks associated with the economic activities of some tribes is also cited as a contributory factor. Such an interpretation was also voiced by Westermarck's contemporary, Hobhouse, who adds that in primitive societies, infanticide, being an act committed within the family circle, would not necessarily attract attention from any authority outside the family group.<sup>14</sup>

Westermarck also claims that hardship plays a role in the acceptance of practices such as the abandonment of the aged and cannibalism, while economic conditions have also influenced moral ideas in such areas as attitudes towards labour and personal cleanliness. Together with such economic factors, Westermarck groups, under the title of "external conditions", a demographic factor: "the form of marriage and the opinions concerning it have been largely determined by such a factor as the numerical proportion between the sexes".<sup>15</sup>

Such external circumstances are, however, not the most important force at work in shaping morality as a whole. While prepared to allow that they contribute to shaping some beliefs more than others, and in a few exercise a dominant influence, Westermarck is quite clear in attributing the dominant role to what he refers to as influences of a



"psychical" origin.

Several such psychical factors can be found in his work. First, there are variations in beliefs concerning the supernatural consequences of action, in ideas about the interference of human spirits in human affairs and the operation of magical forces. Second, there is the development of intellectual enlightenment to be seen in the growth of more penetrating reflection. The development of such intellectual penetration inevitably leads, Westermarck holds, to two results: there is an increase in the importance attributed to subjective motives and intentions in the allocation of responsibility for offences; and there is a decline in penalizing victimless offences.

Some degree of reflection easily leads to the notion that sentimental antipathies are no sufficient ground for interfering with other individuals' liberty of action either by punishing them or by subjecting them to mental censure, provided of course that they do not in an indelicate manner shock their neighbours' feelings. Hence many persons have recourse to utilitarian pretexts to support moral opinions or legal enactments which have originated in mere aversions; thus making futile attempts to reconcile old ideas with the requirements of a moral consciousness which is duly influenced by reflection .<sup>16</sup>

Now, Westermarck's remarks on the resort to utilitarian arguments to defend disinterested antipathies in a climate which has grown hostile to their moral condemnation is interesting and partly borne out by the recent study by Davies of shifting reactions to premissiveness,<sup>17</sup> as well as coinciding with Ranulf's comments on the social origins of the appeal to deterrence as a justification for punishment. But Westermarck's resort to the growth of intellectual insight as an explanation of changes in the allocation of responsibility and the growth of individual liberty is, as it stands, of little value. It remains, in his hands, too ambiguous - does it refer to greater

intellectual ability or to growth in a rational stance towards the world in general in contrast to the passive acceptance of traditional practices or to a greater willingness to check the direct implementation of emotional responses by "the pauser reason"?<sup>18</sup> Resort to variations in intellectual penetration as an explanatory principle is sociologically sterile without careful definition of this factor independently of the phenomena it is invoked to explain, together with an outline of the socio-cultural conditions conducive to the employment of such reflection. This Westermarck does not provide.

The third psychical factor is the expansion of the sentiment of altruism. Altruism is held to lie behind the broadening circle of persons within which the infliction of injuries is prohibited, from the tribe to the nation and, to a certain degree, even beyond. At first sight, this might appear as sociologically unprofitable in accounting for variations in morality between groups as Westermarck's references to the growth of intellectual insight. In his chapter on the origin and development of the altruistic sentiment, however, Westermarck closely links the development of altruism to changes in social structure.

The intensity of social affection depends, Westermarck believes, upon the coherence and size of the social group. This is partly determined by local proximity and population density, both heavily dependent upon economic conditions. For example,

a pastoral community is never large, and, though cohesive so long as it exists, it is liable to break up into sections. The reason for this is that a certain spot can pasture only a limited stock of cattle... The case is different with people subsisting on agriculture. A certain piece of land can support a much larger number of persons when it is cultivated than when it consists of merely pasture ground... It is a kind of property which, unlike

cattle, is immovable; hence even where individual ownership in land prevails, the heirs of an estate have to remain together.

From such economic roots of the size and ties of social groups, Westermarck passes on to a consideration of familial ties and beliefs in common descent. When unsupported by local proximity and frequent communication, however, these are seen as losing much of their strength. Similarly, a sense of social unity and subsequent willingness to protect the rights of those encompassed by such a feeling, may be reinforced by common worship; although religious unity unrelated to, and building upon, other ties, is regarded as ineffective in shaping such sentiments.

Turning to a consideration of broader unity on a national scale, Westermarck concludes that whether the state is successful, as a result of its hostility to separatism, in breaking down local, clan, and tribal loyalties and thus clearing the path for the emergence of a wider unity, depends upon its strength and justice in protecting its members. Like increasing political coherence within, hostility to communities outside the state increases solidarity - and hence mutual consideration - within it. But nationalism and ethnocentricism, while strong, are themselves weakened by increasing intercourse which lessens divisive differences between groups.

There is much that could be said about this eminently sociological analysis of the sources of social solidarity - the association of increasing interaction with the obliteration of differences and increasing social affection between previously hostile groups, for example, clearly only holds good under certain circumstances, such as the emergence of co-operation between them. Otherwise it may simply

provide occasion for the expression of hostility.<sup>20</sup>

Turning to the question of the disinterested urge to chastise the wayward, the notion that people are prepared to recognize the rights of those with whom they identify, and are readier to take offence at attacks upon those with whom they feel a sense of solidarity, is clearly most plausible. Conversely, it may be added that people are readier to condemn, and slower to aid, those with whom they feel no sense of community.<sup>21</sup>

Chambliss and Seidman, for example, see in the transformation from an emphasis upon reconciliation to rule-enforcement in dispute settlement which takes place with growing social inequality and differentiation, a reflection of the dissolution of communal ties.<sup>22</sup> Sutherland and Cressey also emphasize that the social distance between the respective groups from which punishers and punished tend to be drawn is positively correlated with severity of punishment.<sup>23</sup>

Although they share as a central aim the investigation of the social and psychological determinants of moral indignation, Westermarck differs from Ranulf in a number of respects. Westermarck, for example offers an extended discussion of the nature of moral indignation and punishment. The necessity for such clarificatory work was, as has been noted, sadly neglected by Ranulf. Furthermore, although both deal with variations in the intensity and targets of moral indignation in a wide variety of historical and cultural settings, Ranulf's attention is throughout directed by the relevance of such variations to a number of interrelated hypotheses. Westermarck, on the other hand, selects examples of variations in moral codes and

their enforcement not according to their relevance for testing a given hypothesis, but to illustrate the range of ideas to be encountered in six major areas of conduct. The areas themselves are chosen not on the basis of theoretical relevance, but according to Westermarck's assessment of their moral and practical importance. Variations in morality that emerge in the course of this task are explained in an ad hoc fashion, so that his theory outlined above is simply a summary of those factors which he **cites** most frequently

in formulating such explanations. No attempt is made to formulate the conditions under which one factor rather than another is likely to operate or predominate.

Finally, insofar as a theory of the growth of moral indignation does emerge from Westermarck's work it is based upon the influence of social solidarity rather than class psychology. To find intellectual predecessors to Ranulf who not only explored the same field, but also advanced solutions more in line with his own, we must extend our enquiry to encompass the work of Nietzsche and Scheler.

## II. Ressentiment

In an appendix to Moral Indigantion, Ranulf compares his own work on moral indignation with that of Max Scheler on ressentiment. He evidently sets little store on Scheler's work in this area, basing his condemnation on what he regards as the total inadequacy of Scheler's method. This is dismissed as yet another example of what he refers to deprecatingly as "the method of plausible guesses" - the elaboration of explanations untested by adequate investigation.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, as Ranulf admits, a number of Scheler's ideas concerning

the psychology and sociology of morality anticipate those which he advances to account for the development of moral indignation.

Scheler took over the term ressentiment from the study of the genealogy of morals undertaken by Nietzsche.<sup>25</sup> He also incorporated many of Nietzsche's ideas concerning the operation of ressentiment, although Scheler's Catholic faith made it impossible for him to agree entirely with Nietzsche who had seen Christianity as heavily imbued with ressentiment.<sup>26</sup>

For Nietzsche the morality of the powerless - "slave morality"- is based upon continually making a virtue of necessity. The equation of timidity with humility, the elevation of obedience and patience into moral virtues, expresses the timorous subservience of the impotent unable to retaliate directly against those responsible for their condition. As Nietzsche expresses it in the Genealogy of Morals:

The inoffensiveness of the weak man, even the cowardice of which he has so much, his lingering at the door, his being ineluctably compelled to wait, here acquire flattering names, such as "patience", and are even called virtue itself; his inability for revenge is called unwillingness to revenge, perhaps even forgiveness ("for they know not what they do - we alone know what they do").<sup>27</sup>

Men of ressentiment, intolerably miserable, employ morality to sour enjoyment of life by those happier than themselves and to sweeten their own impoverishment.

These ideas form the starting point of Scheler's essay on ressentiment. Ressentiment, for Scheler, is the emotional bitterness which arises from a certain sense of relative deprivation, a bitterness which shapes the sentiments in a specific manner. Deprivation or disadvantage relative to others which does not give rise to a sense of

injustice, does not fuel such rancour and hence does not lead to the adoption of those values which Scheler deals with as manifestations of the resentful personality. One of the preconditions to the emergence of ressentiment occurs when a man is forced by others or by circumstances to remain in a situation which he dislikes and feels to be incommensurate with his self-evaluation. This alone, however, is not sufficient. Not all such experiences of injustice find expression in ressentiment, for they may find an outlet through the expression of other hostile emotions and sentiments, such as revenge, envy, the impulse to detract, Schadenfreude, and malice. Ressentiment only arises when, as a result of impotence, inadequate expression is allowed to such aggressive feelings.

Scheler also expresses the opinion the ressentiment will not arise if a "moral self-conquest" takes place, such as in "genuine" forgiveness in place of revenge, although how genuine forgiveness is to be distinguished from the spurious variety so characteristic of ressentiment is left unclear.<sup>28</sup> A similarly vague distinction is drawn between true and false modesty.<sup>29</sup> Cases are allocated to one class or the other on an intuitive basis, which for Scheler has the satisfying result of enabling him to damn the morality of his opponents as a cloak for ulterior and less laudable motives while saving traditional Catholicism from similar accusations directed by Nietzsche against the Christian deity.

Barring the expression of such hostile emotions touched upon above - revenge, envy, malice and such like - the resulting tension can be alleviated by devaluing the distinctive qualities of those who are the source of dissatisfaction, thus undermining their position and reducing their stature, through stressing the virtues of characteristics

they do not possess or monopolize. In this way they cease to be enviable, hateful, and worthy of revenge.<sup>30</sup>

Before turning to consider the social situation which Scheler regards as favourable to the emergence of ressentiment - laden attitudes and emotions, it is as well to note that he is quite definite in according the dominant role in shaping the history of ressentiment to biological degeneration.<sup>31</sup> This is in accord with the profoundly elitist stance permeating his work, with its sharp contrast between the culture of the common man and that of the aristocrat. The former he portrays as slavish, servile, calculating, self-seeking, filled with anxiety, greedy, distrustful, constantly seeking security and regularity for the morrow. The latter, on the other hand, is heroic, loving uncertainty and danger, spontaneously sensing his own worth, trusting in life, generous, joyful, ready to sacrifice, and valuing men in themselves rather than for their contribution to the common good. Unfortunately, the harmony of medieval society in which the peasants joyfully submitted to their divinely ordained and naturally superior aristocratic masters was shattered by the rise of the bourgeoisie, which Scheler sees as tainting and diluting the aristocratic morality, with the morality of ressentiment.

Leaving aside genetic factors, which social circumstance does Scheler regard as favourable to the growth of the hostile emotions to which he refers, and to their diversion into ressentiment? Firstly, such emotions are particularly likely to occur when unequal treatment arises alongside expectations of equality. As Scheler puts it: "A slave who has a slavish nature and accepts his status does not desire revenge when he is injured by his master; nor does a servile servant who is reprimanded or a child that is slapped".<sup>32</sup>



When, however, a discrepancy emerges between factual inequalities and the constitutional or traditional rights recognized as due to a group, the reaction is different:

Social ressentiment, at least, would be slight in a democracy which is not only political, but also social and tends toward equality of property. But the same would be the case - and was the case - in a caste society such as that of India, or in a society with sharply divided classes. Ressentiment must therefore be strongest in a society like ours, when approximately equal rights (political and otherwise) or formal social equality go hand in hand with wide factual differences in power, ~~property~~ and education.<sup>33</sup>

Hostility, then, is nourished by egalitarian ideologies. Not all hostile emotions, however, lead to the adoption of those values characteristic of ressentiment. Some societies, for example, are better equipped with institutions which function as safety valves for the release of such emotions. Parliamentary institutions can operate to perform this task, and criminal justice can facilitate revenge. Similarly, occupations which allow the opportunity to discharge aggression, such as those of criminals and soldiers, are not prone to what Scheler sees as the mental self-poisoning of ressentiment.

Conversely, some roles are charged with the likelihood of ressentiment through the impotence of their occupants to remedy the injustice or deprivation they have to bear. Scheler holds, for example, that the behaviour of those who obsessively ferret out all sexually significant events in their surroundings in order to condemn them harshly is merely a cloak to disguise their inability to enjoy fulfilling sexual relationships, while at the same time deriving some prurient satisfaction from delving into the sex lives of others. Similarly he sees criticism of the pursuits of the younger generation

by their elders as stemming from a growing inability to compete in such pursuits, such criticism being all the greater the lesser the deference accorded to their elders by the younger generation.

One further comment by Scheler on the social roles prone to ressentiment is of particular interest. He writes: "In present day society, ressentiment is by no means most active in the industrial proletariat...but rather in the disappearing class of artisans, in the petty bourgeoisie and among small officials".<sup>34</sup> This conclusion about the distinctive morality of the lower middle class resembles Ranulf's, although it must be said that Scheler, unlike Ranulf, provides no evidence to substantiate this point. Nor does he even speculate as to why this should be so, although it is in accord with his general antipathy towards the bourgeoisie and its culture.

Sexual prudery and the criticism of the conduct and values of the young constitute only two of the attitudes which Scheler sees as expressing ressentiment. Another is a belief in ethical relativism, a denial of the existence of any absolute standards of morality. This is prompted, Scheler believes, by the impotence of its adherents to perform favourably when measured in terms of a traditional morality which Scheler holds to be true and immutable.

In addition to ethical relativism Scheler holds ressentiment to be the root of the universal love of mankind embraced by modern humanists which is critical of, and devoid of piety towards, the divine and the dead. In its place humanism puts a concern with the welfare of humanity in general, critical of discrimination in terms of local or national distinctions or blood ties. It also embarks upon protest against institutions and customs which are considered obstacles to sensual fulfillment. By contrast, Christian love is aimed not at mutual welfare, but the salvation of souls and, indeed, is antithetical to

the ressentiment inspired values of humanism, such as belief in liberty and equality,

Further instances of the morality of ressentiment according to Scheler can be seen in the denial of hereditary virtue or guilt and the argument that moral evaluation should take place solely in terms of an individual's performance relative to his resources. Insistence on innate equality, moral or intellectual, is Scheler asserts, a delusion into which only those blinded by ressentiment would be drawn .

Scheler, then, sees deprivation as giving rise to a sense of injustice where such deprivation is not balanced by the enjoyment of compensatory rewards or accepted as morally appropriate. Where such beliefs are shaken or compensation inadequate, deprivation results in frustration and aggression. If this aggression is denied expression it will embitter the outlook of those experiencing it, leading to a pervasive grudge against those able to indulge in activities from which they are excluded. Such ressentiment finds expression in the elaboration of a moral code which enables those experiencing it to condemn such activities and to restore their own self-esteem through feelings of moral superiority replacing painful awareness of impotence.

It is clearly not possible to extract from Scheler's work the morality of ressentiment. His approach rather suggests an infinite variety of moral standards depending upon the particular desires that are frustrated. Although Scheler himself makes no mention of this matter, it is clear that there may even be some incompatibility between different values inspired by different grounds for ressentiment. Sexual

prudery, for example, is regarded by Scheler as the product of ressentiment, but so also are a whole set of related attitudes antithetical to such a morality which he deals with in his account of the ressentiment - laden values of modern humanism.

It is this morality of modern humanism to which Scheler devotes most of his attention. Its values include ethical relativism, . atheism, cosmopolitanism disdaining the supremacy claimed by national allegiances and blood ties, denial of any hereditary basis for moral or intellectual distinctions, and the pursuit of liberty and equality. All are denigrated as the products of men unwilling to accept their poor performance in terms of the traditional values to which these stand opposed. The rise of the bourgeoisie thrust ever increasing numbers of such men onto the scene. Unable to be successful enough in terms of the old hierarchy of values when competing with traditional elites and unwilling to submit to an inferior position, they reject traditional beliefs. In their place they foster beliefs in equality in those areas where they do not excel, so that if they do not lead at least none shall be above them.

In the list of the characteristic values of humanism presented by Scheler are several which Ranulf sees as indicators of the absence of moral indignation. These include ethical relativism, atheism, cosmopolitanism, denial of hereditary guilt and rejection of the need for human conduct to be ordered by strong social and moral constraints. Despite similarities in seeking to locate the source of certain moral reactions in deprivation and despair, this clearly means that Ranulf's claim that Scheler's argument is "identical" with his own goes too far.<sup>35</sup> For, as Ranulf sees it, humanists are free to cultivate such

beliefs because they live a fulfilling existence, free from the sufferings of those prone to envy and righteous indignation.

For Scheler, acceptance of traditional standards, standards he regards as the God-given immutable verities of moral life, is unproblematic. This is so whether such acceptance occurs on the part of those innately endowed with the gifts capable of realizing such values or by the rest of an admiring and loyal populace. What does trouble him is why anyone should be so blind as to be unable to perceive the self-evident nature of the truths promulgated by the Catholic church. If Scheler's basic assumption here is not accepted, attempts to explain indifference or hostility to traditional values as the result of innate moral myopia make little sense. There are, of course, a number of propositions in Scheler's essay more amenable to empirical investigation, but, overall, his essay is more concerned with condemning practices by imputing squalid motives to their practitioners on the basis of speculative psychology and religious faith.

Ranulf was well aware of the ease with which approaches to the study of morality such as his own could be employed for the purpose of denigrating the values to which they were applied. Implicit in the Nietzschean approach to the origin of morality is the condemnation of those holding moral sentiments which are rooted in such unworthy emotional dispositions as envy. Ranulf notes that this use of the theory was still very much alive in the work of his contemporaries, such as Bertrand Russell, C.E.M. Joad, and H.L. Mencken. Together with others they employed this argument to discredit the "network of moral prejudices and prohibitions by which traditional Puritanism has endeavoured to make life cheerless and tiresome in England and America".<sup>36</sup>

Yet he not only insisted that such evaluations were irrelevant to the scientific validity of the hypothesis to which they appealed, but also that a strong case could be made out for the social value of moral indignation, despite the questionable nature of its origin. To accomplish this Mandevillean exercise Ranulf relies upon the work of another of his predecessors in the study of the sociology of moral indignation, Emile Durkheim.

### III Durkheim on restitution and repression

Durkheim's first major work, De la division du travail social tackled many of the problems which were to be taken up again by Ranulf, as part of Durkheim's aim to establish a science of ethics. In the preface to the first edition Durkheim starts by defining a moral fact, the subject matter of such a science, as consisting of "a rule of sanctioned conduct".<sup>37</sup> Such a definition places the scientific study of morality squarely within the province of sociology, for "every sanction is primarily a social thing".<sup>38</sup> All obligatory rules of conduct can be identified by the sanctions which are attached to them. These may be either restitutive or repressive. Restitutive sanctions consist of the re-establishment of troubled relations to their normal state through such measures of compensation and annulment. These need imply no suffering for the agent. Repressive sanctions, on the other hand, consist essentially in suffering, or at least a loss, inflicted upon those deemed guilty of crime or immorality. "They make demands on his fortune, or on his honor, or on his life, or on his liberty, and deprive him of something he enjoys".<sup>39</sup>

For Durkheim, the imposition of repressive sanctions against offenders, both through formal punishment and more informal and diffuse moral condemnation, rests upon moral consensus. Crime is defined in terms of punishment - crime is "every act which, in any degree whatsoever, invokes against its author the characteristic reaction which we term punishment".<sup>40</sup> Punishment, in its turn, is defined by a number of important characteristics.

It differs from purely moral sanctions in being applied in an organized rather than in a diffuse manner. Suffering, that is, is meted out on the basis of a decision taken by a tribunal instead of being judged and reacted to by each on an individual basis. This is so whether the tribunal is composed of all the people or only a select number and whether or not it follows a regular procedure. Adopting a definition of punishment based upon the penal law of contemporary society with its definite punishments attached to equally definite crimes would be too narrow for comparative purposes, excluding, for example, the case of early Rome, where crime was prosecuted before the assembly of the people who fixed the penalty by virtue of their sovereign authority.<sup>41</sup>

Nor is punishment simply an extension of individual revenge for personal injury. That the tendency to inflict punishment stems from society and not the individual is demonstrated by the penalty being remissible only by the government in the name of society. In primitive societies those activities which elicit punishment are those which relate to public affairs: offences against religion and traditional patterns of conduct, those against the group as a whole such as treason and desertion. In the case of religion, punishment clearly partakes of

the disinterested nature of the obligations it enforces.<sup>42</sup> Attacks upon the individual constitute only a fraction of the offences which primitive societies see fit to punish. These, indeed, are often left on the threshold of penal law, being left to the offended party to seek satisfaction through the legitimate pursuit of the vendetta.

Durkheim also insists that punishment is fundamentally a passionate reaction rather than the result of utilitarian and unemotional calculation. The retributive character of punishment, the practice of making those deemed culpable suffer for the sake of suffering without further advantage accruing to those inflicting the punishment, is particularly evident in primitive societies. Durkheim acknowledges that in contemporary societies it is often argued that punishment has changed its character. It is claimed that:

it punishes, not because chastisement offers it any satisfaction for itself, but so that the fear of punishment may paralyze those who contemplate evil. This is no longer cholera, but a reflected provision which determines repression.<sup>44</sup>

Yet Durkheim is alive to the possibilities of self-deception, when he counters this claim with the observation that: "The nature of a practice does not necessarily change because the conscious intentions of those who apply it are modified".<sup>45</sup> An underlying concern with expiation for the past is still evident in the trouble that is taken to proportion punishment as precisely as possible to the severity of the crime in courts which continue to be arenas for emotional appeals to moral indignation.



What is common to all rules that are sanctioned by punishment? All crimes, Durkheim argues, shock sentiments which are found in all psychologically normal members of society. Penal practices which do not have the basis of their support firmly rooted in the moral consensus of the community cannot long endure.<sup>46</sup> Such sentiments are not hesitant and passing opinions, but deeply held convictions which are not easily abandoned. This is reflected in the conservative nature of criminal law in comparison with civil law.

While sentiments protected by purely moral sanctions are generally less intense than those which penal sanctions surround, nevertheless there are some exceptions. To result in those offending against them being punished, sentiments must not only be strong, they must also be precise, giving rise to rules relating to a definite practice rather than expressions of vague ideals to be aimed at. Furthermore, Durkheim acknowledges that there are some crimes which are punished more severely than the indignation that they arouse in the general public might lead one to expect. Nevertheless, punishment still rests upon the common conscience, if less directly, as the state exercises its authority on the basis of the loyalty and devotion it receives as the protector of the way of life of the group.

If the scope of the criminal law and the severity of its penalties depend upon intense and shared moral sentiments, what are the factors which determine the content of these moral attitudes and their importance in the social life of a community? All repressive sanctions, Durkheim holds, stem from and are determined by, the collective

conscience, the moral sentiments shared by all members of the community. This collective conscience varies in a number of ways which affect the enforcement of repressive sanctions against offenders

It is the keypoint of Durkheim's thesis that as societies advance, the collective conscience becomes enfeebled, exercising a less powerful hold over the individual. It also becomes vaguer, leaving room for individual divergences based upon different interpretations of general principles. No longer does consensus hold sway and all consciences react in unison. On the contrary, if moral indignation is awakened, upheavals are likely to result from differing views on the importance and meaning of moral standards.<sup>47</sup>

There are a number of social forces bringing about this change. Firstly, there is the growth of rationality. While the whole tribe faces the same concrete situations the observations to which they give rise, the problems they raise and the collective solutions provided, can all be framed in equally concrete terms. With the growth in the size and complexity of societies, however, such notions inevitably take on a more abstract nature in order to encompass a greater diversity of experience. But abstract rules require the intervention of the intellect before they can be applied. "But", as Durkheim remarked "once reflection is awakened, it is not easy to restrain it".<sup>48</sup> It will eventually be extended to and undermine articles of faith originally put beyond the bounds of discussion.

A more important factor leading to the decline in collective conscience is the diminishing authority of tradition. Behind this lies the fact that individuals are no longer tied to the locality of

their birth by family ties and territorial restrictions. Obstacles to innovation exist wherever the influence of those older persons who have been responsible for rearing the child is prolonged beyond infancy. Migration, by breaking these ties, removes these obstacles. While a migrant will encounter other old people he does not and never has depended upon them and hence has less respect for their wishes. Deference towards the elderly is nowadays based more upon pity than fear. Between adults, age differences decline, leaving those embodying ancestral customs with no special standing in the community. People become freer in their approach to customs as they become freer in their approach to those who embody them.

Due to these processes it is in those areas of the country where the population is drawn largely from the immigration of young people that the power of the collective conscience is weakest. It is this Durkheim holds, that partly accounts for the strength of innovatory tendencies in cities. There young adult immigrants, freed from the moderating influence of their elders at home and, furthermore, finding themselves in an environment where the number of old people is relatively small, create a situation in which little heed is paid to tradition. Geographical mobility is matched by temperamental mobility and innovations come to enjoy the prestige formerly associated with tradition as everything that comes from the past becomes somewhat suspect.

Not only do large cities undermine the collective conscience through freeing individuals from the bonds of tradition. Urban anonymity also provides city residents with freedom from social control. The greater the number of people embraced by a society and the

greater the number and variety of contacts between them, the less surveillance that can be constantly focused upon their conduct by the community.

It has to consider too many points at once to be able to concentrate on any. The watch is less piercing because there are too many people and too many things to watch.<sup>49</sup>

Furthermore, interest, the principle source of attention, is more or less absent. In general, the less intimate relations between individuals, the less the desire to know what they are doing. The continuous and frequent contacts which nourish such intimacy diminish as each individual is in contact with a greater number of persons.

Even neighbours and members of the same family are less often and less regularly in contact, separated as they are by the mass of affairs and inter-current persons...As this mutual indifference results in loosing collective surveillance, the sphere of free action of each individual is extended in fact, and, little by little, the fact becomes a right.<sup>50</sup>

Everywhere local opinion weighs less heavily as an individuals preoccupations no longer centre so completely upon the place where he lives. Widening vistas as the result of being drawn into affairs outside the locality lead to a declining interest in neighbours who play a smaller part in his life.

With the growth of social differentiation as societies develop from primitive to more complex forms, factors such as the growth of general principles and the birth of critical reason, the declining social control and surveillance exercised by family and neighbourhood, develop so as to reduce the power of the collective conscience and to

reduce the offensiveness of many acts which had previously provoked moral indignation. Little by little this changing morality works its way through to the criminal law. There it is evidenced by the progressive withdrawal of the law from spheres where it was once heavily involved. Penal sanctions are employed to a lesser extent, if at all, in the regulation of familial duties and sexual activities, in sumptuary regulations and the protection of religious practices and beliefs. In addition attacks against national sentiments or national institutions cease to be repressed so severely and the crime of lèse majesté, formerly widely employed, tends to disappear.<sup>51</sup>

Against this general trend there is, however, a growth in the strength of sentiments protective of the individual. Durkheim emphasises, however, that this is exceptional and that the general trend of the collective conscience is to diminish in strength and decisiveness. His thoughts on the changing character of the duties owed to individuals irrespective of familial or territorial ties are, nevertheless, worth pursuing for the light they shed on the nature of the collective conscience. Of particular interest in this respect is a lecture dealing with the causes of variations in the respect attached to the rule prohibiting murder.<sup>52</sup>

The changing nature of the ideals which constitute the collective conscience can be seen in the changing response to homicide. Both the incidence of homicide and the steps taken by the law to punish it reflect the collective estimate of the heinousness of this offence. Durkheim detects a tendency for homicide to decline with the advance of civilization, while, at the same time, growing public disapproval

of this offence is demonstrated by it being drawn from the threshold of ethics to the position of one of the most binding duties enforced by public sanction. The former indifference of society to these offences is reflected in various practices whereby an offender could evade punishment through compensating the relatives of his victim, or by the protection of the law being withheld from foreigners. Now, however, murder has become prohibited by the most severe penalties society exercises. This has come about partly because the human person is now the object of the sacred respect formerly directed towards the collectivity and its symbols.

The power of moral individualism should not, however, be exaggerated. While the growth of individualism is associated with a declining rate of homicide and increasing public indignation at its occurrence, it does not in itself account for them. For other attacks upon the individual, such as theft and fraud, and even some physical attacks against the person, tend to rise with social development.

If homicide is decreasing it is rather because the mystic cults of familial or political collectivities are diminishing rather than the cult of the individual is increasing. Such group loyalties, because of their strength, are in themselves stimulants to murder. Not only do offences against these sentiments incite murderous response, but such sentiments also create a general climate in which people become less sensitive to individual suffering, attaching little value to individual lives and used to the idea that they can and should be sacrificed to all sorts of things. Man has remained for long ages harsh to his fellows not because of his animal nature, but as the result

of a well-developed moral culture. The strong collective conscience of traditional societies which requires and approves the imposition of suffering in its pursuit of aims foreign to individual interests, is, Durkheim argues, fertile soil for the growth of a disposition to cause suffering.

Whatever increases group solidarity through strengthening likemindedness and loyalty to the group is thus also likely to stimulate the homicide rate. Wars and political crises, thrusting aside all concern for the individual as collective sentiments are roused, have this affect. The Protestant religion, being more individualistic than the Catholic, allows more freedom to the individual to interpret his own faith, and surrounds him with a smaller number of strong collective sentiments to hold sway over his mind, is characterised by a lower homicide rate. And, according to Durkheim, even public festivities, intensifying collective life and causing over-excitement, raise the homicide rate.

From the perspective of this study, the most important point to note is that Durkheim clearly identifies the conditions which lead to the anger of moral indignation as the same as those which stimulate homicide. The collective conscience is the source of impulsive, unreflecting violence in both cases. The nature of morality and immorality in any period are inextricably bound up together. Durkheim saw this as demonstrated in his own day by the way in which morality was becoming increasingly cold, reflective and rational at the same time as immorality becomes more notable for its astuteness than its violence.

The transformation of the content of criminal law is accompanied by a change in the severity of the sanctions it employs, a change discussed by Durkheim in an article on the evolution of penal sanctions where he formulates the following law:

The intensity of punishment is greater the more closely societies approximate to a less developed type - and the more the central power assumes an absolute character.<sup>54</sup>

Absolute power, the treatment of the individual as merely the property of the State, can vary independently of societal complexity. Thus while ancient Israel was not more advanced than ancient Egypt, nevertheless capital and corporal punishment were less intense in the former and applied to fewer offences. This was due to its more democratic nature, never developing absolute government such as the Egyptian theocracy centring upon the divinity of the monarch. As the result of the more advanced level of development reached by the Roman Republic, punishments there were less severe, and capital punishments fewer, than in the preceding Athenian city-states. Under the growth of the empire, however, growth in absolutism accompanied growing harshness in penal law. The succeeding feudal society in Europe shows an amelioration in the penal law in comparison with other societies at a similar level of development. With the rise of strong centralized monarchies, however, this trend was reversed as corporal and capital crimes increase in number and intensity, religious crimes increase and crimes of lèse majesté, unknown in the early feudal period, grow in number. Not until the waning of the power of absolute monarchies in the eighteenth century does a significant amelioration of the criminal law occur. This suggests an alternative - or additional - explanation to Ranulf's explanation of the growing tendency to inflict



punishment displayed by both the regimes of Hitler and Stalin when contrasted with their predecessors.

In Durkheim's account of changes in the severity of punishment, forces similar to those which were noted earlier in considering the transformation of the content of the collective conscience can be seen to operate. Compassion for the condemned can only begin to emerge when the offended party is no longer so much more powerful and prestigious than the offender.

Although Durkheim's work on the nature of crime and punishment is clearly not without its faults, some critics of his work on the nature of crime and punishment have failed to do justice to the subtlety of his thoughts on this matter, oversimplify his position and overlooking the relevance of certain aspects of his work to their own. Joseph Gusfield, for example, in his discussion of moral indignation, attributes to Durkheim the assumption that "the response to norm violation is always a punishing attitude".<sup>55</sup> This assumption, Gusfield demonstrates, is rendered unsound by the common occurrence of assimilative reform directed towards re-educating those who do not live up to society's standards. This is no doubt true, but to attribute to Durkheim the notion that all rule-breaking provokes a punitive response is clearly false. His discussion of the role of restitutive sanctions and the growing diversity of responses to acts previously considered immoral or criminal by the whole community testify to this. Gusfield is no less unfair when he states in reference to modern societies: "Rather than the unanimity which Durkheim thought

essential, norms of tolerance appear functionally necessary to modern society".<sup>56</sup> Durkheim plainly states his opinion that a return to the unanimity of opinions characteristic of the traditional collective conscience is impossible under contemporary conditions and that the only appropriate form of agreement that can be hoped for is a moral individualism which embraces the norms of tolerance to which Gusfield refers.<sup>57</sup>

Ranulf was clearly familiar with Durkheim's major works and refers with approval to Durkheim's description of punishment as a passionate and disinterested reaction.<sup>58</sup> He does not, however, go on to deal with the important differences between Durkheim's explanation of variations in the tendency to inflict punishment and his own. He turns, instead, to Durkheim to provide himself with an argument to counter those who condemn the operation of moral indignation as the unworthy indulgence of frustrated desires.

Ranulf's point is that, by concentrating upon the base motives which give rise to moral indignation, its opponents amongst his contemporaries had neglected to pay sufficient attention to the functions which it serves. Such critics, based their opposition to moral indignation on the argument, in part derived from psychoanalysis, that a large number of people suffer from sexual frustration and unfulfilling sexual relationships, experiences which have important consequences for the sentiments and conduct of those suffering from them. Such frustration and its attendant repression of desire feeds envy, for it is difficult for one who leads an unhappy life as the result of such deprivation to see others possessing what he lacks or even enjoying greater general

happiness and contentment than himself. Repressed impulses will seek such outlets even if an individual succeeds in deluding himself and others into believing that he leads a contented life, and will issue forth in moral indignation aimed at suppressing the indulgence of such appetites in others. Artificial barriers erected by moral indignation further hinder sexual fulfillment and produce further misery to fuel crusades against sexual immorality.<sup>59</sup>

The message is clear. Moral indignation at sexual impropriety is the result of such discreditable emotions as envy and should therefore be repudiated.<sup>60</sup> In reply to such a position, Ranulf argues that the repression of moral indignation might have harmful consequences at least as great as those imputed to the repression of sex. That such harmful consequences are likely to occur can be seen from a consideration of certain social facts revealed by Durkheim's sociology, particularly those referred to as le mal de l'infini in Durkheim's book on the sociology of suicide. According to Ranulf's interpretation of this work, "the evil of infinite possibilities" is only to be averted by persecutions similar to those decried by Russell as the gratification of envy. Only by an unreflecting veneration of the traditional standards which bid men to be content with a modest share of human happiness can le mal de l'infini be warded off. For this phenomenon

makes its appearance with the dissolution of the belief that attempts to arrange life in accordance with men's wishes and impulses are impossible, illegitimate and monstrous. In order to sustain this belief it is necessary to see that what is in fact impossible for oneself is made morally impossible for others. Hence the necessity of a moral reaction whenever the standards have been transgressed.

Otherwise, as soon as the veneration for the moral standards begins to wane 'the evil of the infinite possibilities' makes its appearance, with despair and suicide in store for those who are not in a position to reap any benefits from the increased moral freedom.<sup>61</sup>

This idea is clearly interesting in its own right, although it somewhat misrepresents Durkheim's position. The "disease of the infinite", for example, is common to both despair caused by the pointlessness of life devoid of strong social attachments, as well as the exasperated weariness resulting from the pursuit of the unobtainable by passions released from social supervision.<sup>62</sup> Yet it is clearly only the latter which Ranulf has in mind in his references to le mal de l'infini. Furthermore, Durkheim makes no distinction between those who are in a position to benefit from increased moral freedom and those who are not, but points out that it is impossible for men to benefit where they frustrate themselves pursuing inherently unobtainable desires.

Ranulf is clearly in agreement with Durkheim, however, in claiming that failure to retaliate against offenders will vitiate the collective conscience.<sup>63</sup> Both see that permissiveness is bought at a price, being the effect of the same social causes which also generate such undesired consequences as suicide. If, however, Durkheim is also correct in arguing that social advance is also inextricably bound up with such things as a decrease in homicide, then the balance sheet is obviously no easy affair to draw up.<sup>64</sup>

#### IV. The social and cultural dynamics of morality

To conclude this chapter on the efforts of other sociologists who have attempted to answer those questions raised by Ranulf concerning the social forces underlying variations in the disinterested tendency

to inflict punishment, some consideration of the work of Pitrim Sorokin is essential. Sorokin's work shares with that of Westermarck, Durkheim and Ranulf a concern to test his theories by bringing to bear upon them evidence from a very wide range of societies and periods. Unlike the major works of Westermarck and Durkheim, however, Sorokin's magnum opus, Social and Cultural Dynamics, was unavailable to Ranulf at the time of the appearance of the The Jealousy of the Gods in the years 1933-1934. The line of influence, indeed, lies in the opposite direction, for it is evident that Sorokin relied heavily upon The Jealousy of the Gods for his analysis of Greek morality up to the end of the fifth century.<sup>65</sup>

Sorokin has also much to say about those theories advanced by Durkheim to account for fluctuations in the severity of punishment and the scope of criminal law which we have just considered. He is, in fact, quite blunt in dismissing them as "a mere 'derivation' or 'rationalization' of the wishes and biases of the liberal and radical humanitarianism of the nineteenth century of which he (Durkheim) was a typical representative".<sup>66</sup> This opinion arises out of Sorokin's study of the fluctuation of the extent and severity of punishment in social life.

Sorokin begins this study by observing that, while penal codes give some idea of the severity of penalties employed against offenders, they do not indicate to how many persons it is applied. "The punishment in a certain code may be milder than another, but it may be applied, say, to 20 per cent of the population, while the severer punishment may be imposed on 2 per cent of the population only"<sup>67</sup>

Furthermore, actual punishment may increase enormously in amount and severity by such means as special decrees or mere physical force while the code continues to exist unchanged. Alternative evidence concerning the actual fluctuation in the quantity and severity of punishment is, however, sparse for large periods of time. Nevertheless there are sufficient sources to establish one law which Sorokin expresses as follows:

Each time when in a given social group, the ethicojuridical heterogeneity and antagonism of its members increases - whatever may be the reasons for such an increase - the amount as well as the severity of punishment imposed by one part of the group upon the other tends to increase; and, other conditions being equal, the greater the heterogeneity and antagonism, the greater is the increase.<sup>68</sup>

By ethicojuridical homogeneity is meant the similarity of the convictions shared by members of society, whether these are imperative-attributive or merely attributive. The former are two sided, ascribing a right to one party and a duty to another. In any group these constitute what Sorokin refers to as their law, the rules sanctioned by the state constituting only one subclass of the general class of law. Morality is distinguished from law by being merely attributive: urging and recommending actions without ascribing to anyone the right to demand them.<sup>69</sup>

This law leads Sorokin to dismiss as one of Durkheim's "big blunders" the notion that under conditions of ethico-juridical homogeneity in primitive societies, punishment will be merciless.<sup>70</sup> Not only, Sorokin holds, is punishment in a great many of such primitive societies mild, but there is no trend for the severity of punishment to decrease with social development.

Comparison of the criminal law of France, Italy, Austria, Germany, and Russia in the early Middle Ages with subsequent development, for example, shows them to have been milder in the earlier period. No tendency towards an ever more lenient penal code emerges from this survey.<sup>71</sup>

Marshalling his evidence to refute the popular notion that the evolution of criminal law shows a perpetual trend toward more and more humane and milder treatment of offenders, Sorokin states:

Instead, we see that as far as the normal punishments are concerned, the Barbaric times were mildest then the severity of punishment begins to grow in the medieval period and still more (with the exception of France) in the period of growth of the national monarchies, at the close of the late Middle Ages and at the beginning of the modern period, in the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. The end of the seventeenth century, the period of the Enlightened Absolutism, marks the downward turn of the severity of punishment. This trend continues, with a short time rise at the very end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century (the period of the 'Restoration') up to the end of the nineteenth century. The postwar period (in Russia, Germany and Austria) shows signs of a new turn - towards a growth of severity of punishment.<sup>72</sup>

Sorokin argues that Durkheim's claim that the unlimitedness of the central power is one of the major determinants of the severity of punishment is also incorrect. Evidence to refute this view can be found, he points out, in mildness which marked the codes of the "enlightened" despots of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in comparison with both those of the kings of feudal Europe, who were often only primus inter pares, and the codes of the republics and limited monarchies of the first part of the nineteenth century. Similarly, the codes of Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century were, despite the unlimited absolutism of the Czars, if anything, milder than the codes of France, Italy and Austria with their republican

regimes or limited monarchies.<sup>73</sup>

In considering the relevance of Sorokin's work to that of Ranulf, some discussion of the basic theme running throughout Social and Cultural Dynamics is necessary. As noted earlier, Ranulf's concept of moral indignation and the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment amounts to a portrait of a particular personality type and his concern with social factors is primarily an attempt to determine which milieu is most favourable to the configuration of attitudes which constitute this type. Sorokin is also concerned with investigating the social sources of two fundamentally different temperaments, one of which encompasses certain of the tendencies which Ranulf regards as indicators of moral indignation.

The major dimension which Sorokin employs runs between two polar types of mentality which he labels ideational and sensate or, respectively, Stoic and Epicurean. Starting from the major premises upon which such mentalities are based, Sorokin distinguishes between them in the following manner.<sup>74</sup> Concerning the nature of reality to which one has to adapt, sensate consciousness regards this as limited to what is immediately available to the senses. Ideational cultures regard such phenomena as illusory or, at best, superficial, and seek to adapt themselves to an ultimate, supernatural reality beyond the senses. Corresponding with this division of belief concerning the nature of reality is disagreement concerning the nature of needs and ends to be satisfied. The goals and values of Epicureans are sensual; amongst Stoics they are spiritual. Answers to the problem of how to satisfy these



needs also differ, with sensate solutions focusing upon the modifications of the environment, and ideational solutions upon the modification of self.

The domination of one or other of these mentalities in any given individual, group or period will influence the form and content of all that they produce. Every sphere of culture will be permeated by the major premises of the dominant mentality. Art produced in an era dominated by an ideational mentality will, for example, differ in radical ways from art of sensate periods. In the former, topics will be predominately religious and revolve around the activities of spirits; whereas the latter focuses upon the secular activities of ordinary mortals engaged in the day to day business of life. Ideational art is ascetic and elevates unquestioning faith; sensate art is sceptical, sensual and erotic. Attuned to the supernatural realm, ideational art pays scant attention to sensate preoccupations with paysage, to scenes from ordinary life or the individual portrayal of real persons. It is also unlike sensate art in failing to develop or appreciate satire, caricature and comedy. In sensate eyes art is an avenue to greater pleasure rather than being inseparable from and subservient to religion.

Even the favoured styles moves in line with what one might expect from the basic assumptions of each mentality. Ideational art is found to be symbolic; sensate art naturalistic. The art of ideational periods is also resistant to change in sharp contrast with the progressive accelerating tempo of innovation in sensate art. Ideational periods also prefer to employ simple means and techniques, as opposed to the preference of sensate periods for grand and complex ones. Censorship of art

in the service of religion also takes the place occupied by the cultivation of critical appreciation in terms of Epicurean values to be found in sensate cultures.

The dominant mentality also has far reaching consequences in all the other compartments of culture. Concerning differences in their system of knowledge, for example, Epicureans favour deterministic interpretations of man and nature, and tend to interpret biological and social processes in terms of linear development. Stoics, on the other hand, emphasize the importance of divine intervention and tend to employ cyclical theories of biological and social development. In terms of their ethical theories, ideationalists differ from sensates in adopting an absolutist rather than relativist conception of morality. The nature of liberty also differs. The freedom of the individual rests upon the relationship between his wishes and the means available for satisfying them. Consequently there are two ways to increase freedom:

first, the individual may minimize his wishes until they are equal or are less than the available means of their gratification; or he may increase the available means of their satisfaction. The first is the Ideational way of being free; the second is the external Sensate way to be free.<sup>75</sup>

In analyzing the social relations characteristic of both types of cultures, Sorokin argues that Epicureans tend to be related by contractual ties more than Stoics, who favour bonds similar to those to be found within families - a distinction reflecting that drawn earlier by Tönnies between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft.<sup>76</sup>

In the sphere of social inequality, the dominance of ideational cultures is associated with political and economic dominance by priests and landed gentry; while the cultural hegemony of sensate culture is

associated with "the capitalist - commercial bourgeoisie, the secular bureaucracy, and the secular independent, free-thinking, 'scientific', artistic, political - intelligent ~~sia~~ and the professional classes".<sup>77</sup>

It is clear, however, that Sorokin does not regard the political and economic dominance of classes as the basis of their cultural hegemony, and of how their ideology has come to leave its mark upon history as the spirit of the age. It is, rather, the dominant beliefs and values, unfolding according to their own inner logic, which determine the fate of classes and elites.

Sorokin bases his study of this development principally upon the history of Graeco-Roman and Western civilization over the past twenty six centuries. What emerges is a cycle, played out twice during this period, of ideational dominance giving way to sensate cultures through an intermediate stage which Sorokin terms idealistic. This is a balanced combination of elements from both systems which is, however, short-lived relative to both sensate and ideational cultures. Sensate culture, in its turn, contains the seeds of its own destruction and gives way to a revival of ideationalism.

We are now, Sorokin portends, living amidst the death agonies of an over-ripe and decadent sensate culture. Sensate mentality has been brought to its logical conclusion, progressively throwing off more and more restraints until man has become incapable and unwilling to tame his impulses. The recklessness this induces invokes ever greater penalties, leading to the collapse of Epicureanism and retreat in to ideationalism. Here we are back once again with a vision of the calamities awaiting man's hubris worthy of Herodotus.

Sorokin regards Ranulf's analysis of the culture of ancient Greece as good, but regards the latter's explanatory hypothesis as questionable.<sup>78</sup> The undoubting and unquestioning acceptance of divine intervention in enforcing morality which Ranulf takes as evidence of moral indignation rooted in social deprivation, Sorokin identifies as part of a wider movement, as just one facet of an ideational culture harmonizing with others.<sup>79</sup> The decline of this mentality, heralded by the works of Euripides, Aristophanes and Thucydides, is also part of an integrated movement of the whole culture towards more sensate values and concerns, a movement propelled by its own inner logic of development.

Sorokin clearly sees those anti-hedonistic attitudes which Ranulf regards as part of the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment as the product of an ideational culture. Does he find these anti-hedonistic attitudes to occur together with a tendency to inflict punishment, as Ranulf predicts?

The most important relationship between the two types of mentality and the amount and severity of punishment is, Sorokin believes, determined not so much by which one, ideational or sensate, is dominant at any particular moment, but upon how firmly established they are. When either is deeply rooted, punishment tends to be moderate. It is in the periods of transition from one to another that penalties rise.<sup>81</sup> This much one would expect from Sorokin's principle of ethicojuridical heterogeneity discussed above.

Nevertheless, ideational criminal law does tend to be more severe than sensate law under normal conditions. There are several reasons for this:

first the requirements of Ideational culture, and its laws as to man's conduct, are generally more exacting and less loose and lenient than those of the Sensate law. The first aspires to a higher level of moral conduct, admits less opportunism, inhibits a greater number of the natural proclivities of sensate man than the opportunistic-utilitarian law... Second, Ideational culture and law come usually after the disintegration of over-ripe sensate culture and man, with appetites let loose, with hedonism, skepticism, sensualism rampant; with the human personality deeply demoralized and disorderly. Under such circumstances, in order to discipline such a man and such a society; in order to successfully to bridle the rampant sensual appetites and passions, and engraft new forms of conduct inhibiting these tendencies, a culture and law cannot be too soft.. For these reasons, the average level of the Ideational penal system is likely to be more severe than that of the Sensate. This we see in the great expansion of punishable actions, as well as in an increase of penalty of the medieval codes in comparison with barbaric; of the penal system of Rome in the centuries beginning with the third, with that of the preceding eras".<sup>82</sup>

There is, then, some agreement between Sorokin and Ranulf, although Sorokin proposes an alternative explanation of the rise and fall of such reforming zeal as part of the immanent unfolding of integrated cultures. Is this theory convincing? Not altogether. Sorokin's use of secondary sources such as articles in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, for example, raises the extent to which the consolidation of conceptions of the spirit of an age may have influenced the degree of integration Sorokin is able to attribute to it, as well as the depth of change from one era to another.

But even if these descriptions and interpretations are accepted as reliable, the particular order of development which Sorokin predicts has only been repeated once - hardly grounds for taking it as a pattern of history to be expected in the future. Sorokin puts forward some interesting speculations concerning why such cycles recur, but does not establish that they in fact do so. Despite Sorokin's disdain for the

evolutionary theories to which he adhered in his youth, he has not really disproved explanations of the resurgence in the Middle Ages of many earlier social and cultural phenomena in terms of a temporary regression to long term evolutionary trends brought about by a society being destroyed by technologically less advanced peoples. His pessimistic foreboding that sensate culture is collapsing are based upon certain reversals to sensate trends which he detected in the first two or three decades of this century. Yet this period is far too short in relation to the centuries over which such trends take place to enable any such prediction to be made with confidence, although such pessimism is perhaps understandable given Sorokin's personal experience of the Russian Revolution and the context of the period of world economic depression and the rise of fascism within which Social and Cultural Dynamics was produced.

Sorokin's own comments upon the history of other civilizations throw further doubt upon his theory of social change. The long history of ancient Egypt, for example, exhibits a stable tendency to value a certain mixture of sensate and ideational cultural elements, a mixture somewhat closer to the former mentality than the latter. <sup>83</sup> The unfolding of the ideational - idealistic-sensate sequence does not occur.

Due to Sorokin's stress on cultural integration, societies tend to be portrayed in Social and Cultural Dynamics as being either sensate or ideational without consideration of the distribution of these characteristics amongst their members. Yet Sorokin clearly feels that certain social positions are conducive to the adoption of particular varieties of sensate or ideational mentalities, regardless of which is most widespread or influential in a society at the time.

"Passive" sensates, for example, can be distinguished from the "active" variety by their disinclination to reconstruct the external world to provide for their sensate desires, preferring a "parasitic exploitation" of the world.<sup>84</sup> Such passive sensates are "concentrated in the class of the lazy posterity of rich fathers".<sup>85</sup> Within any society both varieties of Epicureanism occupy a more prominent position in the adaptation of the privileged classes than they do in the adaptation of the under privileged as the result of the former's greater power to modify their environment and satisfy their needs.<sup>86</sup> The poor and subjugated groups are forced to adopt a "pseudo-ideationalism" as a mode of adapting to their lack of power and privilege. This, however, is likely to be quickly thrust aside whenever the opportunity arises.<sup>87</sup>

Sorokin does not explore these ideas in any depth, but his ideas concerning the influence of inherited wealth upon the morality of the privileged classes accords well with Ranulf's observations and suggests the possibility that his work may have provided us with an important diagnostic tool in investigating the influence of different social experiences upon a wide range of attitudes and activities. A start in this direction has already been made by Galtung who finds that such characteristics as age, education and occupation are associated with commitment to ideational or sensate outlooks. Galtung suggests that sensate mentalities tend to be associated with greater involvement with the outside world than with the immediate locality. This is clearly in accord with Durkheim's observations on the influence of cosmopolitanism upon the character of the collective conscience. How far Galtung's findings about the distribution of sensate and ideational

orientations can be generalized beyond their specific Sicilian setting remains, however, to be established.

#### NOTES

1. Westermarck (1906)
2. See, for example, the remarks of Erikson: "Deviance is not a property inherent in certain forms of behaviour: it is a property conferred upon these forms by the audience which directly or indirectly witness them". (Erikson, 1962, p.308.) In the same vein, Becker points out that "deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an offender". (Becker, 1963, p.9) With respect to such comments it is interesting to note Fletcher's comment that Westermarck's "writing about the law and punishment has a quite up to date bearing on our modern discussions of crime and punishment... Indeed, his treatment of these matters seems to me far superior to many of the new essays on the subject now being produced". (Fletcher, 1971, p.115)
3. Westermarck (1906), vol 1, p.17
4. Research into the social sources of moral relativism has been as Barnsley notes, relatively sparse (Barnsley, 1972, p. 347). For the contemporary development of ideas in line with those of Westermarck on this matter, see the discussion by Berger and Pullberg (1965) on the social sources of dereification. Their remarks on the impact of disasters also sets in broader context the views of Ranulf on the effect upon moral codes of social disorganization following the wake of war and revolution. They note: "History affords a good many examples of how natural or man-caused catastrophes shook to its foundations a particular



world, including its hitherto well-functioning reifying apparatus, bringing forth doubt and scepticism about everything that had previously been taken for granted". (Berger and Pullberg, 1965, p. 209)

5. Westermarck (1906), vol. 1. p. 169
6. Ibid., pp. 116-117
7. Ibid., pp. 117-118
8. Ibid., p.123
9. Merton (1968), pp. 335ff
10. Ibid., p.417
11. Westermarck (1906), vol 2, p.742. Cf. Ibid., pp.387ff
12. Ibid., vol. 1, p.158
13. Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 400-401
14. Hobhouse (1915), pp. 339-400
15. Westermarck (1906), vol. 2, p.742
16. Ibid., P.745
17. Davies (1975). Davies' argument is discussed below in chapter 5
18. For a discussion of the integrative and restraining role of reason see Russell and Russell (1961), passim.
19. Westermarck (1906), vol. 2, p.201
20. For a demonstration of the futility and even counter-productiveness of **contact without genuine co-operation** as a means of reducing hostility, see the experiments conducted by Sherif reported in Sherif and Sherif (1969), pp. 255ff.
21. The general inability or unwillingness of the public to identify with offenders, either in terms of empathy seen as the possibility of imagining oneself in the same position as an offender or in terms of the ability to feel sympathy for them, is demonstrated and discussed by Dow (1967).
22. Chambliss and Seidman (1971), pp. 28ff
23. Sutherland and Cressey (1966), p.356
24. Ranulf (1964), pp. 199ff. Scheler (1961). Scheler's study of ressentiment first appeared in 1912 under the title Ressentiment in Aufbau der Moralen.
25. Due to the lack of any English word that does justice to all that Nietzsche and, following him, Scheler intended in their use of the term ressentiment, it is here left untranslated. Nietzsche himself employed the term in the absence of any satisfactory German equivalent. (See the introduction by Walter Kaufmann to Nietzsche, 1969, pp. 5ff).
26. For a comment upon Scheler's religious commitment and its influence on his response to Nietzsche, see the remarks by Walter Kaufmann in Nietzsche (1969), pp. 7-8. For a more detailed discussion of the influence of Scheler's ideological commitments upon his work, see Staude (1967).
27. Nietzsche (1969), p.47
28. Scheler (1961), p.48
29. Ibid., pp. 61-62
30. Ibid., p.77
31. Ibid., p. 60. Some subsequent commentators have neglected to mention this point, conveying the impression that Scheler's interpretation is more sociologically sophisticated than is the case. See, for example, the introduction by L.A. Coser to Scheler (1961), pp.20ff.

32. Scheler (1961), pp. 49-50
33. Ibid., p.50
34. Ibid., p.66
35. Ranulf (1964), p. 199
36. Ranulf (1933-1934), vol. 2, p.289
37. Durkheim (1964), p.425
38. Ibid., p.428
39. Ibid., p.69
40. Ibid., p. 70
41. Ibid., p.95
42. Ibid., p.92
43. Ibid., p.94
44. Ibid., p.86
45. Ibid., p.87
46. Ibid., p.74
47. Ibid., p.152
48. Ibid., p.290. See also the remarks on pp. 163-164 on the progressive part played by Christianity in the dawn of free thought.
49. Ibid., p. 298
50. Ibid., pp. 298-299. It is true that there is a contrary situation in smaller towns where strangers attract attention to themselves. This is not so, however, in large cities where strangers are the rule rather than the exception.
51. Ibid., pp. 156-164
52. Durkheim (1957), pp 110ff
53. In Suicide Durkheim adds marriage to this list of factors stimulating homicide (Durkheim, 1970, pp.354-355).
54. Durkheim (1973), p.285
55. Gusfield (1963), p.113
56. Ibid., p.114
57. See, for example, Durkheim (1972), pp. 23-24
58. Ranulf (1933-1934), vol. 2, pp. 289-291.
59. Ibid., pp. 298ff
60. Bertrand Russell, seen by Ranulf as one of the principal proponents of such an attack upon envy and moral indignation, was not, however, completely oblivious to the possibility that envy could have some beneficial consequences. See, for example, his remarks on envy and democracy in Russell (1961), p.54
61. Ranulf (1933-1934), vol. 2, pp. 300-301.
62. Durkheim (1970), p. 287
63. Durkheim (1964), pp. 99-100. It is also clear from Durkheim's work, however, that the nature and severity of such reaction is not a matter of conscious choice, but is dependent upon such social factors as geographical mobility and urban anonymity.
64. Freud also regarded renunciation of instinctual impulses to be the price which, if left unpaid, would result in the dissolution of culture and civilization. This constitutes a major theme of Civilization and its Discontents (Freud, 1931). By the time he came to write this work Freud was of the opinion that most men and women, given emotional maturity, could achieve sufficient sexual satisfaction within the boundaries

set by society. He sees as a more costly consequence of civilization the increasingly guilt-ridden nature of existence as repressed aggressive impulses denied expression are turned inward against the self.

65. Sorokin (1937), vol. 2, pp. 490-491, and 617-618, n.79
66. Ibid., p. 613
67. Ibid., p.593
68. Ibid., p.595
69. Ibid., pp. 525-526, n.3 and p.595
70. Ibid., p. 598, n.56
71. Ibid., pp. 523ff.
72. Ibid., p. 585
73. Ibid., pp. 612-613
74. I am here focusing upon the contrast between "ascetic" ideational and "active" sensate mentalities as the two extreme types, direct opposites between which all the other types of mentality distinguished by Sorokin may be located. Ibid., vol. 1, p.79
75. Ibid., vol. 3, p.163
76. Similar distinctions can be traced back to the very origins of systematic social thought, as Sorokin himself points out in his Foreward to Tönnies Community and Association (1955), p.6
77. Sorokin (1937), vol. 3. p.249
78. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 490, n . 7
79. Ibid., p. 490
80. Ibid., p. 493
81. Ibid., p. 620
82. Ibid., p. 621. Here Sorokin is clearly characterizing "active" ideational mentality, a somewhat diluted form of pure "ascetic" ideationalism due to its interest in reforming the ways of the world rather than withdrawing from it. Such involvement is, Sorokin says, inevitable as "the tragic and immanent destiny of the Ascetic Ideational culture system "as the rise of a following leads to the necessity for organization. (Ibid., vol. 1, p. 135) Ranulf clearly regards some forms of ascetic ideationalism as free from moral indignation, as in his treatment of Buddhism.
83. Sorokin (1937), vol. 1, pp. 144ff
84. Ibid., p.74
85. Ibid., p.104
86. Ibid., pp. 108-109
87. Ibid., p.109
88. Galtung (1970)

## CHAPTER 3

### THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF MORAL INTOLERANCE

#### I. The authoritarian personality

The work of the sociologists reviewed in the last chapter has provided some initial foundation for the belief expressed in the introduction to the present study that, if we draw together the various contributions made to our understanding of different facets of moral indignation, it is revealed that we are in possession of a body of knowledge concerning this phenomenon that is more advanced than might at first sight seem apparent. To strengthen this foundation we turn now to consider what can be gathered concerning the social psychology of moral intolerance from investigations within the field of social psychology.

As we indicated in the discussion of Ranulf's theory, contemporary social events in the form of the rise of National Socialism overshadow his work and shape his picture of those prone to moral indignation, as well as guiding his thoughts concerning the psychological and social roots of this phenomenon. The attitude syndrome which encompasses the various elements of moral indignation, the additional beliefs and values which tend to surround them, and the lower middle class conditions of life which he holds responsible for this resentment-laden world view, all reflect the state of contemporary knowledge and opinion concerning the social psychology of fascism. Not, however, that agreement was complete. Even where accord on the nature of the attitudes underpinning fascism and the extent of their covariation was

reached, differences remained as to how these were to be accounted for.

The way in which certain aspects of conduct and morality could be condemned by interpreting them as expressions of the malevolent envy of the innately inferior classes of humanity was evident in the work of Scheler. Yet interpretations of similar phenomena which had more radical implications were open to those who did not care to rest content with simply shifting responsibility for philistinism and cruelty onto the irremediable weakness of hoi polloi.

Reich, for example, shares with Ranulf an interpretation of the conditions of life of the lower middle classes in Germany as being at the heart of the authoritarian, repressive and brutal programme adopted by the Nazi movement.<sup>1</sup> Reich believes, however, that the fear of freedom and the authoritarianism of this class only expresses at their most intense attitudes common amongst the masses. It is upon such widespread sentiments that the established order relies for its stability, for they leave the masses devoid of self-confidence and critical faculties.

Reich sees the inability to achieve full sexual fulfillment as at the root of such authoritarianism, an outlook that embraces sadism, submissiveness to authority and a desire to impose submissiveness and self-denial upon others. This inability is produced by repression in the first four to five years of life, reinforced by the continued denial of the full development of sexuality amongst adolescents through the combined efforts of family, school and religion. The denial of sexuality has wider ramifications than the denial of other basic needs:

The suppression of one's primitive needs compasses a different result than the suppression of one's sexual needs. The former incites to rebellion, whereas the latter - inasmuch as it causes sexual needs to be repressed, withdraws them from consciousness and anchors itself as a moral defence - prevents rebellion against both forms of repression. <sup>2</sup>

The result, as Reich notes elsewhere, is that:

The sexual suppression dominating the masses, which finds its expression in superstition, mysticism of all kinds, inhibition of thinking, fear of authority, blind obedience, readiness to make sacrifices for the oppressors, etc., is the most powerful weapon of tyranny. The sexual awakening of the masses, which also gives rise to their awareness of their economic plight, spells the end of tyranny. <sup>3</sup>

How is such awakening to be achieved? Amongst Reich's proposals is work to free adolescents from the limitations placed upon their sexual fulfillment by the restrictions imposed upon them by adults and by their own inhibitions and ignorance. Reich contended that his own work in this area amongst working class youth led to more effective work on the part of those already radicalized and the radicalization of many who were formerly apolitical. <sup>4</sup> As we shall see when we come to consider contemporary campaigns against sexual permissiveness, contemporary conservative opponents to the views expressed by Reich share his opinion that the area of adolescent sexual knowledge and conduct is a crucial arena in which wider issues will be settled.

Reich was not alone amongst German social scientists of the period in attributing importance to the family in the formation of fascist attitudes. The principal collective enterprise of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research during the 1930's was a study

of the political significance of the family, published as Studien uber Autoritat und Familie.<sup>5</sup> This work played the part of a preparatory study for The Authoritarian Personality,<sup>6</sup> the classic analysis of the psychology of authoritarianism. The notion of the authoritarian personality developed in this book bears striking resemblance to the temperament of those prone to moral indignation that is to be found depicted in Ranulf's work. Both were born from the experience of the rise of fascism and shared, together with Reich, the conviction that such temperaments were rooted in frustration and inhibition affecting large sections of the population.

With the historical background in mind it is not surprising to find the authors beginning their investigation by focusing upon anti-Semitism. The ideology of anti-Semitism they define as a set of "stereotyped negative opinions describing the Jews as threatening, immoral, and categorically different from non-Jews and of hostile attitudes urging various forms of restriction, exclusion, and suppression as a means of solving 'the Jewish problem' ".<sup>7</sup> Such attitudes and opinions are resonant with those encountered amongst the morally indignant. And, indeed, the authors proceed to confirm the belief that hostility towards one minority is very likely to occur together with hostility towards others. Anti-Semitism was found to be associated with ethnocentrism, a term first introduced by Sumner to signify the elevation of one's own group and its ways above all others, using it as a standard of comparison against which all others

are measured and found wanting. "Each group thinks its own folkways are the only right ones, and if it observes that other groups have other folkways, these excite its scorn".<sup>8</sup> Both Sumner's anthropological evidence and everyday experience attest to the generality of outgroup rejection in social life, but the authors of The Authoritarian Personality refined the concept by constructing an attitude scale which tapped differences in the strength of the need for outgroups to blame and denigrate. Faced with any social situation the ethnocentric individual exhibits a tendency to divide those involved into two parties, identifying uncritically with one side and rejecting the other out of hand. All the blame for group conflict is laid upon outgroups without attempting to account for why such groups are as they are, other than by appeals to hereditary factors. Also, the prejudiced individual is prepared to reject groups with which he has never previously been in contact, approaching new and strange persons and cultures not in a spirit of interest and receptivity, but in one of doubt and rejection.<sup>9</sup> Of particular interest from the point of view of the study of moral indignation is the manner in which hostility towards what the authors refer to as "moral minorities", such as criminals, the insane and "undesirable elements", tends to manifest itself alongside such other expressions of ethnocentricity as racialism and nationalism.<sup>10</sup>

In seeking to draw closer to the psychological well-springs of ethnocentric ideologies, the authors went on to develop what they termed the "potentiality for fascism scale". This scale is of particular interest because of the manner in which it was used for both correlational



and interpretive purposes by the authors. Apart from holding that the attitudes it encompassed tend to be found together, the authors interpret the psychological meaning of individual attitudes according to the configuration in which they occur. Thus questions revealing an adherence to conventional middle class values tended to show a positive relationship with ethnic prejudice, but one which was not very strong. Although unconventional people tended to be free of prejudice, some conventional people were prejudiced whilst others were not. What appears to distinguish prejudiced from unprejudiced respondents who also adhere to conventional moral standards is the tendency of the prejudiced to derive such moral judgements from a rigid adherence to the standards of the collective powers with which they are at present identified, rather than by the critical application of internalized values. The way in which such authorities are followed blindly and are regarded as beyond reproach emerges from other sections of the attitude scale than those dealing with conventionalism, as does evidence concerning reactions to the unconventional:

For example, extreme conventionalism going with a strong inclination to punish those who violate conventional values is a different thing from conventional values associated with a philosophy of live and let live. <sup>11</sup>

Clearly this is similar to the manner in which Ranulf uses the various elements of moral indignation, such as punitiveness and coercive asceticism, as well as evidence of envy and a relative indifference to human suffering as a method of uncovering the particular meaning which

these have for the individuals concerned, in addition to claiming that such phenomena tend to be displayed by the same individuals.

In addition to questions subsumed under the rubric of conventionalism, covering such areas as adherence to virtues associated with the Protestant work ethic, are to be found others revealing authoritarian submission, a submissive, uncritical attitude towards the moral authorities of the group. Such an attitude "would be evoked in relation to a variety of authority figures - Parents, older people, leaders, supernatural power, and so forth".<sup>12</sup>

Coupled with authoritarian submission we tend to find authoritarian aggression, a "tendency to be on the lookout for, and to condemn, reject, and punish people who violate conventional values".<sup>13</sup> This is clearly close to the essence of the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment. And, indeed, the proposed explanation is similar:

The individual who has been forced to give up basic pleasures and to live under a system of rigid restraints, and who therefore feels put upon, is likely not only to seek an object upon which he can "take it out" but also to be particularly annoyed at the idea that another person is "getting away with something".<sup>14</sup>

Authoritarianism is a sado-masochistic phenomenon, with authoritarian aggression representing the sadistic element, and authoritarian submission the masochistic. Concerning those individuals characterised by authoritarian aggression the authors conclude:

As the emotional life which this person regards as proper and a part of himself is likely to be very limited, so the impulses, especially sexual and aggressive ones, which remain unconscious and ego-alien are likely to be strong and turbulent. Since in this circumstance a wide variety of stimuli can tempt the individual and so arouse his anxiety (fear of punishment), the list of traits, behaviour patterns, individuals, and groups that he must condemn grows very long indeed.<sup>15</sup>

Such a mechanism feeds ethnocentric aggression which, in this respect, is:

but part of a more general tendency to punish violators of conventional values: homosexuals, sex offenders, people with bad manners, etc. Once the individual has convinced himself that there are people who ought to be punished, he is provided with a channel through which his deepest aggressive impulses may be expressed, even while he thinks of himself as thoroughly moral. 16

Adorno and his associates interpret authoritarian aggression as an instance of displacement whereby aggression aroused by in-group authorities is displaced on to out-groups. The authors, consonant with their Freudian suppositions, evidently have in mind the consequences in adult life of childhood experiences, but there is clearly a possibility that displacement could result from the contemporary experiences of adults. The authors of The Authoritarian Personality are, however, at pains to distinguish displacement from "scapegoating" where frustration, usually of an economic variety, finds an outlet upon those not responsible as a result of intellectual confusion concerning its causes. Authoritarian aggression arises where there is a need to vent aggression aroused at the same time as a psychological inhibition against retaliation is created.

Projection also plays a part in outbreaks of moral indignation, for not only must the authoritarian condemn the moral laxness that he sees in others, but he is actually driven to see immoral attributes in them whether this has a basis in fact or not. This is a further device for countering his own inhibited tendencies; he says to himself, as it were:

'I am not bad and deserving of punishment, he is.' In other words the individual's own unacceptable impulses are projected onto other individuals and groups who are then rejected. 17

Clearly here there is much of close concern to the sociology of morality and the study of the disinterested tendency to punish:

"Conventionalism, authoritarian submission, and authoritarian aggression all have to do with the moral aspect of life - with standards of conduct, with the authorities, with offenders against them who deserve to be punished". 18

The other elements of authoritarianism which Adorno and his co-workers delineate are: anti-intracception; superstition and stereotypy; power and "toughness"; destructiveness and cynicism; projectivity; and sex.

Anti-intracception bears close resemblance to the anti-intellectualism which Ranulf found to be associated with moral indignation in places as diverse as fifth century Athens and Puritan England. Ranulf does not delve too deeply into the meaning of this association, but the authors of The Authoritarian Personality suggest that it plays the following role:

The extremely anti-intracceptive individual is afraid of thinking about human phenomena because he might, as it were, think the wrong thoughts; he is afraid of genuine feeling because his emotions might get out of control. Out of touch with large areas of his own inner life, he is afraid of what might be revealed if he, or others, should look closely at himself. He is therefore against 'prying', against concern with what people think and feel, against unnecessary 'talk'; instead he would keep busy, devote himself to practical pursuits, and instead of examining an inner conflict, turn his thoughts to something cheerful. An important feature of the Nazi program, it will be recalled, was the defamation of everything that tended to make the individual aware of himself and his problems; not only was "Jewish" psychoanalysis quickly eliminated but every kind of psychology except aptitude testing came under attack. 19

Stereotypy is defined in the contribution by Sanford as "the tendency to mechanically subsume things under rigid categories". 20

Ethnic groups, for example, are regarded as homogenous entities, over-generalizing unfavourable traits with little mention made of exceptions. Stereotypy is marked by an inability to experience members of the outgroup as individuals. Each is seen and reacted to as a sort of sample specimen of the stereotyped, reified image of the group. Such incapacity for individuated experience renders the reduction of prejudice through greater contact an uncertain enterprise. All members of the outgroup are regarded, in unfavourable terms, as alike. And yet examination of the specific characteristics comprising the imagery "reveals a basic contradiction in that no single individual or group as a whole could have all these characteristics".<sup>21</sup>

On studying the cluster of attitudes which constitute anti-Semitism it was found, for example, that expressions of belief that most Jews are extremely exclusive and aloof tended to be made by the same respondents who also held that most Jews are too intrusive and prying.<sup>22</sup> Other inconsistencies can also be found. "What is called power-seeking and clannishness in the outgroup is transformed into moral righteousness, self-defense, and loyalty in the ingroup".<sup>23</sup> The association of such obliviousness to self-contradiction and hypocrisy with other traits common to authoritarianism and the outlook of the morally indignant had already been hinted at by Ranulf in his study of Puritan ideology.

Furthermore, Ranulf's discussion of the tendency of Protestantism to regard sinners as fundamentally different from the morally upright members of the community as being a manifestation of their greater propensity to moral indignation, in contrast with the Catholic :

interpretation that all are weak and liable to err. appears to indicate that moral indignation is associated with greater stereotypy in reacting to moral outgroups.

As Jay notes of Fromm's account of sado-masochism in Autoritat und Familie, masochism "manifested itself in the passive acceptance of 'fate', the force of 'facts', 'duty', 'Gods will', and so on".<sup>24</sup> This expression of masochism is a theme taken up again in the The Authoritarian Personality in the discussion of superstition, a tendency to shift responsibility from within the individual onto outside forces of a supernatural order.

Power and "toughness" refers to a disposition to view all relations among people in terms of strong-weak, dominant-submissive, leader-follower dimensions, combined with a desire to submit to authority and to exercise power over others. This plays a part in shaping reactions to ethnic and "moral" minorities as an individual who thinks of most human relations in such terms is likely to apply these categories to his thinking about the nature of ingroups and outgroups to the detriment of the latter, fearing, for example, that the outgroup is inevitably itself attempting to gain the upper hand.

Destructiveness and cynicism are displayed in a generalized hostility to others and a vilification of human nature. The authoritarian individual, because he has had to accept many externally imposed restrictions upon the satisfaction of his needs, harbours strong aggressive impulses.

As the authors note:

One outlet for this aggression is through displacement onto out-groups leading to moral indignation and authoritarian aggression. Undoubtedly this is a very servicable device for the individual; yet, the strong underlying aggression seems at the same time to express itself in some other way - in a non-moralized way<sup>25</sup>

Such hostility gives rise to rationalizations for aggression such as expressions of contempt for mankind and a justifactory belief that aggression is common to everyone.

Projectivity encompasses the disposition to believe that wild and dangerous things go on in the world, a disposition which the authors interpret as the projection outwards of unconscious emotional impulses. A preoccupation with evil forces in the world, as shown by a readiness to think about and to believe in the existence of such phenomena as wild erotic excesses, plots and conspiracies, and danger from natural catastrophes, reflects strong unconscious urges to both sexuality and destructiveness.

Finally, an exaggerated concern with sexual deviance and excesses, stimulated by repressed sexual desires in danger of getting out of hand, completes the protrait of the authoritarian which emerges from the potentiality for fascism questionnaire. Further depth is given to this portrait by data obtained from clinical interviews and projective material. Additional evidence is produced which reveals authoritarians to be extrapunitive, to display a tendency to blame other people for any difficulties which arise. Non-authoritarians, on the other hand, tend to be either impunitive, refraining from blaming altogether, or to be intrapunitive, exposing themselves to exaggerated self-blame.<sup>26</sup>

Suspicion and distrust, found by Ranulf to be associated with punitiveness, can also be seen in the authoritarian's view of the world as a dangerous and hostile jungle.<sup>27</sup> Poverty is met with indifference or taken as a further opportunity to exercise the desire to humiliate and attack those outgroups which display evidence of weakness.

Love, admiration, and readiness for submission are automatically aroused by power of persons or institutions, while contempt is equally aroused by powerless persons or institutions. The very sight of a powerless person may lead to the urge to attack, dominate, or humiliate him<sup>28</sup>

What are the forces which bring together and underpin this particular configuration of attitudes? Like Reich, the authors see the root of the problem as resting in repressive family relationships. Prejudiced individuals come from homes where discipline was harsh and arbitrary, exercised within a relationship of clearly defined dominance and submission.<sup>29</sup> The goals of their parents' child-rearing practices reflected a preoccupation with social hierarchy and success. Such parents, concerned with protecting and advancing their own status and that of their offspring, are likely to be intolerant of any sign of impulses detrimental to such aims. Strict parental discipline provokes aggression which is put down with a firm hand. This aggression, denied an outlet in retaliation, finds eventual release through displacement onto others through moral indignation and other outlets.

While substantial agreement exists between Ranulf and Adorno et al. concerning the covariation of the attitudes considered above, the explanation of authoritarianism which the latter propose clearly echoes Scheler's discussion of ressentiment.



Authoritarians display a tendency to make a virtue out of the necessity of their self-negating submissiveness through idealization of those in authority. Nevertheless, the underlying repressed resentment that fuels such idealization occasionally slips out in interviews and finds expression in projective tests. Generally, however, idealization prevails and failures and weaknesses are projected outwards onto minorities. While the mechanism at work is similar, however, both evidence and argument encountered in The Authoritarian Personality constitute a great advance upon Scheler's speculations.

The evidence for the genesis of authoritarianism in childhood was drawn from adult recollections, the accuracy of which may obviously be open to question. However, in a subsequent study one of the original contributors to The Authoritarian Personality, Frenkel-Brunswick, reported confirmation of most of the original findings from a direct study of prejudice in childhood and adolescence. She found that, at least after the age of ten, the personalities of some children tended to fall into patterns similar to those of adult authoritarians. The homes of such children were strict, rigid and punitive.<sup>30</sup>

We have seen above that both the constituent elements of authoritarianism and the interpretation of the psychological mechanisms underpinning and linking these elements are strikingly similar, and offer further corroboration to Ranulf's ideas concerning the values and outlook of the morally indignant. Such similarity is not at all surprising given the social and political context in which both theories were formulated.

Adorno and his colleagues extended notions developed in an attempt to understand the psychological roots nourishing the rise of European fascism to the study of prejudice in post-war America. Ranulf drew similar conclusions from the same circumstances and proceeded to use these ideas to account for the strength of moral indignation amongst groups far more widely separated in time and space. How far have subsequent psychological and sociological developments confirmed or modified the interpretation of moral indignation to be found in these accounts? Studies of every facet of authoritarianism are legion and I shall confine my attention to those which are particularly helpful in clarifying the sources of moral indignation and its continuing influence in contemporary society. The latter point is particularly necessary in view of Harold Lasswell's contention, made in 1964, that moral indignation has been swept away in contemporary complex societies because of their cultivation of disciplined calculation as a result of their dependence on scientific knowledge.

With the advent of contextuality and expediency - the "big picture" and the "working arrangement" - moral indignation slowly vanishes as a source of support for public order. In fact its erratic course under rapidly changing reality conditions can undermine public and civic order. Society learns to play it cool.<sup>31</sup>

First, however, I shall consider how the interpretation of the origins of authoritarianism has grown somewhat closer to Ranulf's own ideas on the foundation of these attitudes and then proceed to examine how the light shed on the nature of moral indignation in the study of

authoritarianism can be supplemented by other studies of the psychology of moral behaviour.

Locating the genesis of authoritarian attitudes such as sado-masochism and extrapunitiveness in childhood clearly differs from Ranulf's contention that relative deprivation in adulthood is the source of such attitudes. Some reconciliation of the two approaches is, however, possible if the family is viewed as mediating the influence of such deprivation which the parents experience in the wider society. In the study by Frenkel-Brunswick referred to above, for example, it was found that the punitiveness of the parents of authoritarian children was associated with feelings of relative deprivation arising from the gap between their actual socio-economic status and that to which they aspire.

Further links between authoritarian attitudes and the social structure have been pointed to by subsequent research. Contrary, however, to the belief that the lower middle class are the bearers of these attitudes, a belief which informed many interpretations of the psychology of fascism in the 1930's, there is evidence that authoritarianism continues to increase as one moves further down the social scale into the working class.<sup>32</sup>

Several explanations have been advanced for the negative correlation of authoritarian attitudes with social class. Partly, consistently with the stress laid on the importance of childhood in The Authoritarian Personality, this may be accounted for by class

differences in child-rearing practices. Physical punishment, for example, which tends to foster authoritarian and ethnocentric attitudes, is resorted to more frequently by working class parents as a means of social control.<sup>33</sup> This is not at all surprising given that other resources of control are less available to the underprivileged, quite apart from the tensions stimulated by deprivation and the possibilities of redirected aggression that this opens up. Other techniques of social control, such as love deprivation require a great deal of free time to devote to individual attention to children if they are to be successful

Relationships nurturing authoritarianism are not, however, confined to the family. Authoritarianism displays a consistent decline as the number of years of education an individual has had increases.<sup>34</sup> This is often interpreted as due to the beneficial effects of increasing sophistication dispelling simplistic notions. There is probably an element of truth in this claim, particularly as it applies to exposure to alternative perspectives. One point often overlooked, however, is that education itself establishes a form of pseudo-ethnicity, a basis for status claims and distinctions irrespective of any practical or intellectual advantages which the process of education is purported to achieve.<sup>35</sup> Formal education constitutes a resource in the struggle for psychological and social security and advantage unavailable to those without it. The latter, with fewer strategies open to them, are therefore to be found more often resorting to the narrower range of attributes available to them as a basis for invidious comparison, such as membership of a

category of humanity deemed racially superior.

## II. Alienation and moral conformity

Education is also seen by Kohn as one of the most powerful forces shaping the distribution of conformist attitudes and associated beliefs. He draws this conclusion from studies undertaken in Italy and the United States, reported in Class and Conformity, a work based upon the assumption that hierarchical position is the most important determinant of man's fate and beliefs. The further one moves down the social hierarchy, the greater is the likelihood of encountering conformity, a view of life which stresses "following the dictates of authority, focusing on external consequences to the exclusion of internal processes, being intolerant of nonconformity and dissent, being distrustful of others, having moral standards that strongly emphasize obedience to the letter of the law."<sup>36</sup> Furthermore,

a conformist orientation includes an unwillingness to permit others to step out of narrowly defined limits of what is proper and acceptable. Thus, a conformist orientation implies not only intolerance of deviant political belief, but also intolerance of any beliefs thought to be threatening to the social order - religious beliefs, ethnic and racial identifications, even beliefs about proper dress and deportment.<sup>37</sup>

Which are the particular facets of social inequality that account for these differences? Partly, as noted above, it is attributable to differences in length of education, an association which Kohn attributes to education providing the intellectual flexibility and breadth of perspective necessary to break away from conformity into a self-directed way of life.<sup>38</sup>

Those more favourably situated in the hierarchical order of society are not only blessed with a better education, however. Their occupations also afford them other privileges, including one, the amount of self-direction which a job allows and requires, which Kohn found to be the most important of several aspects of occupational differences accounting for the extent of conformist values. The greater the degree of occupational self-direction, the smaller the hold of conformist attitudes. Middle class occupations tend to be more self-directed for a number of reasons, such as the absence of close supervision, the nature of dealing with people or data rather than things, and the necessity of having to deal with a variety of tasks and decisions. Kohn's findings concerning the influence of bureaucratic employment upon values is of particular interest as it has been held that bureaucracies reward and foster conformist personalities in contrast with the self-reliance of the capitalist entrepreneurial spirit. Against this claim Kohn argues:

These criticisms of bureaucracy may misinterpret the conditions of life faced by the inhabitants both of the entrepreneurial and of the bureaucratic worlds. We often fail to recognize just how little the small - or medium - sized entrepreneur controls the conditions of his own existence and just how much he is subject to the authority of customers, sources of credit and capital, insurance companies, and officialdom. And we often fail to recognize that monolithic- seeming bureaucracies allow free play for -in fact, may require - initiative of new sorts: in the creation of ideas, in the building of empires, and in the competition for advancement. <sup>39</sup>

And his findings support this contention, indicating that authoritarian attitudes and conformist values diminish according to the size and complexity of the organizations in which individuals

are employed. From this it would appear that Ranulf's division between the upper and lower middle class can encompass contemporary conditions arising out of the decline of the traditional petty bourgeoisie of self-employed traders and artisans and the growth of a new middle class of salaried employees. But differences in conformism within the new middle class appear to be only moderately influenced by income differences, the principal criterion in Ranulf's treatment, being determined to a far greater extent by the degree of occupational self-direction.<sup>40</sup>

Concerning historical trends in conformism, Kohn sees industrialization, both historically and in the developing nations, as leading to a decline in the strength of such values as a result of the growth of education and the increase, on balance, of jobs requiring judgement, thought and initiative. His optimism concerning the role of automation in consolidating and extending this trend is, however, probably misplaced. Amongst lower white collar workers, for example, the nature of many jobs in offices following automation becomes less, not more, challenging, with tasks becoming more simplified and repetitious.<sup>41</sup>

Working class parents seek to imbue their children with the values of conformity which spring from their educational and occupational experience, reinforcing the class associations of such values. Conformist values and the belief that one is at the mercy of forces and people beyond one's control or even understanding are the product of conditions of life which allow little freedom of thought or action and provide little reason to feel in control of fate. The working class tend to see the world in terms which

make conformity seem necessary and appropriate.

Self-direction is a central value for men of higher class position, who see themselves as competent members of an essentially benign society. Conformity is a central value for men of lower class position, who see themselves as less competent members of an essentially indifferent or threatening society. Self-direction, in short, is consonant with an orientational system premised on the possibilities of accomplishing what one sets out to do; conformity, with an orientational system premised on the dangers of stepping out of line.<sup>42</sup>

Is the conformist perspective, while a handicap to those seeking access to the middle class, an accurate reflection of the world in which the working class finds itself and an adequate means of accommodating to it? Kohn is somewhat ambivalent on this point. While the general tenor of his argument is that such a perspective is understandable given the circumstances in which they find themselves, he does hint that he considers it a more inaccurate reflection of the world than the beliefs of the middle class. Such an interpretation of authoritarian beliefs certainly appears in The Authoritarian Personality, where the inaccuracy ascribed to the beliefs entertained by authoritarians is used as evidence that they must be the result of projected fantasies distorting perception of the world.

Nettler has pointed out, however, how such self-congratulatory equations of goodness with accurate perception and mental maturity made by middle class observers tend to be class biased and ethnocentric, failing to comprehend the rougher nature of the world which many others find themselves confronting with more limited resources. Nettler also cites evidence that such observers are also quite ready to regard their own views on matters concerning which there is no clear evidence available as self-evidently sane and correct in comparison with the bias they attribute to their subjects. The crudity of racist ideologies is manifest, but the belief that the world is a jungle may well reflect the greater likelihood of those



in the lower class being exposed to a hostile environment.<sup>43</sup>

Hebb and Thompson's theory of human society in relation to emotion is relevant here, They emphasize that man is, contrary to surface impressions, the most emotionally vulnerable animal. Civilization shelters men from this threat, providing an environment which reduces provocation to fear, anger, disgust and jealousy and other emotions.<sup>44</sup> Extending their analysis, it could be argued that middle class conditions and institutions shield members from many of the more disturbing features of society, quelling their aggressive passions at the price of ignorance. Indeed, on the theory of Hebb and Thompson it is precisely those who are trained and required to develop complex modes of thought who are most likely to be vulnerable to emotional upset and need to be more securely insulated from reality. Part of the association of education with less authoritarian beliefs may well arise from a longer exposure to over-optimistic ideologies about the nature of man and society. This takes place under favourable conditions of isolation from contact with the imperfections of the adult world, longer exposure producing greater commitment to such views. Such commitment and the sheltered conditions of their lives leave many in the middle class with beliefs about the nature of society belied in the experiences of the less fortunate.<sup>45</sup>

Kohn is not alone in producing results which support the notion that the association of class with conformity and authoritarian attitudes is in large part the result of the degree of self-direction involved in different occupations. Lipsitz, for example, found assembly line workers to be more punitive and fatalistic

in their approach to life than workers of comparable income and education in the same plant who enjoyed greater control over their work.<sup>46</sup> Such a finding fits well with Kohn's interpretation of the importance of the degree of freedom entailed by certain tasks and relationships. Alienation underpins conformism.

There are, however, clearly other factors at work in accounting for differences in the effects of occupations upon values and beliefs. Differences between working class and middle class attitudes towards toughness and violence, for example, have implications for the ideas and practices adopted for dealing with disobedience and misconduct. As Collins remarks in discussing occupational class and cultures: "The more physical exertion and danger involved in the work (whether manual labor or fighting), the more one values toughness, courage, and action... situations of physical activity lead to a high value on toughness and hence a considerable use of coercion in backing up orders".<sup>47</sup>

### III. The breastplate of righteousness

Studies of the authoritarian personality such as those conducted by Reich and Adorno interpret moral indignation as in part the product of repressed impulses. The morally indignant long to taste the forbidden fruit, but dare not. Laud Humphreys has produced a fascinating study which goes further, indicating that many of those who stand out from their neighbours as pillars of virtue are led to such a position not so much by repressed desire as by surreptitious practice of vice.

Humphreys interviewed a number of men concerning their social and political outlooks. Although they were unaware of the fact, he had also established that they were involved in otherwise undiscovered homosexual encounters in public conveniences. Amongst this group of secret deviants there were a number who had donned what Humphreys refers to as the "breastplate of righteousness":

In donning the breastplate of righteousness, the covert deviant assumes a protective shield of superpropriety. His armor has a particularly shiny quality, a refulgence, which tends to blind the audience to certain of his practices. To others in his everyday world, he is not only normal but righteous - an exemplar of good behaviour and right thinking... The secret offender may well believe he is more righteous than the next man - hence his shock and outrage, his disbelieving indignation, when he is discovered and discredited.<sup>48</sup>

The breastplate of righteousness is evident in social and political attitudes. These Humphreys found to be conservative on issues such as economic reform and involvement in the Vietnam war, as well as opposition to civil rights and - surprisingly enough given the fate awaiting these deviants if discovered - support for the forces of law and order. One of the covert deviants, a minister,

felt that the police should not give as much regard as they do to the rights of citizens. Vice squad activity, he insisted, should be increased: "This moral corruption must be stopped". One young closet queen had this to say about vice squad activity: "They should be more strict. I can think of a lot of places they ought to raid".

So consistent were the replies...in encouraging more vice squad activity that a portrait emerges of these men as moral crusaders. This at least suggests the ironic possibility of a type of moral entrepreneur who contributes to his own stigmatization. Homosexual folklore insists that "there is a witch behind every witch hunt"... It is not necessary to adopt a psychoanalytic view point in order to discern the self-hatred behind such a punishment process.<sup>49</sup>

The secret offender's breastplate of righteousness is not limited to right-wing social and political attitudes, Humphreys noted that they were also remarkably neat in their personal attire and grooming. Their cars were kept spotless and their homes stood out from those surrounding them as better-kept with well-trimmed gardens. Their religious orientations tended towards the more authoritarian religious bodies and resentment of the liberalization of the churches. Two of those interviewed volunteered the information that they were members of the John Birch Society. From his interviews, Humphreys remarks that "the researcher gains the impression that 'the Bible on the table, and the flag upon the wall' may be signs of secret deviance more than of 'right thinking' ".<sup>50</sup>

It is interesting to note the characteristics which distinguish those who put on the breastplate of righteousness from those who do not amongst Humphreys' sample of homosexuals. The sex life of the former is more limited. Sexual relations between husband and wife are rare and unfulfilling, often the result of religious teaching, such as Roman Catholic views on contraception. Sex becomes confined almost exclusively to frightened, furtive and isolated acts of impersonal sex with other men.<sup>51</sup> In this they differ from those who openly participate in the gay community and who seek other more personal and lasting sexual relations with men.

Another distinguishing characteristic is occupation, those involved in the brief homosexual encounters studied by Humphreys who were less likely to put on the breastplate of righteousness tended to be employed in more independent occupations, that is, occupations which allow them freedom of movement and greater security of employment.

Dependent occupations, those without such freedom and security, tend to be associated with lower educational levels and annual family income. All these factors combine to leave those in dependent occupations with fewer resources with which to conceal their deviance and defend challenges to their reputation, and so they cling all the more tenaciously to the reassurance and safety offered by the breastplate. Marriage, too, leaving men with more to lose as the result of their clandestine activity being exposed, also leads to such a careful concern with moral propriety.

Humphreys recollections from his involvement with undercover deviants from ten years experience in the pastoral ministry are noteworthy ("tearooms" is the expression used to refer to public conveniences used for homosexuality by those involved):

I recall years of puzzlement over the striking respectability of the visible lives of so many of those who came to my pastoral attention: the countless alcoholics with exceptionally neat apartments and tidy houses; the highly respected businessmen arrested in tearooms; the hyperorthodox clergymen with extracurricular sex lives. In one pastorate, three of my laymen were active in the John Birch Society. One of these was a secret alcoholic who beat his wife, another was a tearoom habitue, and the third stole from his employer with regularity... the secret alcoholic, the embezzler, the tearoom customer, may appear to his neighbours as the paradigm of propriety, the finest of citizens. It is not at all unlikely that he will be a moral entrepreneur, serving on the vice squad or heading the local League for Decent Literature.<sup>52</sup>

#### IV. Repression and prosocial aggression

Maria Ossowska, in her study of the social determinants of moral ideas, notes:

Svend Ranulf... tries to prove that, whenever the middle class comes into power, one can observe a growing severity in the penal law, a growing severity of blame in the press and literature. This severity is the result of renunciation. Today we would use the word "frustration".<sup>53</sup>

If, indeed, we were to use this word, it would in large part be due to the fruitfulness of what has come to be known as "the frustration-aggression hypothesis".<sup>54</sup> It is clear that much that is central to Ranulf's theory can be translated into terms which reveal its consistency with this hypothesis. More specifically, it is one particular response to frustration which is involved here: displacement. This involves a frustrated individual who, being unable to vent his hostility against the actual source of his frustration (because the latter is not apparent or is too intimidating), finds a scapegoat to attack. Such a reaction to frustration is so fundamental that it is not limited to human societies but can readily be seen operating amongst monkeys and other animals.<sup>55</sup>

It is not difficult to find evidence of this practice in human affairs, including the allocation of responsibility and the punishment of offenders. Apart from all the instances cited by Ranulf, for example, it is possible to interpret fluctuations in the practice of lynching in the Southern States of the United States as displaced hostility. Lynchings in the South have tended to occur in those counties which, relative to the average level of their states, were more economically deprived, being "lower in per capita bank deposits, per capita farm and factory income, and automobile and farm ownership".<sup>56</sup>

There is also evidence indicating that relatively severe and unexpected declines in income and security brought about by falls in the value of cotton were responsible for raising the level of lynching between 1882 and 1930.<sup>57</sup>

Berkowitz, in his appraisal of the frustration-aggression hypothesis, sees in such findings evidence of displaced aggression arising from economic frustrations finding an outlet under the guise of the enforcement of justice.<sup>58</sup> While such an analysis is clearly consistent with Ranulf's findings concerning the "disinterested" nature of much of the willingness to assist in the punishment of offenders, it could also be argued that lynching was also tied more directly to economic fluctuations, reflecting the intensity of competition for scarce goods and resources and serving as an instrument in the struggle to retain or enhance control over these. This is one of the inferences which may be drawn from Raper's research which reveals that, between 1900 and 1930, the lynching rate varied directly with the white-black ratio of inhabitants in a county. The larger the size of the white-black ratio in favour of the former, the higher tended to be the rate of lynching.<sup>59</sup> Since the counties where blacks were more numerous were run on plantation systems, black tenants and workers were basically indispensable. In the impoverished counties where blacks were a small minority, however, they were also economic competitors with the poor whites who formed the bulk of lynching mobs.

There is much else in the research generated by the frustration-aggression hypothesis to illuminate the psychological mechanisms

which mediate between social conditions and outbursts of moral rage. Research in this tradition has tended, for example, to support the conclusion that where disapproved forms of aggression are stifled and denied expression, hostility will manifest itself in the establishment of a temperamental inclination towards prosocial aggression - that is, in the desire to employ hostility in law enforcement and inflicting punishment for rule breaking.<sup>60</sup> This accords well with Ranulf's interpretation of the hostility generated in the lower middle class as a result of their thwarted desires finding an outlet in punitiveness. The upper classes, being more able to satisfy their desires and vent their aggression more openly, escape the resentment - laden mentality which such pent-up hostility generates. Punishment provides an outlet for such hostility, for the stereotype of the criminal, like that of the Jew, is built into our literature, our language and our myths, providing an armoury of excuses for indulging in persecution and cruelty.

#### V. The open society and the open mind

Explorations of displacement undertaken within the frustration-aggression hypothesis tradition have tended to concentrate upon irrational emotional mechanisms as the psychological source of hostility. Piaget, to whom we shall turn in a moment, displays the much more cognitive-oriented approach in analysing the links between involvement in certain types of social relationship and responses to deviance which one would expect of him from his other studies. Insights into the cognitive style associated with punitiveness are, however, also present in The Authoritarian



Personality and the idea that authoritarianism is part of a more general pattern of encoding experience has been further developed by Rokeach.<sup>61</sup>

The cognitive style of the authoritarian as revealed by the work of Adorno and his colleagues is marked by rigidity and avoidance of ambiguity. Such a style displays little of the readiness to accept and enjoy differences and diversities which is part of the tolerant personality. Instead there is a need to set off clear demarcation lines and establish relative strengths. Such avoidance of ambiguity is not limited to social relationships, but is extended to apprehending the world in general, with prejudiced individuals being only prepared to see the world in terms of well worn traditional categories.<sup>62</sup> In general, tolerant individuals show a willingness to expose themselves to a broader range of experience even at the risk of having to alter their preconceived notions of the world or to sustain conflicts.<sup>63</sup>

The basis of such an approach to the world is insecurity and fear, whether these are implanted deep in the personality or arise from the failure of traditional solutions in the face of threatening social changes.<sup>64</sup> ~~This~~ interpretation is basically similar to Rokeach's interpretation of differences in belief systems in terms of dogmatism. Dogmatism, or closed-mindedness, is characterised, relative to open-mindedness, by the coexistence of logically contradictory beliefs; relatively little difference seen between the systems of beliefs which are rejected and ignorance concerning their content; a greater intensity with which opposing beliefs are rejected; an underlying belief that the world one lives in is a

threatening one; a belief that authority is absolute and that people are to be evaluated in accordance with their agreement with such authority; and a narrow time perspective which overemphasizes or fixates upon the past, or the present or, particularly, the future. In this last orientation the present is held as of no account in its own right. To the future oriented:

The present is but a vestibule to the future, unimportant in its own right, full of injustice and human suffering... Such a person, guided by his belief-disbelief system, typically expresses overtly a greater confidence of what the future holds in store, and a greater readiness to make predictions about the future.<sup>65</sup>

Such commitment reflects the major function of closed belief systems, which is defend the self or group against anxiety, for the central feature of anxiety, as opposed to fear, is a dread of the future, that "most ambiguous and unknowable medium in man's cognitive world".<sup>66</sup> There is, furthermore, the selective avoidance of exposure to contrary opinions and experiences which might prove incongruous with one's beliefs. Since a dogmatic system of belief functions as a kind of defensive carapace holding the personality together, the existence of other people who think differently is threatening to personal stability. When they do come face to face with the unconventional their reaction is more likely to be hostile rejection than cool appraisal.

#### Belief systems

represent Everyman's theory for understanding the world he lives in. On the other hand, they represent Everyman's defense network through which information is filtered, in order to render harmless that which threatens the ego.<sup>67</sup>

Amongst dogmatists the latter function predominates whether as the result of threat-induced anxiety being built into the personality on the basis of formative childhood experiences or emanating from the contemporary situation in which they find themselves. Individuals become disposed to accept or to form closed systems of belief to the extent that they are made to feel isolated and helpless and thus anxious about what the future holds in store for them.

Rokeach does not go into the social sources of dogmatism in any depth, other than in his study of the trend for dogmatism to increase within the Catholic Church whenever the threats to its strength and security were gaining ground. It has become clear, however, that, like authoritarianism, dogmatism is reduced by education.<sup>68</sup> And, of course, the title of Rokeach's book, The Open and Closed Mind, is reminiscent of Popper's use of the terms "open" and "closed" societies in The Open Society and Its Enemies, suggesting links between closed societies and closed minds.<sup>69</sup>

Popper saw many of the major dimensions of dogmatic systems of belief as rooted in specific social structures. Although being ready to admit that all primitive societies are not identical, but embrace a diverse set of cultural configurations, he nevertheless feels that, in general, most display a "magical or irrational attitude towards the customs of social life".<sup>70</sup> The main characteristic of this mentality is the lack of distinction between customary regularities of social life and the regularities found in nature,

a mode of thought which is often accompanied by the belief that both are kept within their prescribed course by supernatural sanctions. Popper regards such beliefs as expressing deep personal fears of changing a routine.

In open societies, on the other hand, men enter into the realm of freedom. People are not longer bound to a set social role with set social responses dictated by sacrosanct codes of conduct. But such freedom, despite its manifest advantages, is bought at a price. As the result of living in a society in which traditional bonds have been broken and beliefs shattered, many come to experience what Popper refers to as the strain of civilization:

This strain, this uneasiness, is a consequence of the breakdown of the closed society. It is still felt even in our day, especially in times of social change. It is the strain created by the effort which life in an open and partially abstract society continually demands from us - by the endeavour to be rational, to forgo at least some of our emotional social needs, to look after ourselves, and to accept responsibilities<sup>71</sup>

It is against such demands that the dogmatist closes his mind, creating a sympathetic audience for the attacks launched upon the open society by traditional authorities and vested interests which find their former pre-eminence challenged. In the writing of Plato, for example. Popper finds ample evidence of such appeals to dogmatism as the desire for the ultimate repression of critical opposition to authority and the practices it establishes or protects, and absolute confidence about being in possession of the laws of history. It even pervades such abstract areas of thought as Plato's theory of Forms.<sup>72</sup>

On the whole, Popper's argument is sound, though in equating mysticism with irrationality, and treating both this mysticism and critiques of contemporary institutions in comparison with those of tribal society as doctrines hostile to the values of the open society, he goes too far. To take just one example of a movement which not only called for a return to the virtues of primitive society and embraced a mystical philosophy, but was also hostile to anti-democratic and obscurantist forces, Taoism might be cited. The literature of Taoism is redolent with the condemnation of social inequality and exploitation and calls for a return to the freer and more egalitarian society believed to have existed in the past of China and which its creators quite probably observed amongst some of the tribes bordering Chinese society. Taoism is also notable for providing conditions favourable to an empirical interest in the ways of the natural world and the development of science.<sup>73</sup>

In considering Popper's analysis of authoritarianism in ancient Athens, it is well worth recalling Plato's comments upon the need to isolate the ideal city from contact with the outside world in order to stifle social change and the emergence of individualism, as providing early evidence that the enemies of the open society were well aware of the social sources which nourished it. In the Laws, for example, we hear that

had the city been on the sea, and dependent for support on other countries, no human power could have preserved you from corruption...For the sea, although an agreeable, is a dangerous companion and a highway of strange morals and manners as well as commerce.<sup>74</sup>

It is also stipulated that traders shall be kept beyond the city boundary, forbidden to introduce any innovation and that those appointed to deal with them shall "hold the intercourse with him which is necessary and this shall be as little as possible".<sup>75</sup>

Popper recognises that the upper class were not all drawn to the authoritarian programme of the oligarchs - Pericles is perhaps the most outstanding example. What was it that accounted for the differences within the ranks of the upper classes in ancient Athens? Popper provides no convincing explanation, but Gouldner, in his discussion of Plato and the origins of social theory in Classical Greece, does provide an interpretation of this division which is in line with Popper's ideas and which bears directly upon the concerns of the present work.<sup>76</sup> This interpretation centres upon the distinction between "Locals" and "Cosmopolitans" which Gouldner had originally elaborated in a study of differing value orientations amongst contemporary scholars.<sup>77</sup> Cosmopolitans can be distinguished from locals by their tendency to be more highly committed to their particular occupational activity and less so to the particular community or establishment in which they work. In Classical Greece Cosmopolitans are typified by the itinerant Sophists, plying their craft in different cities with manifestly different customs, constitutions and beliefs. Locals, on the other hand, because of their birth or longer tenure in a community, are more likely than Cosmopolitans to be attached to its traditional values. For the same reasons, Locals are more likely to be deeply enmeshed in a lasting network of informal relationships with other Locals who can exert influence on their beliefs. Gouldner's remarks are so apposite to any discussion of intra-class differences

in morality that they are worth citing in some detail:

Further, one of the clearest findings about contemporary Local scholars is that they - much more than Cosmopolitans - manifest a tendency toward "rule tropism", that is, a disposition to believe that community rules and formal regulations are too lenient and in need of strengthening. This, it is noteworthy, is all the more true of Locals whose influence in their group is low rather than those whose influence is high.

There is an almost point-by-point correspondence between the social ideology of this ideal type of Local and certain aspects of Platonic social theory, especially with respect to their common stress on values rather than morally neutral technical skills, their emphasis on consensus and unity in the group, and their common stress, notably in Plato's Laws, on the use of formal rules and legal procedure as order maintaining devices. It may be that Plato's emphasis on formal laws, especially pronounced in his later work, is expressive of a social outlook particularly characteristic of powerless Locals, for, as I have noted, his reference groups were probably experiencing an increasing sense of powerlessness due to the defeat of the domestic oligarchical groups with which they were closely connected, as well as their own growing alienation from politics in general.<sup>78</sup>

#### VI. Constraint and co-operation in the development of moral judgment

Returning now from this brief digression into the field of comparative sociology to matters falling well within the boundaries of what in conventionally understood by social psychology, I wish to introduce Piaget's contribution to our understanding of the nature of moral judgment. Needless to say, however, as with so much that is most valuable in social psychology, Piaget's own theorizing and his discussion of Durkheim's sociology of morality will soon lead us back to considering questions of a more broadly sociological nature.

Although of much value in its own right, the contrasts which Piaget draws between moral consciousness in younger and older children are particularly interesting because the same configurations of values and beliefs can be observed amongst adults. The moral beliefs of the younger child may be paralleled amongst adults both as the result of arrested development towards more "mature" moral sentiments by unpropitious social circumstances and the continuing presence and potency of similar social conditions in the lives of adults. It should be borne in mind, however, that the moral insight displayed by any individual is not completely composed of one or other of the orientations which Piaget distinguishes, but that one or other of them tends to pervade a greater range of their moral consciousness, to the extent that the circumstances favouring them prevail in their environment.

The child's consciousness of rules, as Piaget demonstrates, involves a progression from a period when rules are regarded as sacred and untouchable, emanating from adults or divine authority figures, and lasting forever. At that stage every suggested alteration strikes the child as a transgression, even if it were to be accepted by general opinion. This stage, which Piaget refers to as heteronomy, tends to give way more and more before the advance of autonomy.

To the autonomous moral consciousness a rule is looked upon as a law due to mutual consent, which you must respect if you want to be loyal but which it is permissible to alter on the condition of enlisting general opinion on your side:



Thus democracy follows on theocracy and gerontocracy: there are no more crimes of opinion, but only breaches in procedures. All opinions are tolerated so long as their protagonists urge their acceptance by legal methods... He no longer relies, as do the little ones, upon an all-wise tradition. He no longer thinks that everything has been arranged for the best in the past and that the only way of avoiding trouble is by religiously respecting the established order. He believes in the value of experiment in so far as it is sanctioned by collective opinion.<sup>79</sup>

The sources of these two different moralities can be traced to differences in the type of social relationship within which they develop and flourish. Social relations can be located along a continuum stretching from constraint to co-operation, the former involving the handing down of ready-made rules, the latter offering a method for the elaboration of rules. To the extent to which children find themselves free from the authority of older children and adults to participate in more egalitarian relations with others, consciousness of the rules governing social relations takes on a more autonomous tone:

In the past, custom had always prevailed over right. Only, as in all cases where a human being is enslaved to a custom that is not part of his inner life, the child regarded this Custom imposed by his elders as a sort of Decalogue revealed by divine beings (i.e., adults, including God, who is, according to Fal, (one of the younger children) the oldest gentleman in Neuchatel after his own father). With the result that, in the eyes of a little child, no alteration of usage will dispense the individual from remaining faithful to the eternal law... The child therefore distinguishes between a rule that is true in itself and mere custom, present or future. And yet he is all the time enslaved to custom and not to any juridico-moral reason or reality distinct from this custom and superior to it. Nor indeed is this way of thinking very different from that of many conservative adults who delude themselves into thinking that they are assisting the triumph of eternal reason over present fashion, when they are really the slaves of past custom at the expense of the permanent laws of rational co-operation.<sup>80</sup>

As a result of the child's growing involvement in democracy there is a corresponding change in his "philosophy of history".<sup>81</sup> This can be observed, for example, in the child's approach to the rules governing the game of marbles. Before children reach the age at which this game is usually given up they enter into a phase during which they are in the happy position of participating in the operation of an institution in which they have no seniors. Previous beliefs about the divine or adult origin of the rules are, under the influence of this experience, abandoned in favour of the belief that these are the creation of children who modified the rules as they wished. The consciousness of being free to make the law, of autonomy, dispels the myth of revelation.

Heteronomy results from the inequality between the child and the adult surrounding which presses upon him, a situation

which may recur in adult life, especially in the strictly conformist and gerontocratic societies designated as primitive. Conversely in certain circumstances where he experiments in new types of conduct by co-operating with his equals, the child is already an adult.<sup>82</sup>

In many respects, as Piaget acknowledges, the explanatory factors appealed to by Durkheim in his analysis of the development and disappearance of obligatory conformity within communities are similar to those which operate with similar results in children's societies. Just as the collective conscience of adults is changed by the development of new types of social intercourse, so it is within the biography of the child, especially in contemporary societies where adolescence is a time of increasing freedom from adult constraint rather than initiation into an adult role characterised by rigid expectations and continuing domination by one's elders. Children, as they grow older, become aware of,

and involved with, those practising other usages besides those to which they are accustomed. The growing child also detaches himself more and more from his family circle. Heteronomous moral consciousness and the collective conscience are alike in both their content and origin. Both are weakened by the gradual diminution of the supervision exercised over individuals.

Despite this similarity in their ideas, Piaget takes Durkheim to task for disregarding social constraint springing from the influence exercised by one generation upon the next. Such criticism is however, clearly misplaced. The way in which Durkheim did incorporate the changing nature of the power of elders into his explanation of the decline of the collective conscience was indicated in the previous chapter. Nevertheless, it is true to say that Piaget places far greater emphasis upon inequality based upon age as the most important source of social constraint accounting for variations in moral ideas. To illustrate:

We have only to make the impossible supposition of a society where everyone would be of the same age, of a society formed by a single generation indefinitely prolonged; to realise the immense significance attaching to age relations and especially to the relations between adults and children. Would such a society ever have known anything of obligatory conformity? Would it be acquainted with religion or at any rate with the religions that taught transcendence? Would unilateral respect with all its repercussions upon the moral consciousness be observed in such a group as this? <sup>83</sup>

It may be argued, as I hope to demonstrate in the next chapter, that Durkheim's ideas concerning the relationships between types of social bond and specific moral sentiments are fundamentally correct, but that his knowledge of the relationships prevailing in different types of primitive societies was inadequate, leading him into faulty predictions

concerning the nature of the collective conscience which he thought could be found throughout the primitive world. Indeed, in many ways his portrait of the nature of the social bonds enveloping primitive man appears to be at least as representative of the condition of children in contemporary societies. It is therefore not surprising that we find the characteristic features of the collective conscience there, together with a tendency for it to be transformed with the changing nature of the social relationships in which they participate. These show tendency to develop towards "organic" solidarity.

Two main types of morality may be observed in children. The one which at first predominates is the one which encompasses heteronomy and arises from the dominant role played by the respect felt for elders. This earlier morality, wherever truly co-operative relations assume growing importance, diminishes in strength with the increasing role of standards of morality motivated by a feeling of sympathy with one's equals. The former, the morality of authority, like the latter, the morality of mutual respect, embraces a whole set of complementary moral ideas. Heteronomy, for example, arises together with moral realism. This is the tendency "to regard duty and the value attaching to it as self-subsistent and independent of the mind, as imposing itself regardless of the circumstances in which the individual may find himself".<sup>84</sup> While the younger child can discriminate between intentional and unintentional actions, for example, he takes little account of intention in his moral judgments. These are centred upon the sheer amount of damage done by the action, so that the accidental breaking of a number of cups was judged worse than the breaking of one in the course of stealing.

The older child, on the other hand, gives precedence to intention in his moral judgments. When he comes to consider lying, for example, he differs from the younger child in considering a falsehood intended to deceive as "obviously" worse than one due to ignorance or a mistake. Lying to people in authority is no longer necessarily worse than lying to equals, and the reason why lying is wrong is that it betrays the trust without which worthwhile social interaction based upon mutual respect is impossible. Without the development of co-operative relations to mould mutual respect, the younger child just knows that lies are forbidden, without quite knowing why. The proof that they are wrong is that you get punished for it by external authorities. If it were not punished it would not be wrong. Demands which are imposed from outside, without mutual agreement and understanding, by an authority which nevertheless enjoys considerable legitimacy, fosters a sense of moral realism. In the case of children the great prestige enjoyed by parents leads to the development of such views. The hold of such ideas over the mind of the child can, however, be attenuated by parents placing themselves on a more equal level with their children, stressing their own obligations and freely admitting their own ability to blunder in conversations with the child. But usually relations between adults and children are such that the latter only begin to escape from moral realism in spite of and in opposition to the former. From our earlier discussion of the family background of authoritarians it appears that these tend to be particularly inimicable to the open and egalitarian relations between parents

and children advocated by Piaget. That moral realism and many other features of the morality of authority and constraint can be readily observed in the ideas expressed by authoritarians lends support to Piaget's attempt to link this morality with the importance of relationships of unilateral respect in childhood and beyond. It is evident that much of Piaget's thinking concerning the origins of moral realism and the morality of constraint anticipates points later to be made by Adorno and his colleagues in their attempts to account for similar configurations of values and beliefs. Piaget considers, for example, that it is where the child is rendered incapable of criticizing his parents that moral realism is strengthened, as it is also by the pleasure taken by many adults in meting out punishment, exercising authority and attempting to break the child's will<sup>85</sup>

Moral realism is part of a more general tendency on the part of the child towards realism in general, towards the reification of the products or instruments of their own thought:

Dreams, for example, even when the child really knows that they are deceptive as to their contents, are, till about 7 - 8, systematically considered as an objective reality, as a sort of ethereal, rarefied picture floating in the air and fixed before our eyes. Names (comparable to moral rules in that they are transmitted and imposed by the adult surrounding) constitute an aspect of the objects themselves: each object has a name, co-substantial with its own nature, having always existed and been localized in the object. Finally, thought itself, instead of consisting in an internal activity, is conceived as a sort of material power<sup>86</sup> in direct communication with the external universe.

Seeing that he is a realist in so many areas it is not surprising that the child should reify the moral code which he obeys. This is connected to the failure to differentiate between moral and physical laws:

If the moon shines only by night and sun only by day, it is not merely because of the material arrangements ensuring this regularity; it is primarily because the sun 'is not allowed' to walk about at night, because the heavenly bodies are not masters of their destiny but are subject like all living beings to rules binding upon their will.<sup>87</sup>

This lack of differentiation reflects back upon the moral rule, so that it retains something physical about it:

Like names, it is a part of things, a characteristic feature, and even a necessary condition of the universe. What, then, do intentions matter? The problem of responsibilities is simply to know whether a law has been respected or violated. Just as if we trip, independently of any carelessness, we fall on to the ground in virtue of the law of gravity, so tampering with the truth, even unwittingly, will be called a lie and incur punishment. If the fault remains unnoticed, things themselves will take charge of punishing us.<sup>88</sup>

Such patterns of beliefs and values have, of course, often been noted in adult societies and it is Piaget's contention that where such cultural patterns are to be found it is as the result of the bonds of social constraint and tradition extending unbroken - or even strengthened - into adulthood.

Heteronomy and moral realism in large measure reflect egocentrism, a condition which Piaget refers to as "the confusion of the self with the not-self".<sup>89</sup> The egocentric individual sees and thinks about the world from his own point of view without realizing the existence of other perspectives. He assumes that his understanding of the situation is the understanding of it. He therefore lacks awareness that he has a distinctive point of view of his own so that once he comes to see

things in a certain way, then that is the way they must be.

As the result of this egocentrism there is often a difficulty, encountered in particular by very young children, in distinguishing between what has been invented by oneself and what has been imposed from outside by contagion or constraint. Such circumstances give rise to the experience of the mind's content

both as very familiar and as superpersonal, permanent and in a sense revealed. Nothing is more characteristic of childhood memories than this complex sensation of gaining access to one's most intimate possessions and at the same time of being dominated by something greater than oneself which seems like a source of inspiration.<sup>90</sup>

For children, as for Plato, intellectual creation merges into reminiscence.<sup>91</sup>

The extent to which egocentrism is effaced depends upon the presence of favourable social circumstances. These involve contact with, and appreciation of, alternative perspectives, a situation which is most fully realized by full and frank discussion and co-operation amongst equals. In order to appreciate the variety of perspectives in the world it is necessary to perceive the relativity and unique aspects of one's own views. This can only arise when one has achieved a degree of liberation from submission to the thought and will of those in authority. To those whose thinking remains dominated by their involvement in authoritarian relationships, society is not so much a successful co-operation amongst equals as a feeling of continuous communion between the ego and the word of authority.



There are a number of other elements of the two moralities distinguished by Piaget which are of interest from the point of view of the present study, notably attitudes towards punishment:

Two types of reaction are to be found with regard to punishment. Some think that punishment is just and necessary; the sterner it is, the juster, and it is efficacious in the sense that the child who has been duly chastized will in the future do his duty better than others. Others do not regard expiation as a moral necessity; among possible punishments those only are just that entail putting things right, a restoration of the status quo ante, or which make the guilty one endure the consequences of his deed; or again, those which consist in a purely reciprocal treatment. Indeed, apart from such non-expiatory penalties, punishment, as such, is regarded as useless, reproach and explanation being deemed more profitable than chastisement. On the average, this second mode of reaction is found more frequently among the older children, while the first is oftener to be found among the little ones. But the first, favoured as it is by certain types of family life and social relationships, survives at all ages and is even to be found in many adults.<sup>92</sup>

One philosophy of punishment holds that one must compensate for the offence by a proportionate suffering, the other that one must make the offender realize by the measures taken the consequences of his act for himself or others and serve as a direct expression of the way in which he has breached the bonds of social exchange. The passage from the former to the latter is related to the change in the nature of the social bonds which have been broken, from constraint to co-operation.

Another element of the morality of constraint is the belief in immanent justice, the belief that nature takes a hand in making sure that punishment and misfortune are visited upon offenders. This, it will be recalled, played a central part in the traditional morality of ancient Athens and continues to be found in our own day with those whose first inclination in explaining the misfortune of another is to assume some hidden fault.

Only when psychological barriers to the objective criticism and evaluation of authority and the social order are lifted will the belief in universal and automatic justice begin to decline. Here again, as with many other aspects of Piaget's moral realist, such as his support for severe sanctions, a similarity with the villain of The Authoritarian Personality can readily be seen, for he too is displayed as clinging to the kind of superstition which sees the hand of fate in chance events.

As for the practical implications of his theory, Piaget is keen to emphasize that these favour the introduction of schooling based upon self-government by the pupils. He therefore finds himself at odds with Durkheim's authoritarian conception of education:

We therefore do not at all agree with Durkheim in thinking that it is the master's business to impose or even "reveal" rules to the child. A "priest" is the last thing a schoolmaster should be: he should be an elder collaborator, and, if he has it in him, a simple comrade to the children. Then only will true discipline come into being - discipline that the children themselves have willed and consented to.<sup>93</sup>

As for discipline in schools, Piaget notes self-government required that teachers relinquish the right to punish in favour of justice exercised by the children themselves.

When he wrote The Moral Judgment of the Child, Piaget felt that his theory of moral and intellectual development were receiving clear confirmation from the achievements made by the democratic practices of progressive schools. One has only to look at the achievements of A.S. Neill to see what Piaget meant, for Neill's experience of giving children freedom from adult constraint and enabling them to order their own lives provides a wealth of evidence favouring Piaget's position concerning the contrary effects of constraint and co-

operation. The interpretation which Neill offers for the way in which the child's thought and conduct is transformed by such measures bears much in common with Piaget's. To take but one example:

In Summerhill, if a child steals and is tried by a jury of his fellows, he is never punished for the theft. All that happens is that he is made to pay back the debt. Children unconsciously realize that stealing is sickness. They are little realists, and are far too sensible to postulate an angry God and a tempting devil. Enslaved man made God in his own image, but free children who face life eagerly and bravely have no need to make any God at all<sup>94</sup>

The close resemblance between the character types Piaget distinguishes to those drawn by the other authors whose contribution to our understanding of moral indignation was discussed above, is too striking to need further elaboration. Piaget's analysis of how the attitudes which constitute these configurations support and sustain one another is particularly enlightening, as is his emphasis upon the importance of different systems of age stratification as determinants of morality. He tends, however, to emphasize the importance of this particular form of social power and inequality to the exclusion of other dimensions of social stratification. Kohn, for example, has demonstrated that class inequality has far-reaching consequences for adult values. For adults no less than children, occupational self-direction weakens adherence to the morality of constraint.

But the individual's freedom is not only limited by the nature of his place within the system of social stratification prevailing in his society. Even groups composed of those who are relatively equal differ in their hold over the conduct of their members and the amount of freedom which their way of life promotes. Moral judgments

are shaped by the constraints experienced in the lives of those making them, but constraint may emanate not only from the inequalities of power, privilege and prestige, but also from the social pressure bearing upon an individual from the intensity of the mutual surveillance exercised within his community and the access of its members to alternative sources of social exchange and allegiance. The necessity of taking both sources of social control into account when explaining the emergence of moral indignation will become clear from a consideration of the development of attitudes towards deviance in primitive and pre-industrial societies. And it is to this task to which we shall now turn.

## NOTES

1. Reich (1975b), pp. 74ff. First published in 1933. Cf. the similar opinions on the authoritarianism of the lower middle class to be found in Fromm (1960), a work first published in 1942.
2. Reich (1975b), p.65
3. Reich (1975a), p.200
4. For a discussion of Reich's attempts to put his theory into practice, see Ollamn (1972), pp.212ff
5. Horkheimer (1936). For a discussion of this work and its place in the development of the work of the Institute, see Jay (1973), pp.113ff
6. Adorno, et al. (1950)
7. Ibid., p.71

8. Sumner (1959), p.13
9. Adorno et al. (1950)
10. Ibid., p.109
11. Ibid., p.230
12. Ibid., p.231
13. Ibid., 228
14. Ibid., p.232. Jay points out that this combination of authoritarian aggression and authoritarian submission closely resembles the sado-masochistic character type outlined by Fromm in his contribution to Autorität und Familie (Jay, 1973, p.128). Fromm explores this further in Fear of Freedom, a book which, along with Reich's The Mass Psychology of Fascism, receives credit from Adorno and his colleagues as a source of their ideas concerning authoritarianism (Adorno, et al., 1950, p.231 n.1.)
15. Adorno, et al. (1950), pp.232-233.
16. Ibid., p.233
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., pp. 233-234
19. Ibid., p.235
20. Ibid., p.40
21. Ibid., p.94
22. Ibid., p.75
23. Ibid., p.149
24. Jay (1973), p.128
25. Adorno, et al. (1950), p.239
26. Ibid., pp. 409-411
27. Ibid., pp.411-413
28. Ibid., p.414
29. Ibid., p.385
30. Frenkel-Brunswick (1954)
31. Preface by H.D. Lasswell to Ranulf (1964), p.xiii
32. Lipset (1963), pp.97ff
33. Ibid., p.114
34. Hyman and Sheatsley (1954)
35. See Collins (1971)
36. Kohn (1969), p. 189
37. Ibid., p. 201
38. Ibid., p.186
39. Ibid., p.171
40. Ibid., p.135. While in interpreting how social class is related to values and orientations the nature of the work situation and the extent of education are of prime importance, other dimensions of class may well be of greater significance in shaping its association with other phenomena. The relationship of class to health, for example, may well be more closely tied to the income differences involved in class divisions.
41. Blumberg (1968), pp. 61ff. Blumberg cites evidence supporting similar reservations concerning the impact of automation amongst manual workers (ibid., pp.53ff)
42. Kohn (1969), p.87

43. Nettler (1961).
44. Hebb and Thompson (1969), pp. 729ff.
45. One example of the isolation of the middle class can be found in Harrington's (1962) account of their segregation from the poor.
46. Lipsitz (1970), p.149
47. Collins (1975), p.75
48. Humphreys (1970), p.135
49. Ibid., p.141
50. Ibid., p.146
51. Ibid., pp.115ff
52. Ibid., pp.147-148
53. Ossowska (1971), p.158
54. Dollard, et al. (1939)
55. Russell and Russell (1968), pp.99ff
56. Berkowitz (1962), p.137
57. Ibid., pp. 58-59
58. Ibid., pp. 136-137
59. Raper (1933), pp. 27-28 and 57-58
60. See the discussion of anti-social and pro-social aggression in Berkowitz (1962), p.126
61. Rokeach (1960)
62. See Frenkel-Brunswick (1949)
63. It should be noted, however, that Adorno and his colleagues do recognize the existence of a distinct group amongst the ethnically tolerant who cling to liberal ideology in a rigid and stereotyped manner. These often display a personality structure closer to the authoritarian than to the "true" liberal (Adorno, et al., 1950, pp. 771ff).
64. Ibid., p.486
65. Rokeach(1960), pp. 52-53
66. Ibid., p.367
67. Ibid., p.400
68. Guller (1972), for example, demonstrates that college education reduces dogmatism and punitiveness, as well as raising self-esteem, amongst police officers.
69. Popper (1962), vol. 1, pp. 169ff. This study represents yet another work of classical scholarship where the interpretation of antiquity is clearly shaped by the nature of contemporary events and concerns. The final decision to write The Open Society was taken when Popper received the news of the Nazi invasion of Austria in 1938, with the writing extending into 1943 when the outcome of the war was still uncertain (Ibid., p.viii). Popper's contribution to the "war effort" was this attack upon authoritarianism which makes free use of the terms of contemporary political analysis; Plato, for example, is attacked as "a totalitarian party politician". (Ibid., p.169) For further discussion of the nature and development of the contrast between open and closed societies, see Giner (1976), pp.101ff.

70. Popper (1962), vol. 1, p.172
71. Ibid., pp. 176
72. Ibid., pp. 28ff.
73. Needham (1962), pp. 33ff
74. Plato (1953), p.45 (704e)
75. Ibid., p.524 (953a)
76. Gouldner (1965), pp. 188-190
77. Gouldner (1957-1958).
78. Gouldner (1965), p.199
79. Piaget (1932), p. 57
80. Ibid., p.64
81. Ibid., p.66
82. Ibid., p.77-78
83. Ibid., pp. 99-100
84. Ibid., p.106
85. Ibid., p.190-191
86. Ibid., p.185
87. Ibid., p.186
88. Ibid., p.187
89. Ibid., p.249
90. Ibid., p.98
91. Ibid., p.48
92. Ibid., p.199
93. Ibid., p.367
94. Neill (1962), p. 216-217. Cf. Wills (1971), for an account of an institution where the authoritarian practices of the staff permeated down to sour the attitudes and relationships of the children in their care.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE AND THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL CONTROL

#### I. The comparative anthropology of public justice

What is the scope of the theories with which we have been dealing? As was indicated in the previous chapter, similarities between such theories as Ranulf's account of moral indignation, the explanation of authoritarianism which arose from the work of the Frankfurt Institute, and Reich's analysis of mass psychology, can be traced to their common origin in a period which saw the rise of fascism as a mass movement. Can similar configurations of attitudes to those they identify be found in other period and places and are similar social and cultural forces at work in producing them?

Ranulf, for example, claimed such importance for the presence of an important section of the population living under lower middle class conditions of life as the source of the disinterested tendency to punish that he was quite ready to argue that such a tendency does not manifest itself in societies of simple technology due to the absence of such conditions. This clearly presents two problems. Do primitive societies manifest a disinterested tendency to inflict punishment, contrary to Ranulf's contention? And, if so, can this nevertheless be accounted for by forces similar to those which Ranulf reveals as responsible for moral indignation in other societies?

Ranulf's own review of the evidence provides grounds for doubting his claim that manifestations of moral indignation are absent from primitive societies.



Taking his lead from Levy-Bruhl, he describes attitudes to misfortune in primitive societies as follows:

Misfortune is regarded, even by the victims themselves, as a proof of guilt. Or rather, unintentional guilt is, if anything, more severely sanctioned than intentional, because it is felt to be a more grievous symptom of wrath on the part of the invisible powers, and consequently a more serious danger to the community. It is even supposed that men may be induced by the spirits to sin, for instance to break a taboo, which does not in any way imply that they should be punished less cruelly for it. The last idea is known to us from the Israelites, the Greeks, and the Puritans, and the identification of misfortune and guilt is reminiscent of Sophokles' Oedipus and of the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination. There may well be reason to ask whether this whole attitude on the part of the primitive is not inspired by a fundamental disposition to sadism similar to that which we were led to assume in the other cases mentioned.<sup>1</sup>

And, indeed, despite Ranulf's endeavours, he does not really succeed in resolving such conflicting evidence with his contention that moral indignation is absent from pre-literate societies. Unfortunately he fails to acknowledge that primitive societies cannot be treated as an homogenous group when dealing with the issues he arises. Some such societies do indeed display few signs of any disinterested tendency to inflict punishment, and these few only weakly. But this is by no means true of all.

In examining sanctions in pre-literate society, Ranulf makes use of Radcliffe-Brown's description of the penal sanction. Of this Radcliffe-Brown says:

In any society a deed is a public delict if its occurrence normally leads to an organized and regular procedure by the whole community or by the constituted representatives of social authority which results in the fixing of responsibility upon some person within

the community and the infliction by the community or by its representatives of some hurt or punishment upon the responsible person. This procedure, which may be called the penal sanction, is in its basic form a reaction by the community against an action of one of its own members which offends some strong and definite moral sentiments and thus produces a condition of moral dysphoria. The immediate function of the reaction is to give expression to a collective feeling of moral indignation and so to restore the social euphoria.<sup>2</sup>

Ranulf regards the appearance of such a sanction as clearly indicating the presence of a disinterested tendency to inflict punishment, although Ranulf's interpretation of its origin differs somewhat from the approach of Radcliffe-Brown. For Ranulf's argument implies that it is not the delict alone that creates the dysphoria, but that moral dysphoria is a chronic condition which seizes upon the delict as an outlet or finds the self-indulgence the delict proclaims the final straw.

The role played by penal sanctions is also of interest in analysing Durkheim's ideas concerning the punitive character of primitive justice. What, then, is the evidence? Do pre-literate societies employ penal sanctions to any marked extent?

Such societies seem, in fact, to differ widely amongst themselves in this respect. The problem is complicated by the wide variety of sanctions employed in handling offenders. At one extreme there are communities where attacks upon property or person are treated as private affairs, to be redressed by the individual affected on his own or with the aid of his friends and relatives. As Hobhouse, Wheeler and Ginsberg note, such private justice may take a variety of forms:

Redress may be sought by retaliation in like manner to the wrong done or simply by killing or beating the aggressor. Or it may take the form of a demand for compensation in goods. Or there may be a regular fight under conditions prescribed by custom; or, lastly, without fighting, the aggressor may be required to stand a cut or thrust. Custom and sentiment may support the injured party, but unless the neutral party would actually come to his help at need we should regard this as a case of private redress. Similarly, in the Regulated fight, custom certainly imposes limits as to methods of redress, but redress itself is left to the strength and skill of the parties.. Either retaliation or composition may be collective or vicarious, i.e. may attach to the whole family of the aggressor or to any one of its members... But this is not universal. It is just as likely to be sought at the expense of the wrongdoer alone.<sup>3</sup>

Between such communities and those in which public justice and penal sanctions predominate, there exist numerous intermediate stages. Firstly, there are communities in which penal sanctions only operate in connection with offences which threaten the community as a whole. Many societies which treat an individual who robs or attacks another not as an enemy of society, but merely as an enemy of their victim, nevertheless do recognize the existence of others in their midst who are viewed very definitely as enemies of society. As such they call forth a communal response.<sup>4</sup> The Crow, to take one example, were normally without any public enforcement of justice. In the period before and during hunts, however, such justice was exercised by the "police society", a body whose function was to punish disorderly conduct which might imperil the hunt.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from offences which directly endanger the community or its collective undertakings, such as indiscipline on military ventures,

treason, cowardice and violation of the rules of the hunt, individuals may render themselves a menace to communities which do not usually take collective action against offenders by repeated attacks upon their fellows. Expulsion or execution may be invited by such behaviour, which is summed up by Radcliffe-Brown as the "crime of being a bad lot".<sup>6</sup> In addition, societies which do not punish those who offend against the rights of individuals may nevertheless take it upon themselves to punish sins against the sacred order. Incest and witchcraft may be liable to punishment for this reason.<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, a community may intervene to punish offenders in an ad hoc fashion, punishing specific incidents such as the murder of a chief or popular person without the existence of any recognized rules assigning a definite punishment to a specific offence.<sup>8</sup>

Thirdly, sanctions may be attached to some attacks upon the rights of individuals, but not others. Homicide may be punished, but not theft, or theft but not homicide.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, private justice may be assisted or controlled by public intervention:

the injured party may, for instance, get the chief or some officer to help him, to find the stolen goods, or to arrest and confine the murderer of his brother. But he initiates the proceedings. He decides whether he will forgive or accept compensation or exact life for life, and he executes the sentence. Possibly there is even a regular trial, but sentence is left to the accuser to execute, if he cannot enforce it there is no further means of redress. Again, it may be wrong for him to exercise revenge until he has obtained a judgement in his favour which states what the revenge ought to be. Or it may be that he can avenge himself on the spot, but if time has elapsed he ought to go to court. In all these cases there is a blending of opposite principals.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the difficulties arising from the existence of such intermediate cases a definite trend can be discerned amongst pre-literate societies. As one moves further away from hunting and gathering societies in terms of technological advance, through horticulture and the various levels of pastoral or agricultural development, one finds an increasing preponderance of public over private justice.<sup>11</sup> Self redress gives way to the regular punishment of wrongdoers by society as a whole or by those representing it as increasingly advanced methods of production are adopted.<sup>12</sup>

Before going on to consider the reasons for this association, it is as well to notice at once that the evidence upon which it is based does not accord with Durkheim's assertion that societies shift from repressive to restitutive sanctions as they become more complex.

That Durkheim should have been led to such a conclusion seems in part to have been the result of having focused too heavily upon drawing comparisons between the law codes of modern societies and those literate archaic communities such as the states of ancient India, Egypt, Israel, Athens and Rome. Such a selection of evidence obscures the way in which the evolution of punishment in terms of the amount of suffering inflicted upon offenders is more accurately, albeit still very loosely, characterised as curvilinear rather than unilinear. Instead of a gradual amelioration from the pristine severity of the earliest and simplest communities accompanying economic advance, we have a growth in severity up to a certain stage of development, and then a gradual decline. The highpoint would appear to be found amongst advanced agricultural societies. In this the evolution of punishment parallels the growth of social inequality, which starts at a negligible

level in hunting and gathering societies and gradually increases with the growth of the economic surplus occasioned by new methods of production until a peak is reached in advanced agricultural societies. With the full development of industrialization, however, the extent of social inequality declines somewhat.<sup>13</sup> Parallel curvilinear developments occur in other areas of social life, such as the amount of cruelty characterising intra-group relations, for, as Lenski has argued, as

class differences within societies became more pronounced, immorality in intragroup relations increased. The history of every agrarian society is replete with instances of exploitative and brutal treatment of the lower classes. Nowhere is this more evident than in the punishments exacted for minor offenses.<sup>14</sup>

Further evidence which casts doubt upon Durkheim's association of social development with decreases in punitive severity comes from Spitzer's study of punishment and social organization.<sup>15</sup> Comparing simple societies with those which have achieved a measure of development (indicated by one or more of the following: educational specialization, bureaucracy, written language), Spitzer demonstrates that simpler societies are more likely to employ lenient penalties than are more complex societies.<sup>16</sup> The trend for penal severity to increase with social complexity is, however, reversed by the conditions which arise in modern societies. Emergent states are led to employ more violent sanctions than simpler societies and the established nation-state for they have to impose their sway over previously autonomous groups. Furthermore, the ruling class which controlled early states in agrarian societies had to resort to severe physical sanctions in order to support the concentration of wealth in their hands in the absence of the market

mechanisms available to modern societies as means of institutionalizing inequality.

The relationship between the rise of the state and the administration of public justice is complex. Clearly, as was indicated earlier, some primitive societies do punish certain offenders without the existence of any regular state apparatus, through collective action to expel or penalize wrongdoers. Nevertheless, the development of the state opens up new opportunities for the exercise of penal sanctions. As Radcliffe-Brown remarks:

upon the establishment of a political or executive authority even of the simplest kind, disobedience of that authority's commands may be subject to penal sanctions and treated as a public delict, moreover, direct offences against the constituted authority or against the persons in whom that authority rests may be subject to penal sanctions. Thus when the social authority rests in chiefs, an offence which would be a private delict if committed against a commoner may be treated as a public delict when committed against a chief.<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, while there is undoubtedly a trend for the growing power of chieftains to be associated with the suppression of private by public justice, there are some cases where private vengeance is left to flourish by powerful chiefs.<sup>18</sup>

The origins of government involvement in punishing wrongdoers are diverse and cannot simply be treated as no more than the reflection of intensified moral indignation amongst members of a community. However, the sentiments of the people are not without importance in accounting for the origin and growth of penal sanctions in pre-literate societies. Indeed, in some cases the ease with which government spreads can be seen to spring from the desire of people to escape from the dangers and uncertainties of private justice. Thus the desire to have some authority to enforce justice and abolish the fighting that took place in

its absence was instrumental in getting chiefless Bantu tribes neighbouring the Alur to ask for members of the Alur ruling clan to come and govern them.<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth Colson remarks:

The ease with which colonial administrations established themselves in some parts of Africa and New Guinea, with minimal deployment of force, may well be due to a comparable desire for an overriding authority to ensure the public peace and provide a better mechanism for settling disputes than one based on threat and counter-threat.<sup>20</sup>

One may take the Fore of Highland New Guinea as an example.

Sorrenson reports that they regarded the fighting in which their disputes embroiled them as a calamity, but one which they were powerless to avert. With the arrival of the first Australians the fighting ceased. "The warfare was not liked, and the distant presence of but a single patrol officer and a handful of native police was grasped as an excuse to cease".<sup>21</sup> Many Fore groups did not wait to be told to stop fighting, but "stopped of their own - almost as if they had only been waiting an excuse to give it up... The Fore said among themselves that the ... government officer... was coming so it was time to stop the fighting. They looked to his arrival as the beginning of a new era rather than as an invasion"<sup>22</sup>

Clearly one reason why governments may be accepted is that they are seen as providing services to groups which they find difficulty in fulfilling for themselves. People may wish for an end to armed strife, but wishing does not make it so in the absence of the capacity to institute and sustain the necessary social organization. As Colson argues:



We cannot understand the history of the colonial period, or indeed the history of our own time, if we do not understand that people may be prepared to accept authority, even though they find it both threatening and frustrating, because they see it as the guarantor of an overarching security which they value or as providing a security that is lacking. Those who challenged the colonial governments in a search for more local control and then for independence were not seeking a return to the pre-colonial system of diffuse controls.<sup>23</sup>

The existence of courts can provide an opportunity to escape from some forms of dependence on one's fellows. New areas are opened up in which travel is possible without the presence of kinsmen or supporters. In their home communities people become freer from the demands of local opinion, escaping anxiety over the need to secure future support in the event of a dispute.

And yet this point must not be pressed too far. It is clearly erroneous to regard all societies without states as cockpits of endemic violence. Wrongs are kept in check, and redress for wrongs sought, amidst a whole set of pressures and mechanisms functioning to maintain the peace.<sup>24</sup> It is the fear of feud rather than the feud itself which dominates such societies. Relations and others who fear becoming involved in violent disputes exercise a restraining influence and individuals have to impose self-restraint upon themselves lest their repeated or uncalled for endangering of their group leads to a withdrawal of their protection.<sup>25</sup> There is an interesting paradox here insofar as the generosity and forbearance so often displayed in relations within such communities can often be found to be underpinned by very pessimistic views about human nature as needing little to provoke it into murderous violence. Colson sums this up succinctly when she notes

of such communities that "some people live in what appears to be a Rousseauian paradise because they take a Hobbesian view of their situation: they walk softly because they believe it necessary not to offend others whom they regard as dangerous".<sup>26</sup>

But there are more positive sources of harmony in simple societies, such as reciprocity and the absence of marked social inequality and exploitation. Furthermore, the mode of life of the simplest societies enables them to rely upon mechanisms for peacefully avoiding and resolving conflicts less available to those whose mode of production forces them to live in more settled communities. The Chenchus, for example, share with many other small societies which rely upon food-gathering a reliance upon settling disputes and preserving social harmony by the parties involved separating and avoiding one another. This is made possible by the amount of mobility provided by their way of life. This was dramatically illustrated when, earlier this century, the Chenchus of Madras Presidency were forcibly concentrated in settlements. Although materially their conditions were much improved, they rapidly lost their peaceful and amiable ways. Murder, assault and rape grew considerably as traditional means of avoiding violence ceased to be available.<sup>27</sup>

The order which simple societies achieve is often surrendered rather than enhanced by the growth of states which employ law as a means of domination and exploitation. Not only is this true for states which developed from within communities but also for many peoples the role of representatives of colonizing powers has all too often been that of agents and allies of those attempting to seize their lands, rather than providers of social order. This, for example, was clearly what the arrival

of Europeans meant to Amerindians. Even in cases where people thought they were obtaining a source of security in exchange for a little of their independence, the ultimate cost proved dear. The need for vigilance against one's neighbours was replaced by the need to defend oneself against the state. It is on the basis that law has been the instrument whereby the state, overthrowing custom, has enforced economic and political injustices that Diamond argues, in his survey of such African proto-states as Dahomey, that:

Law arises in the breach of a prior customary order and increases in force with the conflicts that divide political societies internally and among themselves, Law and order is the historical illusion; law versus order is the historical reality.<sup>28</sup>

When states intervene in situations where their aid was originally uncalled for in an attempt to widen their sphere of influence, a self-fulfilling prophecy can be created with the intervention of the state itself being a powerful force in bringing about the decline of informal controls, creating a subsequent demand for its protection. Speaking once again with the example of Africa in mind, Diamond says:

One may even state that the substantial rationale for law developed after the fact of its emergence. For example, civil protection of the market place or highway was certainly not necessary to the degree implied in the archaic edicts at the time they were issued. Joint-family markets and village trails were not ordinarily dangerous places, if we are to believe the reports of the earliest chroniclers, as well as those of more contemporary observers. Moreover, if trouble had developed the family, clan, or village was capable of dealing with it... As the integrity of the local groups declined, a process which, in the autochthonous state, must have taken generations or even centuries, conditions doubtless developed which served as an ex post facto rationalization for edicts

already in effect.. Crime and the laws which served if were, then covariants of the evolving states<sup>29</sup>

While Durkheim's hypothesis that the most severe punishments will be encountered in the simplest and most undifferentiated societies appears to be mistaken, support is available from the findings of subsequent cross-cultural studies for the second half of his first law of penal evolution. This it will be recalled, states that the intensity of punishment increases to the extent to which the central power assumes a more absolute character. In Spitzer's sample all except one of the eight societies that employed the most severe penalties (those which used capital punishment, mutilation, torture and severe corporal punishment, for a wide range of offences) exhibit a relatively high degree of political integration and absolute power is exercised by a single ruler or venerated elite.<sup>30</sup> Nagel's comparison of the judicial systems of democratic societies with those of dictatorial societies shows a parallel tendency with regard to the adjudication of criminal matters. Societies in his sample which had dictatorial regimes tend to be prosecution oriented, placing fewer obstacles in the way of finding an accused person guilty, than do democratic societies, where more defence oriented procedures tend to prevail.<sup>31</sup>

However, despite the need to allow for a degree of independence between societal complexity and the extent of political domination, for much of human history these have tended to march hand in hand far more often than Durkheim's argument would allow.

What are the implications for Ranulf's theory of the nature of justice and morality in primitive societies? While many pre-literate societies are free from many symptoms of the disinterested tendency to punish, others can be found which cultivate outlooks clearly resembling those configurations of beliefs and values which Ranulf saw as bound up with moral indignation. The Manus, for example, tend to be stern and unbending in their response to those who have slipped from the path of honesty and virtue, and regard their spirits as displaying the same response to wrongdoing. Margaret Mead characterises the Manu notion of sin as akin to the historic Puritan conception, including a constant fear of sexual transgressions, even of the most minor sort.<sup>33</sup> As Goode writes: "In Manus society, inefficiency, laziness, procrastination, or shiftlessness are never condoned"<sup>34</sup> Public condemnation of such conduct is reinforced by supernatural sanctions. Similarly waste or extravagance for individual or hedonistic ends are frowned upon. Furthermore, these aspects of Manu culture can be found alongside trading activities and preoccupations which share something in common with those of the traditional petty bourgeoisie in commercial communities amongst whom Ranulf locates the structural source of such concerns. The Manus are a Melanesian group living at quite a low level of technological development, engaged in fishing and trading. "Basically middlemen in a monetary economy... their daily lives are enmeshed in business, exchange and contract".<sup>35</sup> As a result they live a life in which economic calculation is important, the payment of debts a constant preoccupation and

litigiousness a well developed trait.

Despite the existence of such cases, however, Ranulf's emphasis upon the importance of the presence of a petty bourgeoisie as the source of the disinterested tendency to punish offers little opportunity to account for significant differences between the moral codes of pre-literate societies. Nevertheless, the conditions of life forced upon the petty bourgeoisie as the result of the mode of production in which it finds itself engaged is a complex one and it seems not at all impossible that those conditions favouring the development of the attitudes characteristic of moral indignation can be reproduced by other economic and political forces. This, indeed, is the position into which Ranulf is forced in attempting to account for the development of moral indignation in Russia, when he takes the experience of close surveillance and tight social control over conduct, springing in this case from the position of office holders and prospective office holders under the totalitarian regime, as the source of industriousness, self-restraint and moral indignation.

If we concentrate upon this common dimension of social pressure, of the experience of having no option but to yield to the demands of other people, as the source of important differences in moral outlooks the way becomes clear for forging a fruitful link between the work of Ranulf and Durkheim's views on the sources of the strength of the collective conscience. That such a link is possible will become clear from a consideration of Mary Douglas's explorations in cosmology.

## II. Social control and control of the body

From the anthropological evidence at present available it is clear that pre-literate societies cannot be treated as an homogenous category with regard to their ideas concerning the nature of deviance and the remedies appropriate for it as Ranulf asserts. Nor can they all be regarded as governed by a strict, rigid and all-embracing collective conscience in the manner of Durkheim. The nature of moral beliefs vary greatly between primitive societies, often in response to the same forces which contribute to similar differences in morality within industrialized societies. Prominent amongst such forces is the extent to which individual freedom is circumscribed by social and cultural constraints.

One source of such constraint is the limitation or elimination of alternative forms of action open to individuals as the result of the force of culturally-derived standards and expectations relating to the social roles which they occupy. Societies differ in terms of the ease or difficulty with which roles are assumed or thrown off and in the range of conduct they embrace. This is the dimension which Douglas refers to as "grid".<sup>36</sup> A society in which much of an individual's daily life is dominated by his status in terms of inescapable ascribed social roles based upon age, sex and kinship is high on grid. Where high grid prevails we have a situation where there is no ambiguity about who is entitled to occupy specific roles and where the conduct expected of the occupants of such roles is clearly structured, leaving little room for personal initiative. The Tallensi, for example, are high on grid: "Here the public system of rights and duties equips each man with a full identity, prescribing for him what and when he eats, how he grooms his hair, how he is buried or born"<sup>37</sup> By way of contrast, for a primitive society low on grid, we can turn to the pygmies:

"Neither sex, age, nor kinship order their behaviour in strictly ordained categories".<sup>38</sup>

Douglas sees the expectations which constitute high grid as part of a culture which rigidly structures experience. The world is divided up in terms of fixed categories which admit no alternative interpretation of events. Strong grid rests upon assumptions unchallenged by contradictions arising within the system. It is an integrated culture in the sense discussed by Sorokin wherein beliefs do not conflict with each other but harmonize in mutual support. Nor is strong grid disrupted by exposure to the blandishments of other systems of ordering the universe. At the other extreme, where cultural definitions are suspended, where the grid has been removed, we have anomie, a situation which may be sought by the mystic or fled in despair by the suicide.

Douglas distinguishes grid from another source of social constraint which she labels "group". Group is "the experience of having no option but to consent to the overwhelming demands of other people."<sup>39</sup> This results from being committed to continuing membership of well-defined groups. Low group occurs when individuals feel free to break off local group allegiances and start afresh quite easily, where groups are fluid and mobility high.

From our earlier discussion of Ranulf's work it will be recalled that the various traits which together constitute the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment fall within two broad categories: punitiveness, and a hostility towards self-abandonment and sensual indulgence. Douglas has something to say about both categories, including the identification of the social situations in which they arise together.

Concerning origins of a stern sexual morality, she sees this



as imbedded, together with vigilant controls on bodily boundaries, in social conditions through the mechanism of symbolic replication of a social state.<sup>40</sup> Relaxing the hold of grid and group leads to concomitant relaxation of bodily control.<sup>41</sup> How individuals relate to their bodies and the nature of the control they exercise over them reflects their relationships with others and their experience of social control. Well preserved and defended social boundaries, for example, will find reflection in a preoccupation with bodily apertures, with bodily exits and entrances.

The experience of slack grid and group can come about as the result of a variety of factors such as social peripherality, an itinerant mode of production favouring a mobile social system and temporary ties, or natural disasters which disrupt social relationships. Steady allegiances and permanent attachments in work and residence are at a minimum. Professions of comment and criticism also slacken group and grid through weakening commitment to society. Tight group and grid can come about through the increased solidarity and commitment which arises out of conflict with an out-group. Using the principle of the symbolic replication of a social state to defend the ancient Israelites against criticism of their adherence to rule, the legalism of their priests and their rejection of the Dionysian mystery cults, Douglas argues that the option of worshipping God through wine, song and dance was simply not open to them so long as they were set upon resisting occupation:

It would be impossible for the leaders of an occupied but still resisting nation to adopt an effervescent form of religion. To expect them to stop preaching a stern sexual morality, vigilant control of bodily boundaries, and corresponding religious cult would be asking them to give up the political struggle.<sup>42</sup>

Tight grid and group are also felt more strongly by those with only slender resources with which to face up to the forceful demands of others. Beliefs concerning changing population size in relation to population can contribute to the experience of having no choice but to submit to social pressure. Where it is believed that resources are static or growing more slowly than population, social control is felt more keenly. Conversely, where people see themselves as living in an expanding economy, the possibility of starting afresh renders present relationships less constraining.

The experience of weak grid and group finds bodily expression through a number of channels. A positive delight in the joys of wine, women and song is more likely to be found amongst those low in terms of grid and group. Here we are more likely to find disdain for the restraints of formal etiquette and the adoption of a more informal manner and appearance, with beards and hair shaggier and unkempt. Rules about whom it will be permissible to have sexual intercourse with will be less stringent and far reaching. States of self-abandonment such as trance will be pursued as valuable experiences, whereas those tightly bound by grid and group will regard such states as dangerous and be wary of releasing conscious control. High grid and group even pervades such areas of bodily control as concern not to give way to unrestrained mirth.

Strong social control, then, calls forth strong bodily control. Furthermore, as social pressure increases, so does the demand that organic processes should be screened out of social intercourse. "The more complex the system of classification and the stronger the pressure to maintain it, the more social intercourse pretends

to take place between disembodied spirits".<sup>43</sup> The casting off of waste products - defecation, urination, vomiting and their products - have to be increasingly concealed, as do such other physiological processes as sneezes, sniffs and coughs. More refinement is demanded, less smacking of the lips when eating, less sound when walking and breathing, greater control over the expression of emotions such as anger.

High grid and group provide the social source of reification and dogmatism:

With strong grid and group, there is the tendency to take the intellectual categories which the fixed social categories require as if they were God-given eternal truths. The mind is tied hand and foot, so to speak, bound by the socially generated categories of culture. No other alternative view of reality seems possible. A small shift in the definitions is anathema and worth protecting with bloodshed. Anomaly is abhorrent.<sup>44</sup>

And turning to attitudes towards authority and deviance we find: "Strong grid and strong group will tend to routinized piety towards authority and its symbols; beliefs in a punishing, moral universe and a category of rejects."<sup>45</sup> Any hierarchy insulated from criticism and change will tend to develop such beliefs, whether they be bureaucratic, monastic, military or traditional. It can be seen most clearly in those African tribal systems stabilized by the action of colonial regimes.

The universe experienced under high grid and group is a moral universe in the sense that all misfortune is believed to be deserved as the result of sin and immorality and does not simply befall someone as the result of bad luck.

The general outlook on humanity and its fate at the hands of a stern deity is pessimistic. In dealing with misdeeds little or no heed is paid to the question of intent. The tighter grid and group, the more punishing does the cosmos appear, the lower grid and group the more benign. The former finds expression in a religion of control, the latter in a religion of ecstasy, of joy rather than fear. Population density can shape such constraints, for where

there are very few people on the ground and they meet each other infrequently and irregularly and their possibilities of evading one another's company are good, there is a lessening of control... Decreasing human contact tends to give the same result. Hence any form of dropping out which is a dropping away from other people's categories and pressures gives a rosier tinge to the world. The deeper the retreat, the greater the faith in the inner purity and goodness of the human heart; the need for ritual forms is weakened, also the sense of sin.<sup>46</sup>

So far we have been contrasting situations in which group and grid increase or diminish in intensity in step with one another. But these different forms of social constraint can vary independently and it is instructive to look more closely at each dimension in turn to discover its particular contribution to moulding ideologies and the new patterns of belief which emerge from certain other combinations of grid and group.

Diminishing grid leads to increasingly ascetic behaviour. Strong grid leads to high value being placed upon material things. No guilt is felt about spending or displays of wealth and pomp. With decreasing grid, however, one of two types of asceticism will emerge. Low grid combined with strong group calls forth strict controls on bodily enjoyment and on the gateways to sensual pleasure.

The indifference to materialism of those experiencing not only low grid but also low group is much more joyful, unmarred by such hostility to sensual pleasure. It

results from valuing human fellowship above material things. Those who belong in this sector are usually aware of other ways of living, both more arduous and more richly rewarded in material wealth. Their culture is often seen as a choice, a preference for the simple life.<sup>47</sup>

Hunting and gathering bands who decide not to follow the mode of life of their agricultural neighbours form a case in point.<sup>48</sup>

Turning to consider the influence of group boundedness we find that where this is low the cosmos is seen as dominated by impersonal powers and principles. Anthropomorphism in religion is weak, as in the Ituri pygmies idea of the forest as a cosmic force.<sup>49</sup> Nor do their religions act as moral regulators. "They hold out no system of rewards and punishment, neither in this world nor in the next".<sup>50</sup>

Under high group the opposite beliefs and values prevail and the self is subordinated, not exalted as under conditions of low grid.

Here we find:

The powers that control the universe are modelled on human figures. Either they are the spirits of dead fathers and grandfathers, or culture heroes like big brothers, or a creator god, the most ancestral figure of them all. Or they are actual, real human beings, free men with powers to bless and curse, or witches and sorcerers with their own armoury of ill-doing. On this side, where group is strong, social control is built into the cosmos. These humans and humanlike powers are activated by moral situations. Ancestors punish and reward; curses avenge moral wrong; even witches only strike when provoked by neglect or rudeness. <sup>51</sup>

Whether witches or ancestors are invoked to explain misfortune and suffering depends upon the interaction of high group with grid. It is a function of the structure of internal roles and the openness and permeability of external barriers. Where group is high and grid is high also, we have punishment by the ancestors, where group is high and grid is low, witches prevail:

By and large witchcraft beliefs are likely to flourish in small enclosed groups, where movement in and out is restricted, when interaction is unavoidably close, and where roles are undefined or so defined that they are impossible to perform.<sup>52</sup>

These conditions provide the social condition promoting "intolerance of imperfections".<sup>53</sup> They can be found in tribal societies which have strong external boundaries and yet harbour internal competition as the result of conflicting role demands and ambiguous rules of succession.<sup>54</sup> They also prevail in sectarian movements such as the Exclusive Brethren.<sup>55</sup> And they find more secular expression in support for the conspiracy theory of politics and the need to outcast evil-doers such as sustained the witch-hunt of McCarthy in America in the 1950's.<sup>56</sup>

Members of small competitive communities tend to believe that they are dwelling in a dangerous universe as the result of the sinister power exercised by their fellows. Suffering is explained by reference to witchcraft. The cosmos is viewed as dominated by ill-will and envy. It seems not unreasonable to see in their image of the witch not only their anxiety about competitive neighbours, but also a projection of the dark side of the self and the temptations they face,

while witchhunting serves them not merely as a tool of political competition, but also as their breastplate of righteousness.

Where high group prevails and such competition is removed, resulting in high grid as well, witchcraft beliefs give way to explanations of suffering in terms of punishing ancestors, as can be seen from the cyclical shift between ascribed and competitive social patterns to be seen in the development of Lugbara lineages, a development accompanied by a parallel shift from ancestor-dominated cosmologies to witch accusation.<sup>57</sup>

Witch dominated cosmologies, common where groups are penned up together and isolated from others, are rare amongst pastoralists and hunting and gathering bands:

The witch fearing cosmology goes with a closely bounded unit. When association is free and escape from unwanted ties easy, the question of evil does not take this particular form<sup>58</sup>

The hazards for such groups are, furthermore, impersonal, they come more from climate and changes in other natural forces than fellow members of a competitive group.

While Douglas develops her argument principally with the aid of cases drawn from pre-literate societies, as she herself notes: "If we cannot bring the argument back from tribal ethnography to ourselves, there is little point in starting it at all."<sup>59</sup> Her argument can indeed be brought back to illuminate life in industrial societies. But before proceeding to examine this I wish to demonstrate the cogency of her argument and to amplify and extend

her analysis with the aid of some other studies which have concentrated upon the dynamics of morality in primitive and pre-industrial societies.

### III. The civilizing process

It will by now be clear that it would not be inappropriate to borrow the term "closed society" to characterize societies high on grid and group. The closed nature of such societies can be seen in the restraints imposed by the prominence of ascribed statuses, in the insulation of their culture from alternative interpretations of the world, and in the strong boundaries which separate them from other groups.

The contrast which exists between open and closed societies, and the consequences of this contrast for the values and beliefs of their members, has been carefully examined by Robin Horton in his comparison of the traditional cultures of primitive societies and scientifically-oriented culture. The central predicament of the closed society, as he sees it, is the lack of awareness of alternative idea systems, in contrast with open societies where such awareness is relatively highly developed. Absence of awareness of alternatives

makes for an absolute acceptance of the established theoretical tenets, and removes any possibility of questioning them. In these circumstances, the established tenets invest the believer with a compelling force.<sup>60</sup>

Threats to the established paradigms are, in the absence of alternatives, threats of chaos and causes of anxiety.

The belief in the magical efficacy of words to be encountered in enclosed cultures is born of such conditions.



Since he can imagine no alternative to his established system of concepts and words, the latter appear bound to reality in an absolute fashion. There is no way at all in which they can be seen as varying independently of the segments of reality they stand for. Hence they appear so integrally involved with their referents that any manipulation of the one self-evidently affects the other.<sup>61</sup>

Closed systems also promote "taboo", a reaction of fear and loathing aroused by certain events which are seen as monstrous and polluting. These, as Mary Douglas argued in Purity and Danger, are events which seriously defy the established system of classification.<sup>62</sup>

Perhaps the most important occasion of taboo reaction in traditional African cultures is the commission of incest. Incest is one of the most flagrant defiances of the established category - system: for he who commits it treats a mother, daughter, or sister like a wife.<sup>63</sup>

Any system of thought involves a system of classification and where the former is sacred and inviolable, so will be the latter. For those in open cultures, more used to the relative status of alternative definitions of reality, taboo reactions are less common and passionate, while for the scientist the discovering of things which defy the established category system may well be sought after rather than repelled.

Horton's analysis of the nature of closed belief systems offers a valuable complement to Douglas's portrait of the culture produced by tight social and cultural constraints, adding some additional details and filling in the way in which the elements of the system are intertwined and mutually supportive. He is surely wrong, however, in attributing such a world-view to all pre-literate societies. Those low on grid and group will not be preoccupied with magic and pollution. Horton has probably been led to overgeneralize about traditional pre-

literate communities from his close concern with parts of Africa where communities are relatively closed. As Douglas says of Horton's criticism of the work of a fellow anthropologist on the savannah-dwelling Dinka for failing to give proper prominence to the role of magic in their lives:

Robin Horton read the Dinka book from his perspective in the steamy mangrove swamps of the Niger Delta where local communities are closed in and where magic is indubitably magic. But magic may be less important in open savannah lands.<sup>64</sup>

The Dinka are relatively free of group and grid in comparison with their neighbours.<sup>65</sup> The impact of social constraint upon attitudes towards the body is not limited to pre-literate societies. Similar forces can be seen at work in the history of European civilization as it emerged from the Middle Ages. Why is it, for example, that people of that period felt free to discuss or mention bodily functions more openly than Europeans of a later age, as well as feeling less need to conceal and restrain these functions? How such inhibitions emerged, how the threshold of shame and embarrassment was raised in the course of European history, is the subject of Norbert Elias's study of the civilizing process.<sup>66</sup> Using as his principal source books on etiquette written since the 13th century, Elias demonstrates how the carnal side of human nature - eating, evacuation, sleep, sex and violence - became increasingly subdued and hidden behind the scenes of social life as the warrior knights of the Middle Ages became transformed into the new aristocracy of the absolute courts. The changing social situation of the upper class was accompanied by an increasing suppression

of bodily impulses. Spitting and yawning, for example, became stifled or concealed. The process and products of bodily secretion are increasingly shielded from public gaze until, finally, suppression reaches such an intensity that they ceased to be even mentionable and everything which recalls them is avoided.

In numerous spheres of daily life parallel changes take place. Nakedness, a frequent sight in the Middle Ages, becomes a source of embarrassment. An invisible wall starts to form between one body and another, so that people become increasingly repelled by something that has been in contact with the mouth or hand of another. Table manners change accordingly and eating by hand from common bowls fades away. Food must not be grabbed and due restraint must be exercised at table. As distaste for handling food with one's fingers grows, the fork makes its appearance. This new implement comes into fashion at about the same time as the handkerchief and the nightshirt and is, like them, an invention called forth by the same civilizing process. It is not lack of resources amongst the upper class which accounts for their earlier absence, but the lack of any felt need for such means of distancing man from his body.

Sleep, like other bodily functions, is shifted behind the scenes of social life. It becomes limited to the nuclear family. Medieval society had not felt the need for such compartmentalization and naked strangers sharing the same bed was neither uncommon nor embarrassing. There grows up an increasing reserve, an emotional barrier between one body and another. As Elias remarks of the new attitudes: "One repulses the body, isolates, feels ashamed of it, tries to ignore it."<sup>67</sup>

This applies whether the body is one's own or another's. Concern with cleanliness and bathing follow the same curve of civilization.

Control of the sexual drive runs parallel with the restraints imposed upon other sensual satisfactions. Relations between the sexes, once openly discussed, become cloaked in silence and increasingly the target of moral condemnation. The extramarital relationships of men and their illegitimate offspring become more unacceptable.

In all these areas the increasing strength of self-control reflected the tightening of social control. The internal pacification of society brought about by the consolidation of the state resulted in the formerly independent members of the upper class being subject to an unprecedented extent to the pressure of others. The civilization of manners, the process of raising the threshold of shame and revulsion results from the "permanent interdependence of many people living together at the courts, the pressure exerted from above toward a stricter regulation of impulses, and therefore toward greater restraint".<sup>68</sup>

Greater repression is expected of subordinates, for what is found distasteful and disrespectful in servants is often conduct which superiors are not ashamed of in themselves. Elias's survey of the historical development of advice concerning proper manners leads him to the following conclusion:

The masters find the sight of the bodily functions of their servants distasteful; they compel them, the social inferiors in their immediate surroundings, to control and restrain these functions in a way that they do not at first impose on themselves.<sup>69</sup>

Medieval knights continued to blow their noses with their hands after their servants were required to conceal their nose blowing behind a cloth. For the knight it was sufficient if he were dining that he should turn round so as to avoid anything falling onto the table. Later, however, with the rise of absolutism and the court, the ruling class itself became a subservient and socially dependent class. As such it is itself subject to similar affective transformations:

It is no accident that the first "peak of refinement" or "delicacy" in the manner of blowing the nose - and not only here - comes in the phase when the dependence and subservience of the aristocratic upper class is at its height, the period of Louis XIV.<sup>70</sup>

Conversely, shame is not felt before inferiors:

In France, as late as the seventeenth century, kings and great lords receive especially favored inferiors on occasions on which, a German saying was later to run, even the emperor should be alone. To receive inferiors when getting up and being dressed, or on going to bed, was for a whole period a matter of course. And it shows exactly the same stage of the shame-feeling when Voltaire's mistress, Marquise de Chatelet, shows herself naked to her servant while bathing in a way that casts him into confusion, and then with total unconcern scolds him because he is not pouring in the hot water properly.<sup>71</sup>

With increasing equality within society, however, shame and anxiety about offending the sensibility of others becomes more generalized.<sup>72</sup>

Following the transformation of manners wrought by the rise of the absolutist court, the next great stride forward in raising the threshold of shame, and embarrassment is taken by the bourgeoisie. Subject to, and ever reliant upon, the internal pacification achieved by the state, the mode of life of the bourgeoisie tightened the bonds

of social control still further.

During the stage of the court aristocracy, the restraint imposed on inclinations and emotions is based primarily on consideration and respect due to others and above all to social superiors. In the subsequent stage, renunciation and restraint of impulses is compelled far less by particular persons; expressed provisionally and approxiamtely, it is now, more directly than before, the less visible and more impersonal compulsions of social interdependence, the division of labour, the market, and competition that impose restraint and control on the impulses and emotions.<sup>73</sup>

Sensuality is further repressed:

For many aspects of the "emotional economy" bourgeois

functions - above all, business life - demand and produce greater self-restraint than courtly functions... by the standard of bourgeois society the control of sexuality and the form of marriage prevalent in courtly society appear extremely lax.<sup>74</sup>

Much of Elias's portrayal of the association between social constraint and attitudes towards the body is clearly consonant with Douglas's thesis. His interpretation of the psychological processes forging this link, is, however, significantly different and leads him to posit the association of social constraint with further forms of self-restraint. For Elias sees the increasing suppression of the carnal side of human nature as part of a more general inhibition on all impulses. The individual's structure of affects is, he insists, a unity. You cannot breed circumspection and caution towards a whole range of pressing impulses and expect that the individuals thus socialized will display spontaneity and lack inhibition in other areas. The feudal knight imposed few restraints upon the satisfaction of his bodily needs and desires because he imposed few checks on any of his impulses, which he was powerful and independent enough to satisfy more or less when and where

they were felt. The civilizing process is one in which the entire pattern of effect becomes more subdued, moderated and calculating. Such emotional repression was foreign to the warrior class of the Middle Ages. Not only were their impulses more openly and spontaneously expressed, but these were more likely to oscillate between extremes. Extreme cruelty can easily give way to equally extreme pity, remorse and mercy. Prudential concern for maintaining the golden mean is out of place in such circles. Moods changed rapidly and dramatically in a way that in our own society is generally only observed in children as the result of the looser grip which socialization has had a chance to place upon them.

With the physical pacification of society however, came the psychological pacification of affect. With the monopolization of force accomplished by the state the threshold of shame and revulsion induced by belligerence rises and surrounds the symbols, gestures and instruments of menace with taboos. Elias remarks that at table for example:

The knife, long a weapon and the only eating utensil, becomes a symbol of danger and death. It generates a feeling of unease that leads to restriction and later to its suppression from use in society.<sup>75</sup>

In China, where the model-making upper class was formed by a highly pacified strata of scholarly officials rather than a warrior class, the knife disappeared altogether from use at table.

As with all other human drives, aggression is directly restrained by the increasing dependence that can arise out of the advance of social differentiation and integration. It is also similar to other emotions

in responding to such social pressure by being only able to find expression in more refined and sublimated forms, such as in dreams or spectator sports.<sup>76</sup>

The central issue for Elias is, then, to find the social roots of the suppression of spontaneity and impulsiveness. The parallels he draws between the uninhibited nature of life in the Middle Ages and similar responses in children before the full force of socialization has run its course, might be taken to indicate that such impulses are inborn instincts, only held in check by socially generated inhibitions. This implies that if social constraint is removed these instincts will resurface with all their pristine vitality. But such an approach pays too little attention to the social origins of the drives themselves, most notably in the case of aggression. As can be seen from our earlier discussion, social control over individuals in many hunting and gathering bands is relatively weak and their attitudes towards the body relatively relaxed and informal. At the same time violence is unusual. Mobility and ready access to open resources serves to reduce aggression not by restraint, but by offering alternative means of satisfying needs and avoiding the build-up of tension. Unlike martial societies which value the hot-tempered man as a fierce fighter, food-gatherers are much more likely to value those with a pleasant temperament who do not arouse quarrels.<sup>77</sup> This is not so in those areas of agrarian societies where the state has not achieved a successful monopolization of force. The effects of such a failure can be seen from Anton Blok's study of the emergence of mafia in Western Sicily in response to the weakness of the state.



Employing Elias's model of the relationship between control over the means of violence and the development of moral inhibition against its use, he notes:

These conditions did not allow for the development of a strong conscience with regard to the use of physical violence. A high sensitivity against using violence or witnessing it would have meant a serious social handicap... In fact, as noted earlier, persons who had a reputation for violence and who eschewed recourse to public authorities commanded respect.<sup>78</sup>

Such an eschewing of recourse to public authorities is a central element of the code of honour known as omertà. This is, as Mosca explains in his discussion of the mafia, is "that attitude which assumes that recourse to legal authority in cases of persecution by private enemies is a symptom of weakness, almost of cowardice".<sup>79</sup>

Elias captures well the emotional quality and social origin of moral indignation, both in his discussion of socialization and in the contrast he draws between moral indignation and compassion. On the subject of socialization, he says:

The more "natural" the standard of delicacy and shame appears to adults and the more civilized restraint of instinctual urges is taken for granted, the more incomprehensible it becomes to adults that children do not have this delicacy and shame by "nature". The children necessarily touch again and again on the adult threshold of delicacy, and - since they are not yet adapted - they infringe the taboos of society, cross the adult shame frontier, and penetrate emotional danger zones which the adult himself can only control with difficulty. In this situation the adult does not explain the demands he makes on behaviour. He is unable to do so adequately. He is so conditioned that he conforms to the social standard more or less automatically. Any behaviour, any breach of the prohibitions or restraints prevailing in his society mean danger, and a devaluation of the restraint imposed on himself. And the peculiarly emotional undertone so often associated with moral demands, the

aggressive and threatening severity with which they are frequently upheld, reflects the danger in which any breach of the prohibitions places the unstable balance of all those for whom the standard behaviour of society has become more or less "second nature". These attitudes are symptoms of the anxiety aroused in adults whenever the structure of their own instinctual life, and with it their own existence and the social order in which it is anchored, is even remotely threatened.<sup>80</sup>

Elias's contrast between moral indignation and compassion is drawn in discussing values in ancient Greece:

Altogether the level of physical insecurity in the societies of antiquity was very much higher than it is in contemporary nation-states. That their poets showed more compassion than moral indignation is not uncharacteristic of this difference. Homer, already, disapproved of the fact that Achilles, in his grief and fury at the death of Patrocles, had not only sheep, cattle and horses but also twelve young Trojan nobles killed and burned on the funeral pyre of his friend as a sacrifice to his ghost. But again, the poet did not sit in judgement and condemn his hero from the high throne of his own moral righteousness and superiority because he had committed the barbarous atrocity of "human sacrifice". The poet's criticism of Achilles did not have the emotional colour of moral indignation. It did not cast doubt on what we call the "character" of his hero, on his value as a human being. People do "bad things" - "kaka erga" - in their grief and fury. The bard shakes his head but he does not appeal to the conscience of his listeners; he does not ask them to regard Achilles as a moral reprobate, a "bad character". He appeals to their compassion, to their understanding of the passion which seizes even the best, even the heroes, in times of stress and which makes them do "bad things".<sup>81</sup>

#### IV. Technology and the moral order

For further elaboration of the nature and sociogenesis of impulse control along similar lines to both Douglas and Elias, I turn to Gouldner and Peterson's notes on technology and the moral order.<sup>82</sup>

Employing factor analysis to explore the interrelationship of cultural traits within pre-literate society, they uncover one complex of traits which they term "Apollonianism", in recognition of Nietzsche's earlier discovery and portrayal of a cultural configuration strikingly similar to that subsequently unveiled by their mathematical analysis.<sup>83</sup> Apollonian values stand in direct opposition to those which constitute the Dionysian outlook. Apollonianism differs from the latter in stressing, above all, impulse control in contrast to glorious transport and intoxication; rejection of all licence versus sexual promiscuity; stress on cognitive modes of experience, on reason, knowledge and science, rather than surrendering to "intuition" or instinct; individuation rather than surrendering oneself, evaporating into a vision of mystical oneness; emphasis on plastic arts rather than music; and a yearning for an afterlife rather than accepting the dissolution of the self.

Two traits which Gouldner and Peterson found to be prominent amongst those constituting Apollonian impulse control were elaborate supernaturally sanctioned ritual requirements and secular political power. These together restrain a person from immediate gratification of impulses. The role attributed to the former of these two forces is reminiscent of Douglas's treatment of the sociogenesis of ritual while the latter has clear affinities with Elias's theory of the role of the state in the process of civilization.

Correlating the level of technological development of the societies in their sample with the level of Apollonianism, Gouldner and Peterson conclude that the higher the level of technology the stronger is the control of impulses ( a conclusion recalling Freud's hypothesis that civilization requires the renunciation of instinctual gratification).

But what lies behind this association? Technological advance at this level of development brings increasing inequality. Social conflict between classes ensues, together with the intensification of the aggressive impulses of ambition, greed and envy.

Since Apollonianism is associated with technology, and the latter with growing social tensions, it can scarcely be expected that Apollonianism will be associated with friction-free social relations. Indeed, to the extent that the impulse control required by Apollonianism induces cumulative frustrations, Apollonianism itself may be a source of aggression. Impulse control mechanisms may, therefore, create some work for themselves, heightening certain of the impulses that it is their business to control.<sup>84</sup>

However, as we have seen, they accomplish this extra work quite readily and often to their own enhancement through the institution of disinterested punishment.

How are people brought to take upon themselves the sacrifice of renouncing immediate gratification? Gouldner and Peterson suggest three main reasons:

One, of course, has to do with the more effective power system which can systematically punish infractions. Another is the expectation of an attractive future life, which may be particularly important to those of heightened self-consciousness, insofar as the latter entails heightened anxieties about death. The priesthood may be able to manipulate such anxieties to strengthen conformity with the norms by giving assurances about the future life, as well as by providing or denying ritual preparation for it. Further, the growth of technology itself makes available, in some proportion to its development, a growing set of rewards which can, here on earth, compensate for the costs of impulse control.<sup>85</sup>

In some circumstances these three are, to an extent, mutually substitutable. On this basis the correlation between technology and Apollonianism

need not and would not be expected to continue into later epochs in which technology could supply greatly increased rewards...This line of analysis may also imply that a concentration of Apollonianism, in various forms, may be especially needed as a "starting mechanism" at the beginning of a major technological spurt or reorganization, insofar as this entails a heightening of deprivation or an initial sacrifice of traditional gratifications. Under these conditions, a concentration of Apollonianism may serve in effect as a form of 'deficit-financing', providing social controls during a period when the new technology's rewards are not yet available to motivate the new demands for impulse control. When and insofar as the increased rewards of the technology are distributed it may be that Apollonianism is a less necessary source of impulse control and may slacken.<sup>86</sup>

Gouldner has been taken to task for not realizing that Dionysus often thrives in the same social conditions which nurture Apollo.<sup>87</sup>

Yet this criticism is clearly unjust if Gouldner's subsequent work on the forces shaping social thought in ancient Greece is taken into account. There he makes quite clear his belief that Dionysianism can arise alongside Apollonianism in response to the same social changes. He also completes his earlier portrait of the two types.

Concerning their differences, Gouldner observes:

The Apollonian draws boundaries which contain things in clear-cut forms; he seeks the individuation of persons and the specialization of social roles in a hierarchical organization. The Dionysian is disposed to flow over or through boundaries, seeking the fusion of separate things and stressing the oneness of the universe; he is hostile to individuation, specialization, and hierarchy...Dionysian ideologies...stress the connectedness of all things, including the unity of nature and society. The Dionysian seek mergence with others and with the universe by a relaxation of expressive discipline sometimes attained through orgiastic excitation; the Apollonian, in contrast, is concerned to maintain separateness through the exertion of expressive discipline.<sup>89</sup>

Dionysian man values solidarity and intimacy with his fellows, whereas the Apollonian holds himself aloof and is concerned to maintain his distinctiveness and distance.

The Apollonian values the ennobling differences in men, the differences that make some higher than others. He distinguishes men from the rest of nature, focusing on those common characteristics which he believes make them higher than other species. He values primarily those qualities, such as reason, that set individuals and their species above others and not only apart. Conversely, those qualities which men share with other species tend to be regarded as lowly.<sup>90</sup>

These two portraits are, of course, ideal types. Any concrete social movement, for example, will combine elements of both in varying degrees. But Pythagoreanism might be taken as one Greek movement of the period which was more imbued with Apollonian values:

Pythagoreanism reveals itself as a revivalistic movement toward cultural revitalization in its call for renewed veneration of the gods, of ancestors, and of ancient codes of conduct. In this traditionalistic vein it emphasizes requital or retribution for evil, and it conceives of evil as a form of excess. Conversely, proper behaviour is regarded as that which is temperate or restrained and which follows the principle of limit, measure and of "no excess".<sup>91</sup>

And for an example of the dominance of an Apollonian outlook in the work of an individual, we can look to Plato's social theory:

Clearly, what Plato seeks is not so much liberty but the elimination of anomia and the establishment of social order and restraint, in political as in other matters. "Anarchy," he insists with the fervour of a Pythagorean, "must be extirpated from the entire life of all mankind and from all the breasts of men." Linked to his distinction between justice and injustice is a series of more or less explicit and corresponding dualisms: order versus disorder, temperance or restraint of the appetites versus intemperance and emotional excess; lawfulness versus lawlessness, anarchy, or anomia. (These affect-laden polarities also resonate with our own previous distinction between the Apollonian and Dionysian. Indeed, from the Platonic viewpoint, the very quintessence of vice is intemperance, a lack of emotional discipline, the concrete paradigm of which would seem to be the orgiastic ecstasy sought in the Dionysian tradition.)<sup>92</sup>

By way of providing an example of an individual opposed to such attitudes it is interesting to note that Gouldner cites Euripides, whom we have already encountered in Ranulf's work as the Greek Enlightenment opponent of the savage moral indignation of traditional Athenian morality, as a champion of Dionysian values.<sup>93</sup>

What, then, are the social conditions fostering the rise of Dionysianism? One of the best answers so far advanced by those who have addressed themselves to this question has been provided by Frank Musgrove in his demonstration of the links between values, the economic order and the open society.

Gouldner and Peterson, it will be recalled, suggest that thrift, sobriety and steady application is called forth at the start of economic revolutions. Musgrove does not deny this, but emphasizes that conditions frequently associated with such revolutions also generate values and beliefs which are discordant with the self-discipline needed to promote economic growth. To demonstrate this he examines five great economic revolutions: the neolithic revolution, the eleventh - century industrial revolution, the commercial revolution of the sixteenth century, the classical industrial revolution of the nineteenth century, and the cybernetic revolution of today. And he concludes: "All appeared to have 'counter cultures' which were at least superficially discordant and 'unhelpful', especially in their support for non-rational, 'disorderly' and highly emotional modes of conduct."<sup>94</sup>

To examine why this should be so, Musgrove employs the Apollonian-Dionysian polarity. Also taking his lead from the work of Nietzsche, he describes the contrast in terms consistent with those we have already encountered:

Apollo is judicious (and judicial), calm, rational, circumspect, guarded and restrained. He makes laws and obeys them. He is an individualist, with a strong sense of boundaries and separateness - he is never "beside himself", he never loses himself. Even in anger decorum never deserts him: he is the perfect ambassador, the supreme bureaucrat. (And he is always meticulously and appropriately dressed for the part. He is a man to whom externals are important.).... Dionysus has no sense of boundaries. He bursts any that surround him, including the boundaries of self that mark him off from others and the world. Dionysus is open. Apollo is closed. <sup>95</sup>

The value of Apollonianism for economic growth is clear, for "whatever the precise emphasis within the complex of Apollonian characteristics, it is never self-indulgent, sleepy, lazy or erratic; it is invariably rational, deliberate, and 'future-oriented'. Its drunkenness is social and its sexuality diplomatic". <sup>96</sup>

Periods of great economic growth and change are thrust forward by those adhering to such values. Sixteenth century capitalism found them amongst the Puritans and the nineteenth century amongst the utilitarians and nonconformists. But what is it about such periods which also favours the rise of Dionysian counter cultures? Musgrove sees the answer in demographic changes:

Successful economic revolutions are associated with population movement and growth. It is the consequent social dislocation and uncertainty and threat to established identities that most satisfactorily explain the conjunction of economic order and spectacular poetic excess. Social dislocation calls for experiments in new interactional norms. Ecstasy is demographic. <sup>97</sup>



Not only prosperity, but openness, with social bonds weakened and questioned as the result of increasing social and geographic mobility, is needed for the emergence of Dionysianism. For: "Dionysus is not the child of deprivation but of unnerving opportunity".<sup>98</sup>

The importance of population movement and growth in addition to economic prosperity for the rise of Dionysian beliefs can be seen from their relative absence from Renaissance Italy:

Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was highly bureaucratic and capitalistic in its economic organization, its population was stagnant and Apollonian men conducted its affairs (and even painted its pictures and executed its sculpture) with the calm assurance which come to men of prudence, assured position, nice calculation and foresight.<sup>99</sup>

It was, contrary to Burckhardt's romantic portrait of the era, a closed society with rigid hierarchies and severely limited opportunities. Renaissance Italy, while prosperous, had a stationary economy and a population stable both in terms of size and movement. With such stability came social rigidity and exclusiveness, an absence of the openness needed to promote the Dionysian temper.

The combination of economic growth and population movement promotes social dislocation, opportunity and uncertainty. It is such conditions that we find Durkheimian anomie, which, as we have seen in discussing the work of Douglas, is fostered by loosening social ties, slackening of grid and group. These provide the opportunity for Dionysian ecstasy.

The open society is the society of opportunity and anomie...  
When there are no boundaries and goals are infinite -  
as with Nietzsche's Dionysus and Spengler's Faust -

there is anomie, exhilaration and perhaps ecstasy. The certain cure for anomie and ecstasy is limited and specific goals, lack of opportunity, hierarchy and due subordination.<sup>100</sup>

Dionysian counter cultures celebrate openness. They are not merely a product of lighter social constraints but also an affirmation of the value of such conditions.

#### NOTES

1. Ranulf (1964), pp. 116-117
2. Radcliffe-Brown (1952), p. 212
3. Hobhouse, et al. (1965), p.54
4. See Radin (1936).
5. Ibid., p. 336
6. A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, quoted in Mair (1964), p. 158. Cf. Hoebel on the collective sanctioning of the execution of homicidal recidivists amongst the Eskimo (Hoebel, 1968 pp. 84ff).
7. Mair (1964), pp. 157-158
8. Hobhouse, et al. (1965), pp. 55-56
9. Ibid., p.56
10. Ibid., pp. 56-57
11. Ibid., pp. 61ff
12. Hoebel (1968), p. 327
13. Lenski (1966).
14. Lenski (1970), p. 475
15. Spitzer (1975). See also Schwartz and Miller (1964)

16. Spitzer (1975), pp. 623-624. Spitzer also finds that relatively concentrated societies, those made up of compact and relatively permanent settlements, are more severe than dispersed societies made up of migratory bands and scattered dwellings.
17. Radcliffe-Brown (1952), p. 213
18. Hobhouse, et al. (1965), p. 81, n. 1.
19. Mair (1964), pp. 119ff.
20. Colson (1975), p. 64
21. Sorrenson (1972), p.360
22. Ibid., p. 362
23. Colson (1975), p.67
24. For some illustrations drawn from Africa, see Mair (1964) pp. 35ff
25. See Moore (1972)
26. Colson (1975), p. 37
27. Furer-Haimendorf (1967), p.22
28. Diamond (1973), p.339
29. Ibid., p.332
30. Spitzer (1975), pp. 624-625
31. Nagel (1962), pp. 153-154
32. See the argument unfolded in Power and Privilege by Lenski (1966); see also the remarks on "hypercentralization" by Spitzer (1975), p.625
33. Mead (1963), p.15
34. Goode (1951), p. 102
35. Ibid., p.64
36. Douglas (1973), pp. 81ff
37. Ibid., pp. 86-87
38. Ibid., p.132
39. Ibid., p.81
40. Ibid., p.113
41. Ibid., p.114
42. Ibid., p.113. Cf. Bullough's comment on Jewish history; "When Judaism seemed threatened, when the Jews, both as a group and as individuals, were insecure, their sexual attitude was the most repressive. When there was a greater feeling of security, attitudes were more tolerant" (Bullough, 1976, p.75)
43. Douglas (1973), p.101
44. Ibid., p.174
45. Ibid., p.87
46. Ibid., p.172
47. Ibid., p.177
48. Sahlins (1974), p.27
49. Douglas (1973), p.176
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., p.148
53. Ibid., p.175
54. Ibid., p.137
55. Ibid., pp.140ff
56. Ibid., pp. 169-170

57. Douglas (1973), p.146
58. Ibid., p.147. Colson points out that it is not just the ease with which pastoralists can leave groups which accounts for the lack of witchcraft accusations amongst them in comparison with more settled neighbours, but also the quality of social surveillance which such mobility permits. Such conditions are not suited to the intense gossip which enables individuals to pool suspicions arising from different incidents (Colson, 1975, pp. 55ff)
59. Douglas (1973), p.15
60. Horton (1970), p.154
61. Ibid., p.156
62. Douglas (1970).
63. Horton (1970), p.165
64. Douglas (1973), p.36
65. Ibid., pp. 119ff
66. Elias (1978),
67. Fontaine (1978), p.245
68. Elias (1978), p.137
69. Ibid., p.151
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid., p.138
72. Cf. the investigation of Brown into the evolution of European pronouns of address for a discussion of parallel developments in polite conversation in response to the the advance of social equality (Brown, 1965, pp. 51ff).
73. Elias (1978), p.152
74. Ibid., p.186
75. Fontaine (1978), p.244
76. See Elias (1971).
77. Furer-Haimendorf (1967), pp. 15ff
78. Blok (1974), p.211
79. Mosca (1933), p.36
80. Elias (1978), pp. 167-168
81. Elias (1971), pp. 108-109
82. Gouldner and Peterson (1962)
83. Ibid., pp. 32-34. These ideas were developed by Nietzsche in The Birth of Tragedy (Nietzsche, 1967)
84. Gouldner and Peterson (1962), p.38
85. Ibid., pp. 51-52
86. Ibid., pp. 52-53
87. Musgrove (1974), p.50
88. Gouldner (1965), pp. 116-117
89. Ibid., p.120
90. Ibid., p.122
91. Ibid., p.124
92. Ibid., p.221
93. Ibid., pp. 118-119
94. Musgrove (1974), p.41
95. Ibid., pp. 45-46
96. Ibid., p.47
97. Ibid., p.45
98. Ibid., p.59
99. Ibid., p.60
100. Ibid., p. 64

## CHAPTER 5

### THE PERILS OF PERMISSIVENESS: MORAL INDIGNATION AND CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN SOCIAL CONTROL

#### I. Subterranean values and the ethos of productivity

Does moral indignation continue to exercise any marked influence over morality and conduct, or is it now principally of historical interest?

For Harold Lasswell, at least, moral indignation appears as a vanishing source of social control as the advent of advanced industrial society produces conditions which enable society to outgrow such irrational sentiments. He sees such sentiments being eliminated by the growth of a tolerant and less punitive moral climate that is more in accord with the nature of the contemporary social order.<sup>1</sup> Certain contemporary developments in morality would certainly appear to lend credence to such ideas.

To illustrate this development we can take up from where we left off the last chapter, for Dionysianism in the form of the counter culture which emerged in the 1960's represents the antithesis of those beliefs and values so dear to the hearts of the morally indignant. Since Musgrove completed his study of it in 1973, the counter culture, seen in terms of groups committed to putting its ideals into practice, has experienced something of a decline. This is quite in accordance with what is known about the circumstances propitious to the flowering of such movements, given the atmosphere of economic depression in the 1970's. Nevertheless, numerically it is still far from extinct. Its members are to be found running rural communes, whole-food co-operatives and radical

bookstores, together with a variety of community projects. Closest to its romantic inspiration the counter culture as a movement is even still to be found lingering in the dwellings of the tepee people in the depths of Wales. Most significantly, it provides the main stay of the current campaign against nuclear power.

The development of the ideology of those movements concerned with combatting moral pollution, which are discussed later in this chapter, has reflected their recognition that the emergence of the counter culture represented a complete challenge to their way of life, and and the values they uphold. Mary Whitehouse, for example, giving vent to her feelings on the prosecution of the underground magazine OZ, clearly identified the counter culture as one of the principal sources and examples of the moral degeneration facing the nation:

In the OZ case, as in the case of the Little Red Schoolbook, millions were left wondering what it had all been about.. But thousands of parents who had seen their children's life style changed through the impact of the underground press were only too well aware of its significance. They knew Richard Neville not as some hard-done-by humorist but as the author of the paperback Play Power which became the handbook of the international dropouts and bemused pot-smoking youngsters persuaded to believe that society was rotten, life was too tough and the odds stacked too heavily against them - the best thing to do was to drop out and bum around. The purpose of the underground press is "not so much to dissent as to disrupt" and its editorial policies explicitly and implicitly seek to overthrow society as we know it and of this it made no secret.<sup>2</sup>

It is not, however, so much the counter culture seen as a social movement upon which I wish to focus at this point, but as a system of beliefs and values and it is in this sense that the term will be employed from hereon.

These values and beliefs are the antithesis of the culture of the morally indignant and delineating them will help to throw the latter into sharp relief and help in the investigation of conditions hostile to its development. As will be apparent, the portraits painted here will be in the nature of ideal types; encountering total commitment to every facet of the culture to which they refer is hardly to be expected, particularly as they include models of conduct which people seek to approach rather than expect to attain. Nevertheless, there is clear evidence, as we have seen, that certain social conditions will propel people closer towards such an outlook and away from the culture of the morally indignant. Contemporary counter culture, like its historical predecessors, flourishes where group and grid are weak, where loose social networks and an open society prevail.

The contradiction between the counter culture and the culture of the morally indignant does not, of course, embrace every opinion. Nevertheless, it runs deep, and what at first sight appear to be areas of agreement often appear on closer examination to have little substance when isolated opinions are related to the broader system of values and beliefs from which they draw their meaning.

In recent years, for example, the counter culture (in this case both as a movement and an ideology) has been pervaded by the ideals of the women's liberation movement. Now both feminists and those contemporary movements which give voice to the system of values and beliefs associated with moral indignation, movements such as the Festival of Light, The National Viewers' and Listeners' Association and the Responsible Society, are opposed to commercial pornography.

They share not only the same enemy, but also couch some of their arguments against it in similar terms, such as attacking commercial pornography as a damaging assault upon the dignity of women. Closer examination of their beliefs, however, reveals that agreement between the two sides is superficial and that their understanding of what constitutes women's rights are fundamentally opposed and spring from mutually antipathetic views of the world.<sup>3</sup>

To understand the nature of the counter culture in relation to the wider society in which it is located, it is useful to employ the theory of subterranean values. Matza and Sykes, writing in 1961, emphasized that attention needs to be paid not only to the contrasts which exist between the cultures of different groups and societies, but also to the inconsistencies which exist within these cultures. Within the value systems of all members of society there exists a tension between the overt, dominant values of society on the one hand and subterranean values on the other. Matza and Sykes see the subterranean values of society as including a desire for adventure, excitement and thrills. Such a desire often exists side by side with such respectable values as the desire for routine and security. "It is not a deviant value, in any full sense, but it must be held in abeyance until the proper moment and circumstances for its expression arise."<sup>4</sup>



For

the value of adventure certainly does not provide the major organizational principle of the dominant social order in modern, industrial society, This is especially true in the work-a-day world where so much activity is founded on bureaucratization and all that it implies with regard to routinization, standardization and so on. But this is not to say that the element of adventure is completely rejected by the society at large or never appears in the motivational structure of the law-abiding.<sup>5</sup>

Society tends to cope with the resulting tension through setting aside certain periods when subterranean values are allowed expression, periods such as holidays, festivals and sporting events. The saturnalia of the ancient world is a particularly vivid example, incorporating the reversal of normal rules and relations.<sup>6</sup>

Matza and Sykes are particularly concerned to examine how juvenile delinquency appears in the light of this model. From this perspective juvenile delinquents appear "not an alien in the body of society but representing instead a disturbing reflection or caricature".<sup>7</sup> For the dominant society

exhibits a widespread taste for violence, since fantasies of violence in books, magazines, movies, and television are everywhere at hand. The delinquent simply translates into behaviour those values that the majority are usually too timid to express.<sup>8</sup>

More respectable members of the community, careful to hold their subterranean impulses firmly in check are likely to adopt a more ambivalent attitude towards such fictional exploits. Rather than imitation on the part of such members of the community, then we are likely to find an ambivalent attitude towards those overstepping the boundaries set upon the indulgence of subterranean desires, an ambivalence similar to that which we encountered amongst

the respectable citizens of Athens towards the heroes of their tragedies, a vicarious enjoyment of their hubristic and daring exploits mingled with a never tiring smugness at hearing of their eventual downfall at the hands of justice.

Following upon the work of Jock Young, we can characterize the contrast between the dominant, official values of the world of work with subterranean values in the following way.<sup>9</sup> The former emphasize deferred gratification; planning future action; conformity to bureaucratic rules; fatalism, with high control over detail, but little over direction; routine and predictability; instrumental attitudes to work; and hard work seen as a virtue. The latter represent the antitheses of these respectable virtues. They enjoin short-term hedonism; spontaneity; ego-expressivity; autonomy, with control over both the detail and direction of behaviour; new experience, excitement; the performance of activities as an end-in-themselves; and disdain for work. Relatively few members of society opt to accentuate subterranean values to the extent of denigrating the dominant value system. For most, indulgence in the former is mediated by performance in accord with the latter set of values as the result of the prevailing ethos of productivity which

states that a man is justified in expressing subterranean values if, and only if, he has earned the right to do so by working hard and being productive. Pleasure can only be legitimately purchased by the credit card of work.<sup>10</sup>

This moral solution to the tension between the two competing value systems is not, however, flawless, for people can come to doubt

both the sanity of alienated work and the validity of their leisure. For they cannot compartmentalize their life in a satisfactory manner: their socialization for work inhibits their leisure, and their utopias of leisure belittle their work.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, for the present the ethos of productivity remains strong, acting to keep within bounds the recent shift in emphasis away from the preoccupation with production to expanded possibilities in the field of consumption and leisure. As Musgrove notes in attempting to account for the positive result of studies of job satisfaction: "It is shameful in Western industrial societies for anyone to confess that he hates his work, dislikes his boss, and has often changed his job".<sup>12</sup> The counter culture, unencumbered by the ethos of productivity, is untroubled by such shame:

It is principally within the counter culture that an unequivocal and unapologetic "fun morality" is to be found: work is not only de-emphasized and displaced from the centre of life, but the obligation to engage in "productive" work is not recognized. The justification for activity is personal enrichment and extension of awareness, social service, or frankly enjoyment.<sup>13</sup>

As a result of such attitudes the counter culture is a prime target for moral indignation: "fascinating because they act out in an uninhibited fashion the subterranean goals which the rest of the population desires, immediately condemnable because they do not deserve any of these rewards".<sup>14</sup> As Paul Goodman notes of the treatment meted out to hippies:

Proportionate to its numbers, this group is by far the most harrassed, beat up, and jailed by the police.. with the hippies there is a gut reaction from the beginning - they are dirty, indecent, shiftless; they threaten the self justification of the system.<sup>15</sup>

Young sees the ethos of productivity as shaping attitudes towards the young in general as the result of their removal from full participation in the economy; "Restriction on youth's economic activities are reflected in the moratorium placed upon their sexual habits. For the ethos of productivity dictates that only those who are economically self-sufficient are entitled to enjoy full sexual relationships".<sup>16</sup> Similarly it is the use of marijuana to express or facilitate the pursuit of subterranean goals unfettered by the ethos of productivity which calls forth repression against those enjoying unearned pleasure. As Alisdair MacIntyre observes:

Most of the hostility that I have met with occurs from people who have never examined the facts at all. I suspect that what makes them dislike cannabis is not the belief that the effects of taking it are harmful but rather a horrifying suspicion that here is a source of pure pleasure which is available for those who have not earned it, who do not deserve it.<sup>17</sup>

Clearly the counter-cultural view of the world is in many respects the antithesis of that entertained by the morally indignant. It is in favour of uninhibited sexual relationships, against the work ethic and organizational restraints, opposed to authority.

The gross power of government, industrial, military (and educational) bureaucracies, as well as their infrastructure of rule-regulation, are seen as exploitative and dehumanizing... Deference is degradation, ambition is corruption, and rule-observation and bureaucratic routine a denial of human spontaneity and autonomy.<sup>18</sup>

It is opposed to the hierarchical grading of people in terms of race, sex or examination. Systems and processes of classification are suspect, hindering openness, mutability and flux. This extends beyond dereifying conventional social roles to attempts to ease the normal boundaries of sense impression and perception through, for example, the use of hallucinogens.

As Willian Braden writes of the effect of L.S.D.

Subject-object relationships dissolve, and the world no longer ends at one's fingertips: the world is simply an extension of the body, or the mind...As for identity, it is not really lost. On the contrary, it is expanded to include all that is seen and all that is not seen. What occurs is simply depersonalization.<sup>19</sup>

Open and free communication, untroubled by the use of obscenities, is valued. The nuclear family is rejected both on the grounds of its sexual exclusiveness and its centralized exercise of power.

Conceived of as a system of sentiments and beliefs the counter culture can, then, be seen as in many respects a polar type to the system of sentiments and beliefs which we have seen as characterising the outlook of the morally indignant. The counter culture is the product of diminishing social pressure, of a relatively open society. Moral indignation is quite the reverse. It is the product of social constraint, of impermeable social boundaries and pressing obligations.

Strong commitment to the central tenets of counter-cultural philosophy is till limited to a small minority. Nevertheless, as will be illustrated in the following section contemporary morality has moved away from a number of the traditional standards championed by the morally indignant towards a more permissive stance. Certain sections of society are in the **vanguard** of this change. Examining who they are in addition to reviewing the general trend of development in morality will shed light on the structural changes which have nourished this development.

## II. Structural origins of contemporary developments in morality

The emergence of the counter culture in Britain in the 1960's represented the most extreme development of trends which were not limited to itself. The decline of deference, for example, has been more general. The working class has become less deferential in its respect for the major social and political institutions of society, a change reflected in the decline in deferential Conservative voting amongst the working class.<sup>20</sup> Musgrove sees this particular change as largely the result of increasing urbanization and the creation of an urban population living, in the main, in one-class districts. The extent of the surveillance and social control exercised by superiors declines:

One-class residential areas are a powerful safeguard of human dignity. Deference is eroded in one-class estates, where a man can walk his neighbourhood streets without having to pull his forelock.<sup>21</sup>

Musgrove also notes that there is evidence from studies of the social and political attitudes of school children that the middle class is also declining in the deference they accord to our major social and political institutions.<sup>22</sup>

Musgrove views the changes in values amongst young people which his study reveals as having taken place between 1963 and 1973 as representing a radical transition from an uncritical acceptance of the outlook of their elders to the elaboration of a new set of values in conflict with traditional morality. His focus upon the counter culture means that this change appears more marked than

it was for the mass of the population. Nevertheless, there is clear evidence that there has been a significant change in moral standards over this period, a series of changes generally referred to as the emergence of a permissive society. The change has been particularly marked amongst the young, leading to an inevitable increase in inter-generational conflict.

The extent of the change is indicated by two surveys undertaken by Wright and Cox. Repeating in 1970 a survey of sixth form students previously undertaken amongst a similar sample in 1963 they found that there had been a shift away from the unqualified condemnation of misdeeds. The most dramatic changes in the direction of greater tolerance occurred in relation to anti-ascetic action, which are

forms of individual self-indulgence the undesirable consequences of which, if any, are felt mainly by those who engage in them...Examples are forms of 'immoral' sexual behaviour, drunkenness and drug-taking<sup>23</sup>

Wright sums up the changes revealed in this area as follows:

As far as anti-ascetic actions are concerned there has been a considerable change in the direction of a position which holds that provided no one else is hurt, and in the case of sexual intercourse provided the couple love each other and are responsible, it is no one's business to pass moral judgements on them<sup>24</sup>

Wright goes on to note that surveys reveal that from "the middle twenties onwards, the trend is for moral beliefs to become progressively less flexible, and for people to grow less permissive in their judgements".<sup>25</sup> Berl Kutchinsky, reviewing research on knowledge and opinion about law and morality undertaken in a number of advanced industrial societies in recent years, finds that they confirm the association between age and morality:

The general trends can be summarized as follows: Young persons tend to be more lenient, tolerant, reform-minded and liberal towards crime and criminals, while older people tend to be more severe, intolerant, oppressive and conservative with regard to legal reforms. Young people also tend to express less respect for the law than older persons.<sup>26</sup>

He challenges, however, psychological interpretations of this association of the sort offered by Wright by pointing to two developments for which they are unable to account:

Firstly, in early studies (mainly before 1965) the age differences were less prominent than in the more recent studies. Secondly, the differences between older and younger women seem to be much more prominent than the differences between older and younger men. In other words, the findings suggest that the differences between young and old people are becoming more distinct, and this tendency towards polarization is more marked among women than among men.<sup>27</sup>

Rather than people growing more severe with age it is better to conceive of them as becoming less flexible in terms of attitude change in general in comparison with the plasticity of youth. The reason for the smaller age differences in the earlier studies - and the differences between the pre- and post - 1965 studies suggests that the 1960's was a pivotal point in the development of morality in several advanced industrial societies - is that the pace of socio-cultural change has accelerated. As a result the polarization between young and the old has inevitably increased. Similarly, the position and views of women have been changing more rapidly than those of men, but the relative inflexibility of older people has meant that older women have been less likely to reflect the changed circumstances in their attitudes.

In Britain the last twenty years have brought about a growth in the willingness to tolerate and indulge in sexual behaviour previously condemned. The surveys of Wright and Cox clearly indicate that the greatest change in the direction of permissive moral standards



amongst young people has taken place in relation to sexual conduct the change being most marked in the case of the attitudes of girls.<sup>28</sup> Behaviour is moving in line with attitudes. Schofield's study of the sexual behaviour of young people shows an increase to have taken place in the proportion of girls experiencing pre-marital sexual intercourse between 1959 and 1964.<sup>29</sup> There can be little doubt that this continued to rise after that period.<sup>30</sup> Improved methods of contraception - most notably the introduction of the contraceptive pill - have doubtless made a major contribution to this trend. Even without such improved methods, however, the changing climate of opinion has meant that illegitimate pregnancy is now met with less severe consequences than formerly. Apart from the increased availability and safety of abortions, social sanctions against unmarried mothers have been relaxed. This is reflected in the declining number of babies available for adoption despite the increase in illegitimate births.<sup>31</sup>

The growing tolerance and permissiveness of the British public over the last twenty years has been matched by changes in government and media policies. As Christie Davies summarizes the changes in this respect:

The guardians of society's morality have made little attempt to prevent or reverse these changes and indeed did much to encourage and accelerate them. Parliament freed homosexuals from prosecution, legalized abortion, made it easier to get a divorce or to lay a bet, and liberalized the law on censorship. The courts, the broadcasters, the publishers and other bodies relaxed their attitudes as to what books, plays, films and programmes could be sold or shown... Even where society continued to condemn an action as immoral, its relaxed its penalties and made punishment more lenient. Capital punishment was abolished and corporal punishment was ended in prison and curtailed in schools.<sup>32</sup>

Seen in such terms, the permissive society clearly poses a direct affront to moral indignation.

Such a rapid change towards permissive moral sentiments, with an inevitable upswing in intergenerational conflict, as was witnessed in both Britain and America during the 1960's is not without precedent in this century. In both countries sections of the younger generation became rapidly more permissive in their outlook in both the 1920's and the 1960's, with a slower rate of change in the same direction continuing to unfold in the intervening decades.<sup>33</sup>

In Britain, it is true, the change was less dramatic during the 1920's than in America, being confined to the more prosperous.<sup>34</sup>

Affluence was more widespread in America at the time due to greater economic expansion. This underwrote a more widespread change towards permissiveness in the way Ranulf's analysis of the economic roots of morality would suggest.<sup>35</sup>

Davies argues that a common thread running through the changing moral attitudes in Britain over the last two decades has been the replacement of "moralism" by "causalism". The former deals with issues of permitting or prohibiting an activity in terms of the intrinsic wickedness or goodness of the activity itself, irrespective of its consequences. The latter concerns itself solely with the balance of harm resulting from forbidding or allowing an activity. Even if the activity itself is considered immoral, such consideration will be outweighed in the mind of the causalist if it is demonstrated that forbidding an act fails to resolve conflict and increases suffering.<sup>36</sup>

This change can be seen most clearly in the changes introduced by the 1967 Divorce Act. Before this Act came into operation the only grounds for divorce were to prove the commission of a "matrimonial offence" such as adultery, cruelty or desertion. The function of the court in such cases was to determine guilt and innocence in relation to an offence. By contrast, the new proceedings are not at all concerned to allocate responsibility for an offence, but to determine whether a marriage has irretrievably broken down. Under the new law, as Richards remarks, "it is not sufficient to show that the respondent has committed adultery; the petitioner must also satisfy the court that he or she now finds it intolerable to live with the respondent." <sup>37</sup>

The debate upon the Divorce Bill was conducted overwhelmingly in causalist terms, with opponents phrasing their opposition in terms of the factual basis of the reformers' case. They argued, in effect, that the relative balance of consequences between the reformed and unreformed situation in terms of the reduction of human suffering was in favour of making no alteration in the law, rather than attacking divorce as wrong in itself. Yet there is reason to suspect that this was a somewhat spurious causalism, serving to defend moralist objections, given the high correlation of religious belief and views on this issue. Roman Catholics were particularly likely to be opposed to reform, as were the majority of Anglican M.P.'s. <sup>38</sup>

Similarly, the opponents of the Abortion Act, while giving clearer expression to moralist condemnation of abortion, did not press such arguments too hard within a predominantly causalist House of Commons in comparison with the use made of them in the campaign outside Parliament. The supporters of the Bill, arguing in causalist terms, did not couch their argument in terms of women's rights, but simply stressed that legalized abortion was the lesser of two evils.<sup>39</sup>

The history of the attempts to abolish capital punishment in Britain since the war show a similar change. In the past both retentionists and abolitionists were more likely to stress the importance of moral arguments in assessing the death penalty. Retentionists, for example, were more likely in earlier debates to stress the death penalty as just retribution, while abolitionist sentiment condemned the taking of life by the State as inherently wrong irrespective of its value as a deterrent. Gradually, however, causalism has gained the upper hand, with the issue increasingly being argued in terms of the effectiveness of capital punishment as a deterrent.<sup>40</sup>

The decline of moralism and the rise of causalism can, Davies argues, also be seen to underpin the growing freedom of expression allowed in the media and increased sexual permissiveness.<sup>41</sup> But what accounts for the decline of moralism?

Davies sees the rise of modern bureaucracy as the main answer to this question:

The causalist mode of tackling questions is one that developed because it was the best method of governing the relationships between large bureaucratic organizations. The moralist way of looking at the world which had evolved in small communities and which sought to regulate relationships of individuals living in such communities proved unsuitable to this new context. One cannot describe ICI or Distillers or the Department of the Environment or the Prudential Assurance Company or the Transport and General Workers Union as 'good' or 'bad' 'praiseworthy' or 'blameworthy' in exactly the same sense as one can apply these terms to particular individuals. They are not persons and the relationships between them are more usefully seen in terms of cause and effect than in terms of reward and punishment.<sup>42</sup>

The increasing tendency to think of society and to attempt to solve problems between institutions in causalist terms spills over into attempts to regulate other areas of social life such as those issues of public policy and private morality touched upon above.

Herbert Marcuse has noted a similar tendency for the growing pervasiveness of bureaucratic institutions to undermine moralism:

With the rationalization of the productive apparatus, with the multiplication of functions, all domination assumes the form of administration...Control is usually administered by offices in which the controllers are employers and the employed...The sadistic principal, the capitalist exploiters, have been transformed into salaried members of a bureaucracy, whom their subjects meet as members of another bureaucracy. The aggressive impulse plunges into a void - or rather encounters smiling colleagues, busy competitors, obedient officials, helpful social workers who are all doing their duty and who are all innocent victims.<sup>43</sup>

In at least one area, however, there has been the decline of a particular type of bureaucracy which has allowed one facet of the permissive society, namely male homosexuality, to gain greater

acceptance than formerly. Fluctuations in the moral condemnation accorded to homosexuality are closely related to the nature of the armed forces within our society. These have been, since the army reforms of the last century, essentially bureaucratic organizations. Not only are the formation of specific homosexual ties within primary groups within the forces frowned upon in favour of a more diffuse loyalty to the group as a whole in order to avoid jealousy and tension, but homosexual ties may be formed across the military hierarchy, eroding discipline. The importance of such considerations within the forces are reflected in the refusal to extend the legalization of homosexual acts between consenting adults in 1966 to those within the armed forces.

During the period when Britain had a large overseas empire, the military and the all-male quasi-military bureaucracies employed to administer it were a most important group and close attention was paid to cultivating the moral qualities necessary for them to fulfill their task. This is reflected in the tightening up of restrictions against homosexuality and an increasing concern with its possible development in public schools during the late nineteenth century.<sup>44</sup> With the decline of the Empire in recent years the importance of the military has declined and its interests no longer exercise the sway over public policy they once enjoyed.

Not only must we take into account the changing balance of forces between different types of bureaucracy in attempting to account for

changes in morality, but we must also keep in mind the sort of personnel which the tasks undertaken by modern organizations demand and create.

It is hard to generalize about the role of modern bureaucracies in shaping the moral outlook of their members, for, as we have seen in surveying Kohn's study of the impact of alienation upon conformity, this depends upon the nature of the individual's position within the hierarchy and the extent of self-direction his work entails. Certainly there are forces at work in bureaucracies which are favourable to the development of such traits as rigidity and overconformity, as Merton indicates in his discussion of bureaucratic structure and personality.<sup>45</sup> But the picture must not be overdrawn and there appear to be trends at work within modern bureaucracy which run counter to such forces. As Musgrove observes in reply to Merton's argument:

More recent investigations have shown modern bureaucracies obsessed not with rule-observation but with flexibility, even to the extent of creating chaos, confusion and uncertainty about rule application, to the dismay of bemused clients who wish to know where they stand. Meticulous and unbending rule-observation is a serious disqualification in a modern bureaucrat.<sup>46</sup>

Similarly, Crozier has argues that: "The modern organization can tolerate more deviance, restrict its requirements to a more specialized field, and demand only temporary commitments."<sup>47</sup> The hold of contemporary bureaucracies over their member is further loosened by the devolution of decision making down into the

organization necessitated by the increasing complexity of the tasks undertaken.<sup>48</sup> This increases the power of the technical intelligentsia. This group, together with intellectuals, constitute a class whose distinctive values deserve close attention.

Gouldner has argued that a willingness to place the worth of any practice under the inspection of critical discussion and the refusal to justify assertions simply by appeals to authority, sentiments central to the causalist outlook, are values particularly characteristic of this New Class of intellectuals and technical intelligentsia whose distinctive class situation is determined by their possession of cultural capital in the form of expertise. The growth of this class in numbers and importance promotes the spread of causalism at the expense of moralism. This class comes to have an increasingly important role within society as the growing size and complexity of the operations of contemporary bureaucracies lead to the devolution of power down into the technostructure. As a result modern organizations are not characterized by a unified bureaucratic temperament, but by different temperaments according to the roles played within the organization:

The cadre of the old bureaucratic structure are an officialdom...the "bureaucrats" of legendary stigma, the "line" officials whose position depends simply on their rigorous conformity with organizational rules, obedience to their superiors orders, the legality of their appointment, and sheer seniority. Their principal function is control over the behaviour of those beneath them and those outside the organization. They are rooted in the elemental impulse of domination.... The old bureaucrats' skills are often little more than being able to read, write, file, and are limited to their employing bureaucracy. The new intelligentsia's greater cultural capital is, indeed, more productive of goods and services and they are, therefore less



concerned to vaunt their personal superiority or to extract deference from those below them.. Bureaucrats employ a control apparatus based on "ordering and forbidding", threatening and punishing the disobedient or resistant. The intelligentsia of the New Class, capable of increasing services and production, typically seek to control by rewarding persons for conformity to their expectations, by providing material incentives and, also, by educational indoctrination... They are less over-bearing and less punishment-prone.<sup>49</sup>

Similar sources of strain within the ranks of the middle class can be observed from a consideration of middle class radicalism. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, for example, was primarily a movement of middle class radicals opposed to such dominant values of British society as the monarchy, private property, religion, militarism and nationalism.<sup>50</sup> It was not simply a middle class movement, however, but one which drew upon the support of the better educated middle class. The expansion of the educated middle class, of what Gouldner calls the New Class of professional and scientific staff, introduces into the middle class a growing number less willing to accept without question traditional morality. For central to the mass production of the New Class, to the creation of the cultural capital on which it is based, is the extension of public education. As we have seen, increased education is associated with a decline in such supports of moral intolerance as rigidity, authoritarianism and dogmatism. For education influences morality through extending cosmopolitanism, freeing people from a dependence upon a narrow range of fixed ideas and limited sources of opinion, as well as facilitating greater freedom through the provision of resources in the form of cultural capital.

Clearly there exist differences within the New Class, despite common foundations upon cultural capital. Nevertheless, the differences between the technical intelligentsia and the intellectuals, for example, fade when both stand contrasted with certain other sectors of the middle class.

By comparison with the line bureaucrats, the technical intelligentsia of the New Class are veritable philosophers. By comparison with the intellectuals, the intelligentsia may seem idiot savants. In contrast to the bureaucrats, however, the intelligentsia seek nothing for their own sake, give reasons without invoking authority and regard nothing as settled once for all...nothing is sacred to them: their primary concern is with the technical effectiveness of their means rather than its moral propriety. They are pragmatic nihilists. They are capable of emancipating men from old shibboleths but they are emancipators who know no limits. Their emancipation has a side effect: cultural destructiveness, anomie. The cultural dissolution they bring is precisely that always entailed by the culture of critical discourse, which always alienates persons from tradition.<sup>51</sup>

Moral indignation is thus weakened by the opposition of those liberatarian and humanitarian values to be found in the counter culture, but also through the growth of such "pragmatic nihilism".

Ranulf was clearly correct to see that the middle class as a whole does not share an allegiance to the same set of moral sentiments and beliefs, but is internally divided on this matter according to differences in the nature and extent of the resources they enjoy and the work they undertake. In considering the impact upon morality of such divisions in contemporary Britain, such an approach must be extended to include differences with regard to the creation and employment of cultural capital.

While new forces have been at work in loosening social bonds, the greater freedom from social pressure this allows has the

same consequences for morality as we have witnessed elsewhere. The open society encourages mobility, not simply geographical and social, but also mental, a condition inimical to moral indignation. Apart from the transformation in class structure touched upon above, what other structural changes have contributed towards creating a more open and permissive society?

First we may note that, with the replacement of capitalism based upon individual enterprises by the dominance of economic life by large scale corporations, local communities have been opened up to penetration by the cosmopolitan values carried by the migratory elite serving national and multinational enterprises. Growing geographical mobility weakens the collective conscience and in the context of economic growth encourages a leaning towards those values celebrating openness and flux that we find in Dionysianism.

Economic growth has underwritten the extension of education which in its turn increased the amount and significance of cultural capital together with its distinctive values and perspectives that incline towards moral tolerance. Looking at developments in this century in Britain it can also be seen as set off from the late Victorian era simply by virtue of the greater economic surplus produced. The growth in affluence accounts for much of the difference in moral standards between the two periods. As we saw above, the trend towards a more relaxed moral code was accelerated in both the 1920's and the 1960's as the result of affluence.

An expanding economy favours openness. People feel freer to break off relationships and start afresh, thus weakening social and moral boundaries. The values of an age of scarcity, the demand for hard-work, deferred gratification, asceticism and discipline, inevitably come to have less meaning in an era concerned with generating consumption as well as production. Technological developments and increased productivity have provided the opportunity for greater leisure and the resources to generate a concern with spending and enjoyment relative to a preoccupation with work and its values to the exclusion of all else. The balance between work values and subterranean values has shifted towards the latter.

Throughout Europe in the post-war decades, what one commentator has described as "post-bourgeois" values have emerged amongst those who have not experienced the wars and scarcities of the preceding era.<sup>52</sup> As economic and physical security come to be taken for granted amongst those who spent their formative years free from threats to these, other concerns have the opportunity to emerge, including a greater concern with the extension of democratic control and the defence of freedom of expression. This is what one would expect from the theory of a value hierarchy advanced by Maslow, which predicts that it is only where basic survival and safety needs are met that other priorities can be expected to emerge with any vigour.<sup>53</sup> And as Inglehart demonstrates, it is amongst the children of the modern middle class who have experienced contemporary affluence and security to a greater extent than the less privileged that the concern with

advancing freedom of expression and extending democratic control is greatest. Increasing affluence will, he argues, lead to the further growth of this group, with its emphasis on humanitarian concerns and opportunities for self-expression and on de-emphasizing material success and adherence to conventional morality.

The world of the educated middle class thus comes to take on a rosier hue as the result of economic prosperity and personal security. It comes to be experienced as less threatening and more controllable, resulting in less redirected hostility onto children and less training for life in a hostile world by stressing the need for conformity.

A further consequence of the decline of entrepreneurial capitalism and its replacement by corporate capitalism is the declining importance of family enterprises and with them the power of the family. As Marcuse writes, speaking of the change from "free" to "organized" capitalism and the subsequent decline in power of the head of the family: "His authority as transmitter of wealth, skills, experiences is greatly reduced: he has less to offer and less to prohibit".<sup>54</sup>

Gouldner notes a similar trend in the weakening of paternal control:

As middle class women become more educated and emancipated, they may increasingly challenge paternal authority and side with their children in resisting it. With declining paternal authority and growing maternal influence, the autonomy strivings of children are now more difficult to repress; hostility and rebellion against paternal authority can become more overt. There is correspondingly, increasing difficulty experienced by paternal authority in imposing and reproducing its social values and political ideologies in their children.<sup>55</sup>

We can surmise, given Piaget's theory of moral development, that the diminishing unilateral respect in this change entails will hinder the firm establishment of a morality of constraint. Similar conclusions can be drawn concerning the eradication of the family relationships which underpin the socialization practices producing authoritarianism. In addition, the declining influence of the family is met by the rising importance of the media and education as sources of more cosmopolitan interests, and values.

The changing position of women, as Gouldner's remarks indicate, deserves attention as an important source of changes in morality. Randall Collins argues that the affinity of the bourgeoisie and bourgeois society with sexual puritanism is largely the result of the changes they wrought in the condition of women. With the replacement of feudalism by a market economy under the aegis of a centralized state monopolizing the use of violence, women gained at least potential freedom to negotiate their own sexual relationships, no longer being so reliant on the force of their sexual owners for protection. Their main resource, however, is limited at this stage of development to their sexuality, given the monopolization of the economy by males. Consequently, a certain strategy develops:

The most favourable female strategy, where men control the economic world, is to maximize her bargaining power by appearing both as attractive and as inaccessible as possible. Thus develops the ideal of femininity, in which sexuality is idealized and only indirectly hinted as an ultimate source of attraction, since sexuality must be reserved as a bargaining resource for the male wealth and income that can only be stably acquired through a marriage contract... A hierarchy of moral evaluation emerges among women, in which women who sell their favours for short-run rewards (prostitutes, 'loose women') are dishonored; this moral code reflects

female interests in confining sexuality to use as a bargaining resource only for marriage.<sup>56</sup>

With the increased availability of occupational opportunities for women witnessed in this century the need for women to rely upon keeping the supply of sex firmly under control in order to enhance the value of the only resource available to them declines and the need to incur all the emotional costs and restraints involved in adopting the role which this strategy requires is removed.

Social control has also lessened during the course of this century under the impact of urbanization, urban anonymity reducing the power of mutual surveillance amongst neighbours and the expectations of employers and clients for deferential and creditable conduct outside working hours. The virtual elimination of the formerly large class of domestic servants has also reduced the direct influence exercised over a sizeable section of the working class by the bourgeoisie.

The loosening of the bonds of moral restraint in the twentieth century has, then, been rooted in changes that can in large measure be traced back to the technological innovations and economic developments which have marked this period. Cosmopolitanism and freedom from local control, for example, have increased as people have gained access to wider worlds using the means provided by the technological revolutions in the realms of transport and mass communication.

### III. Continenence and accumulation: The Victorian background

For the reasons outlined above, this century has witnessed a decline in the repressive force of the collective conscience in this

country. The morality of the late Victorian period was not, it is true, the highpoint of Victorian respectability. Nevertheless, the contrast with contemporary standards is most marked and nowhere more so than in the changes which have taken place in sexual morality. A closer look at the nature of late Victorian respectability in this sphere will clarify the extent and nature of the moral transformation that has occurred.

For the Victorian bourgeoisie sexual restraint both before and within marriage was closely tied to hopes of social and economic advancement and fears of losing what privileges they possessed. So pressing were these concerns that time and energy were not to be expended upon sex without endangering them. Ruin was feared to await those who squandered their time on sexual indulgence, letting their minds wander from production and accumulation. As Cominos remarks on the function of late Victorian respectability in relation to the prevailing economic and social anxieties:

Continence was good. Attained by sublimation through industry, it resulted in the accumulation of wealth. Incontinence was bad. The outcome of idleness and yielding to temptation, it resulted in poverty and early marriages.<sup>57</sup>

Sexual restraint was but one element, albeit a very strongly charged one, in the "Respectability" cultivated by the bourgeoisie: thrift; abstemiousness; diligence and hard work found equal favour. And, as one would expect from Ranulf's theory, concern with maintaining respectability was most marked amongst the lower middle class, both amongst the classic petty bourgeoisie of shopkeepers and small businessmen and the new white collar employees such as



clerks and commercial travellers. These groups shared a sense of identity in feeling stridently conscious that they were emphatically not working class.<sup>58</sup> They also shared a position of marginality in relation to the richer sections of the bourgeoisie. The traditional petty bourgeoisie was already during the late Victorian period subject to the pressures arising from economic concentration and the threatening competition this entailed. The period 1870-1914 also saw an increasing insecurity of employment and deteriorating conditions of employment for white-collar workers.<sup>59</sup> For both sections of the lower middle class, therefore, the traditional petty bourgeois fear of losing their precarious advantages and ambition for individual advancement were exacerbated. As mobility became more difficult, concern with moral propriety increased.<sup>60</sup> Fear of failing fed a craving for security and a fear of the risky and unconventional, bolstering conformity. Speaking of the lower middle class support of temperance, McLeod notes that this

could be stimulated by an obsession with work, or by a preference for everything that was clean, orderly, restrained, controlled. The cult of work was probably more characteristic of small businessmen, haunted by the fear of bankruptcy or allured by the hope of riches; but a cult of cleanliness arose more naturally from the situation of the white collar worker, its particular advantages, and the qualities required of him.<sup>61</sup>

As noted earlier, the late Victorian period was not the highpoint of Victorian respectability.

The decade of the 1890s was a climatic to the 'late-Victorian revolt'. The hegemonical values of mid-Victorian respectability were clearly on the defensive, if not in steep decline...What this challenge involved, in its essentials, was the breakdown of the moral consensus that had emerged

out of the evangelical middle classes in the earlier part of the century. The verities of religious faith, if not the form of that faith, were not only being questioned but were undergoing wholesale abandonment... Those sections of society who were beginning to abandon traditional moral standards as guides to social and family behaviour can be more easily identified than those who still retained a conviction of the importance of traditional respectability. But contemporary observers - who were very sensitive to shifts in popular moods - strongly imply that traditional morality was slowly and surely retreating into its strongholds among the burgeoning lower middle classes.<sup>62</sup>

A cleavage appeared between the lower middle class and others, often the privileged children of more affluent sections of the community, who ridiculed the traditional standards of propriety. In one notable incident these proponents of the new morality attacked a theatre where the Moral and Social Purity Union and the L.C.C. had insisted that a screen should divide the parading prostitutes and the stalls. (Supposedly active in the crowd was the young Winston Churchill.)<sup>63</sup>

If the late Victorian age saw the beginnings of the weakening of moral consensus within the bourgeoisie, differences between bourgeois and working class morality had been evident throughout the Victorian era. The material deprivation suffered by large sections of the working class, particularly the poor housing conditions and harsh conditions of employment in which many found themselves, were not at all conducive to the preoccupations with moral respectability cultivated by the middle classes. They did, however, lend added point to the lower middle class fear of proletarianization.<sup>64</sup>

The respectable morality established by bourgeois society in the Victorian era proved capable of enduring well beyond the social conditions which were the cause of the success it then enjoyed. Its force is still not spent and it does not lack defenders, particularly from amongst those who have been more sheltered than others from the forces which have been undermining traditional morality. It is to these defenders of traditional standards of purity and propriety to whom we shall now turn our attention.

#### IV. Three contemporary moral crusades

If late Victorian society did not exhibit complete consensus concerning the dominant values of the entrepreneurial middle class. what of the present? Have we really entered a period when, as Lasswell would have it, society learns to play it cool and moral indignation has dwindled into insignificance?

The answer must be no. This can be demonstrated most clearly by examining current organized manifestations of moral indignation. Three contemporary moral crusades which have emerged in the forefront of attempts to restore traditional morality are the Nationwide Festival of Light (NFOL), the Responsible Society, and the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association (National VALA). The following discussion of the values and beliefs central to these movements is based upon a study of the publications and papers issued by the three movements, including their periodicals, the Nationwide Festival of Light Bulletin (formerly the Broadsheet), the Viewer and Listener, and the Bulletin of the Responsible Society

over a five year period. In addition, the autobiographical writings of Mrs. Mary Whitehouse were consulted.<sup>65</sup> Further information concerning the movements was obtained by attending two national conventions of National VALA, two annual general meetings of the Responsible Society and a meeting of the younger members of the Society, and the September 1976 rally of the NFOL in Trafalgar Square. In addition interviews were conducted with three members of the executive of the NFOL and fourteen regional organizers of the movement were interviewed by telephone.

Central to the ideology shared by these movements is an opposition to the representation of explicitly sexual behaviour. Although such representations are regarded as distasteful or disgusting in themselves, the principal objections centre around the influence they are feared to exercise over personal sexual behaviour. For there is a great concern to confine the permissible range of sexual outlets to normal sexual intercourse between husband and wife. Even here there remains a lingering desire to stress the function of sex as primarily a means of reproduction rather than as an end in itself. For to be too carnally-minded is thought of as wrong. Although careful to avoid the excesses of the Victorian era, masturbation, an alternative outlet for sexual appetites and one irrelevant to reproduction, still draws condemnation.

Apart from recalling the moral pollution and possibility of Divine displeasure entailed in sexual permissiveness, they seek to frighten people away from such a course by calling upon the aid

of what Alex Comfort, in a felicitous phrase, refers to as God's Little Allies - the danger of venereal disease and the risk of pregnancy. In the case of venereal disease much is made of increases in the disease in recent years. The lesson drawn is that sexual misconduct should decrease - the need to invest in research to discover an effective vaccine as an alternative is quite simply out of the question and is never mentioned.<sup>66</sup> And where the risk of pregnancy has been reduced the argument has shifted to stressing the dangers of the contraceptive pill and the wickedness of abortion, as well as its detrimental effects upon health and the promotion of further immorality.

Purity is further protected by a belief that the sins of the parents will be visited upon the children. Mary Whitehouse, for example, adopts the view that a mother who indulges in abnormal and immoral sexual practices during pregnancy runs the risk of her child subsequently developing into a homosexual as the result of her shame and anxiety communicating itself to the foetus.<sup>67</sup> Other dire consequences are postulated as very real threats to the children of those who succumb to permissiveness. Increasing childhood delinquency is explained as the result of homes broken by increasing permissiveness which makes parental separation easier and tempts marital partners away from seeking their sole sexual satisfaction with one another.

The ignominy of illegitimacy is appealed to as another safeguard for virtue. In a Responsible Society pamphlet children are asked to consider, as one of a series of questions designed to encourage

sexual restraint, "How would you feel if you were a bastard?"<sup>68</sup> Particular hostility is aroused by those who challenge the importance or desirability of confining the acceptable bearing and rearing of children within wedlock. In an address to the 1976 National VALA convention, for example, Conservative M.P. Rhodes Boyson suggested that children should be taken away from unmarried mothers who deliberately set out to have children with no intention of providing them with a proper father.

It is not so much the infraction of their sexual mores as the challenge to their legitimacy which excites the strongest indignation from these movements. Homosexuals whose shame and clandestine conduct confirms the legitimacy of its condemnation as a vice can be pitied and treated: those who "come out" and argue for the open acceptance of homosexuality are the objects of bitter attacks. As the advance of permissive attitudes leads to greater tolerance, increasing numbers are emboldened to openly challenge the values defended by these movements, leading to them adopting coercive responses to deviants as the objects of their reformatory zeal no longer lend themselves to pity or treatment.

To cope with an increasing trend in the deviance which they concern themselves with, a certain picture of the world emerges. It is a world divided between the "normal" respectable members of society like themselves: the "sick" deviants who seek treatment or admit the moral reprehensibility of their conduct: a large number of "innocents" who are potentially normal and virtuous, but who are vulnerable to being misled; and a small number of the wicked who are

out to corrupt them.<sup>69</sup> The innocents are believed by the normal to be less able to control themselves or understand what is best for them, justifying paternalist measures to protect them from themselves and the wicked who seek to manipulate them. This can become linked to expressions of middle class superiority. At the 1979 National VALA convention, for example, Mary Whitehouse expressed the opinion that the children she had encountered in secondary modern schools were more vulnerable to corruption as they were more easily led than their more thoughtful counterparts in grammar schools.

Due to the important role played by according deference to the norms—and thus to those who uphold them — rather than actual infractions, who comes to be considered as the wicked source of corruption will depend upon the relationships established between those concerned and the morally indignant. During the 1960's, for example, the B.B.C., under the liberal influence of Carleton Greene as Director-General, paid little deference to the leaders or aims of National VALA. As a result the B.B.C. drew strident condemnation as a major villain in undermining morality. Broadcasting authorities have now come to adopt a more deferential and accommodating tone in their dealings with the leaders of the movement. As a result the leadership now seem to regard those running broadcasting as themselves amongst the innocent, duped by wicked outsiders who take advantage of them being overworked to gain an airing for their subversive ideas. Such, at least, was the defence advanced by the executive from the platform on behalf of guest speakers from broadcasting at the 1979 VALA convention who were being criticised from the floor for promoting immorality.

All three movements are agreed in seeing the prevalence of

representations of explicitly sexual behaviour as a manifestation of a general decline in moral standards. It is also believed to be a major contributory force in bringing about such change; leading to rising rates of marital failure, increased promiscuity, crime and violence. As such it is a tool of ruthless profiteers or conspirators who wish to undermine the moral foundations of society in order to overthrow the social order.

There are, indeed, as far as profiteering is concerned, large profits to be made in the British market from the sale of sexually explicit publications, reflecting the conditions of supply and demand in the field. Competition is reduced due to the dubious legal standing of some of the products, while demand has grown.<sup>70</sup> Increased demand for the favourable and explicit treatment of sexuality has even penetrated the market for women's magazines. As Winick notes, Cosmopolitan was facing bankruptcy when carrying articles on homemaking, recipes and similar subjects but became an enormous success when it switched its focus of attention to the sexual pleasures of women.<sup>71</sup>

In addition to concern with commercial profiteering from sex, there is a belief that an international communist conspiracy focused on education and entertainment is undermining morality. Not only the polity but also the economy can be undermined by moral subversion, for national as well as personal success is seen as based upon moral restraint. In a well-received address to the fifth annual general meeting of the Responsible Society, for example, the speaker attributed acceptance of compulsory sex education, the lifting of censorship and the availability of abortion-on-demand in Denmark to a communist conspiracy emanating from outside



the country aimed at attacking such moral virtues as "sobriety", "continence", and "ruggedness", as well as diverting energy and interest into sex, as a prelude to political conquest. As Mary Douglas's analysis would suggest, fear of outside threats to the body politic is here found hand-in-hand with a morality of severe bodily self-control, although the relationship is probably more two-way than she would allow, psychological projection mixing with the impact of social relationships on how the body and society are viewed and treated.

Such conspiracy theories can easily fuel witch-hunts. And there is something of a contemporary version of witchcraft belief in the faith of the moral crusaders in the ability of the wicked to implant overwhelming and destructive urges into their victims through such mediums as pot and pornography. Attraction and repulsion are reconciled through projecting the source of temptation onto an outside force which threatens to possess and take over the person. For the two movements more inclined to give voice to their morality in terms drawn from fundamentalist Christianity, the NFOL and National VALA, such forces of evil are not seen as limited to other human beings but may emanate from evil spirits. A striking instance of such anxiety emerged at the 1976 National VALA convention. The Secretary of the British Board of Film Censors, James Firman, took what turned out to be an unfortunate line of argument in attempting to placate those who were criticising the Board from the floor for granting The Exorcist a certificate.

Taking a liberal position in attempting to understand the reasons for his critics' anxiety over this film he stated that if it had been felt that the film would actually persuade people that possession by the forces of darkness was a real threat to them, it would not have been allowed, his remarks bearing the clear implication that such beliefs were, as we all knew, nonsense and good only for entertainment, albeit of an inferior sort. His denial that people could be possessed in such a fearsome way was met with howls of "But they are" from throughout the audience. Mr. Firman was evidently nonplussed.

All three movements regard education in terms of an authoritarian enterprise aimed at instilling established values rather than stimulating creativity and criticism. Children need rigid guidelines, sound moral doctrine, rather than being left to make up their own minds. The National Union of School Students - highlighted by Musgrove as an expression of the decline in deference for moral authority<sup>72</sup> - is attacked for challenging school discipline and the content of lessons and the "obscene presentation and subversive aims" of its publication Blot in a report distributed by Nationa VALA.<sup>73</sup> This report, in keeping with the definition of young people as amongst the most vulnerable of innocents, flatly refuses to accept that Blot is produced by schoolchildren, claiming it as a deliberate attempt to pass itself off as such when it is really produced by adults in an underhand attempt at corruption. (This is despite evidence of widespread support for the aims of the N.U.S.S. amongst schoolchildren.)<sup>74</sup>

As noted above, the portrayal of explicitly sexual material is considered dangerous for being likely to challenge traditional moral standards concerning sexuality. As a result, sex education in schools is a major target for all three movements, particular alarm being raised by the suspicion that children are being told how to make love without being told not to. Similar concern is felt concerning masturbation and homosexuality. Sex education should be concerned with emphasizing chastity before marriage and the sanctity of sexual exclusiveness within marriage. In addition to fearing the consequences of sex education there is also a concern about the possibility of schoolchildren being exposed to revealing and salacious material, a concern reflecting traditional notions of the impropriety of nudity and representations of sexual subjects.

The movements all emphasize the importance of maintaining parental authority, which they assume stands as a last bastion against challenges to traditional morality from other sources. School must support parents in this and where they are seen as introducing a more relativistic morality and a more cosmopolitan outlook in opposition to the values and beliefs of the parents they are strongly attacked. Similarly, the mass media is resented as a competitor to parental authority, encouraging challenges to the respect which parents are entitled to expect from their children towards them and their views. A survey of the content of girl's magazines published by the Responsible Society deals in a

condemnatory tone with their encouragement of the following vices: intergenerational conflict and disrespect for parents; Women's Liberation; abortion; "ultra-sexy" fashions, "lurid" make-up and heavily sensual fantasies; anti-marriage sentiments; the attempt to depict religion as a drug designed to instil subservience; providing information about the Campaign for Homosexual Equality; and failing to admonish those who fornicate under the age of consent.<sup>75</sup>

In the case of television, which is no longer to be trusted to uphold the values of respectable members of society, the challenge is particularly galling as it enters so immediately into their homes, the last refuge of their authority. The mass media is seen as manipulating the young, turning their thoughts prematurely to sex, arousing or implanting desires which put them into conflict with their parents, destroying the natural innocence of youth and encouraging unfortunate displays of precocity. Scenes explicitly depicting immoral or sexual behaviour are believed to offer either offence or temptation and should therefore be removed through the exercise of more stringent censorship by those in positions of authority.

The three moral crusades share a general belief that many people, particularly the young, are morally weak and that it is the obligation of the stronger-willed to help them. In this way, what it was formerly possible to condemn as wicked in itself becomes translated into a problem of personal inadequacy in order to justify interference in activities which do not harm others within a prevailing climate of causalism.<sup>76</sup>

Here it is employed in an attempt to control adolescents in the name of defending them from outside corruption, rather than acknowledging that it is an attempt by adults to stifle what they see as "precocious" conduct on the part of the young. For what they view as attacks upon "parental rights" are often attempts to give greater freedom to adolescents to do as they wish, rather than as they are told.

The conflict in which these moral crusaders are engaged can be interpreted as part of a broader characterological struggle between cultural groups within the middle class, as we shall discuss below. Nevertheless, a most significant broader conflict in which the debate is set is one of intergenerational conflict founded upon a particular form of age stratification. Adolescence is the invention of adults, one of relatively recent origin in historical terms.<sup>77</sup> The temperament, concerns and conduct which it produces in young people are not at all, as is claimed, what comes naturally to them but are the product of elders who are careful to stamp out precocious conduct and the exercise of independence. As Musgrove remarks in relation to the creation of adolescence "Legislation ostensibly intended to protect him in fact segregated belittled and enfeebled him".<sup>78</sup> The morally indignant are right, the young are manipulated. They are manipulated by them.

Such a system was always open to challenge from amongst the young themselves, usually surreptitiously, sometimes more openly. At times of rapid changes in attitudes and a changing balance of resources such as occurred in the favour of the young in the 1960's, the strain between the groups inevitably increases as the envy

and moral indignation of their elders is excited by the provocative conduct of the young who begin to trespass further upon their jealousy guarded prerogatives, so flattering to their sense of the relative importance of adulthood and parental preeminence.<sup>79</sup>

The age structure of those involved with the movements lends support to an interpretation along the lines of age stratification and conflict. Those attending National VALA conventions for example, are overwhelmingly elderly and late middle-aged. Despite the presence of Youth Representatives on the executive committee, the annual general meetings of the Responsible Society display a similar age structure. The national young members' meeting in October 1977 was diminutive with barely a dozen people assembled to hear speeches delivered on abortion, the age of consent and alcoholism. The Society claims about fifty "young members" out of a total membership of over six hundred. Both National VALA and the Responsible Society stand in marked contrast with an organization which all three moral crusades regard as an adversary, the National Council for Civil Liberties, whose annual general meetings attract a much greater proportion of young people.

The NFOL at first sight appears to contradict this association between age and moral indignation, for a survey by Roy Wallis of those attending the 1976 rally indicated that almost half of those present were under the age of 16.<sup>80</sup> This is not, however, so surprising when one takes into account internal divisions within the NFOL.<sup>81</sup> The executive of the NFOL is now clearly committed to giving priority to a programme of coercive reform,

as is evident from their publications and the speeches from the platform, rather than the assimilative reform through attracting people to Jesus favoured by the mass of young supporters. The Wallis survey clearly indicated that most of those who attended the rally had assimilative, evangelistic views about transforming people from within rather than enforcing morality. A similar tendency was revealed at the NFOL rally in Trafalgar Square five years earlier, where a large proportion of the predominantly young audience seemed uninterested in the coercive-oriented platform speeches which their elders had prepared for them, preferring to spend their time in singing and chanting unrelated to what was being said on the platform.<sup>82</sup> Both the content of the NFOL publications and composition of the platform at the rallies were firmly in the hands of the executive. Those responsible for the running of the NFOL at the time of the 1976 rally were predominantly middle-aged and elderly. The NFOL having no membership to influence the leadership they were free to mobilize a mass demonstration of Christian witness as a means of publicising aims which were not those uppermost in the minds of those attending the rally. The latter served as a backdrop against which the leadership of the NFOL could address their message to the media and the authorities.

This is not to say, however, that there were no displays of moral indignation from amongst the audience. A small group of men from the Gay Christian Movement distributing leaflets stressing the compatibility of homosexuality with Christian faith and asking those present to love their homosexual brothers and sisters, met with a most chilly reception from almost all they encountered as

they moved amongst the crowd and were instructed by the police to leave the Square following complaints from the rally. As renegades to the cause they could perhaps expect to elicit even more hostility than those who had even less in common with the assembled Christians.<sup>83</sup>

In the light of these considerations relating to age, opposition to counter-cultural ideals and beliefs on the part of the three moral crusades discussed above becomes more understandable. There is evidence of conflict between the crusaders and the counter culture viewed as a group of people who drop out of society and behave in a radically different way - as can be seen, for example, in the remarks of Mary Whitehouse quoted earlier in this chapter and the protest staged by representatives of the underground press and street theatres at the 1971 NFCL rally.<sup>84</sup> But in considering their opposition to the counter culture here, what I have in mind is the counter culture viewed as a set of ideals and beliefs with which people can feel varying degrees of sympathy. Musgrove has pointed out that his study of such values and beliefs indicates that support for them tends to divide at the age of 36, with the support for counter-cultural values in relation to work and power, the communal raising of children and opposition to the imposition of rigid boundaries upon the world far less in evidence amongst those over that age than those below it.<sup>85</sup> None of these values find acceptance by the moral crusades. Indeed, the very opposite views prevail. Stress is laid upon the need for respect for authority, marriage and parental rights are upheld, and short-term hedonism opposed. There is an Apollonian regard for the distinctions elevating humanity above other species and a tendency to regard those attributes which they share in common as "beastly" and



low. This contributes to the taboo on nudity and an attempt to disembody social intercourse. Conventional social roles and boundaries tend to be experienced in a reified form. There is a concern to avoid obscenity and a resort of euphemism which one would not expect to encounter amongst those with a more open-minded Dionysian inclination to flow over and evaporate boundaries. One pamphlet distributed by National VALA, for example, decries as on a level with blasphemy "the wanton use of words relating to immorality, fornication, homosexuality and the like, and to parts and functions of the body connected with the elimination of waste".<sup>86</sup> The development of tabooed subjects depends upon a desire for a clear-cut and unambiguous grid through which to interpret the world. As we have seen, such a desire varies in strength, being heightened by the experience of social pressure emanating from immersion in conditions where social and cultural boundaries are well established.<sup>87</sup>

All three movements are movements of coercive reform in sharing a faith in the importance of employing the criminal law to reinforce morality. Both the NFOL and National VALA have expressed concern about the increased leniency of the penalties employed to uphold discipline, morality, and law and order. In addition, they express support for the forces of law and order and faith in the police. The views of the Responsible Society on the matter of punishment are somewhat more difficult to determine, as the Society tends to avoid straying too far from its brief as a pressure group primarily concerned with sexual matters in its public pronouncements. Nevertheless, as the name would suggest,

views have been expressed by members that people should be prepared to take responsibility for their conduct and to suffer the consequences, rather than attempting to evade personal responsibility through blaming others or expecting to be relieved of the burdens their misconduct has brought down upon them.

#### V. Middle class cleavages and the defence of righteousness

While the norms of respectability and social propriety which the three moral crusades set out to defend were, as we have seen, historically associated with the old middle classes, reflecting in particular the social situation and concerns of an entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, these values have to some extent freed themselves from their structural source. Once generated the culture of this class outlives the structural circumstances which gave birth to it. The values laid down in the formative years of childhood and perpetuated through family socialization form a barrier against cultural erosion in the face of more rapidly evolving structural change. We need not, therefore, expect to find too close a fit between present structural position and the championship of such values.

Nevertheless, it remains clear that the three movements are overwhelmingly middle class in composition. This is reflected, for example, by the number of doctors and teachers within the Responsible Society. In 1975 out of a total of 635 members, 74 were teachers and 100 doctors.<sup>88</sup> Although such a finding is not surprising given the middle class nature of most voluntary associations other than trade unions,<sup>89</sup> it does reflect the fact that the struggle in which these defenders of traditional morality are engaged is largely one between different sections of the

contemporary middle class, a characterological struggle between the mores of consumption-oriented cosmopolitans and those rooted in production-oriented and localistic concerns.<sup>90</sup> In certain respects the activities of the morally indignant in this area can be seen as a demand for reassurance that traditional values are still dominant, a demand for gestures of deference towards the legitimacy of their morality from prestige-conferring national institutions in the face of challenges to their status which challenges to these standards entail. Particularly indignant responses are provoked when leading institutions such as the B.B.C. are seen as failing to defend such standards. Just as the issue of the Bomb carried a far heavier symbolic load for those involved in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament than opposition to nuclear weapons alone, so does the issue of pornography and sexual permissiveness for the morally indignant.<sup>91</sup> Sex is chosen as the battlefield because it is the area of greatest change and challenge, but it is not in itself the reason for the war.

This war is seen as stretching beyond the borders of this country and the movements are interested in, and involved with, counterparts and sympathisers in other advanced industrial societies of the Western world such as Australia and America. The fight revolves around similar issues and reflects similar concerns. Comparing divisions within the middle class between anti-pornography campaigners and their opponents in two American cities, Birkelbach and Zurcher report that the former "were older, more often reared in smaller communities, less well-educated formally, less often

in professional occupations, more often associated with dogmatic religions (especially Catholic), more religiously active, more family and religiously oriented, more politically conservative more dogmatic, more authoritarian, and less politically tolerant".<sup>92</sup>

With regard to certain of the characteristics touched upon by Birkelbach and Zurcher, it is not certain that similar differences between anti-pornography campaigners and their opponents exist in this country. The movements concerned have, for a variety of reasons, been unwilling to allow their membership and mailing lists to be used as a basis for conducting sample surveys of their members. The survey of those attending the 1976 NFOL rally conducted by Roy Wallis tended, as noted earlier, to capture principally those who were drawn to participate in the event with little concern for the aspects of coercive reform stressed by the platform. It seems probable that those who take an interest in the day-to-day work of the movement and receive news of this activity through being on the mailing list for the Broadsheet, are more favourably disposed towards coercive reform and accordingly differ in other respects from those drawn to the rally for more evangelistic reasons. Certainly, in the telephone interviews conducted with the local organizers of the NFOL for the purpose of the present study, while those interviewed tended to stress both coercive and assimilative aims as equally important and complementary, there was greater emphasis given to coercive reform than was evident amongst the mass of younger participants at the 1976 rally who were more intent upon

conversion than coercion, evangelism rather than legislation.

They too, however, were overwhelmingly middle class, with over 78% of those present at the rally coming from the non-manual section of society. Within the rally there was a small number who saw it principally as an opportunity to protest against the loss of deference towards those who lead a respectable life. These were found to be more likely to have had less education and to be retired than those who dismissed such a reason as irrelevant. Of those present at the rally, a greater percentage of those falling within the categories of housewife, retired, or unemployed, than of those who were students or employed, gave priority to securing more effective legislation against immorality rather than evangelistic aims.<sup>93</sup>

Although denied permission by National VALA to conduct a random sample of their membership, Morrison and Tracey were able to interview 100 members from different areas within England and Scotland. On the basis of these interviews they arrived at the conclusion that members of National VALA are "mainly middle class female and elderly. It is also over-represented by those in rural areas, the older professions such as solicitors and teachers, small businessmen, traders and shopkeepers".<sup>94</sup> My own more limited observations conducted at the annual conventions of the Association would tend to confirm these conclusions. Such a pattern of support in large measure coincides with what might be expected from our earlier discussion, particularly with respect to the traditional petty bourgeoisie. The over-representation of the elderly is in part accounted for by recalling that the foundations of their moral sentiments were laid in less permissive age. This is reflected in the

remarks of Ernest Whitehouse, the husband of Mary and another prominent figure in National VALA, on the decline in moral certitude:

It gets worse and worse as the time goes on and it becomes impossible to define what is obscene until we can come to accept the most extravagant obscenities as being for the public good. Life was very much less complex in those days...before the second world war when we were all growing up - it was very much less complicated.<sup>95</sup>

Care must be taken, however, in interpreting such findings in the absence of more representative samples and adequate comparison groups. While, for example, teachers and lawyers appear to be over-represented in National VALA in comparison with society as a whole, attendance at the annual general meetings of the National Council for Civil Liberties serves to convey a similar impression about that organization. While it is quite possible that the lawyers and teachers involved in the National Council for Civil Liberties represent radical wings within their profession that are unrepresentative of the profession as a whole, similar considerations may well apply to their colleagues involved in National VALA. Teachers in particular belong to an occupation in which can be found considerable political conflict over the nature of their task.

As with the rural location of support for National VALA, it is interesting to note from the lists of those attending the annual general meetings of the Responsible Society in London that those coming from large cities, others than London itself, were barely represented, while a large number of those present came from small towns. (The NFOL was for several years its inception run from that

bastion of middle class suburbia, Woodford.<sup>96</sup> Mary Whitehouse's movement originated in the Midlands, a part of the country which lagged behind, and was therefore all the more shocked by, the trend towards less inhibited sexuality in London and the South-East.)<sup>97</sup>

#### VI. Moral indignation and the retardation of rationality

Finally, the question occurs as to the political implications of such moral crusades. They concur with the sexual radicals such as Reich and Marcuse on the importance of conventional sexual morality for the perpetuation of the present social system, although their support for this system leads them to opposite conclusions about what ought to be done about it. The conservatism of such movements is perhaps at its most marked in National VALA, which has hosted as guest speakers such leading Conservative M.P.'s as Sir Keith Joseph, William Whitelaw and Rhodes Boyson. Those leading this movement have little doubt as to their influential position in relation to determining Conservative policy in the areas which interest them and the 1979 NVALA convention address delivered by Mrs. Whitehouse a few days before the election was devoted to an attack upon the iniquities of the Labour Party and praise for the sympathetic treatment the Association enjoyed in its dealings with the Conservative Party.

The habit of taking orders and renouncing desires stretches back to the earliest years of family training and is reinforced by the practices of traditional education until the habit is finally felt as a duty. Bertell Ollman, following Reich, argues that this forms a most powerful barrier of irrationality against the development of class consciousness.

So powerful, in fact, that attempts to politicize adult Americans are a waste of time relative to what can be achieved in the future by getting children and adolescents from the working class "to question the existing order along with all its symbols and leaders, to loose generalized habits of respect and obedience, to oppose whatever doesn't make sense in terms of their needs as individuals and as members of a group, to conceive of the enemy as the capitalist system and the small group of men who control it, to articulate their hopes for a better life, to participate in successful protest actions no matter how small the immediate objective, and create a sense of community and brotherhood of all those in revolt".<sup>98</sup> Ollman, in an extensive and sympathetic discussion of Marx's conception of men in capitalist society, discusses sexual repression and the resulting retardation of rationality, as the missing element, the blindspot in Marx's vision of the development of class consciousness.<sup>99</sup> Such a relationship between sex, repression and class consciousness is not likely to be consciously formulated by conservative moralists, given their ideology of national unity and harmony of interests. But the passage from Ollman quoted above is precisely the sort of analysis which disturbs them. Could this be because their subconscious political acumen has led them to just such an assessment of the situation?



## NOTES

1. Preface by Harold Lasswell to Ranulf (1964), pp. xii-xiii.
2. Whitehouse (1977), p.239
3. For a discussion of these contrasts from a feminist point of view see Wallsgrove (1977).
4. Matza and Sykes (1961), p.716
5. Ibid.
6. Such festivities serve a definite social function in relation to the normal, dominant values and practices of society. Henriques, in his survey of these festivals, including the original Roman Saturnalia and the medieval Feast of Fools, points to their carthartic function: "The flouting and disregard of what is normally held to be sacrosanct has a tonic effect on the human being engaged in social bonds of his own making. There is release of tension which enables the duties and obligations incumbent upon man in society to be able to be taken up again". (Henriques, 1963, pp. 416-417).
7. Matza and Sykes (1961), p.716
8. Ibid., p.717
9. Young (1971), p.126
10. Ibid., p.128
11. Ibid.
12. Musgrove (1974), p.180
13. Ibid., p.194
14. Young (1971), p.149
15. Goodman (1968), p.123
16. Young (1971), p.140
17. MacIntyre (1968), p.848
18. Musgrove (1974), p.86
19. Braden (1968), p.16
20. For evidence on this point, see McKenzie and Silver (1968), pp. 183ff. and 251ff.; and Butler and Stokes (1969), pp. 104ff
21. Musgrove (1974), p.151
22. Ibid., pp.159-160
23. Wright (1971), p.67
24. Ibid., p.181
25. Ibid., p.182
26. Podgorecki, et al. (1973), This work is also of particular interest in relation to the present enquiry because of the conclusion drawn by Van Houte and Vinke from a survey of the social distribution of punitiveness. This, as they write, provided evidence "that the middle and higher occupational groups are more moderate in their reactions than the other groups, including small shopkeepers. In our opinion, this constitutes confirmation of Ranulf's theory that social insecurity of lower middle class groups is correlated with greater advocacy of punishment". (Ibid., p.35)

27. Podgorecki, et al. (1973), pp. 123-124
28. Wright (1971), p.180
29. Schofield (1968), p. 258
30. Davies (1975), pp. 66ff
31. Ibid., p.72
32. Ibid.; pp.2-3
33. Ibid., pp. 8ff
34. Ibid., p.12
35. For further evidence of the shift in moral standards towards greater tolerance in sexual matters in America during the course of this century, see the replication by Coombs (1967) of a survey of attitudes towards various crimes in terms of their seriousness first undertaken forty years previously by Thurstone. This reveals that offences such as abortion, adultery and seduction have come to be regarded as less serious over the intervening years. Interestingly enough, in line with Durkheim's suggestion concerning the rise of respect for the individual accompanying the decline of the traditional collective conscience, condemnation of crimes of violence against the individual has increased.
36. Davies (1975), p. 3
37. Richards (1970), p.1-7
38. Ibid., p.183
39. Davies (1975), pp.21ff
40. Ibid., pp. 27ff
41. Ibid., pp. 45ff and 61ff
42. Ibid., p.207
43. Marcuse (1970), p.88
44. Davies (1975), pp.93ff. A similar trend can be observed in Germany during the period 1871 to 1918, followed by an increased tolerance towards homosexuality in the 1920's as the result of the loss of empire and the reduced importance of the military.
45. Merton (1968), pp.249ff
46. Musgrove (1974), pp.37-38
47. Crozier (1964), p.184
48. See Galbraith's discussion of the devolution of power down into the technostructure (Galbraith, 1972, pp. 59ff).
49. Gouldner (1978), pp. 349-350
50. Parkin (1968),
51. Gouldner (1978), pp. 350-351
52. Inglehart (1971), See also the same author's The Silent Revolution (1977).
53. Maslow (1954), pp.80ff
54. Marcuse (1970), p.87
55. Gouldner (1978), p.154
56. Collins (1975), p.243
57. Cominos (1963), p.223. For further illustrations of the beliefs aimed at encouraging continence in Victorian England, see Comfort (1967).
58. Crossick (1977), p.13
59. Ibid., pp. 22-23
60. Ibid., p.30

61. McLeod (1977), p.75
62. Price (1977), pp. 92-93. For further evidence concerning changes in Victorian respectability, see Harrison (1977), pp. 61ff
63. Price (1979), pp. 109-110, n. 25
64. For an analysis of working class conditions in Victorian Britain and their impact upon working class morality, see Harrison (1977), pp.157ff
65. Whitehouse (1971 and(1977)).
66. On the possibility of discovering a vaccine for syphilis given sufficient financial resources, see Morton (1966), p.172  
Clearly such an allocation of funds is, despite the high medical social and economic costs to which this disease gives rise most unlikely given the unique position of venereal disease in terms of the moral indignation it attracts.
67. Whitehouse (1977), pp. 83-84
68. Riches (1975),
69. Cf. the discussion of moral indignation and the media in Young (1973), pp.314ff
70. See Manson and Palmer (1973), pp.85ff
71. Winick (1977), p.228
72. Musgrove (1974), pp.161ff
73. Oxley (1979),
74. Musgrove (1974), p.161
75. Nash (n.d.)
76. Cf. the discussion of moral indignation posing as humanitarianism in Young (1971), pp.99-100
77. Musgrove (1964), pp.33ff
78. Musgrove (1974), p.4
79. For an analysis of the changing pattern of age stratification in relation to changes in resources determining exposure to surveillance, cosmopolitanism and the exercise of power, see Collins (1975), pp.219ff
80. I am most grateful to Professor Wallis for making the results of this survey available to me at an early date. A report on the survey has since been published (Wallis and Bland, 1979)
81. See Wallis (1972).
82. Wallis (1976).
83. Cf. the discussion by Gusfield of the reaction of Temperance supporters to renegadism (Gusfield, 1966, pp.135ff)
84. See Wallis (1972), p.70; and Capon (1972), pp. 79-80 and the wonderful photograph facing p.69 of the archetypal representative of the counter culture being led away from protesting at a NFOL meeting by police.
85. Musgrove (1974), pp.81ff
86. Porter (n.d.)
87. See Leach (1977), Leach's discussion, however must be supplemented by an awareness of the extent and sources of **concern** with ambiguity and the defence of boundaries with taboo such as is to be found in the work of Mary Douglas.
88. Source: Report of the Honourary Secretary to the 1975 Annual General Meeting of the Responsible Society. For a discussion of the morally conservative nature of the contemporary medical profession, see Comfort (1967), pp.195-196. This work also recounts their activities as the scourge of such vices as incontinence and masturbation in the past under the guise of medical advice.

89. See Parkin (1968), p.18 and the literature quoted there.
90. Cf. Gusfield (1966), pp.139ff
91. On opposition to the Bomb as symbolizing a broader range of concerns, see Parkin (1968), passim.
92. Birkelbach and Zurcher (1970), p.19
93. Wallis and Bland (1979)
94. Personal communication from Michael Tracey and David Morrison. The results of their research into National VALA are due to be published later this year by Macmillan.
95. Quoted in Tracey and Morrison (1979), p.178
96. On Woodford, see Willmott and Young (1960).
97. Davies (1975), pp.66-68
98. Ollman (1972), p.22
99. Ollman (1976), pp.247ff

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS

#### I. The moral authoritarian: a portrait

From the preceding chapters it is evident that moral indignation is pre-eminently a phenomenon calling for sociological explanation. Not only is the action emanating from moral indignation social in terms of its object, it is also social in terms of its origins. This is not to deny that other forces make some contribution to the formation of those sentiments which constitute moral indignation.<sup>1</sup> But those deep differences between groups in terms of moral tolerance which we have surveyed can only be adequately accounted for by social factors. The evidence indicates that moral indignation arises in response to the quality of social relations, that it is shaped by the process and products of social interaction.

What are the specific social and cultural conditions conducive to the growth of moral intolerance? From the findings discussed in earlier chapters of this thesis it has clearly emerged that the experience of social constraint exercises a powerful influence over the formation of such moral sentiments. Such social constraint must not, however, be conceived of as operating purely along hierarchical lines. Without denying the great importance of different experiences in terms of giving or obeying orders as a source of those moral sentiments under investigation, the importance of "horizontal" sources of social constraint must also be taken into account. People similar in terms of their hierarchical position may nevertheless differ

significantly in terms of the intensity and diversity of their social contacts, with important consequences for the development of differing moral outlooks. Social constraint involves the narrowing of freedom of thought and action by strengthening the social and cultural boundaries encompassing people. Not merely the powerful, but also one's peers can take a hand in such work.

Before proceeding to specify the social and cultural sources of moral indignation in more detail, however, it will be useful to have before us a portrait of the morally indignant individual. In listing the beliefs and values which characterise the outlook of the extreme or "ideal" morally indignant temperament, it must be acknowledged that few individuals will correspond to this picture in every detail. The dependent variables involved are complex and shaped by several forces, some of which operate to varying degrees independently of those with which we are primarily concerned. Nevertheless, the evidence which we have surveyed so far clearly indicates that the sentiments and beliefs outlined below constitute an emotionally coherent view of the world, the elements of which are interlinked to form a character structure that emerges in response to specific social experiences. I shall refer to this particular structure of sentiments and beliefs as "moral authoritarianism" retaining moral indignation to refer to that particular disposition to punish immorality described in the introduction.

Moral authoritarians are notable for their support for the strict restraint of impulse by rules and sanctions, whether this is justified

in terms of social good or divine ordinance. Anomie, the absence of moral norms constraining conduct and thought within settled boundaries, is feared and rejected. Moral codes are regarded as sacred and inviolable, independent of changing human wishes.

Such moral reification is part of a more general realist stance towards the process and products of human thought. Dogmatism prevails. No alternative view of reality seems possible or desirable. Contrary definitions are repelled and anything which is anomalous in terms of the accepted categories is met with extreme distaste. Such unreflecting veneration for the established verities naturally does not favour their critical examination with either the instruments of reason or humour. Intellectual cultivation is itself somewhat suspect and associated with licentiousness.

Licentiousness is a prime target for moral condemnation. Sensual appetites must be held in check, for indulging them is morally reprehensible. The enjoyment of sex, food, drugs and play for themselves alone, is frowned upon. The permissible outlets for sensual appetites are strictly limited.

Organic processes in general are screened out of social intercourse. The carnal side of human life is hidden and suppressed and reference to it censored. One's own body and those of others become sources of shame and embarrassment. The process of casting off waste products is concealed. Other physiological processes such as eating, walking and breathing are performed in as subdued a manner as possible.

Nakedness is hidden.

Moral authoritarians are distanced from their bodies and those of others. They stress those characteristics of humanity which elevate it above other species and devalue those shared in common. Moral regulation must be brought to bear to eliminate any inclination towards a self-indulgent, sleepy, lazy and impulsive way of life.

In keeping with their distrust of unrestrained impulses, moral authoritarians are wary of relaxing conscious control. States of self-abandonment are viewed as dangerous, whether medically, morally, spiritually or socially. The opposition of moral authoritarians to the use of certain drugs springs partly from this fear, in addition to suspicions concerning their potentiality for pure sensual pleasure.

Neither do moral authoritarians relax control over their manner and appearance. They are neither casual nor unkempt. To adopt some terms devised by their contemporary adversaries which aptly capture this facet of life-style, moral authoritarians certainly do not "let it all hang out": on the contrary, their inhibited nature is apparent in their "uptight" bearing and appearance. They are, in every sense of an older idiom, opposed to "loose living".

Such self-discipline is not merely praised and practiced: it needs to be enforced. Those who violate or challenge the moral code are met with condemnation and harsh penalties, not forbearance and understanding. Moral authoritarians display an inability or unwillingness to identify with offenders in terms of sympathy or empathy.



Their enforcement of the law and morality is unbending. Recognition of mitigating circumstances is held to a minimum. Few restraints are placed in the way of finding an accused person guilty. Evil is viewed as an excess which must be balanced or erased by retribution. There is a strong desire to see others suffer for their immorality.

Social problems elicit an extrapunitive reaction rather than an impunitive response. Ethnocentrism prevails. Unpatriotic and irreligious opinions are suppressed. Art and literature pandering to sexual interests is censored.

Moral authoritarians share none of their adversaries' belief in the inner purity and goodness of the human heart. They are more likely to view others with suspicion and distrust. They see themselves as dwelling in a dangerous universe. The world is a place where one is at the mercy of malevolent or dangerous forces beyond one's control or even understanding.

Immanent justice can be seen to be at work in the cosmos: retributive justice is woven into it. Even if people escape punishment, misfortune will overtake them as the result of their immorality.

They are religious, but their religion is one of fear and control, not joy and ecstasy. Supernatural forces punish immorality in this world or the next with the same unswerving severity as their devotees employ. Moral authoritarians inhabit a punishing, moral universe in which misfortune is deserved and hence a sign of lax or immoral conduct.

Those who are proud are cast down. Envy is easily provoked. Ease and comfort are believed to have a demoralizing and debilitating effect. Hardships and self-denial, on the other hand, are beneficial and should be employed in raising the young.

This portrait has, as mentioned earlier, been drawn in deliberately bold lines to serve the purpose of an ideal type against which the moral outlook of individuals can be assessed and compared. It is not meant to imply, for example, that manifestations of moral authoritarianism will never be found amongst those displaying any degree of self-indulgence and sensuality. What is argued here is that those people who entertain a view of the world and their responsibilities closer to moral authoritarianism as outlined above than others will be more likely to have experienced certain social conditions and relationships. The beliefs and sentiments outlined above are those most central to a view of life arising out of the experience of social constraint. The following sections discuss in turn, the nature of this approach to the world in more detail, enlarging upon the outline sketched above; the shortcomings of relying too heavily upon the presence of certain social institutions as indicators of the presence and intensity of moral authoritarianism; and the social circumstances in which they have their origin.

## II. An analysis of moral authoritarianism

One of the most interesting aspects of moral indignation seen as the desire to impose impulse restraint upon others is its disinterestedness.

Where groups or individuals stand to gain economically or in terms of political power from the enforcement of this morality, the presence of such interests suggests strongly that theirs is but a spurious piety employed as a cover for personal advancement, although the presence of such attempts to secure support by appeals to moral sentiments of a repressive nature does point to the presence of a readily provoked moral indignation within the community at large. It is the moral indignation of this latter group, and not the spurious piety of the self-seeking which poses the most interesting questions in searching for the sources of social control. Why do those who stand to make no direct gain from the forceful imposition of morality nevertheless come in their mutual inhibition?

The exercise of such social control by the unofficial watchdogs of morality cannot fully be explained with reference to the operation of envy. This is most clearly so in the case of what Westermarck referred to as "disinterested antipathies", or victimless offences, but also contributes to shaping the reaction to other offenders. Schoeck sees envy and moral indignation as the universal consequence of men being chafed by their membership of human groups.<sup>2</sup> In this argument membership in groups is not seen as fulfillment of human nature, but is experienced as a diminution. The loss of individuality consequent upon the compromises necessitated by group membership is ameliorated by depriving others, particularly newcomers, unused as yet to the norms of the groups, of their individuality. But to such an argument concerning the universality of envy and its function as the foundation of social control must be added on account of variations

in the intensity of these factors between groups. Groups vary in terms of the relaxed or tight control which they exercise over their members. Not all groups or social positions rob those within them of their liberty to the same extent. The extent to which they can and do do so is determined by the relationship of the group to its environment and the nature of its internal structure.

As Adorno, building upon Freud's discussion of group psychology, notes, a repressive and malicious egalitarianism can arise on the basis of brotherhood born of humiliation.<sup>3</sup> The nature of such spurious egalitarianism is envy which aims at ensuring that no one enjoys himself in greater measure than another. It is part and parcel of the moral authoritarian's temperament and should not be confused with attempts to realize true equality through the transformation of the sources of repression.

Envy, the tendency to feel displeasure and ill-will at the success or joy of another, calls forth the desire to deprive him of those things upon which his relative advantages rest, regardless of whether these then pass to the envious person. In this it shares with moral indignation the quality of disinterestedness. When people are forced to adhere to a moral code which imposes severe restraints upon the satisfaction of their impulses and sensual appetites it is not surprising that they are quick to condemn those whose conduct mocks such values. For if the wicked are seen to thrive upon and enjoy forbidden fruits, the deprivations endured by the righteous become all the more burdensome. If the social situation in which the morally indignant find themselves renders it costly, dangerous or impossible for them to indulge such desires, then the relative deprivation

to which the unrestrained indulgence of others exposes them can only be alleviated if the wicked are rendered uneviable by being made to suffer for their sins.

In this light moral indignation can be seen as part of the politics of social mobility, which is, of course, a two-way affair encompassing possibilities of social degradation as well as the pursuit of success. Social mobility is, further, something that can be accomplished in relative terms without moving one's own position in any absolute sense by comparison with the fate of others. Others are held back or pulled down in order to relieve the relative deprivation which arises from the inability to emulate their condition. Moral condemnation compensates by demonstrating the superiority of the righteous. Where the direct action of envy to remove fruit forbidden to them from out of the reach of others is not available, two courses of action present themselves. The first is to neutralize the pleasures of transgression by the pain of punishment. The second way of rendering the sinful uneviable is particularly likely to emerge where the first is unavailable or ineffective. It entails the elaboration of beliefs concerning the evil consequences likely to befall the sinner regardless of any punishment by his fellows. To the individual forced to relinquish basic pleasures and to live under a system of rigid restraints the notion that others are getting away with something is intolerable. Something must be done. The solution lies in a mechanism similar to Scheler's notion of ressentiment: those who are indulging in pleasures which it is not in the power of the

morally indignant to detect or punish are rendered uneviable in the sight of the righteous by beliefs concerning the misfortune which will befall the wicked. In pre-industrial societies such acts are likely to attract ritual sanctions. beliefs that, despite the difficulty of their detection and punishment by human agents, such acts will nevertheless attract the displeasure of supernatural spirits or the evil consequences of pollution. In more secular settings this mechanism is more likely to be seen operating in terms of a willingness to entertain beliefs concerning the ill-health attendant upon such victimless offences as certain forms of drug abuse or sexual licence.

The particular tactics which are resorted to in dealing with deviants depend in part upon the willingness of the offender to co-operate in producing the experience in the righteous upholders of morality that someone else is not getting away with something. The repentant deviant who appears to feel remorse or to have undergone suffering as the result of his transgression not only commits a lesser offence than the unrepentant deviant who revels in his immorality by not questioning the legitimacy of the sacred code: he also renders himself uneviable, the target for self-congratulatory pity rather than anger and repression.

Moral authoritarians, as we have seen, see themselves as inhabiting a dangerous world, threatened both by human and supernatural forces.

And their anxiety is not without foundation. As we shall see, their position renders them vulnerable to many pressures, exacerbated by the envy of their peers who are similarly constrained to keep a tight rein upon their impulses. Threats are felt to arise from human nature, which is viewed as inherently evil and hence requiring forceful restraint. Fear rather than faith in humanity and the unknown alike arise as the result of the quality of the social relationships in which people are involved. Such anxiety also reflects a lack of self-confidence in one's ability to cope with threats and obstacles. Such a lack, born of long dependence upon others, renders the protective shelter of an unquestioned system of moral beliefs all the more alluring and makes the suppression of those who question it by their deviance all the more pressing. Anomie entails facing ambiguity and the unknown, an unwelcome prospect for those unequipped with the necessary social and cultural resources to successfully negotiate such challenges. Instead they cling to the belief that to arrange the world to suit men's needs is impossible and illegitimate. Their morality serves to protect themselves from facing their weaknesses by reducing life to a set of safe rituals and routines. Flaunting these boundaries leads to repressive sanctions being directed against the deviant, especially where he challenges the legitimacy of the boundaries themselves.

Punitiveness is the natural accompaniment of the other elements of moral authoritarianism. There is first the operation of redirection, the finding of an acceptable outlet for accumulated frustration

of desire. Then, as indicated above, there is the need to neutralize the gain from immorality, to render the wicked unenviable. And both coercive asceticism and punitiveness reflect an indifference to the suffering imposed upon individuals when their desires are subordinated to the demands of authority. Compassion for the condemned can only begin to emerge when the offended party is no longer so much more powerful and prestigious than the offender. Where the moral order is elevated to an absolute and sacred status, where the collective conscience is firmly established, the distance between the offender and the offended increases and gives rise to harsher penalties.

As Durkheim noted, harshness towards one's fellows is not an innate human trait, but the product of strong moral sentiments produced by specific forms of group life. Where the individual subordinates himself completely to the will of the group, breaches of collective moral sentiments and affronts to the will attributed to symbols of the collectivity elicit especially violent responses. The gap between the offender and the offended is too great to permit of much sympathy for the offender. Furthermore, the moral sentiments instilled by a strong collective conscience are not weak and vacillating, but strong and decisive. No doubts or qualms arise to stay the hand retribution.

At this point it is worth pointing out that attempts to explain the emergence of disinterested indignation at the wrongs suffered



by unrelated members of the community by reference to increasing social solidarity often misinterpret the meaning of this relationship. It is true that an increase in social solidarity, where this is taken to mean the individual subordinating his own and others interests and inclinations to those of the group, is associated with the emergence of moral indignation. But this is not because individuals feel an increased sympathy with each other, for such sympathy should also extend to the offender, who is also a member of the community. Compassion, in Elias's sense, rather than moral indignation might be expected. Indeed, the very notion of punishment as a sanction employed against another member of the community often implies the recognition that he has rights not accorded to outsiders which limit the available forms of redress. It is the greater respect paid to the authority of the group and its norms, widening the distance between the individual and the sacred order offended, which sharpens the punitiveness of the reaction to deviance, and not the extension of sympathy for individuals.

The use of religious beliefs as a means of understanding the fears and hopes of their adherents in the search for the roots of moral indignation cannot be underestimated. It was, it will be recalled, the fact that when the Greek gods acquired a newfound zeal for justice they also developed other new sentiments and concerns which gave Ranulf his initial clue as to the meaning of moral indignation.

Knowledge of supernatural beliefs illuminates the orientation towards the world upon which moral indignation rests. In some supernatural forms of enticing people into sin, for example, we see the view that some men are doomed, impelled to sin by unalterable forces beyond human control rather than responding to alterable circumstances. Such a **view** also underpins the use by human agencies of agent provocateurs to lure people into crimes they might otherwise not have committed on the basis that such immorality is inherent in the fallen character of deviants rather than the product of circumstances.

In making use of religious beliefs to study moral indignation it should be noted, particularly in the case of contemporary society, that the fears and hopes which such religious sentiments and beliefs express can equally find expression in secularized form. As was noted above, when it is regarded as important that people suffer as the result of their loose morals, it is as one for the purpose of the study of moral indignation whether such suffering is believed to result from supernatural retribution or natural processes. Thus vice can be visited by supernatural punishment or believed to result in disease or disability as the result of purely natural processes.

Similar parallels of supernatural beliefs expressive of moral authoritarianism can be found in other areas. When what matters, for example, is the longing for an overwhelmingly strong power which limits human freedom, **determines** their life independently of their interests and wishes and administers salutary lessons concerning their helplessness, it makes little difference if the source is envisaged as God, Fate, Necessity, or Nature. Likewise

the fear of possession by spirits considered capable of corrupting and destroying people recurs in contemporary guise in the form of beliefs concerning the qualities of some drugs.

To point to the way in which such beliefs perform functions similar to those previously served by religious ideas is not, of course, to deny that they may be true. It may well be the case, for example, that pride does come before a fall even though it is no longer believed that the gods take a hand in ensuring that this is so, or sexual licence may have unfortunate psychological and physical consequences. What is argued here is that, in the absence of any conclusive evidence in these areas, differences in the willingness to accept such beliefs or to emphasise the danger involved result from variations in terms of moral authoritarianism.

To conclude this section, some mention needs to be made of the role of censorship as an expression of moral authoritarianism. As Elias noted, the banishment of references to the carnal side of human nature from conversation, or explicit representation of this aspect of human life in art or literature, is a sign of the increasing strength of social bonds which fetter human impulses and subdue sensuality. Prurient material is the particular target for censorship by the morally indignant as it not only affords sensual pleasure in itself, but is believed to promote the value of sexual indulgence. Censorship of such material is also a means of cutting off painful awareness of the presence of forbidden fruit. (Such "cut-off" mechanisms in the face of extremely tempting objects made unobtainable by social restraints are so basic that they can also

be observed amongst other primates.)<sup>4</sup> Censorship is also the inevitable weapon resorted to by those seeking to safeguard their reified view of the world and morality from the inroads of relativism and to suppress those who have the temerity to insult the sacred order by daring to question it.

### III. Repressive institutions and repressive sentiments

In studying the extent and intensity of those sentiments and beliefs which constitute moral authoritarianism we are not able to rely upon the presence of certain institutions as indicators of the strength of moral indignation within a society even when these might at first sight seem its natural embodiment. For example, the formal institution of punishment, seen in Durkheim's sense of the term as repressive sanctions emanating from a tribunal independent of both accuser and accused, is not the simple reflex on the institutional level of a deeply entrenched consensus of values throughout society. Repressive sanctions are not simply the result of repressive sentiments.

The history of any social institution such as is revealed in the introduction and development of criminal law, is the result of a diverse range of pressures and the end result, both in terms of its inception and operation, is likely to represent a compromise between these. In the case of the motives behind the development of the criminal law, for example, not only the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment but also the pursuit of economic and political advantage played a significant role. The state may seek to expand the criminal law not merely as a response to moral sentiments .

developing within society, but also for such considerations as the desire for revenue and to weaken local, clan and tribal loyalties.

The sentiments of the general population are not, however, without importance for developments in the enforcement of justice. Yet even here the possibility of more interested tendencies to inflict punishment would have to be taken into consideration in any full account of the development of formal mechanisms for the settlement of disputes. At a certain stage of development, when the mode of production renders the form of dispute avoidance and settlement used by foodgatherers inoperable, forms of primitive justice may well develop which pose dangers and uncertainties

which communities may well wish to be rid of by the introduction of a third force independent of the disputants and capable of keeping the peace.

For whatever reason the formal sanctions are introduced, whether it is the weakness of informal social controls, the desire for greater independence from mutual aid groups or the independent activity of the state aimed at strengthening its position, their very existence tends to create a public demand for their continuation as the result of the dissolution of informal social controls which their introduction fosters.

On the point of popular support for the enforcement of justice, it is not possible to share the assumption of Ranulf that interested and utilitarian considerations on the part of those desiring to protect themselves may be treated as constant and therefore as incapable of explaining variations in support for penal policies.

Different sections of society differ in terms of their vulnerability to the predation of criminals. Such fears are likely to make their mark upon public policy in accordance with the numbers, organization and resources of those threatened.

Where wide differences of power exist within society further difficulties are introduced for any attempt to see in the criminal law simply the reflection of interests and sentiments common throughout society in an equally intense form, as some people's interests and concerns will manifest themselves as more pressing than those of others. Some appearance of unanimity may be manufactured by the control of the means of ideological and emotional production by the powerful and privileged.<sup>5</sup> This renders it difficult for other classes to formulate and express their ideas and interests in a coherent ideology. The potentiality for conflicting views of the world, however, remains latent as the result of differing conditions and experiences, finding expression wherever a degree of independence from spiritual subservience is gained.

It cannot therefore be assumed that the experience of moral indignation will always find unequivocal expression, nor that it is the only significant force shaping penal policies. Particularly in the development of crime and punishment other, often more interested, motives are at work. It has not been the intention here to give any full account of the various forces shaping the history of penal policies and institutions, merely to indicate some of the forces strong enough to complement or counteract the operation of moral indignation in such areas.

#### IV. Moral indignation: towards a sociological explanation

We have encountered the central elements of the outlook of the morally indignant under a number of guises in the previous chapters: as the moral realist; the authoritarian; the dogmatist; the Apollonian; the person whose life is imbued throughout by a still vigorous collective conscience. This is not to say that these terms refer to identical characters in every respect. They all, however, particularly in the studies which have been made use of here, share much in common and encompass the sentiments and beliefs which constitute moral indignation. Given their common origin in a specific type of social experience, this is not at all surprising. From these studies and from the difficulties Ranulf encountered when faced by the emergence of what he regarded as a lower middle class mentality in the absence of any traditional petty bourgeoisie, it became clear that the tendency of the petty bourgeoisie to develop such values was only a particular case of a more general tendency governing the relationship between moral indignation and the social structure. Having surveyed a considerable amount of evidence concerning the sociology and social psychology of moral indignation, we are now in a position to advance a more general explanation of the social sources of this phenomenon than Ranulf proposed, an explanation which is capable of embracing differences other than the contrast between upper middle class and lower middle class psychology which was Ranulf's starting point and principal interest.

From the evidence before us it is clear that moral repressiveness is the result of the experience of inescapable social pressure, of having no choice but to yield to the demands of other people due to the nature of the social relationships in which one is enmeshed. To the extent that they are independent of the continuing good-will of those with whom they interact, individuals will be less likely to develop a morally indignant temperament. The social forces which give rise to the experience of social pressure that underlies moral authoritarianism bear upon the individual from a number of directions. Let us look more closely at some of these.

The first which merits consideration is the unequal distribution of power. Differing experiences of giving and taking orders have been held to be the main determinant of variations in individual outlooks.<sup>6</sup> Is this so with moral authoritarianism? It would certainly appear so. As early as childhood, as Piaget demonstrates, the morality of constraint is the direct outgrowth of unilateral respect of the child for its parents. The child's lack of resources and the activities of its parents render it incapable of criticising them. Only when parental constraint gives way before co-operation between equals and self-government by peers does unilateral respect give way to mutual respect and a morality based upon sympathy for one's equals rather than adherence to the codes and commands of authority. As we saw in our discussion of Piaget, with this change in relationships the mode of thought which he terms "moral realism" begins to fade.



Similarly with respect to early socialization we see in the authoritarian personality studies that those brought up under the burden of repressive family relationships, where discipline is harsh and exercised within clearly defined and unquestionable relationships of dominance and submission, are likely to develop the mentality of a moral authoritarian and to adopt equally harsh means of disciplining others when given the opportunity. Such emotions are fostered by severe parental discipline which both stimulates aggression as the result of frustration and at the same time denies it expression against the authorities which are its source. It then becomes harnessed to the service of social order in the form of prosocial aggression.

Such patterns of authority can be repeated in adulthood with similar consequences for moral consciousness. In neither case need it be assumed that those subject to such control consciously resent it. Consciously they are quite likely to regard this as just and the checks which they impose upon themselves by limiting and restraining their exploration and enjoyment of the extremely diverse range of behaviour of which they are capable as voluntary or inevitable. The explanations which people offer to account for their conduct are not necessarily correct. A strong argument can be made out that everyday consciousness in the realm of human affairs is in large measure composed of lies, mystifications and disguises aimed at deceiving oneself and others in the face of fear, ignorance and conflict.<sup>7</sup>

The explanations advanced by those whose mentalities have been shaped by authoritarian relationships are particularly suspect for two reasons. First, we have evidence of deeply ambivalent attitudes towards themselves and towards those in authority, indicators of smouldering hatred beneath the facade of self-acceptance and uncritical submission to authority which usually dominates their conscious thought. Second, as we have seen in the work of Rokeach, the function of belief systems as providing an accurate account of the world is easily suppressed for those with the closed minds typical of moral authoritarians by their function as filters to mask and distort evidence threatening to the ego.

Two further points need to be noted about the conditions influencing the formation of moral intolerance in childhood. The first is that repressive family relationships reflect concerns with social hierarchy and status generated by the experience of parents of relationships of inequality and competition in the wider society. This contributes to the formation of moral authoritarianism not only as the result of parental redirection of aggression as a consequence of their fate within oppressive social structures, but also simply from the parents desire to prepare their children to be able to cope with what they perceive as a threatening and uncontrollable world. The second point is that, in reviewing the influence of parents upon the formation of their children's morality, attention should not be limited to the parents beliefs and values and the success they have in duplicating these in their children.

People whose childhood was spent in a home untroubled by economic insecurity are likely to develop attitudes at variance with those of parents whose own childhood was spent under such conditions. For their children economic security may be taken for granted, in a way which is impossible for the parents who, despite present affluence, passed their formative years under more straightened circumstances. Concentration on too narrow a notion of socialization can obscure such sources of attitude formation.

The influence and power of one's elders can, of course, extend well beyond childhood under favourable conditions. Gerontocracy as a form of social inequality has important consequences for the development of moral authoritarianism, which is often couched in terms of respect for tradition. Such respect diminishes where people are able to escape from the continued supervision of those who were responsible for them during their formative years. Becoming freer in their dealings with their elders they become freer in their attitude towards the morality which these elders represent.

The fear and caution of moral authoritarians in dealing with the world beyond the safe confines of what has been rendered predictable by moral regulation are inimical to the pride and self-assurance of those enjoying greater power, privilege and independence. The latter are better able, by virtue of the resources at their command, to satisfy their desires, to overcome opposition and obstacles, and freer to give vent to their frustration, escaping the temperamentally souring influence of long endured resentment from having their desires thwarted and denied expression. The nearer to the top of the social hierarchy the greater the opportunity of shaping events and exercising

thought, judgement and initiative. Increasing occupational alienation as one descends the social scale breeds susceptibility to moral authoritarianism, as does the increased dependence upon others resulting from slender resources.

At the very bottom of the social hierarchy, however, other forces enter into account which check this trend. Prominent amongst these is the fact that the lowest class achieves a measure of independence from others by the very fact that its members have so little to lose. Threats to take away valuable statuses in the event of nonconformity hold little menace for those with no status to lose.<sup>8</sup> What keeps most people from acting upon their deviant impulses is in large measure the extent to which they have become committed to conventional society through having, or expecting to obtain, a favoured position within it. Detected deviance would have wide reaching repercussions for such people, threatening their livelihoods and reputation.<sup>9</sup> Seen in this light, moral restraint and the resulting indignation at the wickedness of others can be seen as a "middle class" phenomenon in the broadest possible sense of the term, the tendency towards moral indignation increasing as one reaches the lower levels of the middle class until the lack of a stake in the system of stratification weakens the pressure it exerts as individuals find themselves with little to lose by deviance. (The appeal of moral indignation to those sections of the community which aspire to gain or retain a hold, however precarious, upon the status ladder above the lowest level is nicely illustrated by the social characteristics

of those who choose to become professional guardians of morality. For the police are drawn principally from the ranks of the aspiring and respectable upper working class and from the lower levels of the middle class who are anxious to retain their claim to social superiority).<sup>10</sup>

In general we may expect those whose economic achievements are most precarious, who are more likely to be tumbled from their position of economic advantage, to be more anxious to cling to the dictates of moral rectitude. Economic depressions will increase this tendency and fuel their zeal to mete out justice to the wicked. Likewise, increasingly intense and threatening competition leads to further desperate impulse renunciation. Prosperity and prestige, on the other hand, will dilute such an outlook, although the complete effect of such improved conditions may not be fully realized until the second generation.

So far we have been concerned with outlining the social pressures which allow little freedom of thought and action which emanate from systems of social inequality. Such conditions provide little reason to feel in control of fate and make conformity seem both necessary and appropriate. But social pressure, the experience of having no choice but to yield to the demands and expectations of other people, can also bear upon one from one's equals. This is not entirely the product of redirected hostility aroused by social inequality. The removal of inequality is not in itself sufficient to secure the elimination of moral intolerance and repression. People will continue to feel that they have no option but to comply if the nature of their social relationships is such that moral standards are reified into

absolutes and where escape from the group appears out of the question. The greater the commitment to society, the tighter the moral bonds limiting the individual pursuit of sensual satisfaction and the more the body and its functions are veiled from public view".

At this point it needs to be emphasized that in discussing social solidarity as a source of morality what we have in mind is loyalty to the group as a whole and not simply some sort of sum of independent affections and aversions for the individuals composing it. To borrow Martin Buber's distinction, what we should focus upon is the "social", the situation where loyalty to the group takes precedence over loyalty to any one individual, rather than the "inter-human", that is to concrete friendships.<sup>11</sup> The former has no necessary relationship with respect for individual rights and freedom. Despite equality within the group the importance of the social can be raised to such a point as to provide an object of unilateral respect over and above the individuals who comprise the group, with all that unilateral respect means by way of moral realism, restraint and intolerance. Individual members who affront the absolute authority of the group's code of conduct in such cases are likely to meet with moral indignation rather than sympathy. Here we see again the operation of the principle that the greater the social distance between the offender and the offended, the harsher the reaction. The group is elevated above all, the individual counts as nought in comparison. The development of individuality may well be feared as posing a threat to its cohesion and loyalty to its collective values and beliefs.

Whatever weakens such unilateral respect, subordination and incorporation into the group relaxes social pressure and hence bodily control, as well as opening up the possibility of greater compassion towards offenders as people become less ready to sacrifice the individual in the name of collective ideals. The lengthier and more permanent the involvement in a particular group, the greater tends to be the attachment to its traditional values and their enforcement. Conversely, the more fluid social boundaries are as the result, for example, of practising an itinerant mode of production the less likely we are to encounter moral authoritarianism. The easiness of moral authoritarians to impose boundaries upon experience and conduct reflects the impermeability of the social boundaries which encase them. Where people feel free to breakoff relationships and start afresh, as under the conditions afforded by an expanding economy, boundaries weaken and evaporate. Access to alternative sources of social exchange and allegiance form one of the most important conditions of social and intellectual independence.<sup>12</sup>

The ability of a group to induce the experience in its individual members that they have no option but to conform to group standards and to subordinate themselves to its authority depends in particular upon two conditions: mutual surveillance and cosmopolitanism.<sup>13</sup> To take mutual surveillance first, it can be observed that groups differ in the extent to which members carry out their activities in the presence of each other.

Where it is impossible to evade such surveillance, social control is tightened, unreflecting acceptance of group values and beliefs reinforced and expectations of conformity in others raised.

Cosmopolitanism, exposure to a diversity of perspectives as the result of contacts with people from a variety of social groups and situations, introduces a degree of relativism in place of realism in moral beliefs as in others. It also provides the confidence and knowledge necessary to dispel the vision of the world outside the safe confines of a closed community as alien and uncontrollable. Conversely, limited social relationships foster undivided attention to each other's conduct and involvements and provide the social conditions necessary for intense gossip to flourish. Through such gossip information is pooled, suspicions created and confirmed and reputations attacked. Diversity of attention brought about by diverse involvements outside the group distracts interest from its affairs and dilutes the importance accorded to it and its values and beliefs by more cosmopolitan members.

The more activities such as work, leisure, politics and religion become separated from one another, carried out by separate groups in separate territories, the lower the degree of mutual surveillance and the higher the degree of cosmopolitanism. This historical trend has inevitably weakened the forcefulness of collective beliefs and feelings. Large cities exercise a similar influence over the formation of morality, weakening mutual surveillance at the same time as erasing the involvement necessary to stimulate it. Cosmopolitanism also increases as diverse cultures intermingle. Decreasing mutual surveillance and increasing cosmopolitanism ease social pressure,



making slipping over social and moral boundaries easier to contemplate and to achieve.

Moral doubt and scepticism are not only the product of being introduced to alternative realities entertained by others. Catastrophes which disrupt the taken-for-granted routines and sunder relationships, whether such catastrophes are natural or man-made, shake unreflecting veneration of the traditional verities. The social dislocation brought about by the combination of economic growth and population expansion and mobility, identified by Musgrove as the source of Dionysianism, likewise leads to the weakening of the collective conscience and the growth of anomie.

#### V. Ranulf revisited: an appreciation

It is quite understandable that Ranulf should have concentrated upon the lower middle class as the source of moral indignation within society. The psychology of this class was evident at the time in its attraction to National Socialism with its advocacy of law and order and manipulation of moral indignation. There was also an established body of knowledge concerning the outlook typical to the petty bourgeoisie, present in the work of such writers as Sombart and Weber, which portrayed this class as ascetic, moralistic and severely self-disciplined as a consequence of their position within the social structure and the peculiar mode of life which it dictated.

It is evident from studies such as these that the lower middle class lead a life dominated by the notion of scarcity. On the one hand this distinguishes them from the upper-middle- and upper-class. On the other, while material scarcity also impinges still more heavily upon the working class, the hope of gaining or retaining a hold, albeit precarious, on the lower rungs of the ladder of privilege and prestige, lead the lower middle class to adopt

a different response. For much of the working class, the individual mobility held out as a possibility by bureaucratic careers or the pursuit of success over competitors in business is not readily available. Long term planning and deferred gratification make less sense in such circumstances and scarcity is therefore dealt with by seizing the opportunity to enjoy oneself while the opportunity presents itself.

For the lower middle class, and for its downwardly-mobile representatives within the working class, the "sunken middle class", struggling to retain their middle class position or seeking to ensure such a position for their children, scarcity takes on a different meaning as the result of the different constraints and opportunities their social situation presents to them.<sup>14</sup> Their mentality is pervaded by the notion of thriftiness, as much in emotional as in economic affairs. Deferred gratification is, however, something of a two-edged weapon with which to fight their way to economic and social advantage, for those who have cultivated emotional inhibition within themselves cannot readily cast it off again when the long deferred enjoyment actually presents itself. Sombart's contrast between the man able to enjoy life to the full and the man with the calculating and cold nature of one dedicated solely to business and economic ambition captures this well:

A good householder...that is a good burgher and a lover, of whatever rank, are irreconcilable antitheses. Either economic interests, in the broadest sense, or love interests form the central part of all life's importance. One lives either to work or else to love. Work implies saving, love implies spending.<sup>15</sup>

The traditional petty bourgeoisie of small business and independent artisans have, due to their meagre resources, and the size of their business, been constrained to adopt behaviour that is creditable in every sense of the term. The need is for conspicuous production, not the conspicuous consumption employed by those in more favourable circumstances.

The marginal position occupied by lower middle class employees produces similar contrasts between their morality and that entertained by the more powerful and privileged. Subject to closer supervision they lack much of the independence and initiative enjoyed by their superiors, while their contact with new and alternative perspectives is more limited as the result of the requirements and regulation of their work and the nature of their education.

Still more impressive, however, than Ranulf's contrast between the morality of the lower middle class and that of their superiors, is the boldness of his general approach to solving the problem of the origin of moral indignation. While it cannot be denied that interested motives play a part in shaping responses to immorality, these are usually much more obvious and unproblematical than the contribution stemming from more disinterested sources. Ranulf searched for the cause of the difference between groups and classes in terms of moral indignation through carefully enquiring into the meaning of such sentiments for those entertaining them by relating them to their whole view of life, tracing such views to their origin in social experiences.

As we have seen, experiences

conducive to the development of moral indignation are not the monopoly of the lower middle class as he was led to believe. Nevertheless, the evidence which we have reviewed amply bears out the value of pursuing the line of enquiry into the origin of moral indignation which he commenced, seeking its source in the limitations imposed upon people by virtue of the social position in which they find themselves.

#### VI. Breaking the bonds

Attitudes towards moral authoritarianism by those who have studied it have varied. Mary Douglas argues for sensitivity towards those whose morality and modes of thought and expression are dominated by high grid and group. Elias regards civilization and its psychological impact as an advance, a fragile defence against man's predatory nature, although he acknowledges that the civilizing process has the unfortunate consequence of promoting a morally indignant condemnation of offenders rather than allowing the development of compassion. Ranulf, while clearly feeling distaste for the sentiments of the morally indignant, nevertheless feels impelled by his desire to claim academic neutrality to point out the likely dysfunctions of ceasing to impose strict moral regulation of conduct in terms of the distress of those unable to benefit from new found freedoms.

In general, however, the approach to moral authoritarianism has been hostile. This is clearly so in the authoritarian personality studies of Adorno and his colleagues. It also finds expression in Piaget's opposition to hierarchical relationships with their morality of unilateral respect in favour of egalitarian relationships and the morality of mutual respect which arises from them.

Musgrove makes abundantly clear his contempt for Apollonians.

Such critiques of moral repressiveness partake of a long tradition within sociology that stretches back to the Enlightenment.<sup>16</sup> It expresses a faith in the possibility of human improvement through people freeing themselves from existing institutions which are seen as the cause of human impoverishment and their failure to achieve their full stature. It is this belief which has inspired the present enquiry into some of the hidden costs of closed and inegalitarian relationships and communities. The intolerance and repression emanating from moral indignation clearly cannot be wished away. To some extent it has been reduced by contemporary developments sketched in the previous chapter. Its radical reduction, however, depends upon the realization of truly open and egalitarian societies which do not provide such fertile soil for moral indignation by stunting the growth and fulfillment of so many of their members and filling them with anxiety and frustration. Such a radical transformation will not be achieved by piecemeal appeals for civil liberties, nor yielded lightly by those committed to the perpetuation of the present social order.

## NOTES

1. Eysenck, for example, has argued that differences between individuals in terms of moral attitudes towards sensual pleasures are associated with differences between extroverts and introverts, two distinctive personality types which he regards as determined principally by genetic factors (Eysenck, 1972, pp. 34-35 and 236ff).
2. Schoeck (1969), pp.87ff
3. Adorno (1973), p.96
4. Russell and Russell (1968), pp. 121-123
5. The term "means of emotional production" is taken from Randall Collins' discussion of the manipulation of materials and techniques used to stage rituals producing strong emotional bonds. This typically entails the emotional contagion which results from gathering together a significant number of people focusing upon a common object and participating in a co-ordinated sequence of gestures. Religious ceremonies provide typical examples. (Collins, 1975, pp. 58-59)
6. Ibid., p.73
7. Harris (1977), pp. 12-13 and passim.
8. See, for example, the study of Skid Row by Wallace (1965). He argues that such areas are attractive to many of their inhabitants precisely because of the absence of middle class morality, despite the hardships involved.
9. For a discussion of the process of increasing commitment to respectable society and its consequences for conformity, see Becker (1963), pp. 26-28
10. For a review of the evidence concerning the social background of the police, see Box (1971), pp. 183-190
11. Buber (1965), pp. 72-73
12. Cf. Blau (1967), pp. 118ff
13. For further discussion of these factors, see Collins (1975), pp. 75ff
14. For a discussion of the role of the sunken middle class as the mainstay of the "respectable" working class, see Parkin (1972) pp. 53ff
15. Werner Sombart, quoted in Bramsted (1964), p.61
16. See Zeitlin (1968), and Dawe (1970).

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