Blog on Capitalism

Exploring the nature of Capitalism

An Explanation and History of the Emergence of Capitalism

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Over the past century Western industrialized nations have attempted to reorganize the rest of the planet to live by their understanding of the natural and social world. In many ways they have been very successful in this endeavor. Over the period a world economic system has emerged with which communities must increasingly interact. Successful interaction seems to depend on internal reorganization of the political, economic and social lives of people, and so communities find themselves compelled, by their need to compete in the world system, to 'develop'.

Since governments everywhere are under increasing pressure to establish and maintain the legislative, political and economic institutions that are necessary to ensure formal economic development, we need to understand the key principles which underpin such developments. We also need to be aware of the ways in which such principles conflict with the equally 'natural' understandings of people in non-Western communities. Any examination of economic organisation and action needs to be based on a prior understanding of the basic

cultural presumptions underpinning them.

In a way which is common to people in all societies, people in Western communities, when considering the fundamental rights and responsibilities of community members towards one another, speak in ideological terms.[1] Yet, while they hold variant ideologies, they speak the same conceptual language. While each ideological frame spells out a particular version of 'reality', they all presume certain fundamental understandings about the nature of individuals, communities, the environment, and the metaphysical realm, and about the forms of relationship found in and between them.[2]

It is from these less than consciously held basic presumptions that individuals and communities construct their own particular variants of 'ideal realities'. For the purposes of this discussion I will refer to the unconsciously and semiconsciously held presumptions upon which these ideal realities are based as *primary ideology.* I will refer to the consciously held 'ideal realities' which are derived from them and promoted by groups within a society as *secondary ideologies* (see Ideology and Reality for further discussion)*.*

To communities which do not share Western primary ideological presumptions, the confrontations among competing Western secondary ideologies are less than rational. Because their own forms of secondary ideology are based on their own primary ideological presumptions about life, which are likely to be very different from the basic presumptions contained within Western primary ideology, it is very difficult for them to enter into a dialogue with Western people. Rather, as has happened during the last half century, people become opposed on the basis of subconsciously held basic presumptions about life, rather than on the basis of variant secondary ideologies. So, we speak of the confrontation between 'Islam and the West', rather than about a confrontation between Shiites and capitalists. What we have is a confrontation between primary rather than secondary ideologies.

Through this century, as non-Western communities become increasingly self-assertive, we are likely to find that the confrontations which occur will not be between people holding competing versions of Western secondary ideology - those are likely to oppose each other at the ballot box and in other ways within Western countries - but between variant sets of basic presumptions about the meaning, purpose and organisation of life. These presumptions, being reflections of the basic cognitive frames of communities, will be poorly expressed, and those who attempt dialogue based upon such confrontations will find the explanations and basic positions of their adversaries rationally and logically unconvincing.

Before we can grapple with the confrontations which are already occurring and will repeatedly re-occur throughout this century, we need to comprehend the basic presumptions underpinning Western capitalist understandings of life. In this discussion we will attempt to do this through exploring the historical experiences which shaped and moulded Western European communities over the past thousand years as they moved from feudalism to capitalism.

How have some of the most basic presumptions which underpin Western understandings of life been shaped by history, becoming seen as features of the real world, the unfocused backdrop to secondary ideological disputes? The descriptions which follow are complementary to sketches drawn elsewhere (Ideology and Reality, Subsistence and Status, The Nature of Work).

Here I will examine:

- the ways in which 'the economy' became separated from other 'environments' in Western thinking;

- the emergence of an emphasis on 'market exchange' as the 'correct' form of exchange between individuals and groups;

- the reasons why formal economies are so strongly bound by legal frames and supported by both legal and fiscal bureaucracies;

- the nature of 'consumerism' and its historical underpinnings;

- and why those who became committed to Western ideologies became so missionary-oriented, focused on the material world and convinced of the need for the whole world to be organised according to their ideological understanding.

In the examination of these issues I am going to look at some of the historical experiences of Western Europeans which have, over more than eight hundred years, produced the consumer culture of today. To understand the present we have to know the experiences of the past which shaped and moulded Western European thinking and action and produced the primary ideological presumptions which underpin interaction, meaning and organisation in Western communities.

People and recognised 'environments'

Fundamental to understanding Western primary ideological presumptions is an understanding of the ways in which people conceive of and interact with their *environments.* In order to grapple with the ways in which Western Europeans conceive of themselves in relation to their environments, we need to understand several important fundamental assumptions from which they operate.

First, all human beings are *individuals* who *independently* interact with the various environments within which they live, and develop their own unique personas through that interaction.

Second, these independent individuals are autonomous fashioners of their environments, which are passive, being moulded by, and reflecting, human activity.

Third, individuals interact with a number of quite distinct environments.

- There is the *physical* or *material* environment, bound by *natural* laws. For Western people, the 'natural world' can be controlled and directed by mastering sets of laws which relate to its various aspects - those of physics, chemistry, geology, botany, and so on.

- There is the *social* environment bound by *social* laws, again controlled and directed through understanding and applying sets of laws - the economic, political and social. The search for, and outlining of, such sets of laws has produced a reification of these aspects of social life, so that most Western people think of each area as a self-existent whole, as an environment with its own *raison d'être,* and, its own logic.

- And there is, for many Western people, approximately eighty per cent of the

population in most Western national censuses, a spiritual, or religious, or *metaphysical* environment bound by its own quite distinctive sets of laws.

Each set of laws is self-contained and, until very recently, it was assumed (and still is by most Western people) that the rules for interaction with, and in, each environment can be spelt out, providing people with all the necessary information for interacting in the best possible ways with each of those environments.

This belief has led Western people to assume that through education and research, through mastering the principles and rule requirements for interaction with each environment, the best possible forms of behavior, attitude, organization and interaction for individuals and groups can be determined. Once those best possibilities have been outlined, and people commit themselves to living in accord with those possibilities, both individuals and communities become 'developed'.

That is, once Western researchers have determined the fundamental laws for interaction with each recognised environment, they are able to *prescribe* the *best* forms of activity and organization for any community. They are therefore able to evaluate the performance of any community in terms of their prescriptions. The sets of prescriptions reflect, of course, the secondary ideologies of Western communities. The presumption of the existence of a range of separate environments with which people interact is, however, a *primary* ideological presumption, one which is basic to the ways in which Western people think and organize their lives, no matter what secondary ideology they might subscribe to.

So, the keys to *development* [3] are research to ascertain the principles underlying human interaction with each Western environment, together with the ways in which the environments might be reorganized for individual and community advantage; establishment of the bureaucratic frameworks through which the activities of individuals can be focused and channeled to the requirements of those prescriptions [4] and education of people to live by those principles, so ensuring physical, social, political, economic and spiritual well-being. Rathbone Gregg, in the 1870s, put it very clearly:

> The lot of man ... is in his own hands, from his being surrounded by fixed laws, on knowledge of which, and conformity to which, his wellbeing depends. The study of these and obedience to them form, therefore, the great aim of public instruction ... (quoted in Holyoake 1896, p. 85)

Western people find it *natural* [5] that all activity should be circumscribed by rules and regulations. Rarely, if ever, has there been such an acceptance of and compliance with systems of rules and regulations as exists in Western communities [6]. But, because those rules are applied by impersonal bureaucracies, they are not seen as intrusive. Rather, Western people regard rules and regulations as necessary for the protection of their individuality and a guarantee of their right to interact with their environments for their private ends. Since the twelfth century, Western Europeans have increasingly committed themselves to uncovering *systems of law* governing the various environments, and to educating people to live in accordance with them once they have been uncovered.

Among the reasons for the phenomenal success of Western Europeans in imposing their world views on others throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is their absolute certainty of the superiority of their 'knowledge' of how the physical, social and spiritual

worlds 'really work', and their ability to impose on others well-organised systems of law and government, centred not on individual personalities but on impersonal bureaucracies.

Western people have come to believe that, whereas all other people live in the mists of superstition and dubious rationality, governed by the whim of their rulers, they have discovered the 'laws' of the physical, social and spiritual worlds and so can act 'rationally', ensuring that all their behaviour, interaction and organisation conform to those principles which underpin the rule-bound systems they are in the process of uncovering. When Europeans imposed themselves upon the rest of the world during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries they took with them the 'best' ways of using the physical environment, of organising communities, and of ensuring individual 'development' and a successful life in the next world. They therefore set about changing the worlds they encountered in terms of their understandings.

The physical environment could (and should) be dominated, managed and organised to 'realise its potential', that is ensure high yields, whether of minerals, crops or anything else which Western people might consider a 'potential' for that environment (e.g. 'tourism'); the social environment could (and should) be managed and organised to 'realise its potential', to ensure individual development (defined, of course, in terms of the particular secondary ideology of those holding the power); and the spiritual environment could (and should) be managed and reorganised to ensure high rates of conversion and commitment to the religious forms and beliefs of Europe (which would not only ensure life in the next world, but also orient people to be responsible citizens in this 7).

Not only were Western Europeans committed to systems of laws, rules and regulations, they also strongly emphasised the use of mathematics to measure success by quantifying results. This emphasis on quantification coincided with yet another emphasis, that on material possessions, on the accumulation of goods and the generation of material wealth. Industry and frugality would inevitably produce riches. The demonstration of these virtues, in turn, would inevitably bring respect and status. So, in order to attain and maintain status and respect, one needed to demonstrate that one had gained wealth *by one's own efforts - that* one had *realised one's own potential and the potential of the environments within which one lived.* One's material *worth* is most easily ascertained by giving cash values to possessions so that a total value can readily be calculated by interested others. This attitude led 'naturally' to conspicuous consumption and ownership, demonstrating the wealth of the person. And so there emerged, in Western Europe, apparently paradoxical emphases on hard work and frugality on the one hand, and increasing conspicuous ownership and consumption on the other.

Of course, Western Europeans are convinced that these emphases are 'logical', and necessary for the 'rational' direction and control of the environments within which they live. Whereas almost all other people are bound by 'tradition', by forms of organisation, interaction and behaviour which have their roots in the historical experiences of their forebears, Western people believe that they organise life in terms of *rational* constructs, derived not from tradition but from scientific investigation of their environments. As they uncover the principles governing their natural and social environments, they gain control of them and are able to manage them to produce the best possible returns for people.

We need to confront this belief. Do the constructs and understandings of Western Europeans come from their scientific investigation of substantive environments, or is the nature and

form of those 'environments' the result of reification of aspects of the natural and social worlds, required by the historical experiences of Western people? That is, are the environments with which Western people interact objective features of the world which are recognised as such by all people everywhere, or are they only real to Western Europeans?

In the following historical sketches I suggest that the environments which are recognised are consequences of the historical tensions and confrontations of Western Europe. They are, in fact, understandings which are derived from, and required by, Western historical experience. They are as shaped and determined by 'tradition' as any other system of knowledge and understanding in other communities. The presumption that there are sets of laws waiting to be uncovered for the control of each environment is, equally, a consequence of particular historical experience.

The Western European conviction that they have 'got it right', while others have not, is based in their certainty of the validity of their view of the world, and the effectiveness with which it allows them to manipulate their environments in engaging in forms of activity and organisation which are required by Western industrial social templates. Western communities, no less than any other communities, have *inherited* their understanding of how their world is organised and the ways in which they relate to the environments in which they live.

A key and fundamental difference between Western communities and most other communities lies in the Western presumption of the existence of *separate environments,* each of which operates in terms of its own logic and its own set of operational principles or laws. Before any such sets of laws can even be anticipated, one must recognise the existence of the separate environments to which they relate. For people not brought up in Western communities, and therefore not thinking in terms of Western presumptions, the existence of the identified environments, let alone the rules for interaction with them, is unlikely to be recognised.

In the same way that Western people take the existence of separate environments as a subconscious given, something which needs no justification, other people take their own understanding of the environment within which they live for granted, together with their understanding of their interaction with it. When they are required to organise life in terms of Western European understandings, they inevitably warp the organised environments within which they are required to operate towards their own, quite different presumptions about their environment. This effect is most clearly seen in what, for Western people, is the dominant social environment, the economy.

Before I begin an examination of the historical emergence of this Western view of environments governed by systems of law, a few qualifiers are necessary. When investigating historical trends one has to start somewhere. The important primary understandings of any community do not suddenly appear. They are shaped over hundreds of years and through a multitude of interacting variables and circumstances. So, one has somewhat arbitrarily to decide on a starting point in time and on the variables which one will investigate. What is described in one century will have its roots in preceding centuries.

The influences on community understanding which I highlight are, themselves, modified and focused through a wide range of other variables and circumstances on which I have chosen not to dwell. However, for our purposes here, those issues I investigate do seem to be central

to understanding how Western Europeans came to conceive of life as being lived in a number of distinct environments, governed by systems of law, and subject to quantification and evaluation in terms of material returns for individual endeavour.

The 'economic' environment [8]

Elsewhere I have suggested that many people in non-Western communities make no clear distinction between their 'economic' and their 'social' (or any other) environments (see Subsistence and Status). So, when they engage in 'economic' activity, they, quite naturally, without needing to think about it, integrate their activity with social responsibilities and concerns. This integration produces a very different form of activity from that presumed to be 'economic' by Western people. Because of this 'confusion' (in Western terms) of environments, the presumptions in terms of which they organise activity are also very different (and they are highly unlikely to have developed detailed sets of economic rules and regulations defining and governing activity and impartially applied across communities [9]). Their economic activity does not match that anticipated and required by Western people. They seem to be indulging in 'informal', or even 'illegal', economic activity, that is activity which falls outside the scope of 'legitimate' economic activity for Western people. Even when they have attended the West's best teaching institutions, through which the 'necessary' forms of legislation, organisation and activity are inculcated, all too often, once back in their home countries, they seem to 'warp' and 'distort' the forms they have learned.

In order to sketch the emergence of primary ideological presumptions underpinning economic organisation and activity in Western communities I am going to have to examine the ways in which those presumptions became established in late medieval Europe. As will become clear, the understandings and organisational forms of the period were very different from those of Western communities in the twentieth century. Unfortunately given the constraints of this discussion, the sketches must necessarily be brief and therefore inadequate. The focus will also have to be limited, bypassing the emergence of particular metaphysical understandings, and the emergence and establishment of the various 'disciplines' for uncovering systems of law operating within the recognised environments.

The development of systems of law

In the feudal period of the tenth to the twelfth centuries, western Europeans saw the world as divided into two domains: a spiritual domain and a secular one, which included political, economic, social and material environments as now understood in Western communities. These were hierarchically interrelated, with the spiritual domain dominant and the secular domain subject to spiritual oversight and direction.

The spiritual domain was dominated by the Roman Church, with the pope at its head and bishops as representatives of the pope within territorial districts. In their own districts, in all normal matters, bishops took final responsibility, only referring to Rome when something out of the ordinary needed definition, or when they needed support in the face of challenges to their authority. The secular domain was the arena within which the Church exercised authority. In the secular domain, feudal princes held political power within hierarchically organised territories. As Maitland has described, feudalism was:

> ... a state of society in which the main bond is the relation between lord and man, a relation implying on the lord's part protection and defence; on the man's part protection, service and reverence ... The national organization is a system of these relationships: at the head there

stands the king as lord of all, below him are his immediate vassals, or tenants in chief, who again are lords of tenants, who again may be lords of tenants, and so on, down to the lowest possessor of land. Lastly, as every other court consists of the lord's tenants, so the king's court consists of his tenants in chief, and so far as there is any constitutional control over the king it is exercised by the body of these tenants. (quoted in Macfarlane 1987, pp. 182-3)

Although Western capitalism depends on a division of the world into private and public arenas, feudal Europe did not require such a division. As Macfarlane, quoting Maitland, says:

The English lawyer Bracton [in the mid-thirteenth century] knew of the distinction of 'private' and 'public', yet 'he makes little use of it. This was because 'feudalism ... is a denial of this distinction. Just in so far as the ideal of feudalism is perfectly realized, all that we call public law is merged in private law: jurisdiction is property, office is property, the kingship itself is property; the same word *dominium* has to stand now for *ownership* and now for *lordship'*. (Macfarlane 1987, p. 182)

While the distinction between public and private made little sense in the feudal world, it was during the feudal period that the Western European emphasis on the importance of publicly formulated law, governing private interactions, developed. As Tay and Kamenka explain:

The feudal compact, in keeping with Germanic tradition, was not an act of authority but a voluntary agreement between independent legal persons - one agreeing to serve, the other to provide and protect. It was an enforceable contract which bound the king or lord as much as it bound the subject or liegeman. In a very important sense, it brought the whole basis of political authority and obedience into the area of private law, of relations between individuals capable, for the purposes of law, of abstract equality and of rationally and freely seeking their individual well-being and subordinating themselves voluntarily. Those not capable of such freedom, e.g. serfs, were not fully legal persons. (Tay & Kamenka 1983, p. 69)

Although feudal relationships did not require a distinction between public and private realms, the concept of *'free' legally defined* individuals entering into *contracts* with one another was, in fact, born in the feudal period. It became greatly expanded and provided a basis for understanding the nature of the relationship between the individual and society during the seventeenth century, but it underpinned the development of feudal law. It also provided one of the rationales for the emergence of a wide range of common-interest groupings during the medieval period. During this period numerous 'associations', 'unions', 'guilds', 'fraternities', 'communities', 'colleges', 'leagues', 'nations' and other forms of common-interest grouping developed, managed by those who constituted the group and designed for mutual protection and self-help [10]. Interaction among individuals within these groups was fraternal, with most exchanges being based on cooperation rather than competition.

This form of egalitarian, common-interest grouping is usual in hierarchically organised communities. It allows those who see themselves as being in a similar relationship within a hierarchy to join with others of like mind in promoting and protecting their interests. As feudal organisation became increasingly distorted during the medieval centuries [11], these groups became increasingly important. Amongst the most important were those which brought educated people together to protect their interests against others, and those which emerged amongst the 'money-making' people of western Europe. Together, these two groups were to challenge and finally displace feudal leaders, and, with their displacement, introduce an entirely different rationale for the organisation of society, new forms of

interpersonal relationship, and new understandings of the meaning and purpose of life. And, for a variety of reasons, some of which will be sketched here, these forms of reorganisation required a very different set of primary ideological presumptions. Western Europe, over a period of eight hundred years, with enormous difficulty, learned to think in ways which were foreign to people who lived in the feudal communities of the tenth to thirteenth centuries.

While the sense of legitimate, approved feudal hierarchy within the society was strong, the dominance of hierarchically determined social position over membership of such groupings ensured the subordination of group interests to those of the wider society. Whenever, for whatever reason, the cohesion of the wider society was suspect, these common interest groupings became more demanding, leading to strikes, riots and other forms of social challenge.

So, in the period when we begin our story, people lived in hierarchically organised communities, with their primary social and political status defined by their relationship to land. Those of similar status within the society recognised egalitarian bonds of common interest, and tended to support one another and make demands of each other on the basis of their shared identity. But, equally, they recognised those who were hierarchically superior as leaders who both required and deserved their allegiance. In fact, they recognised common-interest association only in terms of these hierarchical responsibilities. At the base of the hierarchical pyramid of feudal communities were the peasants who, though they held some land, usually held too little to ensure their livelihood. Few peasants could have lived off the land they held within an estate alone. As Ganshof has described for the later medieval period:

> ... However great its contribution to livelihood, agriculture had by no means altogether
> displaced the very ancient practices of pastoral life, hunting, and food collecting. By his fields
> alone the peasant literally could not have lived. All about the area more or less permanently
> cultivated and, when under crops, held in strict individual or family possession, he required
> access to immense stretches of common waste left in its natural condition. These moors and
> marshes and forests did not merely furnish necessary food for his cattle. His own nourishment
> depended on them; for wild vegetables and fruits were even more important in his dietary
> than wild game ... In villages where there was no lord, or where the lord's power was a late
> growth, the village community sometimes retained absolute control of these common lands;
> it owned them, in feudal phrase, *en alleux* ... But throughout the greater part of Europe,
> where common was essential but still only a sort of annexe to the arable, the lord almost
> always extended his power over commons as well as over fields ... [However] it is no doubt
> vain to look for the true medieval 'owner' of the commons. (Ganshof 1971, pp. 281, 282)12

Land was held by families who owed allegiance to those above them who provided not only access to land but also political and other forms of protection and a sense of community to those under their jurisdiction. And a great deal of the land in an area was 'common'; that is, it had no legal owner. European feudal organisation was not based on the need to ascribe individual ownership to all existing land. In this feature, it has a lot in common with many non-Western communities before the imposition of Western forms of organisation in the twentieth century.

When land is not primarily seen as a wealth-creating resource, and people are not primarily geared to the 'wealth-creating' use of their environment, there is no strong compulsion to claim ownership of 'un-owned' land. The West, as a result of experiences to be sketched here, came strongly to believe in the necessity for all land to be legally and exclusively held by

identifiable 'real' or 'artificial' individuals, and used to generate increasing cash income for its owners.13

The communities in which medieval people lived were serviced by clergy who belonged to a hierarchically organised Church and claimed very important rights and responsibilities within the communities they serviced. The metaphor which emerged to describe the relation between pope and emperor, between clergy and laity, was that of the soul and the body. The body without the soul is of no consequence. It is the soul which animates the body. Equally, the Church ensured the spiritual life of the secular world. The Church was, therefore, central to life in the medieval world. It therefore claimed authority over the secular world and reinforced its claims with legal statutes based upon written, historical evidence accumulated over the centuries 14.

This assumption of the superiority of the soul over the body, of that which is life over that which is a 'container' for that life, was to become significant in the emerging belief in the independence of self-contained, pre-social individuals from the seventeenth century onwards. Then, with the material and the spiritual thoroughly separated, a similar separation was to be assumed between human beings and the material environments they controlled. Individuals were to be perceived as separate from and superior to the material world, over which they rightfully exercised dominion. Just as the Church believed it had a mandate from God to direct the medieval world, so Western individuals came to believe that they had a mandate to 'realise the potential' of the resources of the material world wherever they might be found.

The Church's power came from two sources. It held large tracts of land controlled by bishops and abbots who, as feudal lords, had authority in the secular domain, and it was also perceived to hold a very real power to condemn people to hell. If one could, as the Roman Church after Augustine claimed (cf. Warfield 1970, p. 122ff), be saved only by belonging to the Church, then to be excommunicated was to be consigned to eternal damnation. In an age when people were convinced of the existence and potency of a spiritual realm, one placed the destiny of one's soul at risk by challenging the Church.

However, there were long periods, particularly following the disintegration of the ninth-century Carolingian empire, when the papacy was politically weak, dominated by local Roman families, and unable to assert its claimed authority. During the tenth and eleventh centuries increasing numbers of secular rulers extended their authority over bishops within their territories. This situation came to a head with the accession of the Duke of Saxony, Otto the Great (912-973), to the German throne in 936. Otto, ostensibly to rescue Pope John XII, conquered Italy and received an imperial coronation from the pope. As part of his strategy for securing his reign, Otto had made an alliance with the German Church. Bishops and archbishops were given lands and immunity from some of the royal claims on landlords in return for full support of Otto's reign. With the papacy very weak, another way of ensuring support from the ecclesiastical hierarchy was to appoint it (cf. Hayes, Baldwin & Cole 1962, p. 142ff).

The situation was similar throughout northern and western Europe during the eleventh century. It was brought to a head by Pope Gregory VII in 1075 when he prohibited any form of lay investiture of the clergy. Gregory, calling on legal precedent as established within the Church canons (laws), denied the right of secular leaders to appoint ecclesiastical office holders. He argued that, on the contrary, the pope had the right both to anoint and to depose

secular leaders.

Henry IV (1050-1106), King of Germany from 1056 and Holy Roman Emperor from 1084, opposed the decree and called on the pope, 'now not pope, but false monk', to 'relinquish the Apostolic See which you have arrogated' (Koenigsberger 1987, p. 166). The pope responded by excommunicating him, and, faced with resultant challenges to his authority, Henry was forced personally to petition the pope for absolution and reinstatement to his position as emperor.

The pope had demonstrated that he held very real political power within western European territories. Secular leaders, very aware of the way in which Henry had been humiliated, felt a need to counter this power in some way. This confrontation marked the start of growing conflict between the papacy and secular rulers throughout western Europe, a confrontation which has come to be known as the *Investiture Conflict,* which finally climaxed in the sixteenth-century Reformation.

The Roman Church argued that, since kings were established in their kingdoms through the Church's administration of the ritual of Unction 15, religious authority was superior to secular authority. As Ullman (1965, p. 86) says, 'It was that act alone which made the king'. The stage was set in the tenth and eleventh centuries for mounting conflict between secular and religious leaders. The political history of this period is that of fluctuating but constantly increasing papal fortunes and claims to ascendancy and authority over secular rulers.

The Roman Church underwrote its political dominance through appeals to canon law, established over the centuries, and taking its form from Roman law, defined by the legal works of Justinian, compiled in the sixth century. Such appeals depended on the maintenance of a strong legal framework and of people schooled in interpreting both the canons and the legal prescriptions of Roman law as defined by Justinian. From the eleventh century onwards, as Murray points out, 'popes, legates and councils saw the evils of their age as "contempt for the canons". They sought to revive the Church's ancient legal framework, with a few surreptitious accretions' (Murray 1978, p. 214).

This revival of the Church's legal framework, coupled with its use as a justification for political claims, led to legal expertise, and the development of legal frameworks, being widely perceived as of great practical importance within both secular and religious spheres. For the Church,16 'Mankind is ruled by two laws: Natural Law and Custom. Natural Law is that which is contained in the Scriptures and the Gospel' (d'Entreves 1965, p. 33). Natural law was canonical law; all other law was of suspect quality and should be altered to conform to the canons of the Church. Secular leaders, ruling by custom, should, themselves, be subject to the natural law of the Church. All legal statutes of states and nations should conform to canonical law. The clash between Henry II, King of England, and Thomas a Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury (1163-1170), resulting in Thomas's death, was a product of this conflict: ' ... when the king had drawn up sixteen "Constitutions", which he said embodied the "Customs of the Realm", the archbishop denounced them as contrary to canon law, and refused to seal them' (Ward 1905, p. 47).

With the Church's legal framework revived and a new stress placed on legal training within the Church, increasing numbers of legally trained scholars passed out of the schools and universities of medieval Europe. 'One paradoxical result of the canonical revival and the burst of education which followed it, was that kings could now lay their hands on learned officials'

(Murray 1978, p. 217). What followed, with many slips for kings who were initially forced to rely on scholars who had been dedicated to and trained for the Church, was a burgeoning emphasis on the study of Roman law throughout the late twelfth century. The Investiture Conflict underscored a need for secular rulers to have alternative legal frameworks to those employed by the Church. One way to do this was to develop alternative interpretations of Roman law, based on scholarship, countering the interpretations of the Church.

However, if they were to break the shackles of the Church by challenging canonical law, they had, first, to give the concept of 'natural law' a new meaning. It had to be something other than simply 'the laws of the Church'. The study of law had begun in earnest. During the following three centuries secular bureaucracies were developed which were firmly anchored in written legal decrees and statutes. If anything was not legally defined, it was suspect. The basis for legitimacy was to be found in *written statutes.* This conflict convinced the people of western Europe of the need for the independent development of *centralised, secular legal systems, maintained, refined and applied by state bureaucrats and bureaucracies, with all documentation stored within state archives,* to protect and assert the interests of rulers. And, as such legal systems became elaborated, they inevitably affected the lives of people throughout Europe. Genicot describes some of the effects:

> ... the local and traditional tribunals were more and more replaced by superior courts run by *doctores* who were not known and whose integrity (not without reason) was suspect, and who practised a new, the Roman, law, rather than the ancient customary one. The state now advanced a claim, mainly under cover of this *jus,* to the entire ownership of waste, forest and water, and to their exclusive use, or at any rate the right to regulate arbitrarily their utilisation. The villages also had to submit to orders from above and from distant places, and to officials sent from outside ... (Genicot 1971, p. 701)

As states developed legal systems to protect the interests of rulers against the claims of the Church, those involved in developing statutes extended the legal rights of rulers over more and more of the activities and properties of their subjects,[17] so that, in succeeding centuries, conflict was to develop not only between Church and state, but also between the state and its people. And, as a result, emphasis was to be placed on the legal rights of individuals within the state against the state itself. Increasingly, people and state were to become defined in *oppositional* terms.[18] This change in emphasis was brought to a head in the seventeenth century in the writings of the Protestant jurist-theologians, chiefly by Hugo Grotius, whose principal work, *The Law of War and Peace,* appeared in 1625. As Pound has put it:

> Grotius and those who followed him made reason the measure of all obligation. They conceived that the end for which law exists is to produce conformity to the nature of rational creatures ... at the very time that a victory of the courts in the contests between the common law courts and the Stuart kings had established that there were fundamental common-law rights of Englishmen which Englishmen must maintain in courts and in which courts would secure them even against the king, a juristic theory of fundamental human rights, independent of and running back of all states, which states might secure and ought to secure, but could not alter or abridge, had sprung up independently and was at hand to furnish a scientific explanation when the next century called for one. By a natural transition, the common-law limitations upon royal authority became natural limitations upon all authority; the common-law rights of Englishmen became the natural rights of man. (quoted in Grotius 1957, p. xiv)

Increasingly, during the medieval centuries, *customary* obligations and rights between people, not supported by written, legally acceptable documentation, could be successfully challenged by appeal to this developing system of legal statutes. Of course, the experiences of various western European regions differed. In England there was no 'violent breach between folk-law and jurist law' (Cam 1957, p. 13) as experienced in some other areas of Europe with the establishment of Roman law as the law of the land and the supervention of customary law.

There seems to have been a stronger sense of independence amongst English law makers and practitioners, with the result that, by the reign of Henry VIII, common law had become separated from both Roman law and the canons. As Maitland observes, 'Roman law was by this time an unintelligible, outlandish thing, perhaps a good enough law for half-starved Frenchmen. Legal education was no longer academic - the universities had nothing to do with it' (see Cam 1957, p. 125).

English law had accommodated the 'customs of the realm' and provided rulers with a centralised, bureaucratically developed legal system which differed widely from the Roman law upon which Church authority and canons were established. Henry II had set England on a legal course which resulted in an alternative base for legal authority to that used by the pope and by many of the monarchs of Europe. By the reign of Henry VIII, the king was able to appeal to this body of law as legal justification for independence from the Church. Common law had incorporated customary law, and in doing so had become immediately relevant to people at all levels of society.

For the English, to a degree found in few other regions of western Europe, both formal and informal mechanisms of dispute settlement involved attorneys and recourse to courts of law. Justices of the Peace were accessible to all or most members of society, and 'the total impression is that the multitude of overlapping courts and laws penetrated right down to the level of the lowest inhabitants, and that ordinary people had a good working knowledge of the national system of criminal law' and their own legal rights. Macfarlane claims that in Westmoreland, between 1550 and 1720, large numbers of villagers personally initiated complex legal actions against their fellows, which were heard in the central courts of England. 'English society was based on, and integrated by, two principal mechanisms - money and the law' (Macfarlane 1987, p. 74).

The continuing conflict between Church and state in western Europe produced:

- strong emphases on the development of centralised legal systems spelling out the rights and responsibilities of individuals towards each other and to the state, and greatly expanding the state's powers over its members;

- a growing sense of the need to separate Church and state: each with its own independent set of laws and regulations governing life within the secular and spiritual domains; its own bureaucracy to promulgate and administer legal statutes; and its own set of archives to preserve the documentation upon which the developing systems of law were predicated;

- an expansion of the concept of law to cover an ever-increasing spectrum of daily life;

- a recognised need to separate the rights of the state over its members, and the separate rights of those members, independent of the state;

- and a burgeoning emphasis upon the importance of education.

Education became an alternative avenue to status attainment, with feudal lords dependent on educated people to run their bureaucratic machinery, and citizens increasingly in need of access to legal expertise to protect themselves from the claims of both the state and fellow citizens.[19] And with this emerging means of status attainment came an increasing emphasis on money income.

Since western Europe in this period was feudally organised, it was inevitable that key positions in the emerging bureaucracies were filled in the feudal manner, through the patronage of the royal household, rather than on the basis of educational training or legal expertise. So, within bureaucracies one had 'political' appointments to key positions, and people employed for their expertise and training under them.

Over succeeding centuries this arrangement was to produce increasing tension between educated 'experts' and feudally appointed principals. By the seventeenth century this tension had hardened into a strong conviction on the part of the educated (who, by allying themselves with various other protesters of the period, gained increasing power) that principal positions within state bureaucracies and private enterprise should be filled on the basis of educational achievement and demonstrated 'expertise', not on the basis of patronage. In later years placement on the basis of education was to be regarded as *achieved;* placement on the basis of patronage was to be considered *ascribed.* Of course, feudal appointments were just as 'achieved' as those of the modern period within the capitalist framework; only the kind of activity through which one achieved was very different.[20]

As seems common at crisis points in western European history, at the time when Church and state confronted each other most directly, a person emerged who provided a philosophical construct from which both Church and state could argue. Thomas of Aquinas (1225?-1274) was able to focus the debate and provide a logical construct which appeared to sum up and resolve the problem of the relationship between Church and state in the Church's favour. However, it was not long before princes, and those who worked for them, found in Aquinas' construct a justification for a separation of Church and state, each with its own set of laws, and each with its own independent rationale for existence.

Western Europe experienced a growing fascination with the work of Aristotle from the mid-twelfth century onwards. Aristotle's focus upon categorisation of the particular within the sensible world was to result in the re-emergence of a focus on human beings as part of the natural world. As Ullman has suggested:

> It was as if a new continent had been discovered - the discovery of man's real nature - and a new subject-matter was revealed. With every justification has it been said that there was a Renaissance, a rebirth of the long-forgotten natural man. (Ullman 1965, p. 167)

This was a natural man firmly placed in his supernatural context. The medieval fascination with Aristotle received impetus when scholars recognised that he offered a means of defining a new kind of law - *natural law* - law which God had established as the principles through which the natural world was organised and sustained. If Aristotle could be seen as inspired, as spelling out the natural laws of God in the natural world, then people who sought bases for secular law which were different from those underpinning Church, or supernatural, law could

appeal to him.

The term 'supernatural' was coined in the thirteenth century, at the time when there arose a strong need to differentiate clearly between two separate realms (cf. Murray 1978, p. 12). The spiritual realm was governed by spiritual laws, and the natural realm, and people, as creatures within that realm, were governed by natural laws. Human beings within society were governed, or ought to be governed, by laws which reflected those laws of nature.

God makes everything perfect. He had established laws for the governance of the Church, *canonical law.* He had also established laws for the governance of the secular world, *natural law.* Each set of laws would be found to be self-contained and perfect in its organisation and functioning. So, it was the responsibility of people in the secular realm to uncover the *laws of nature,* established by God for the smooth running of the secular realm, just as it was the responsibility of the Church to uncover and apply the laws God had established for the running of the Church and the spiritual realm. So Aquinas argued:

> Now in human affairs a thing is said to be just from being right according to the rule of reason. But the first rule of reason is the law of nature ... Consequently every human law has just so much of the character of law as it is derived from the law of nature. But if in any point it differs from the law of nature, it is no longer a law but a corruption of law. (Aquinas 1952, Pt 1: 2, Q. 95:2)

Whereas the Church had defined 'natural law' as a set of rules spelt out in Scripture and Church canons, Aquinas reintroduced a definition of natural law from Roman jurisprudence [21] and Greek philosophy. To develop legal systems which reflected natural law, it was necessary to understand the 'nature' of human beings. The claim by Aristotle, that civilisation is based on people ordering their lives by instincts implanted in each individual,[22] resurfaced in the high Middle Ages. But the definition of those instincts reflected the recognised needs of medieval society.[23]

In Aquinas we have a melding of the concepts of Roman jurisprudence and orthodox theology. The laws of nature should be sought but, when found, would be discovered to be a coherent, immutable whole. If natural laws could be uncovered by examining the material world, the material world, in turn, would be found to be governed by sets of immutable laws established by God. By conforming to the laws established by God for the optimal performance of his creation, people could reasonably expect burgeoning prosperity.[24]

Human beings bridged the natural and spiritual realms. Spiritually, they were governed by laws of the spirit, and, naturally, they were governed by laws of nature. 'To the natural law belongs everything to which a man is inclined according to his nature.' An understanding of natural law required comprehension of the nature of human beings, and the nature of human beings could be determined by observing them within their social setting.

Aquinas' construct made Church law 'supernatural law' and laws of the state 'natural law'. According to Aquinas, there were natural laws to which all creation conformed, which were implanted in human beings and in a subservient relationship to divine law. Those who conformed to natural law conformed also to the will of God, as expressed in the natural order. Natural and divine law were hierarchically related, not opposed to each other. And it was possible for people to live according to the dictates of natural law, with a this-worldly, secular focus to their lives, and yet be living in tune with the will and purpose of God. For the

natural world was a law-directed whole, composed of parts which were perfectly placed within the whole through the operation of that law.25 So, Aquinas observed:

> ... natural processes develop from simple to compound things, so much so that the highly developed organism is the completion, integration, and purpose of the elements. Such indeed is the case with any whole in comparison with its parts. (Gilby 1960, p. 369)

The natural and supernatural wholes were logically prior to their elements, which only existed as parts of the whole. Without the whole, there is no point or purpose in the existence of its elements. The parts were created because they were necessary to the whole. Individuals did not exist in or for themselves. They only existed as members of a society. A perfect creation required perfect parts. It was, therefore, the responsibility of all people to live as God had intended they should. Otherwise, they could be held accountable for the trials and troubles visited upon people in this life. And the perfect society was that which, in all its forms and functions, conformed most closely to natural and spiritual law. Aquinas set western Europe on the search for natural laws governing every area of life in this world. From this time onwards, western Europeans increasingly accepted that if a natural law was discovered, people had a moral and spiritual duty to live by it.

It was this quest which set western Europeans on a path which led to the eventual change from natural laws legitimised by God, to natural laws legitimised by rational logic [26], a move already prefigured in Aquinas's model. And, finally, as the secularism of the 18th and 19th centuries unfolded, to natural laws legitimised statistically [27]. This made the elements primary and the characteristics of the wholes constructed from them determined by the characteristics of the elements.

By the 17th century, although it was still accepted that natural law had been established by God, it was increasingly accepted that any phenomenon in the sensible world could be explained by reference to natural laws. The natural realm was a self-contained, self defining whole and, therefore, one could 'explain' phenomena in the natural world without recourse to the divine. There were no exceptions. So, understanding of natural laws, coupled with rational extrapolation from those laws would provide a full understanding of the possibilities and potential of the natural realm. One could also, by rationally extrapolating from known laws, determine the likely existence and character of associated natural laws. And all the while, western Europeans became increasingly aware that individuals had a moral duty to 'make the most' of themselves, to fulfil their lives, to 'develop their potential'.

With devout people proving their sincerity and morality through a life focused within this world, the responsibility of each person to strive for perfection through self-development became the prime obligation of life. They had to 'fulfil their potential' - as defined by seventeenth-century 'responsible people'. It was, equally, and for the same reason, their responsibility to ensure that they realised the potential of the resources placed in their hands. People who misused the 'talents' given to them by God could expect the fate of the indolent servant in Jesus' parable of the talents [28]. Richard Baxter, in 1678, spelt this out very clearly:

> If God show you a way in which you may lawfully get more than in another way (without wrong to your soul or to any other), if you refuse this and choose the less gainful way, you cross one of the ends of your Calling, and you refuse to be God's steward. (quoted in Gilbert 1980, p. 33)

Then the greatest of all sins became, as Foucault has eloquently described, the sin of Sloth. To waste the life which God had given, or the resources he had placed in your hands, was not only a sin against oneself; it was a sin against society. Initially, given the concerns of the age, the focus on natural law was a focus on social organisation and activity. Natural was social, and the focus of intellectual inquiry, strongly influenced by the Investiture Conflict, was political.

Within a generation of Aquinas' teaching, those who had been seeking legal and philosophical foundations for the independent rights of kings from popes succeeded in separating natural law from canonical law and arguing for their entirely independent legitimacy and efficacy. God had created separate, self-consistent, natural and supernatural worlds, each with its own set of laws defining the correct interrelations among the parts. It was in the interests of civil powers to insist on, and to provide philosophical justification for, the entirely separate development and efficacy of civil law.29

Over succeeding centuries this process was to produce recognition of a whole range of separately existing bodies of law relating to specific areas of the natural realm. Western Europe became convinced of the importance of written law as sets of basic principles through which elements in any whole could be perfected and combined and through which the whole gained its identity. To control the natural world, one needed to discover the sets of laws for such control. Knowledge of laws was power.

The search for systems of laws defining the correct interrelations among parts of logically constructed wholes had begun in earnest. And, because in the medieval world all law was enshrined within a guardian bureaucracy, the search for laws assumed such bureaucratic underpinning. Where a body of laws was uncovered there should be a bureaucratic body to safeguard, preserve and apply those laws.30

By the end of the twelfth century western Europeans were already becoming aware of the potential political value of an understanding of the natural world. Alexander Neckham (1157-1217) claimed that when 'the subtle truths that lurk in the very bosom of nature' had been uncovered, 'what enemies could withstand the kingdom that was able to triumph over [i.e. master] the sciences?' (quoted in Murray 1978, p. 124). With Aquinas' new interpretation of 'natural law', Western Europe quickly came to believe that, by uncovering the laws for the organisation of the material environment, people could gain power to manipulate it in their own interests.

From the outset the recognised importance of establishing secular law as an independent, self-contained system was based on a pragmatic determination to use it in establishing secular independence, empowering the state. Knowledge of laws, and the ability to manipulate them, was power. The search for natural laws was, from the outset, accompanied by a belief that those who found them and learned to master them empowered people to exploit to the full the domains or environments governed by them.

During the later medieval period people became increasingly aware of both religious and secular corruption, as those with access to legal expertise used their power to disinherit those who had no access to it. People felt less constrained by social obligation as hierarchical relationships became challenged with the growing abuse of power and authority in the medieval world. They therefore felt free to pursue private gain without the need for social justification. In fact, if one could gain an advantage through appeal to law, one could claim

'legitimacy' in making the most of that advantage.

Over succeeding centuries people increasingly learned to manipulate legal statutes to increase their private wealth, accepting fewer and fewer social responsibilities which were not required by written law. By the seventeenth century, people were able to challenge many of the customary responsibilities of earlier centuries in this way. Joseph Lee, a succinct spokesman for the cause of enclosure and independence espoused by new landowners in that century, could say:

> Let it be granted that our land and businesse lying nearer together fewer servants will be kept; are any bound to keep more servants than are needful for their businesse; or may they not cast how to do the same businesse with least labour ... Is a man bound to keep servants to pill strawes or labour in vain? By what law? ... (quoted in Appleby 1978, p. 61)31

'Money-making' patron-client networks and an emerging emphasis on quantification

Prior to the thirteenth century, merchants were constantly on the move in an unending pursuit of profit. They were fringe dwellers, outside normal society, who challenged many of the central moral presumptions of the feudal period and were regarded with suspicion by upright citizens. In an endeavour to contain them and yet, at the same time, attract them to establish their bases in their territories, states established rules and regulations both governing their activities and defining the necessary obligations of people who interacted with them. They formed a common-interest group who regulated their affairs amongst themselves on the basis of cooperative rather than competitive exchange. Because of their exclusion from feudal society, they formed parallel, informal networks of patron-client relationships among themselves. Over time, there emerged an informal ranking of the 'money makers' of western Europe and an intermeshing of their interests. They then used their wealth and collective power increasingly to subvert the feudal system.

By the thirteenth century the relationship between feudal leaders and the wealth holders of western Europe was increasingly based on transfers of wealth in return for feudal position.32 Those who gained wealth were able, from the outset, to use it to purchase position and recognition within feudal society. As they increasingly gained the upper hand, they were finally, in many regions of western Europe, to displace the feudal hierarchies with their own, alternative networks based on patron-client relationships.

Of course, as they gained political power, they increasingly influenced the exercise of government and the formation and implementation of law, so that, by the seventeenth century, the foundations had been laid for the transformation of feudal structures into those which we now realise are required by capitalism. The intermeshed patron-client networks of those engaged in wealth-accumulating activities remained important throughout Western Europe during the succeeding seven hundred years. Muldrew (1993: 163) has shown that during the early modern period, those who identified each other as engaged in similar activity within the marketplace 'stressed credit relations, trust, obligation and contracts' amongst themselves rather than unbridled individualistic profit making. They acted as common-interest groupings within patron-client networks.

Western European merchants travelled throughout the Mediterranean, into Egypt, through central Asia, and throughout western and northern Europe. They were not scholars. They were morally suspect adventurers, willing to incorporate any ideas or practices which might

increase the profitability of their ventures. Above all, what they needed was a clear, simple method of accounting and calculation. During their travels they encountered Muslim traders, who had gained a new form of calculation from northern India, based on the abacus. The abacus required a base-ten number calculation system which employed the zero to retain all place columns throughout calculation. Traders who accepted this new system gained great advantages in bargaining and exchange.

The ponderous Roman numbering system, enshrined in the literary, legal and political worlds, was cumbersome, made any attempts at either multiplication or division extremely complex, and was inappropriate to the use of the abacus. It was, however, for a variety of reasons, strongly supported by scholars. These scholars, remaining wedded to the Roman system, had great difficulty in mastering the principles of the new mathematics - principles which required the use of the zero as a place holder. This produced a clear divergence between money makers and scholars, with the money makers of Europe gaining increasingly independent control over financial matters as their expertise outstripped that of people tied to the use of the Roman numbering system.

While scholars depended on the existence of feudal society for their success, since scholarship was a means of upward mobility, merchants gained greater freedom of activity as feudal society weakened. The new mathematics of the late medieval period was important in driving a wedge between scholarship and practical bookkeeping which has been reflected in the Western separation of the humanities from the sciences and commerce, ever since. It was also to mark the beginning of a developing interest in numeracy as a prime means of expressing the quantitative evaluation of individuals and groups (required by the emerging 'modern' social template which needed means for comparing the material worth of individuals).

These developments occurred at the time when secular rulers were seeking increased independence from religious domination and were looking for people with the necessary skills to help them to become truly independent. High on the list of those who were most valued were those who had developed successful mercantile ventures. They were able to support secular rulers financially and to provide the kinds of skills necessary for the more efficient development of taxation and other forms of revenue earning and accounting. As Murray claims, 'Authorities needed arithmetic because they, like merchants, had counting houses' (Murray 1978, p. 195).

In western European capitals the expansion of legal bureaucracy was paralleled by the expansion of fiscal bureaucracies, and an area of law emerged, focusing on commercial activity. By the reign of Henry II the English administration of finances was already being formally systematised, with its own sets of laws and regulations. This organisation was spelt out in a descriptive handbook entitled the *Dialogue of the Exchequer.* Similar developments occurred in both France and Germany, while in Italy a range of very sophisticated commercial techniques were developed, supported by handbooks of commercial practice. Those from the rest of Europe who wished to master the intricacies of double entry bookkeeping or buying and selling on credit travelled to Italy, where they were able either to enter employment in established business firms or to study the new methods of accounting and banking at schools and universities.

Regionally based administrations became stronger as the hierarchical interrelationships of feudalism weakened. They also became more formally organised and economically viable as

the political structures supported by the administrations increased in stability. The development of legal and fiscal institutions provided a base for bureaucratic government which had not existed in the early Middle Ages. Over time, a rationale for government emerged which was different from that of feudalism, based on control of legal and fiscal bureaucracies and systems of law rather than on the personal allegiances of land holders.[33]

Autonomy and systems of law

As towns arose in an economically reviving Europe during the Middle Ages, people were provided with new means of livelihood. Merchants needed bases, markets, merchandise and security. They were to find all these in the newly forming urban areas. As trade increased, the need for artisans grew to provide the merchandise for trading. Towns, gaining their prosperity from trading, consciously provided support to their traders and encouragement to merchants to relocate to their districts. Rural dwellers from estates near towns gravitated to them and became involved in the production of goods or in the provision of various services to other urban dwellers.

Most larger towns managed to distance themselves from feudal lords and laws, developing their own sets of laws and bureaucracies to administer them. The legal statutes of towns spelt out the rights and responsibilities of citizens, the legal relationships between towns and rural land holders, and the 'freedom' of citizens from the claims of rural lords and statutes. 'In most towns there was a gradual evolution towards equality before the law and this equality came to be extended to unfree persons who settled in towns. "Town air makes free" became an important principle in medieval law' (Koenigsberger 1987, p. 146).

In most towns of western Europe it became accepted that residence for a year and a day set serfs free from their obligations to the estate owners under whom they formerly served. In the minds of the inhabitants of western European towns, freedom and 'progress' became closely associated. Equally, rural labouring, servitude and domination by 'tradition' became conflated. For a labourer to better himself, he should do what Dick Whittington did in the folktale - go to town to seek his fortune.

Since urban areas became identified with freedom from servitude and increased material wealth, and towns emphasised the importance of merchant activity, the merchant, from the mid-thirteenth century onwards, slowly emerged as more of a hero than a rogue. In the minds of western Europeans, country life was equated with serfdom and tradition, town life with freedom and self-improvement.[34]

As Hertz observed, 'the feudal disintegration of the central government .. , gave many towns the opportunity of winning an almost republican independence' (Hertz 1972, p. 57). Where any region, however small in territorial extent, could successfully establish and maintain autonomous legal and fiscal bureaucracies for the government of the people, it could claim autonomy on the basis of the existence of these structures. The state became identified with control of bureaucracies which applied systems of laws and regulations. Those who controlled the bureaucracies controlled the state. Any territory which could successfully establish such bureaucracies and legal systems could claim autonomy.

The weakening of feudal institutions resulted in a range of demands on kings as pressures for self-government of regions within their territories mounted. Not only were regions within kingdoms claiming limited autonomy, they were also insistently demanding the limitation of legal prerogatives of the Crown. While the Magna Carta was an unusually sweeping charter,

similar limitations on the rights of rulers were being negotiated throughout western Europe. 'Nearly everywhere in Europe kings acceded to such demands for the sake of peace at home and support for their foreign wars ... Everywhere rulers granted charters to cities in their territories, allowing them varying degrees of self-government' (Koenigsberger 1987, p. 233).

The separation of states and commerce

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there arose, in western Europe, as in England, groups of well-to-do merchants, wealthy professionals and rural property holders, who, either through direct purchase or through the judicious use of credit, were able to gain control over increasing areas of land. Over time they developed into a country gentry with resources of their own on which they might call. Landlords, where they claimed power over common lands, could see in them sources of revenue through sale which would in no way diminish the size of their domains. They therefore increasingly claimed title to these lands and sold them to the highest bidders. Rural smallholders, who required access to common land in order to supplement the inadequate returns from their holdings, found their access being denied, and increasing numbers were forced from their lands.

From personalised, cooperative hierarchical relationships to object-oriented, competitive oppositional relationships

One could no longer, by the late Middle Ages, speak of any simplistic division of rural society into lords and peasants. Rather, there were some large landlords who controlled estates of considerable extent, with large numbers of resident villeins, and there were landowners with very small holdings, working for themselves and eking out a living which was little different from that of the feudal villein. Between these extremes there was a large group of landlords who controlled estates of varying size, with varying numbers of dependent land holders, and with varying degrees of acceptability by those tenants.

Not only were there large and small property holders, there was also a growing number of property holders whose wealth came from commercial activity and who had strong links with towns. These land holders were 'owners' rather than holders. They had not acquired rights to property through feudal favour but through purchase.[35] They therefore felt under less obligation to accept feudal responsibilities, either towards those who were hierarchically superior or towards those inferior to themselves.

Most lived in the country but conducted their business activities in towns. Gaining status from their rural addresses and wealth from their town pursuits, they were in a position to play one off against the other to their own advantage. In the process they became defined as separate from both town and country, an independent group who became increasingly aware that they could, by manipulating various systems of law, gain an advantage for themselves.

This group, in succeeding centuries, became identified as a common-interest group, an incipient 'class' with interests of their own which they should pursue.[36] Their success in manipulating legal statutes to their own advantage made them a major force in western Europe and provided a class of 'owners', 'employers' and 'directors' as the emerging economic concerns of Europe became increasingly dominant. Acting as the 'unions' and 'nations' of the Middle Ages had acted, those who identified with the 'country gentry' saw themselves as having common interests, as sharing cooperative relationships with each other against opposing groups - the workers, the poor, the Crown, the 'idle rich'.

There was also a constantly expanding population of itinerant labourers who had lost access

to land, or whose lands, without access to common land, were inadequate to meet their needs. They moved with the crops and seasons, employed, as needed, by land holders. They were coming to understand the world in terms which directly reflect the experience of those employed by others. As Thompson argues:

> Those who are employed experience a distinction between their employer's time and their 'own' time. And the employer must *use* the time of his labour, and see that it is not wasted: not the task but the value of time when reduced to money is dominant. Time is now currency: it is not passed but spent. (Thompson 1967, p. 61)

The relationship between the growing population of employed people and those who employed them was being transformed from one of hierarchical responsibility into one based on wage labour, with employers and employed, landowners and tenants being increasingly seen as opposed groups. With decreasing populations in the later fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, and opportunities abounding for material advancement for those who wished it, the emphasis on material returns for labour input greatly increased:

> The Black Death ... brought a sense of urgency, especially in urban areas. The work day was extended and night work became common as merchants sought greater profits and workers, higher wages ... Clocks and the rhythmic chimes of bells became more important than ever ... By the end of the century, 'merchant's time', rather than 'the traditional conception of time in Christian theology', became the rule. (Gottfried 1983, p. 81)

In the process, there developed a need for the determination of starting and finishing times in work.[37] It became a common practice, perpetuated over several hundred years, for early morning and curfew bells to be sounded to alert people to the start and end of the working day. This was done, as Richard Palmer explained in 1664:

> ... that as many as might live within the sound might be thereby induced to a timely going to rest in the evening, and early arising in the morning to the labours and duties of their several callings, (things ordinarily attended and rewarded with thrift and proficiency). (quoted in Thompson 1967, p. 63)

During this period of feudal decay the peasants of Europe, in the words of Blum, threw off:

> ... the bonds that held them in serfdom. Nonetheless, they still owed servile obligations to seigniors, and they were still subject, to a greater or lesser extent depending on the locality, to the jurisdiction and punitive authority of seigniors.

> Some historians have made much of the fact that the dependence or servility of these peasants was not attached to their persons (as it was to the person of a serf). Rather, they argue that the dependence adhered to the land. It became part of the price the peasant paid for the use of his holding to the seignior who had the superior ownership of the land. (Blum 1978, p. 33)

This progressive transference of rights and responsibilities from person - person *hierarchical* relationships [38] to person - property - person *oppositional* relationships, often confused and ambiguous during the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries in western Europe (and during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries in much of eastern Europe), removed direct responsibility for the welfare of tenants from landlords and resulted in an increasing sense of alienation.

Landlords were increasingly able to demand servility as a cost to the tenant, and the land holder or rural labourer increasingly objectified such costs as the *price* of the land or of employment. This social distancing of rural poor and landlord distorted recognised social relationships, emphasising the *differences* and decreasing the recognised *commonalities* between them. *Cooperative, interdependent* relationships were being displaced by *oppositional, independent* relationships, mediated through legal statutes governing the ownership and use of property.

During the nineteenth century Marx was to comment on these developments, arguing that, over time, the dependence of the serf on the lord of the manor became increasingly transformed into apparent independence with the individual 'hemmed in on all sides by material relations' (Fischer & Marek 1973, p. 57). Increasingly, the obligations of individuals to each other became *legally spelt out* and *materially measurable,* objectified. These obligations could then be traded in the same way as other objects.

That is, the obligations implicit in social relations could be treated as costs and the potential labour input of the obligation could be evaluated against labour inputs into commodities. One could calculate the money worth of social obligations. This development did not do away with the obligations; it only made the individual who owed them *appear* to be independent of those to whom the obligations were owed. As Marx perceptively observed of the production of commodities:

> ... it is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things ... This I call the Fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities. (Marx 1887, p. 43)

Since the obligations were costs attached to the land worked by the tenant, the tenant could be seen as independent of the landlord to whom the obligations were owed. Previously hierarchical obligations and responsibilities were transformed into 'terms of rent' and attached to the property rather than to the people involved. A social relation between individuals had assumed 'in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things'. The focus of Europeans was being fixed on the *legal obligations* and *quantifiable costs* of social interaction, attached to or incorporated into the *object* of any exchange, rather than the persons involved in the interaction.[39]

Increasingly, over succeeding centuries, people were to see all social relationships in terms of costs and rewards within a legalised framework of rights and obligations. What was *gained* and what was *lost* through social interaction became the determinants of social exchange. The focus of interaction was on the *products* rather than the *participants.* One could now aim to minimise costs and maximise personal gains with less and less consideration of social responsibilities not spelt out in legislation. Social relationships were being reduced in form to commercial transactions.[40]

The alienation of property and stress on legally bounded confrontation

The focus of life was increasingly on the gains and losses of interactions. This competitive calculation of costs and rewards was coupled with an emerging belief in the morality of 'realising the potential' of one's resources, and burgeoning possibilities of both attaining and enhancing status by accumulating wealth with which to purchase estates. Business people and country gentry therefore saw it as more and more important to use their assets to

generate increased wealth. In order for landlords to increase their personal incomes from their holdings it was necessary to rationalise land holding and land use practices.

This focus on reducing costs and increasing profits resulted in permanent reductions in the number of people living off the land, the consolidation of land holdings, and increasing farm size, together with alterations in land use practices. In turn, these developments could only lead to increasing tension between landlords and tenants and increasing alienation (see Ideology and Reality for a contemporary account of this alienation). During the fifteenth century, as population increased again, increasing numbers of rural dwellers were displaced from their holdings. The number of itinerant labourers moving with the seasons, crops and availability of work escalated, and towns' populations rapidly expanded.

Increasingly, it became a fact of life that the person without an *inalienable legally recognised right* to property was at the mercy of those who controlled the means of livelihood. Any person who was *materially or socially dependent* on another gave that person material power over him or her. One needed to *own property* (that is, have written, legal entitlement to exclusive possession) in order to maintain social and material independence.

The smallholders and labourers of western Europe were forced, by bitter experience, to re-evaluate their relationship to feudal hierarchies and find alternative bases for social and economic security. The natural direction in which this took them was towards the *personal legal ownership* of land and other means of livelihood, with all the rights and responsibilities of ownership spelt out in legislation and attached to the property.

Europe was passing through a period of profound political, social, religious and intellectual change. And, as with all such fundamental change, affecting and being affected by alterations in the primary presumptions of thought and organisation, people became less and less sure of themselves and those around them. It was from the late fourteenth century onwards, as Foucault so graphically describes, that 'the face of madness ... haunted the imagination of Western man' (Foucault 1971, p. 15). Nothing made any sense.

A contemporary comment from the 1350s paints a graphic picture: 'justice and pity were powerless, so soon as it appeared advantageous to murder or poison rivals in power at the hospitable board. The science of finance was reduced to robbery, politics to perjury ... ' (quoted in Nohl 1961, p. 96). The miracle play of Theophil included sentiments which summed up the mood of the age: '0 Thou thoroughly wicked God, if I could but lay hands on Thee! Truly I would tear Thee to pieces. I deny Thee, deny Thy faith and Thy power. I will go to the Orient, turn Mussulman, and live according to the law of Mahomet. He is a fool who puts his trust in Thee!' (quoted in Nohl1961, p. 97).

People seemed able to apply the laws, established by God for the more perfect organisation and functioning of society, to personal gain, to robbing the poor, to dispossessing the weak, to denying long-established social responsibilities. And the justifications they gave for their actions did not make sense in terms of the understandings of the feudal world. While their actions could be justified by law, they contravened all the sensibilities of people who accepted that society was organised in terms of complementary, cooperative hierarchies, with the hierarchically superior taking responsibility for the welfare of those under their protection.

With the fundamental assumptions of communities in a state of change and disarray, people

found it difficult to keep control of reality. There were too many conflicting and contradictory understandings of life, and it was increasingly difficult to know who or what to believe. Europeans became increasingly aware, and fearful, of the effects of madness, of people whose view of the world did not 'make sense', who flirted with 'forbidden wisdom'. As Foucault says:

> What does it presage, this wisdom of fools? Doubtless, since it is a forbidden wisdom, it presages both the reign of Satan and the end of the world ... Apocalyptic dreams are not new, it is true, in the fifteenth century; they are, however, very different in nature from what they had been earlier. The delicately fantastic iconography of the fourteenth century ... where the order of God and its imminent victory are always apparent, gives way to a vision of the world where all wisdom is annihilated ... Victory is neither God's nor the Devil's: it belongs to Madness ... On all sides, madness fascinates man. (Foucault 1971, pp. 22,23)

During this period the movement towards the enclosure of common land and the rationalisation of land holding and land use produced severe social distortions. As Polanyi has described:

> Enclosures have appropriately been called a revolution of the rich against the poor. The lords and nobles were upsetting the social order, breaking down ancient law and custom, sometimes by means of violence, often by pressure and intimidation. They were literally robbing the poor of their share in the common, tearing down the houses which by the hitherto unbreakable force of custom, the poor had long regarded as theirs and their heirs'. The fabric of society was being disrupted, desolate villages and the ruins of human dwellings testified to the fierceness with which the revolution raged, endangering the defences of the country, wasting its towns, decimating its population, turning its overburdened soil into dust, harassing its people and turning them from decent husbandmen into a mob of beggars and thieves. (Polanyi 1957, p. 35)

Monarchies of the Reformation period, increasingly despotic, looked for support from the common population against an increasingly independent rural gentry who were challenging feudal responsibilities and insisting on the logic of what we now call 'economic rationality'. As Polanyi claims, the Tudors and Stuarts of England used the power of central government to relieve the victims of this transformation in property rights and, in the process, gained the increasingly vociferous opposition of those who stood to benefit from enclosure, the rural gentry. The monarchies of western Europe and their bureaucracies were essentially feudal, not business-oriented. Political power in the sixteenth century still rested with hierarchies whose positions were legitimised by their relationship to the Crown, not by their control of material resources.

The 'money-making' gentry and the feudally oriented political hierarchies of Europe were increasingly seeing their interests in *oppositional* rather than *hierarchical* terms. This confrontation produced an expansion and elaboration of the centralised legal system developed throughout preceding centuries to incorporate rules and regulations governing relationships between state and rural gentry and commercial interests. Another elaboration spelt out the relationships between landowners and tenants and between employers and employees. The state, through its legal bureaucracies, became an intermediary between tenant and landowner, between employer and employee.

Legal systems therefore became more detailed, spelling out the rights and obligations

between subjects as well as those between subjects and princes. Blum (1978, p. *60ff)* has succinctly spelled out the consequences of this movement for peasants and seigniors on the European continent. Over time the obligations of tenant and landowner, employer and employee, became standardised, with labour commitment, tithe of produce, and cash payments becoming increasingly objectified by statute, and peasants or workers - who dared - able to appeal to the courts if they considered themselves unfairly treated.

In England the scene was a little different. During the fifteenth century legal developments resulted in the spelling out of a comprehensive law of *contract.* According to Maitland, the bonds of family settlements through which land had been tied up within kin groups were loosened, so that each inheritor gained alienable title, and villein tenure was converted into the secure copyhold tenure of modern times (see Cam 1957, p. 126). This removal of responsibility for the tenant's welfare from landlord to state, from the feudal *person - person hierarchical relationship* of the lord and tenant, to a *person - state bureaucracy - person oppositional* relationship was part of a general movement towards the interpolation of a non-personal, apparently objective legal framework in terms of which interpersonal relationships (increasingly being identified as a body of interactions relating to a particular 'environment' - the economic) could be assessed and limited.

As the rights and responsibilities of interactants were legally objectified, knowledge of the law became a means of maximising profits. One needed to know the statutes. As Prest pointed out, 'the Elizabethan and early Stuart gentry learnt their law ... from the various manuals and texts designed specifically to meet the needs of landlords and J. P.s' (Prest 1967, p. 21). Strong emphasis was placed on legal knowledge as a means of protecting one's interests against opposing groups. Inns of Court, the principal legal schools of the period in England, 'attracted two classes of students: those who sought to become lawyers, and those whose parents "do not desire them to be trained in the science of the laws, or to live by its practice, but only by their patrimonies" , (Prest 1967, p. 22). Those who owned estates needed to know the law in relation to estate ownership.

The Inns of Court had become 'the nurserie of the greater part of the gentrie of the realme' (Prest 1967, p. 22). While the poor had to hire the services of lawyers - whose fees, as we have already seen, were considered exorbitant - the gentry were being trained to defend their legal rights to property. Legal power was on the side of landlords and employers. And they were being trained to view relationships as based on legal definition and confrontation. The 'modern' world would be one in which people identified themselves in terms of classes, hierarchically ranked through their former statuses within feudal society, with the 'higher' having access to legal expertise not available to the 'lower', and considering themselves the 'natural' directors of 'lower' classes. Society was becoming divided into *competing* common-interest groups, into embryonic classes, whose confrontations would be framed by state legislation.[41]

Private ownership, consumption and accumulation

As previously feudal relationships became legally objectified, the possibility of making demands of tenants and rural labourers without considering them as people became increasingly conceivable. With landlords and employers decreasingly needing to confront tenants and employees as persons with whom they shared direct social relationships, it became possible to whittle away the rights of the poor.

Jurists steadily reduced the tenants' right of freedom and movement, allowed landlords to

raise their demands for labour service beyond long-accepted norms, and steadily weakened the security that attached to customary rural tenures. And employers successfully argued for state legislation compelling the poor to work. This attenuation of recognised social obligation deepened the emphasis on freeholding and private enterprise so that, by the sixteenth century, as Hill has commented, 'when the business man of ... Geneva, Amsterdam or London looked into his inmost heart, he found that God had planted there a deep respect for the principle of private property' (Hill 1966, p. 46).

Increasingly, to ensure social and physical well-being, people had to own what they needed. This requirement placed mounting demands on production, fuelling a growth in commodity output. Demonstrating to others that one was materially independent or self-sufficient gave one increased status and prestige. It became increasingly 'obvious' that property *should* be privately owned, and that such ownership was ownership of the thing itself, not merely of socially approved rights to its use. The principle of private property was undeniably a *natural law* principle. Those who could demonstrate such ownership, demonstrated their moral and therefore social worth.

During the sixteenth century in much of western Europe (and a century or two later in most eastern areas), as Blum argues:

> ... monarchs had managed to divest the nobility of much of its political power as a corporate entity. Yet the nobles not only continued but were strengthened in their social position and in their claim to special privilege, and they retained and broadened their claim to the land, labour, dues, and subservience of the peasantry. (Blum 1978, p. 197)

Monarchies managed to secure their own political positions and emasculated the political authority of the nobility and powerful landowners by granting legally sanctioned privilege to them at the expense of the poor. The reduction of political responsibilities and the reaffirmation of legal and economic entitlements led in turn to the development of absentee landlords, having their estates run by managers and living in an increasingly profligate manner, which required excessive borrowing, often against either the future production of estates or the value of the estate itself. As McCracken describes:

> In the last quarter of the sixteenth century, a spectacular consumer boom occurred. The noblemen of Elizabethan England began to spend with a new enthusiasm, on a new scale. In the process they dramatically transformed their world of goods and the nature of Western consumption ... They changed their patterns of hospitality as well, vastly inflating its ceremonial character and costs. Elizabethan noblemen entertained one another, their subordinates, and, occasionally, their monarch at ruinous expense. (McCracken 1988, p.11)

This situation was tailor-made for the mercantile capitalists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Having inherited the entrepreneurial skills and the structures of medieval capitalism and mobile capital, they were able to relocate their enterprises and take advantage of the profligacy of nobility to accumulate sizeable fortunes. Yet, once having accumulated their fortunes and having purchased the rundown estates of those whose profligacy had been their undoing, they found themselves expected to live in the same extravagant manner. There developed a tension between increasing consumption and conserving one's gains for further expansion of one's holding which required increased stress on the material productivity of estates. As Mukerji says:

> ... the hedonistic culture of mass consumption was probably as crucial in shaping early patterns of capital development in Europe as the asceticism usually associated with this era. Hedonism was to consumers what asceticism was to entrepreneurs: it provided the cultural rationale for increased interest and participation in economic activities. (Mukerji 1983, p. 2)

The new emphasis on conspicuous consumption coincided with a strong expansion in commodity output, which provided burgeoning incomes to those who controlled commerce. In a period of rapid economic expansion, entrepreneurs could both indulge in the hedonistic consumerism of the age and greatly expand their mercantile interests, funded by the new wealth. The rise of Antwerp as the financial capital of Europe in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century coincided with the opening up of the Portuguese spice trade and the conquest of the Americas by Spain. These developments stimulated entrepreneurial activities throughout most of western Europe and further fuelled the growth of commercial activity. Western Europe entered into a prolonged economic boom which coincided with the growing emphases on conspicuous consumption, material independence, and the use of holdings to generate increasing surpluses.

This was an age of merchant houses, acting across territorial boundaries and developing their own sense of identity as semi-independent political, as well as economic, enterprises.42 Princes, seeing in the granting of monopolies to merchant houses another way of raising revenue and of tying merchant houses into the political structure, granted to them exclusive rights to trade in certain goods. Appleby has described this process in the following way:

> ... the king had long had the power to grant monopolies, which took the form of issuing licenses for the exclusive public control of a product, a trade, or even a government service like the inspection of tobacco. James found the granting of monopolies a particularly facile way of increasing his income. A typical Englishman, as Christopher Hill noted, lived 'in a house built with monopoly bricks ... heated by monopoly coal ... His clothes were held up by monopoly belts, monopoly buttons, monopoly pins ... he ate monopoly butter, monopoly currants, monopoly red herrings, monopoly salmon, monopoly lobsters' ... With the growth of both the internal and external markets, monopolies distorted the whole pattern of trade. (Appleby 1978, p. 33)

What started out as being to the advantage of mercantile entrepreneurs became another means of revenue collection, a further drain on business houses which already saw themselves as separate from, and using, the state in which they operated. As Appleby points out, increasing numbers of traders, who found their activities severely curtailed by monopolies, began insisting that the right to *free trade* (that is, the abolition of state controls on production and sale) was a basic human right, a *natural law* right which, since Aquinas, made it a legally required right.

Over a period of more than a century the money makers of western Europe came to oppose the granting of monopolies. They argued increasingly forcefully for the separation of political and economic activity and increased autonomy for merchant houses to act on their own, in their own interests without government prohibitions. *Free trade* was to imply not only the right of traders to trade, but also the reduction of government restrictions on trade. Traders should not be subject to political or social restrictions on their activities. Rather, laws and regulations should be passed which guaranteed individuals and businesses freedom to pursue their own independent interests without interference from the state.

Increasingly, what we now unhesitatingly define as *economic concerns* became distinguished from the political and social concerns of the period, the province of a common-interest grouping which included country gentry, traders, merchants, financiers and manufacturers. They demanded greater *autonomy,* and government interests demanded greater *control* of this newly emerging environment. The role of government was being redefined by this common-interest group as the provision of a secure fiscal, legal and social background to commercial activity, not the regulation of business. Business should operate under its own laws and regulations, those which applied to the economic world.

By arguing for the existence of a separate environment, a realm which was governed by its own internal principles and logic, those who saw themselves as operating within that environment could advocate its independence from state control. It should conform to its own laws. And such laws would necessarily facilitate business activity, providing a dependable set of rules governing business transactions which would ensure the consistency of economic decisions and planning. Inevitably, those rules and regulations reflected the emerging relationships of the period.

Many members of this business-oriented group looked with some contempt on those whose self-indulgence led to the dissipation of their inherited wealth.[43] It was clearly not in their interests to support monarchical regimes of similar temper which saw them as sources of ready income through taxation. Most either applied pressure on regimes for reform of business regulation and control or moved their centres of operation to areas where such reform was already occurring.

The Renaissance state of the sixteenth century supported bureaucracies which, from the twentieth-century perspective, would be considered very corrupt. No clear distinction was made between the office and the office holder, and the expenses of office were not clearly distinguished from those unconnected with the office. The rulers of western Europe were not business people; they were traditional rulers, supported by a nobility which was feudally justified. While the emerging nations of Europe supported bureaucracies, those bureaucracies were organised in ways which facilitated patron-client access to the wealth, information and influence which they focused. The personalised bureaucracies of patron-client states are organised and operate on very different principles from those of Western industrialised states.

Since bureaucratic posts were tied into the traditional systems of leadership and patronage, those who identified with the business and new property interests of the period found themselves in conflict with the traditional, non-business-oriented claims and requirements of the bureaucracies with which they were forced to deal. It became increasingly 'obvious' to money makers that those appointed to bureaucratic offices were a drain on their resources, not there to facilitate their activities but to put obstacles in their way. This belief led to an increasing insistence that the roles of bureaucratic offices should be clearly defined and limited, and that a clear distinction should be made between the bureaucratic office and the office holder. Holders of offices should be trained for their posts and paid stipends, and should not assume that they could use their offices as means of generating income.[44] As Trevor-Roper has claimed:

> To cut down the oppressive, costly sinecures of Church and State, and to revert, *mutatis mutandis,* to the mercantilist policy of the cities, based on the economic interest of society - such were the two essential methods of avoiding revolution in the seventeenth century.

During the sixteenth century religious demands for reform of the Roman Church changed into demands for independence and for the removal of Church authority. By the seventeenth century there was a strong belief amongst Protestants, property holders and business people that 'responsible' people, primarily those who belonged to the educated and business communities, should be freed from state and Church interference, able to 'develop' themselves, both spiritually and materially, unhindered by state and Church bureaucratic demands.

Entrepreneurs favoured the decentralisation of political control for business reasons and found themselves in accord with Protestant groups advocating decentralisation for other reasons. Inevitably, the arguments of the various groupings became intermixed, with Protestants making claims which could more easily be understood from a mercantile position, and mercantile entrepreneurs supporting arguments which seemed primarily religious in character.

As we have seen, the growth of mercantile power coincided with the decay of feudal structures and a decreasing acceptance of responsibility for the welfare of their tenants by landowners. By the turn of the seventeenth century increasing wealth, flowing from imperial expansion, coupled with expanded trade between regions of western Europe, had provided a buffer against the unfolding effects of land enclosure and the appropriation of peasant holdings by landowners.

As rural people became displaced, many of them drifted into towns where they could obtain some form of employment. But, as we have already seen, such movement into towns was traditionally linked with the freedom of the individual from obligation to landowners. A felt sense of independence was inherited by those who moved in this way, which naturally allied them with a pragmatic Puritanism which emphasised the independent, private rights of individuals against both Church and state. This sense of independence was coupled with a strong sense of injustice at being displaced from rural holdings which had long been their means of livelihood and identity. Those who should have provided feudal protection had failed them. Traditional authorities could no longer be trusted to protect the rights of the poor and, increasingly, they would be prepared to align themselves with those who opposed such authority.[45]

From the subversion of tradition to plotting the future

By the turn of the seventeenth century there was a growing sense among business people, Puritans and the dispossessed that those who claimed authority on the basis of tradition, whether prelates, princes or bureaucrats, should be displaced by those better fitted to govern, who complied with the natural law requirements of the age. They too should have the law applied to them, and people should be protected by law from the excesses of a leadership which seemed out of step with the pragmatic business concerns of the age. The 'property-owning, money-making' people of western Europe became increasingly aware that their interests did not coincide with the interests of those who controlled the state bureaucracies of Europe.

There was a feeling in western Europe that life was improving. The terrible uncertainties of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were being replaced by a dawning sense that the future would be better than the past. The awareness of an uncontrolled madness in the air, which

Foucault described, was being displaced by a sense that Europeans, by devoting themselves to the reform of society, could take control of their own destinies. But, as we have seen, the reform of society required, first, the reform of the person. Those who wanted to reform society recognised that such a change required the reformation of individuals. Individuals should apply themselves to self-development, to self-improvement. Then society would indeed be reformed.

While the world was still in turmoil, the primary ideological assumptions of the emerging dominant groups in western Europe were becoming more certain. Amongst 'responsible' people, those who were demanding increasing freedom and control in western Europe, the feudal thinking of the past was being displaced by what we now term 'modern' ways of understanding the world. Now, if western Europeans could ensure that people lived by the laws being uncovered in the natural and social worlds they would surely usher in a golden age of prosperity.

Thinkers of the seventeenth century applied themselves to utopian schemes and dreams. Whether in the writings of Bacon or Campanella, Comenius or Dury, of Hartlib or Hobbes, social philosophy became the discernment of necessary alterations in the present to ensure the realisation of a better future. And, it was assumed, the necessary alterations could be ascertained through reasoned consideration of the natural laws which underwrote all valid human activity and organisation. The protesters of western Europe became increasingly sure of themselves, aware that they had a destiny to fulfil.

If, as Hartlib, author of a treatise on the requirements of the 'perfect society', had said in 1641, the 'whole world should be reformed', such reformation could only happen if those who were determined to ensure it had the political authority to set the necessary changes in place. There was indeed a tide in the affairs of men which taken at its flood would lead to the millennium. The future would be better than the present - provided that society was reorganised to allow people to fulfil their own private destinies and, in the process, bring into being a perfect society based upon the natural laws established by God and being spelt out by Hugo Grotius and other jurists.

If Aquinas was correct, and each person had a place and purpose in society, then society could only be reformed if individual people were reformed, 'realising their potential' by living their lives in accordance with the natural laws which God had established.[46] Western Europeans were becoming conscious of the goal-oriented nature of life in this world. The individual life should demonstrate *progress.* An individual should aim at *self-improvement,* and self-improvement could only be judged through increasing mastery over the material world around one.

Over a period of more than three hundred years, economically oriented western Europeans moved to a focus on the future, a condemnation of tradition as a validation of action or organisation, and an assumption that *progress in this world was inevitable for those who obeyed the laws of God.* Therefore, those who did not progress could be assumed to have not been obedient to the laws of God. As Gellner says:

> The consequence of a belief in progress ... is that time ceases to be morally neutral ... there is, at the very least, some predisposition to tie up *past* with *bad* (in one word: *backward),* and *future* with *good (progressive).* (Gellner 1978, p. 3)

From the late fifteenth century onwards, with the writing of Erasmus and More, the responsibility of western Europeans for securing the future had become a preoccupation of western Europe. Europe was alive with millenarian speculation and interpretations of the apocalypse. This time of turmoil and madness was surely the time preceding the return of Christ, and that would herald the arrival of the perfect age. Before that day, the events spelt out in the Revelation of John 47 would be fulfilled. The Anti-Christ would be bound and cast into a pit which would be shut and sealed over him for a thousand years. The Beast would be captured and cast into the 'lake of fire that burns with brimstone'. And those who had not worshipped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands would reign with Christ in a perfect society of the blest for a thousand years.

For the subsequent four hundred years the social philosophers of western Europe were to focus on the required precursors of the millennial age which was surely almost upon the world. So institutionalised did this focus become that philosophers were to forget its origins, were to accept its societal assumptions, with their implicit religious underpinnings, without acknowledging them. Europe engaged in a quest for utopia - assumed to be attainable - and in a discovery of the necessary social alterations which must occur to ensure its arrival.

Europe became focused on the future - a real and yet, at the same time, an ideal future towards which the present should be moulded. And, because people were now becoming recognised as self-developing, independent and opposed to one another, the attainment of the ideal depended on the diligence with which individuals ensured that they fulfilled the potential of their separate lives.

In the political arena, no less than the philosophical, there was an air of expectancy and of duty. As Trevor-Roper has eloquently put it:

> [Oliver Cromwell] believed that a new heaven and a new earth were coming ... and that Christian men had a duty, while reforming the society around them, and gathering up their strength to beat back the temporarily triumphant Anti-Christ, to seek the key to the Scriptures, which were now being fulfilled: the vials that were being poured out, the trumps that were being sounded, and the inscrutable number of the Beast. (Trevor-Roper 1972, p. 282)

As Hartlib claimed, Europeans were in the process of uncovering 'that model by which the whole world should be reformed' and of ensuring its practical outworking in this world.

Since the millennium was within reach of western Europeans, people had a duty to apply themselves to ensuring its arrival. For the next three hundred years the 'responsible' people of western Europe undertook to organise those who were 'not responsible', ensuring that they lived moral, productive lives. As Polanyi says, 'under Elizabethan law the poor were forced to work at whatever wages they could get and only those who could [demonstrably] obtain no work were entitled to relief' (Polanyi 1957, p. 79)

The view that the able-bodied poor should be put to work reinforced an emerging belief in the need for employment as both an obligation and a duty. Those who were gaining political and economic control of western Europe were becoming convinced that the promised utopia would be realised only if people diligently applied themselves to whatever work was available. The state should ensure that employment was available for those without work, and there should be no charity in the form of unearned handouts. Yet, in the early

seventeenth century, this was more easily said than done. As Foucault describes:

> Despite all the measures taken to avoid unemployment and the reduction of wages, poverty continued to spread in the nation. In 1622 appeared a pamphlet, *Grievous Groan for the Poor,* attributed to Thomas Dekker, which ... condemns the general negligence: 'Though the number of the poor do daily increase, all things yet worketh for the worst in their behalf; ... many of these parishes turneth forth their poor, yea, and their lusty labourers that will not work ... to beg, filch, and steal for their maintenance, so that the country is pitifully pestered with them'. It was feared that they would overrun the country, and since they could not, as on the Continent, cross the border into another nation, it was proposed that they be 'banished and conveyed to the New-found Land, the East and West Indies'. In 1630, the King established a commission to assure the rigorous observance of the Poor Laws ... it recommended prosecuting beggars and vagabonds, as well as 'all those who live in idleness and will not work for reasonable wages or who spend what they have in taverns'. They must be punished according to law and placed in houses of correction. (Foucault 1971, pp. 49-50)

The necessity to work had become recognised either as a requirement of natural law which, of course, made it an inescapable obligation, or as a requirement of sanctification. As Foucault says:

> If it is true that labor is not inscribed among the laws of nature, it is enveloped in the order of the fallen world. This is why idleness is rebellion - the worst form of all ... the sin of idleness is the supreme pride of man once he has fallen, the absurd pride of poverty ... In the Middle Ages, the great sin ... was pride ... All the seventeenth century texts, on the contrary, announced the infernal triumph of Sloth: it was sloth which led the round of vices and swept them on. (Foucault 1971, pp. 56-7)

Appleby claims that 'laws were not seen as coming down from authority; rather they worked up from the propensities of people. Policy makers could best realise their aims by working with the known nature of man' (Appleby 1978, p. 96). All people were ruled by the same natural tendencies and biases, so it was possible to formulate legislation which could be applied to everyone, no matter what their status or position. Good law was universally applicable. Of course, since, as Roscoe Pound observed, the natural laws sprang from the common law rights of seventeenth-century society, in fact they closely reflected the social circumstances in which they were formulated. Dumont has said of this focus on the propensities of human beings as the basis for law that:

> For the moderns, under the influence of Christian and Stoic individualism, natural law, as opposed to positive law, does not involve social beings but individuals, i.e. men each of whom is self sufficient, as made in the image of God and as the repository of reason. This is to say that, in the idea of jurists in the first place, first principles regarding the constitution of the state (and of society) have to be extracted, or deduced, from the inherent qualities of man taken as an autonomous being independently of any social or political attachment ... in short, the hierarchical Christian Commonwealth was atomised at two levels: it was replaced by a number of individual states, themselves made up of individual men. (Dumont 1965, pp. 29-30)

Those who were morally upright disciplined themselves, living by the natural laws which underwrote all reasonable human endeavour. This emerging focus on independent individuals was strongly supported by Puritanical insistence on the independent rights of individuals to approach their God directly without relying on mediation by a professional

hierarchy. However, the apparent consequences of this insistence on separate rights seemed to be social chaos. Many people became disturbed by the apparent civil consequences of Puritanical insistence on the rights of independent individuals. Russell has neatly summed up the fears of the mid-seventeenth century:

> Every community is faced with two dangers, anarchy and despotism. The Puritans, especially the Independents, were most impressed by the danger of despotism. Hobbes, on the contrary having experienced the conflict of rival fanaticisms, was obsessed by the fear of anarchy. (Russell 1979, p. 539)

If one emphasised independent individual rights, one had, simultaneously, to spell out independent individual responsibilities. Moral people abided by the terms of the social contract. Their lives conformed to the natural law requirements of all members of society. And those natural laws could not be challenged. They had been established by God. If, as Newton was to demonstrate and Galileo had already described, the planets obeyed natural laws when orbiting the sun, equally, members of society obeyed natural laws when they conformed to the moral rules of society.

By the mid-seventeenth century, with the English revolution, political power in England passed into the hands of property owners. For almost two hundred years they had been arguing for the curtailment of power derived from tradition. Laws which stemmed from 'traditional' authority were increasingly regarded as suspect. The legal systems of western Europe, but particularly of Britain, were being refashioned to reflect the basic assumptions underpinning what we now call 'democracy'. Protestant jurist-theologians provided the theoretical charter based upon the natural rights of human beings, which gave legitimacy to the individualism of Protestant and merchant groups and to an increasingly insistent demand for economic and political freedom to pursue one's own interests.

As has already been noted, in the Europe of decaying feudalism, landownership had become increasingly seen as ownership of the thing itself, with particular social and material costs and prices attaching to it. Not only was there an emerging recognition of the differences between government and people, there was a parallel recognition of the difference between people and their physical environments. It was becoming increasingly certain to most western European landowners that people *used* land rather than being identified with and defined in terms of locality. It was becoming equally clear that the poor were potential labour and that, just as property owners had a duty to use their land resources productively, so government should ensure that this labour resource was prepared and able to be employed productively. Sir William Coventry, somewhere round 1670, put it most clearly when he argued for the repeal of the Poor Laws and the development of workhouses 'where such as will not work for themselves may be compelled to work for others'.

Appleby has summed up the new mood well:

> The emancipation of property owners from most forms of political control over the use of their land and money had shifted the source of economic planning from regulations shaped by the past to private decisions oriented toward the future. Where earlier the disposal of a harvest or the pursuit of a trade had been conditional upon the likely social impact, the acceptance of near-absolute property rights had driven a wedge between society and the economy. With the curtailment of political oversight over economic life, the formal link between the material resources of the country and the people to be sustained by them had

been cut. The commonwealth had become an aggregation of private wealth. (Appleby 1978, p. 151)

In western Europe, decentralisation of political authority, reassertion of individual rights and responsibilities, and demand for deregulation of economic activity became interfused. These became increasingly seen in terms of oppositional couplets: Government versus People; Public versus Private; Political versus Economic; Regulation versus Enterprise; Tradition versus Progress. And, as perceptions matured, demands for clear separation between the social expressions of those oppositions became more forceful. However, this separation was not simply a matter of recognising and spelling out social oppositions. Not only were there oppositional pairs, there were also conceptual categories of likeness: Government, Public, Political, Regulation, Tradition :: People, Private, Economic, Enterprise, Progress. It became difficult to assert the need for the clear separation of one oppositional pair without, by implication, asserting the need for the rest.

Entrepreneurs became religiously and socially respectable. But they did not, for these reasons, become any less earthly-minded. It was their individualistic pragmatism which had brought them into alignment with religious protest groups. Each party in the alignment simply assumed their own orientation in those with whom they associated. However, the consequences of this new-found respectability and assumption of religious morality were not to the advantage of less fortunate members of society. According to Wilson, James claimed that, 'the social legislators of the Restoration aimed at nothing less than making the poor a source of profit to the state by forcing them to work for reduced wages' (Wilson 1969, p. 119). Yet, as Wilson argues in focusing on the eighteenth-century poor law, 'what came to be regarded by later critics as a system of calculated brutality and repression arose in the first place not from unconcern or harshness, but out of a desire to protect the efforts of those local authorities who were trying hardest to improvise remedies' (Wilson 1969, p. 134).

As property owners and their allies took control of government, they became increasingly insistent that the 'natural laws' which underwrote their activities should be applied to all people. So important did it appear to be to ensure that the poor became involved in productive activity that otherwise moral and upright people could entertain extreme measures to ensure that this happened. A major problem among the poor was that there appeared little desire on their part to increase their material possessions or to indulge in work for work's sake. There was therefore little incentive to engage in continued labour beyond that which was required to supply their perceived needs. This attitude made labour inefficient and the labouring poor unreliable workers. They needed external stimulus to labour. In 1700, in setting out labour laws for the Crawley Iron Works, Crawley spells out his problem:

> Some have pretended a sort of right to loyter, thinking by their readiness and ability to do sufficient in less time than others. Others have been so foolish to think bare attendance without being imployed in business is sufficient ... Others so impudent as to glory in their villany and upbrade others for their diligence. (quoted in Thompson 1967, p. 81)

The poor felt that they were being employed for a particular set of tasks. Crawley felt that he had hired their *potential to labour,* and that they should 'put in a good day's work'. His solution was to provide external checks on the punctuality and performance of labourers:

> Every morning at 5 a clock the Warden is to ring the bell for the beginning to work, at eight a

clock for breakfast, at half an hour after for work again, at twelve a clock for dinner, at one to work and at eight to ring for leaving work and all to be lock'd up. (quoted in Thompson 1967, p. 82)

Since there was no internalised discipline in these labourers, they had to be regimented and checked by those who could supply such discipline.

Over succeeding decades this problem of ensuring greater reliability and effort from the labouring poor was a perennial concern of those who wanted to harness the productive possibilities of the century. In order to ensure consistency, those in charge seemed to need to be constantly vigilant against a population apparently determined to impair their constitutions by laziness and dull their spirits by indolence (Thompson 1967, p.83).

Employers were looking for ways in which consistent effort could be guaranteed, and one of the best seemed, initially, to be to compel labourers to conform to clock time. Factories had clocks built into their facades, which chimed the time so that labourers would know when to start work. Schooling was quickly seen as one of the prime means by which people could be taught the importance of punctuality and sustained labour so that 'by the time the child reached six or seven it should become "habituated, not to say naturalised to labour and fatigue" , (Thompson 1965, p. 84).

Inevitably, over time, less scrupulous employers started to manipulate their clocks, starting early and finishing late by altering the time shown: ' ... in reality there were no regular hours; masters and managers did with us as they like. The clocks at the factories were often put forward in the morning and back at night, and instead of being instruments for the measurement of time, they were used as cloaks for cheatery and oppression' (quoted in Thompson 1965, p. 86). This practice, far from undermining people's reliance on measured time, made people increasingly conscious of 'correct' clock time, of working 'to the clock'. However, all the measures adopted during the eighteenth century to retrain people to 'use their time productively' were of mixed success, and on into the nineteenth century employers and reformers continued to lament the indolence of the labouring poor.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, Townsend provided one of the more extreme solutions to the problem of compelling people to diligent work, which was to be taken up in the early nineteenth century:

> The poor know little of the motives which stimulate the higher ranks to action - pride, honour, and ambition. In general it is only hunger which can spur and goad them on to labour; yet our laws have said, they shall never hunger. The laws, it must be confessed, have likewise said that they shall be compelled to work. But then legal constraint is attended with too much trouble, violence, and noise; creates ill will, and never can be productive of good and acceptable service: whereas hunger is not only a peaceable, silent, unremitted pressure, but, as the most natural motive to industry and labour, it calls forth the most powerful exertions; and, when satisfied by the free bounty of another, lays a lasting and sure foundation for good will and gratitude... The wisest legislator will never be able to devise a more equitable, a more effectual, or in any respect a more suitable punishment, than hunger is for a disobedient servant. Hunger will tame the fiercest animals, it will teach decency and civility, obedience and subjection, to the most brutish, the most obstinate, and the most perverse.
> (Joseph Townsend 1786)

To the bridle of time discipline was to be added the spur of necessity. If people's needs could be kept at a high level, then their efforts to supply their needs would ensure consistent long-term 'habits of industry'. The silent, unremitting pressure of a constant threat of starvation, which could only be countered by engaging in wage labour, could be relied on to channel people into 'adopting those habits of industry, which always tend to steadiness and sobriety of conduct, and to consequent material wealth and prosperity' (Codere 1950, p. 24).

These means were to be reinforced by developing education for the poor. From John Bellers who, in 1696, suggested the establishment of 'colleges of industry' in which the 'involuntary leisure of the poor could be turned to good account' (quoted in Polanyi 1957, p. 105), to increasingly frequent attempts at the social education of the poor during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it became a recognised social responsibility of mature people to re-educate the morally suspect poor and to ensure, in the meantime, that they were gainfully employed.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the primary ideological assumptions of modernity had become well established. Now, it seemed, to most well-educated, well-enculturated western Europeans that people were (or should be) undeniably separate, private, self-developing, acquisitive individuals whose moral and social worth could be calculated by observing the extent and nature of their private property. It seemed equally certain that economic enterprise should be undertaken by private individuals and corporations, not by the state, but that the state had responsibility to ensure that the workforce was properly trained and that those who would not work were put to work.

Perhaps the most successful of the eighteenth-century social philosophers was Adam Smith - not because he had anything particularly new or revolutionary to say, but precisely because what he had to say expressed the emerging primary ideological assumptions of western European industrialism when increasing numbers of British people were already organising their lives and thinking in terms of them. He made explicit, in an organised form, what people already unconsciously 'knew'. And, of course, he is recognised as the father of economics. He also, in a way which may now be difficult to understand if one reads his writings, became an immensely popular author. His work, particularly *The Wealth of Nations* (Smith 1974), which was first published in 1776, became the topic of drawing room discussion. People easily identified with his description of how the world was, or should be, organised, but that description was novel in the literature of the time.

Western Europeans did not become economically oriented *because* Adam Smith provided a systematised account of rational economic behaviour. Those in control were already economically oriented. Adam Smith systematically described what was happening around him. The primary assumptions of those in control in the mid-eighteenth century already assumed the existence of independent, self-interested, competitive, acquisitive, rational beings, focused on life within an economic environment. Adam Smith made the inevitable, *moral,* by spelling out the system of laws which underwrote economic behaviour. Since economic behaviour was governed by rational conformity to natural laws it could scarcely be otherwise than morally acceptable.

By the late eighteenth century, at the outset of what we now refer to as the *industrial revolution,* prosperous western Europeans *knew* that life should be lived in an economic environment, that they were private, self-promoting individuals whose lives were oriented to use of the material world, with the correct forms of relationship and organisation spelt out in

the 'economy'. Moral people worked hard. The evidence of their morality was their increasing prosperity. Their increasing prosperity could best be demonstrated by increased accumulation of possessions and by increased consumption. The ways in which they should engage in economic activity were all spelt out by the 'principles' through which they could guarantee both individual prosperity and the wealth of the nation. Those principles had been distilled through five hundred years of history.

Moral western Europeans 'knew' that there were *natural laws,* and that, whether they had been established by God or not, conformity to them would lead to a better world. On the other hand, failure to live by them would bring chaos and poverty. Western Europeans had a moral duty to transform the world by reorganising it to conform to the rules and regulations which guaranteed successful economic endeavour and burgeoning material prosperity.

Conclusion

The past two hundred years have seen the primary ideological presumptions of Western Europe become those of more and more of her people. And, as Western Europeans have become increasingly convinced that these presumptions are features of the real world, they have increasingly devoted their time to defining and particularising the rules and principles of economic activity and organisation. The past fifty have been years in which Western 'experts' have increasingly insisted on reorganising the rest of the world to engage in 'correct' economic activity and organisation. This reorganisation requires the establishment of institutions and bureaucracies to govern economic enterprise; the reorientation of government to guarantee a secure fiscal, legal and social background appropriate to the self-interested, contractual activities of private individuals in pursuit of wealth and independence; and the establishment of the statutes and regulations governing 'formal economic activity'.

One of the continuing problems for Western Europeans, who are as convinced of the need to transform the world as their forebears were, is that so little of the economic activity in Third World countries conforms to the prescriptions of formal economics. People seem, all too easily, to engage in forms of activity and develop forms of organisation which are clearly 'informal' and 'illegitimate'. As was said at the start of this discussion, the primary ideological assumptions of any community change throughout time. They both reflect experiences of the past and modify those of the future. The primary ideological assumptions of Western Europeans have given birth to a number of competing secondary ideologies, and to a felt compulsion on the part of Europeans to refashion the rest of the world to participate in 'economic development'.

Both the Western assumption of the independent existence of an 'economic environment' and the equally accepted belief that there is an objective set of laws governing behaviour in that environment come from, and reflect, the particular historical experiences of Western Europeans over a thousand years. Every community has such a history, whether written or not. And all communities think and act on the basis of primary ideological presumptions which stem from their own unique history. It is as difficult to change the forms of organisation and behaviour of other communities which are based on their primary ideological assumptions as it would be for Western Europeans to live their lives in terms of the understandings of another society.

To the extent that Western 'experts' demand that other communities deny those basic features of their world which they 'know' to be true, and that they, instead, live by Western presumptions, they bring confusion and disorientation to individual lives and to communities.

If these communities need to 'develop', that development must be on their own terms, based upon their own primary assumptions and filtered through their own secondary ideologies. Otherwise, advisers bring not 'development' but confusion to the lives of other people,

If there are increasing numbers of people who are becoming marginalised in non-Western communities, they are being marginalised by forms of organisation, interaction and understanding which come from Western Europe's historical experiences. Only by allowing them to reorganise the world from their own perspectives can that marginalisation be countered. Then, of course, Western Europeans will find themselves marginalised, unable to come to grips with the forms of organisation and interaction which they experience when living in those communities. If other communities, organising life in terms of their own primary assumptions, are able to take control of their material environments, it may well be that some will prove to be better at the game of competitive profit making than the West. But the West is likely to find it difficult to understand what gives them their edge. They are also likely to argue that the competitive advantage of those communities comes from their engaging in illegitimate forms of economic organisation and activity.[48]

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End Notes

1 Of course, as Marxist writers have stressed so heavily, those who

commit themselves to a particular ideology are likely to be those in the community who perceive that if it is organised in those ways they will benefit. However, commonly, they do not simply cynically support an ideology out of self interest; rather, they believe that only when life is organised in those ways will it fulfil its potential. There are also likely to be many others in the community who are persuaded by the logic of the arguments presented and support the ideology without seeing any great benefit to themselves personally, though, of course, they are unlikely to support it if they perceive any particular threat to themselves

2 It is because they share the same basic understandings that confrontations are so intense and clearly articulated

3 Since the seventeenth century, those Western people who have ordered their lives by 'modern' primary ideological presumptions have been very aware of the need for individuals and communities to 'realise their potential'. This awareness in turn, has led to an increasingly strong emphasis on 'progress', an assumption that through realising both their potential and the potential of their 'environments', people will make the future better than the past (though in the last fifty years that belief in progress has been severely shaken by the apparent consequences of this Western drive). From the second half of the twentieth century, Western people have preferred the term 'development' to the term 'progress'. The former term carries the implication that people and communities, through applying themselves to particular forms of activity and organisation, will 'realise their potential'. It suggests that there are particular forms of organisation and activity which are required if human beings are to live as they should. Inevitably, the presumption is that all human beings think as Western people think (or if they do not they ought to), and that what Western people perceive as being the 'goals' of life are universally the best goals for all human beings. Since the forms of organisation and activity which are promoted in this drive to 'develop' the world are Western, it becomes inevitable that true development requires an absorption of Western values and Western motivations in life. The whole exercise is an extension of a metaphysically inspired commitment by Western people, since the sixteenth century, to establishing a practical utopia on earth

4 As Samuelson (first American to win the Nobel Prize in Economics) explained, although the Western world prizes individualism and 'freedom', this freedom is guaranteed through the imposition of 'order'. 'We ... have to coordinate and cooperate. Where cooperation is not forthcoming we must introduce upon ourselves coercion' (Samuelson 1972, p. 629). In the West the individual's 'freedom' is contingent upon acting within the framework established for 'legitimate' economic behaviour. Impersonal bureaucratic agencies are endowed with responsibility for ensuring such compliance.

5 This word has a distinctive and peculiar meaning in Western communities. As the Oxford Dictionary says, it refers to what is 'based on the innate moral sense', or is 'instinctive'. When Western people say that a thing is 'natural', they imply that it is as it 'ought' to be. This is the way it was 'made', or the way in which it best fulfils its 'potential'. When things are not 'natural' they are in some way 'contaminated'. So, when Western people consider a particular form of organisation or activity 'natural', they also consider that other forms of organisation and activity are in some way deviant, distortions, and un-natural. The term has metaphysical implications. One of the focuses in this discussion will be on seeing how this term became so important to Western people, on uncovering its implications as they were established throughout history.

6 A random selection of a few of the plethora of regulatory systems which constrain economic organisation and activity in Western countries includes antitrust, commerce, contract, copyright, industry, labour, patents, privacy, property, trade - l could list many other legal focuses, all of which are intimately intertwined with the others, forming a legislative mesh which securely holds the rights and obligations of interacting parties in place, defining acceptable and unacceptable forms of practice, organisation and even intent.

7 John Wesley, a revivalist preacher of the eighteenth century, recognised that ' ... religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality, and these cannot but produce riches' (quoted in Thompson 1980, p. 391).

8 See How Born Again Christians Rescued Capitalism for the origin of this.

9 Although Western people have always very readily identified 'systems of law' in other communities, few non-Western communities in fact develop and apply systems of law in the way Western Europeans do. In many communities, including even those which have been conceded to have been 'civilised' in the past, those who are responsible for enforcing the 'law' deliver ad hoc judgments, based on the particular circumstances and people involved, rather than on the basis of impartial adherence to a centralised, closely defined system of rules and regulations. In most matters, justice is decentralised, personalised and particularised by communities and/or by those responsible for its administration. This contrasts strongly with the Western European insistence on the establishment of detailed, impartially administered systems of rules and regulations, applied consistently across communities. See Chanock (1985) for a description of the ways in which 'fluid, shifting set[s] of principles and procedures', in Zambia and Malawi, were changed into 'fixed, written set[s] of codes which claimed continuity with an African past' (Merry 1991, p. 897).

10 Feudal communities, in common with many present-day

communities in the Third World, were hierarchically organised through personalised, redistributive relationships (see Reciprocity and Exchange). A society which is redistributively organised usually comprises a base population of producers and labourers with a more or less developed political hierarchy (see Figure 1 below), the members of which depend on taxes, rent, tribute, and gifts from producers for their livelihood and to fund their political and social activities. Some kind of redistributive system is required by any large integrated group of people to ensure community works, the funding of political offices, support of the needy, and so on. Even in Western Industrialised societies people are required to be involved in such redistributive systems, administered by Inland Revenue services in most nations.

In some societies the hierarchies are well established and formalised as systems of 'kings', 'chiefs', 'nobles' and so on. In other societies, particularly those in which formalised hierarchies have been severely disrupted during the past two centuries, the hierarchical system is less formalised, with more fluid, less well-defined patron-client relationships either taking the place of, or working alongside, the formalised hierarchies. Patron-client relationships are extremely common in present-day redistributive communities.

In its simplest form a redistributively organised community is pyramidal. At the base are the majority of people, whose status is low and who look to those of higher status for support whenever they have to deal with people in authority; whenever they have to interact with the wider community beyond their own homestead or village; and when times are difficult. It is the task of patrons not merely to use the surpluses they receive, but to provide a range of services and to store and redistribute surplus production to community members who are in need.

So, the society is organised in 'tiers', with people interacting on the basis of similar status. This is, of course, reminiscent of 'class' relationships but the term is misleading. It comes from analyses of Western Industrialised communities whose organisational principles are very different from redistributively organised communities. We will therefore avoid it, speaking instead of 'common interest groups'. Figure 1 provides a simplified picture of the networks which develop. The group D1 is a common interest group, as are groups D2, D3, D4, D5, C1, C2, and B. In each, group members cooperate with each other and support each other when requested. Acceptance into the group is based on an individual's demonstrated reliability and trustworthiness in relations with other group members. Those who fail to live up to the group's requirements soon find themselves on the outside, seldom consulted, and seldom helped.

Figure 1:

Vertical and Horizontal Integration of Redistributive System
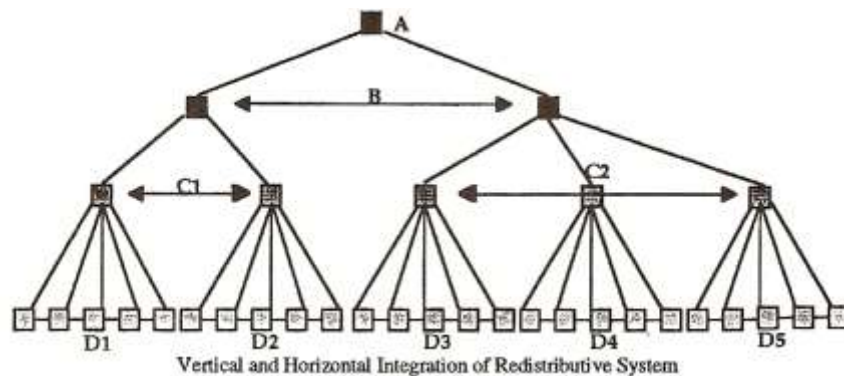
We will call people of higher status patrons and those of lower status clients. This follows the extensive literature on patron-client relationships within anthropology and political science. In most redistributively organised societies those who share a common patron are also cooperatively related to one another, seeing themselves as a distinct group, separate from other similar groups connected with other patrons. So, in Figure 1, all the members of D1 share a common identity, as do members of D2, D3, D4 and D5. Similarly, the patrons in C1 are cooperatively related, as are those of C2 and B. Because the patrons of groups D1 and D2 share a common patron, members of those groups are likely to consider themselves more closely related to each other than to members of D3, D4 and D5. Similarly, the patrons in C1 and C2 will identify fairly readily with each other.

10 As much because of the increasing influence of common-interest groupings based on education and money making, as because of the growth of 'corruption'. Indeed, it can be argued that the corruption so loudly condemned during the period from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries was, in large measure, as John Wyclif (1324-1384) claimed, a result of the self-interest of these egalitarian groups (see Tawney 1938, p. 40)

12 This dependence on various forms of hunting and foraging is common to most extensive agriculture communities (cf. Geddes 1993, p. 86ff).

13 One of the most pressing concerns of colonial powers, faced with systems of land use not based on legal definition, was to compile registers of landowners so that all relationships to land could be defined in terms of legally established individual ownership. This concern has remained important in 'international developoment' circles. See Holznecht (2003) for a description of the colonial processes; Dale (1997) for an explanation of the international development world's concern with the 'problem'.

14 As the Vatican web site explains:

The modern archives of the Holy See were established thanks to Paul V Borghese around 1610, but the roots of the history of the archives of the Roman Pontiffs reach way back in

time, linking up with the very origin, nature, activities and development of the Roman Church itself. Right from the apostolic times, the Popes carefully preserved the manuscripts concerning the exercise of their activities. This collection of manuscripts was kept in the *scrinium Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae* that usually followed the Popes in their various residences, but the fragility of the papyrus, normally used at the papal chancery until the XI Century, the transfers and the political upheavals nearly caused the total loss of all the archival material preceding Innocent III.

From the XI Century onwards, when the Roman Pontiff and his Curia gained a central role, the number of offices of the Curia grew, as well as the number of archives...
(The Vatican Secret Archives [Accessed 2 January 2010])

15 See Bagge (2002:36-38) for a description of Otto's coronation and administration of the ritual of Unction.

16 As claimed in the opening paragraph of the oldest collection of Church law embodied in the 1441 collection of Church laws.

17 This same situation now exists in many Third World countries. Under colonial authorities legal statutes were extended to cover a constantly increasing range of activities (cf. Chanock 1985; Cooper 1987; Fitzpatrick 1987; Mitchell 1988, etc.). As control has passed to indigenous leaders, these systems of rules and regulations have been modified but maintained so that, in ways which are very similar to that described by Genicot (1971, p. 701), people find themselves subjected to 'orders from above and from distant places, and to officials sent from outside'. Long-established customary understandings are being challenged and denied. Traditional rights to land are being subverted, and those least able to defend themselves find legal systems working against rather than in their interests.

18 Western European communities, as a result of a range of experiences we will briefly consider, strongly emphasise the separateness and competitive opposition of people involved in interaction (cf.Ideology and Reality). Each interactant is assumed to be attempting to get the best return for the least outlay in any interaction. This is, of course, a key feature of 'market relations' (cf. Reciprocity and Exchange).

19 A legal training became a guarantee of worldly success. In a world where legal claim could be matched by legal claim at every level of society, the legally trained person was in great demand. Murray tells us that 'it is in satire that we find some of the clearest evidence for lawyers' worldly success. "If you want wealth, be a lawyer"; "Justinian is the distributor of honours"; "Follow the decretalists and fill - not purses, *but - chests'*" (quoted in Murray 1978, p.222). As William Langland claimed in 1370 in his *Piers the Ploughman,*

Besides all this, a hundred men in silk gowns stood swaying from side to side and making speeches. These were the lawyers who served at the bar, pleading their cases for as much money as they could get ... you could sooner measure the mist on the Malvern Hills, than get

a sound out of them without first, producing some cash!
(Langland 1966, p. 31).

20 Educated people were at the forefront of many of the religious
protest movements which developed in succeeding centuries. The
movement which most strongly identified itself with education as a
means to both social betterment and individual 'development' was
Calvinism. Calvinism, more than the other religious reform
movements of the sixteenth century, attracted upwardly mobile
people. Not only was education seen as a means to social
betterment, involvement in commerce was also seen as a means to
upward mobility. Reformers who passed through the Geneva schools
of Calvinism during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries went
away convinced of the importance of a legally spelt-out faith, and of
the need to establish education systems for the training of the
population in both Church doctrine and a 'vocation serviceable to
God and neighbour, to Church and community' (McNeill 1954,
p.224). Educationally achieved position was of more importance in
society than feudally attained position, and the test of one's
worthiness was in the diligence with which one pursued that
vocation for which one was trained in one's youth. As Tawney has
argued, for a period, Calvinism became identified with
entrepreneurial activity, and it was through the influence of these
entrepreneurs that Calvinist teaching was to develop its ideal society
'which seeks wealth with the sober gravity of men who are
conscious at once of disciplining their own characters by patient
labour, and of devoting themselves to a service acceptable to God'
(Tawney 1938, p. 114). As Tawney claims,

> Calvinism was largely an urban movement … in its early days, it was carried from
> country to country partly by emigrant traders and workmen; and its
> stronghold was precisely in those social groups to which the traditional
> scheme of social ethics, with its treatment of economic interests as a quite
> minor aspect of human affairs, must have seemed irrelevant or artificial. As
> was to be expected in the exponents of a faith which had its headquarters
> in Geneva, and later its most influential adherents in great business
> centres, like Antwerp with its industrial hinterland, London and Amsterdam,
> its leaders addressed their teaching, not of course exclusively, but none the
> less primarily, to the classes engaged in trade and industry, who formed
> the most modern and progressive elements in the life of the age.
> (Tawney 1938, p. 113).

21 Where, for the Church, 'natural law' referred to the laws established
by God for the smooth running of his creation, for Roman
jurisprudence it meant searching for rules corresponding to the 'real'
nature of things (cf. d'Entreves 1965, pp. 29-30).

22 A claim which is echoed in neo-classical economic and other forms of
positivistic theory in the twentieth century.

23 Just as the definition of instincts in twentieth-century economic

theory happens to coincide with the requirements of a capitalist society.

24 Through the combined focus on Roman jurisprudence and Greek thinking, those searching for the 'natural laws' which governed the secular realm found themselves trying to come to grips with laws which underwrote both social organisation and action and the physical world. They were to resolve this problem by assuming the existence of self-contained environments which reflected the interests of those looking for the laws. The natural world could be seen to be compartmentalised, each compartment with its own system of rules and regulations ensuring its perfect functioning.

25 Because canonical law was, by definition, the preserve of the Roman Church, when people, from the sixteenth century onwards, rejected the Church, whether to gain political, mercantile or religious autonomy, they rejected Church law which had been used throughout the centuries to secure the pre-eminence of the institutionalised Roman Church in western Europe. They therefore found themselves committed to demonstrating their sincerity and morality by living an upright life in this world, conforming to the natural laws established by God and, in so doing, living in obedience to the will and purpose of God. This understanding of the road to sanctification, often summarised as the 'duty of human beings to live as God had intended them to live', had long been accepted as an alternative form of Godliness, but in the sixteenth century, for increasing numbers of people, it became the only acceptable form of Godliness. Since society was perfected in the perfection of its members, if individuals lived moral lives, society would benefit. If they failed to live such lives, all members of society would suffer. This was taken to an extreme and clearly spelt out in the deistic writings of Lord Herbert of Cherbury in the early seventeenth century. The central beliefs were summed up by Matthew Tindal in a book entitled *Christianity as Old as Creation; or the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature* (1734). According to Tindal, natural religion consisted of belief in God, the pursuit of what makes for one's good and happiness, promotion of the common happiness, and conformity to the moral rules which indwell all people. Apart from a first requirement of acknowledging the existence of God, religious activity was to be focused within the present world. A moral life was evidence of the spiritual orientation of the individual. 'The only religious "experience" in their sense was moral experience' (Kent 1982, p. 7).

26 Hugo Grotius, early in the seventeenth century, claimed that 'the law of nature is a dictate of right reason which points out that an act, according as it is or is not in conformity with rational nature, has in it a quality of moral baseness or moral necessity ... in consequence, such an act is either forbidden or enjoined by the author of nature, God' (quoted in O'Brien 1975, p. 23).

27 The bases for this movement are to be found in attempts, within emerging self-governing territories, to organise the administration of their populations and finances through legal and fiscal bureaucracies. The development of probability theory by de Fermat and Pascal in the 17th century gave the approach formal mathematical structure. Huygens, with the publication of a book *On Reasoning in Games of Chance* in 1657, gave impetus to applying the approach to a wide range of issues within the natural sciences.

28 Matthew 25:14-30; (also Luke 19:12-28)
Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.' His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. 'Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
(The Bible, New Testament, Matthew 25:14-30. New International Version)

29 Inevitably, all that referred to the 'supernatural' was the preserve of canonical law. Civil law could include no such allusions. It therefore became firmly anchored within the 'natural' world. From this point onwards, 'natural' laws are clearly, and necessarily, separated from

the supernatural. Supernatural principles, relating to a spiritual realm, while they might exist, were separate from, and did not override, the laws of the natural world. If God intervened in people's non-religious affairs, He did so in ways consistent with the operation of the natural laws. David Hume's assertion that a miracle was 'a violation of the laws of nature', in his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Hume 1748, p. 114), was the inevitable result of the direction in which the separation of the supernatural and the natural in the thirteenth century was to lead western Europeans.

30 By the seventeenth century this was to result in bureaucracies being established to safeguard each set of laws as they were discovered. Many of the scientific associations established at the time took as a prime responsibility the establishment of the body of laws of the 'discipline', and the safeguarding of those laws once they were uncovered (cf. Berman 1978).

31 This use of law as justification for dispossessing the poor and taking advantage of their weakness has been a feature of business activity in the twentieth century, whether in the First or in the Third worlds. If it is not legally required then those engaged in business activity can rightfully dismiss any demands made by members of a community. It is against 'economic rationality' to incur business costs when they can be avoided. Any conflict between 'morality' and 'economic rationality' will always be settled in favour of the latter. After all, if a particular business incurs costs based on 'moral' (i.e. non-legally defined) claims, it will be severely disadvantaged by other businesses which govern their affairs by the 'natural' requirements of economic rationality. Under capitalism, the logic of the marketplace effectively emasculates (or spays) morality.

32 Medieval literature provides numerous examples of the snowballing effects of simony throughout the later Middle Ages, and the resulting civil unrest and rebellion of those who saw this as a corruption of feudal relationships. Those who purchased position were, increasingly, a suspect group who took their feudal responsibilities lightly and used their positions to promote their money-making activities. William Langland (1370) commented that,

> nowadays, bondmen's children are made into Bishops and bastards into Archdeacons; and soap-makers and their sons buy themselves knighthoods, while the sons of true noblemen toil and sweat for them - for they mortgage their estates to ride out against our enemies ... And the monks and nuns, who should feed the poor, buy up the incomes of knights and make noblemen of their relatives. Even Popes now, and ecclesiastical patrons, are refusing noble blood, and appointing the sons of Simony to keep God's sanctuary
> (Langland 1966, pp. 258-9).

33 This same movement from traditional leadership spelt out in the land-holding systems of Third World communities to authority based upon the control of legal and fiscal bureaucracies is a feature of Third World nations. (The West would not recognise them as nations

if they did not base political and economic organisation and activity on such bureaucracies.) And, just as this movement produced growing alienation between the state and its people in medieval Europe, tensions have arisen in Third World countries as people try to come to terms with these very different bases for authority and direction within society.

The shift in the justification of leadership from direction of land holding to control of bureaucracies does not require a shift away from patron-client relationships. That is, it is perfectly reasonable to have hierarchical relationships within a society reinforced bureaucratically, and this is precisely what happened in medieval Europe (and in a large number of Third World countries in the twentieth century, in South America, Asia and Africa). The result, however, is bureaucratic behaviour of a very different kind from that which is required by Western capitalism.

The reorientation of Third World bureaucracies to stress depersonalised egalitarianism, at the insistence of Western 'experts', represents a triple shift: from leadership based on land holding,

- to leadership based on control of bureaucracies,

- to bureaucracies organised to emphasise impersonal egalitarianism,

- to leadership based upon 'democratic' principles.

It took Western European nations five hundred years to make these shifts, and, even then, people on the receiving end of the changes suffered extreme privation.

It is small wonder that attempts at moving directly from land-based leadership to 'democracy' in Third World communities have failed, with bureaucracies subverted to serve hierarchical patron-client interests (cf. Geddes 1994b, p. 128ff). Only 'experts' who have failed to understand the nature of the changes they are introducing could possibly assume that one can, by putting 'democratic institutions' in place, effect the transition from hierarchical leadership based on land holding to leadership justified in terms of control of impersonalised bureaucracies aimed at guaranteeing 'equality' and freedom to engage in competitive self-promotion to members of a community.

As we will see shortly, this change requires stripping social obligations from hierarchical relationships and attaching them to 'things' and the development and internalisation of a complex network of rules and regulations in terms of which community members 'automatically' relate to one another.

For Third World people, it has certainly been true that 'experts' with a little knowledge have proved dangerous. They have forced changes which, in many communities, have resulted in mounting tension and stress, resulting, all too often, in a loss of hierarchical authority relationships (cf. Ideology and Reality), and increasing opportunity for a ruthless few to gain and wield power through

control of resources and of the armed forces. Far from enhancing the 'freedom' of people, such developments all too often lead to despotism and police states.

34 This belief still exists in the minds of many Western people, who assume that those in Third World countries who have moved to towns are, by definition, moving from a life 'bound by tradition' to a life of 'freedom'. This assumption has provided one of the justifications for stimulating rural-urban migration. And, of course, since rural environments in many Third World countries have been steadily degraded over the past hundred years, it is true that life in rural areas has become increasingly harsh and many people see life in the country as no longer sustainable. However, we should not automatically assume that people living in Third World communities have this very Western attitude to people who live outside urban areas.

35 A strong consideration in acquiring property was that it was a shortcut to status. Ownership of formerly feudal estates gave the new owners some entree into interaction with the nobility and into recognition of noble status by those who still operated within the feudal system. In order to be accepted they found themselves emulating the lifestyles of the nobility, which resulted in increasing consumption as the trade in country properties escalated.

36 As we have seen, the medieval period is marked by the emphasis placed on groupings of people with common interests:

- from the specialisation of some districts into suppliers of particular products to fairs and markets;

- to the establishment of guilds and associations of artisans and tradesmen;

- to the establishment of associations of merchants and traders - such as the English Fellowship of the Staple or Merchants Adventurers, or the German Hanseatic League, or various city groupings of Italian traders;

- to associations based on learning, common social position, religious interests, and so on.

The people of western Europe seemed to enter naturally into quite consciously recognised and organised common-interest groupings, prepared and able to act together to preserve and promote their own rights and interests.

As the hierarchical nature of society became questioned, the importance of common-interest groups began to dominate, increasingly unchecked by any sense of duty and commitment to the wider society. Already, before the close of the medieval period, social commentators were decrying the activities of guilds and nations. Wyclif condemned them because 'they conspire to bear up each other, yea in wrong, and oppress other men in their right by

their wit and power' (quoted in Tawney 1938, p. 40).

By the seventeenth century feudal hierarchies were being successfully challenged by the dominant common-interest groups. Over the next two hundred years, this development was to produce a consciousness of 'class', that is of separate groupings within society having relationships of competitive opposition with each other. As the feudal legacy of Western Europe has faded, and the primary ideology of the dominant common-interest groups has been absorbed by increasing numbers of people, these 'classes' have become less and less important to most people in Western communities. So, 'class'-based studies in Western communities now seem outdated, no longer corresponding to a reality in which Western communities have become ideologically increasingly homogeneous.

37 Western people have a very distinctive understanding of time, based on centuries of wage labour. For them, life is first and foremost about work; 'socialising' is done in one's 'spare time' (see The Nature of Work for more on this). As a result, many non-Western people, who place far greater value on 'socialising' and far less value on 'work', have, over the years, been accused of 'moral degeneracy', 'childish indiscipline' and 'blindness to religious virtue' (cf. Cairns 1965, p. 76ff) . When status attainment and maintenance are based on social interaction, people will spend much more time in 'socialising' than in 'being productive'. Time is not 'spent'; it forms a less than conscious backdrop to the activities of community members.

38 Relationships in which those of different ranks saw themselves as cooperatively interconnected (cf. Geddes 1993, p. 114ff; 1994b, p. 130ff).

39 Objectified oppositional relationships make it possible for the exchangers to focus solely on the object of exchange, without having to consider the other party, which is, of course, a prime characteristic of 'market exchange'. In many societies, even where people work for 'wages' or rent property, the obligations and responsibilities remain with the *exchangers* rather than with the *objects of exchange.* Where this is so, *exchangers remain in hierarchical relationship,* which is a fundamental feature of patron-client relationships.

40 This feature has been one of the common experiences of Third World people in interaction with Western people over the past two hundred years. Since the interactions are 'economic', that is various forms of employee-employer relationships, Western people see no reason to 'socialise' with indigenous people. They need to assume no social relationship with them at all. Nor do they need to investigate the living conditions or breakdown of community suffered by the people they employ. That is none of their concern. Their relationship starts and ends with the 'job' and the payment of

wages. They do not even have to ensure that the wages they pay are sufficient to meet the subsistence needs of their employees - that is a responsibility of the employee. As Townsend argued in the eighteenth century, 'Let the market look after the poor, and things will look after themselves' (quoted in Polanyi 1957, p. 113). This attitude remains central to the 'economic development' activities that are promoted in Third World countries. During the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, western Europeans expanded the range of 'economic' relationships to include many previously 'social' relationships. They also became convinced that economic relationships could be strictly limited and bounded by the exchange of 'cash' and/or 'things'.

41 Just as the 'labouring poor' of western Europe found themselves oppositionally defined in relation to landlords and employers, people in colonial territories found themselves classified in oppositional terms, with relationships deliberately depersonalised and bounded by rules and regulations. This produced real confusion amongst many colonial people who very often assumed that Europeans with whom they interacted would become, as Patrice Lumumba suggested, 'his friend and his guide or his "godfather" , (quoted in Geddes 1994a, p. 48). Instead, they found themselves placed in a 'class', to which was attributed particular characteristics, and individuals found themselves treated as members of that class, with their relationships with Europeans standardised and bounded by legislation. No matter what their personal abilities, aptitudes, achievements, intentions or aspirations, they could not escape their legally spelt-out, exclusive, oppositional categorisation as different from and hierarchically inferior to Europeans.

42 The international nature of these merchant houses, and their freedom from the control of any one state, resembles the development of multinational corporations in the late twentieth century.

43 Those who belonged to this emerging class brought with them, from the Middle Ages, a deep respect for those who showed prudent self-control (cf. Murray 1978, p. 134) in their economic dealings, and who demonstrated an ability to 'realise the potential' of the resources at their disposal. As we have seen, in breaking free of the rules and regulations imposed by the Roman Church, one of the prime means of demonstrating one's morality was through 'making the most' of the 'talents' given by God. For this emerging class, prudent people used their resources to the full and disciplined themselves to successful business activity.

44 From the sixteenth century onwards the 'responsible people' of Western Europe became increasingly opposed to 'political' appointments, a viewpoint which, as we have seen, was strongly reinforced by Calvinist and Puritanical emphases on vocational education. It became increasingly seen as essential that those

holding either bureaucratic or business positions should be 'educated' for the positions they held and that appointment on any other basis was illegitimate. This point of view has, in succeeding centuries, become an indisputable requirement of life. Nepotism or 'favouritism' are considered 'corrupt' practices. But this belief did not develop because they *are* corrupt by any other standards than those developed historically in western Europe. Although Weber (1930) has considered the emphasis on vocational education and hard work a 'Protestant' ethic, as we have seen, these are western European emphases, which emerged long before the sixteenth-century Protestant movements became important.

45 Many people in Third World countries have found that the patron-client relationships which they assumed would provide them with support, direction and protection have similarly failed, though, with nowhere else to turn, they have to accept the exploitation to which they are subjected as unavoidable 'costs' of the relationship.

46 Hartlib claimed that 'the law of God saith, "He that will not work, let him not eat". This would be a sore scourge and smart whip for idle persons if ... none should be suffered to eat till they had wrought for it' (quoted in Tawney 1938, p. 265).

47 The Bible, New Testament, Revelation Chapters 6-19

48 The continual complaint by the United States that Japan engages in restrictive import practices, and that Japanese firms collude in taking over American industries, are classic examples of this form of activity. While neither is understandable, or acceptable, from a Western economic perspective, both are perfectly understandable from a Confucian perspective. It is very likely that over the next several decades similar complaints will be made about the activities of the Chinese when interacting with the West.

End notes Explanation

The primary focus of this article is on the historical development of the 'economy' in Western Europe. In order to keep it readable, I have placed in end notes some theoretical asides and comments on present Third World experience which can better be understood in the light of the historical experiences of Western Europe