

# Chapter 2: The Creation of Social Order is Irreducibly a Moral Project

The wise and virtuous man is at all times willing that his own private interests should be sacrificed to the public interest.

— Adam Smith<sup>1</sup>

## Assumptions Underlying Contemporary Public Policy Debates

In the first chapter, I argued that recent public policy debates have been impoverished by the failure of policy makers—under the influence of economic fundamentalism—to appreciate the extent to which the market system depends on, and is a sub-system of, the broader social system. Famously, it was Margaret Thatcher who claimed that there was no such thing as society. She had failed to notice that, by the very same peculiar logic, there was no such thing as a nation, an economy or a market, either. Rather, civil society, the political system, the market system and the broader culture are all involved in a complex mosaic of interlocking, mutually supporting structures and activities that provide the system of relationships, the social system within which we live.<sup>2</sup> The interactions between these elements resemble a complex, interdependent ecological system. Importantly, the complex system of moral, social and legal constraints that underpins our social order is an essential part of that ecological system. Threats to that social order are, therefore, threats to the whole system. Because of this interdependency, I argue that a healthy, just society that promotes human flourishing and actively mediates commercial relationships is an essential prerequisite to an effective, developed market system.

In contrast, economic fundamentalism tacitly assumes that social relationships are reducible to transactions between self-interested individuals—that is, economic relationships are the fundamental social relationships. It is this assumption and the reductionist tendency in Western thought that has allowed a particular economic methodology to become the dominant methodology for the evaluation of public policy choices in our society. Implicit in this assumption is the demeaning proposition that self-interest is the fundamental motivation of human beings. Contrary to popular belief, however, Smith, the father of economics, did not share this view, as the above quotation makes quite clear. Similarly, leading positivist economist and sociologist Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923) acknowledged that ‘real men governed by purely economic motives do not exist’.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, the vocabulary of mainstream economics and its values now provide the dominant vocabulary and values for policy evaluation, crowding out other

vocabularies and other values. Furthermore, within that economic vocabulary, 'economic efficiency'—the shorthand description of Pareto-optimality—has become the dominant value to be served by government policy. This has been true of most recent Australian policy debates, including the Australian fair-trading debate to which I will turn in the discussion on the doctrine of freedom of contract in Chapter 9. That debate raises in a direct fashion the relationship between the economic system and the social system, and the role of the State in supporting economic activity. It provides a good example of the influence of economic ideas on a fundamental legal institution that is backed by the coercive powers of the State, and which facilitates complex and longer-term economic exchanges.

### **How is Social Order Possible?**

Cooperative behaviour is a fundamental, ubiquitous feature of human life. Let me say that again with emphasis in case you missed it: *cooperative behaviour is a fundamental, ubiquitous feature of human life!* Our day-to-day relationships are subject to a pervasive structuring of which we are largely unconscious. The excessive contemporary focus on the role of competition in market economies has concealed the fundamental significance of this cooperative behaviour. Without it, no human behaviour—social or economic—of any significance is possible. Let me emphasise the point again with an added twist: competition is not *the fundamental force* in human affairs—social or economic. For the moment, we will concentrate on how this cooperative behaviour, this structuring, this social order, is to be explained, with that word 'force' to be the focus of some attention in Chapters 5 and 8. The quest for such an explanation has long been at the centre of religious, philosophical, sociological and anthropological speculation. It is also related closely to the central questions of political life, namely: how should society be organised? How should the resources of society be distributed? What is the extent of our responsibility for others? Should individual freedom be restricted, to what extent, and in what ways? In so far as these questions ask what *ought to be*, they are moral ones: they ask about what is good, what is bad, and involve the fundamental questions about who we think we are.

Much academic discourse directed at these questions since the Enlightenment has emphasised the primacy of the individual, contrasting a methodological individualism with more corporatist notions. It has been something of an academic fashion in Western circles in recent centuries. Contemporary research has, however, shown that individuals are complex entities with internal states,<sup>4</sup> and if a reductionist strategy is thought essential to scientific investigation then, for consistency, one should not stop at the individual. This is not a position I take. Rather, I start from a position that sees the individual as embedded in society—an embedding that takes place through a continuing enculturation.

Consequently, I see the extensive theoretical discourse focused on whether the ‘individual’ is ‘prior’ to society or vice versa as a sterile waste of time—the product of obsessive Western dichotomous thinking. It seems clear to me that individuals constitute—and are constituted by—society. Putting it another way, the human ‘I’ discovers himself or herself only in encountering another ‘I’ and achieves identity and maturity only as a person in community.<sup>5</sup> In short, there is and can be no ‘I’, except in relationship and in contrast with others. The very idea of individuality is nonsense in the absence of comparison.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, it is now clear that the evolutionary emergence of *Homo sapiens* is inseparable from the emergence of society. As sociologist Werner Stark (1909–85) argues, ‘Here we are challenged to realise that the self and society are also coequal and coeval; that they are...twin-born.’<sup>7</sup> And again, ‘Think society away, and *Homo sapiens* disappear; what is left is a speechless, mindless beast.’<sup>8</sup>

What this means is that there is no pre-social, fixed human nature on which to base discourse about human behaviour. Social life is not an optional extra;<sup>9</sup> it lies at the core of what it is to be human. Consequently, it is not possible to strip culture away in order to get to a more *essential* human nature in the way that many reductionist theories since the Enlightenment have tried to do.<sup>10</sup> This is an insight that renders the idea of the autonomous individual—so beloved of economics and much recent political philosophy—a dangerous falsehood.

Even the contemporary Western concept of the self, which seems so natural and self-evident to contemporary Western thinkers, is an artefact of a long social discourse.<sup>11</sup> This Western liberal notion of the human person as a free, independent, inquiring, rational and maximising individual is a masculine, Enlightenment view,<sup>12</sup> derived from a long Western Christian tradition, as mediated by John Calvin (1509–64) and René Descartes (1596–1650). To Buddhists, this view is a delusion and the source of human unhappiness. Indeed, other societies have held very different ideas of who we are, connected closely also to their particular forms of social organisation. For example, Homeric culture barely conceived of a self outside of social roles. Similarly, Geertz (1926–2006) writes of Balinese culture:

[There is] a persistent and systematic attempt to stylise all aspects of personal expression to the point where anything idiosyncratic, anything characteristic of the individual...is muted in favour of his assigned place in the continuing, and so it is thought, never-changing pageant of Balinese life. It is *dramatis personae*, not actors, that endure; indeed it is *dramatis personae*, not actors, that in the proper sense really exist. Physically men come and go—mere incidents in a happenstance history of no genuine importance, even to themselves. But the masks they wear, the stage they occupy, the parts they play, and most important, the

spectacle they mount, remain and constitute not the façade but the substance of things, not least the self.<sup>13</sup>

Geertz therefore concludes:

[T]he Western conception of a person as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic centre of awareness, emotion, judgment, and action organised into a distinctive whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes and against a social and natural background is, however incorrigible it may seem to us, a rather peculiar idea within the context of the world's cultures.<sup>14</sup>

Importantly, these different views of the self are not just different they are incommensurable. This means that it is not possible to synthesise these understandings to obtain a genetic concept of the self.<sup>15</sup> This insight poses a fundamental challenge to the positivist view of the social sciences, on which economic fundamentalism is based. That discredited positivist view presupposes that there are 'sheer facts' to be discovered about human interactions and about the world more generally. Consequently, it ignores the social process through which these 'sheer facts'—and the conceptual frameworks on which they are based—are established. Now these are not new ideas, however much they have been ignored in positivist discourse. Even Sir Francis Bacon (1561–1626), one of the fathers of empiricism and the scientific method, described four kinds of barriers—'Idols of the Tribe, Cave, Market Place, and Theatre'—that act against the achievement of objective knowledge and shape perception and thought. These were the limitations of human nature in general, the preconceptions of individuals, the fashions of day-to-day discourse and the dogmas of philosophies and science. Of course, Bacon hoped that the empirical method would provide a way out of these problems. Now, however, we can be far less sure that this is possible.

It is now clear that our taken-for-granted 'reality', our everyday understanding of the world, of our scientific knowledge and of ourselves is socially constructed. Importantly, language is now seen as the social medium into which we are born and within which we live, rather than simply being a tool we use to describe a pre-existing reality.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, the extent of our ability to get beyond language is problematic. The only reality we can know anything about is the reality we encounter through our language<sup>17</sup> and our stories. As Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann tell us:

I apprehend the reality of everyday life as an ordered reality. Its phenomena are prearranged in patterns that seem independent of my apprehension of them and that impose themselves upon the latter... The language used in everyday life continuously provides me with the necessary objectifications and posits the order within which these make

sense and within which everyday life has meaning for me...In this manner language marks the coordinates of my life in society and fills that life with meaningful objects.

And again: 'Everyday life is, above all, life with and by means of the language I share with my fellow men. An understanding of language is thus essential for any understanding of the reality of everyday life.'<sup>18</sup>

Consequently, for bacteriologist and philosopher of science Ludwik Fleck (1896–1961), 'Cognition is the most socially conditioned activity of man, and knowledge is the paramount social creation. The very structure of language presents a compelling philosophy characteristic of that community, and even a single word can represent a complex theory.'<sup>19</sup>

The idea that language, as a sign of something else, was always removed from reality was a cornerstone of the ancient rhetorical tradition that held sway over Western societies for many centuries.<sup>20</sup> This does not mean, however, that the natural and social worlds do not play a role in constraining our conceptual system, or that there is no order in those worlds. Rather, it can play this role only through our experience of it, and that experience is constructed socially through language and stories. Consequently, American philosopher Nelson Goodman (1906–98) goes so far as to argue that it is not meaningful to talk about the way the world is.<sup>21</sup> In this vein, Wittgenstein has pointed out that concepts must necessarily presuppose the existence of—and operate according to—the public rules of a social milieu, and presuppose a shared public domain of discourse.<sup>22</sup> The very language of that discourse is itself a product of a language community, a culture.

American linguist Benjamin Whorf (1897–1941) put it this way:

Thinking also follows a network of tracks laid down in a given language, an organisation which may concentrate systematically upon certain phrases of reality, certain aspects of intelligence, and may systematically discard others featured in other languages. The individual is utterly unaware of this organisation and is constrained completely within its unbreakable bonds.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, Whorf tells us, on the basis of his studies of other cultures and languages, the 'various grand generalisations of the Western world, such as time, velocity, and matter, are not essential to the construction of a consistent picture of the universe'.<sup>24</sup>

Wittgenstein goes further:

Language disguises thought. So much so, that from the outward form of the clothing it is impossible to infer the form of the thought beneath it, because the outward form of the clothing is not designed to reveal the

form of the body, but for entirely different purposes. The tacit conventions on which the understanding of everyday language depends are enormously complicated.<sup>25</sup>

In this same spirit, contemporary linguists Lakoff and Johnson have drawn attention to the pervasiveness of metaphor in everyday life, and, in the process, spelt out in part the mechanism by which language structures reality. The terms in which we think and act—our conceptual system—are fundamentally metaphorical in nature, reflecting the dominant historical and social order.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, many other theorists have argued that the way in which social phenomena are labelled serves as a device for social control. Accordingly, the leading sociologist of science, Karl Mannheim (1893–1947), claimed that almost no human thought was immune to the ideologising influences of its social context; that knowledge must always be knowledge from a certain position.<sup>27</sup> This view applies with particular force to knowledge of society itself. Consequently, the extent to which our accounts of social phenomena are a product of those phenomena—or of the process by which they are derived—is always problematic. John Shotter bluntly sums all of this up:

[O]ur understanding and our experience of reality is constituted for us, very largely, by the ways in which we *must* talk in our attempt...to account for it...In accounting for ourselves we must always meet the demands placed upon us by our status as responsible members of our society, that is, we must talk in ways that are both intelligible and legitimate to others, in ways that make sense to them and relate to interests in which they can share.<sup>28</sup>

As we saw earlier, there is an important circularity here. We tend to become what we say we are.

Culture is something we learn as children growing up in a society and discovering how our parents and those around us interpret the world.<sup>29</sup> This process of enculturation is a process of sharing knowledge<sup>30</sup> —the knowledge by which people design their own actions and interpret the behaviour of others. This knowledge provides us with the standards we use for deciding what is, for deciding what can be, for deciding how one feels about it, for deciding what to do about it and for deciding how to go about doing it.<sup>31</sup> The creation and sustainment of such shared meanings is itself a social process in which moral knowledge is incorporated into a society's moral vocabulary and its social discourse.

This is often described as a process of institutionalisation. The development of language is itself considered the paradigm case of that institutionalisation, the basis of intelligence and the mechanism by which knowledge can be transmitted through time and space. Therefore, William Noble and Iain Davidson argue that

'mindedness'—that human conduct that exhibits signs of awareness, interpretation, understanding, planning, foresight or judgement—cannot occur independently of language. 'Mindedness' and language are learned through years of socialisation through interactions with others.<sup>32</sup> For Berger and Luckmann:

Language now constructs immense edifices of symbolic representations that appear to tower over the reality of everyday life like gigantic presences from another world...In this manner, symbolism and symbolic language become essential constituents of the reality of everyday life and of the common-sense apprehension of this reality...Language builds up semantic fields or zones of meaning that are linguistically circumscribed. Vocabulary, grammar and syntax are geared to the organisation of these semantic fields. Thus language builds up classification schemes to differentiate objects...forms to make statements of action as against statements of being; modes of indicating degrees of social intimacy, and so on.<sup>33</sup>

In particular, the acquisition of language is an integral part of personality development. In this regard, George Mead argues that the hearing of one's own speech—and observing the response of others—is central to the recognition of the self as an object and agent.<sup>34</sup> Among that reality is our understanding of our own lives in the context of the passage of time. Consequently, Jerome Bruner argues that because we have no way of describing lived time other than in the form of narrative, we construct our understanding of ourselves as an autographical narrative: '[I]t is only through narrative that we know ourselves as active entities that operate through time.'<sup>35</sup> For his part, Jean-Paul Sartre tells us that 'a man is always a teller of stories, he lives surrounded by his own stories and those of other people, he sees everything that happens to him in terms of these stories and he tries to live his life as if he were recounting it'.<sup>36</sup> We construct our understanding of the causal relationships involved in happenings in the natural world in the same way—as knowledge narratives.

Accordingly, it seems clear that the contemporary liberal concept of the human person is the product of a particular tradition, a particular social discourse and a cultural artefact. To be a person in contemporary Western society is not to be a certain kind of being—'a self'—but to have internalised a particular socially transmitted and approved moral story, which is then used to structure that Western individual's sense of identity. Consequently, it is a story that is used to organise one's knowledge, experience and behaviour.<sup>37</sup> It follows immediately from the above insights that, at most, individuals—even Western individuals—can be only partially sovereign and autonomous, and it is a deceit to pretend otherwise. The formation of our values, and even of our consumer preferences, is a social process and cannot sensibly be separated from them.

My starting position is at odds with the starting point of the dominant school of economics—neoclassical economics. As the basis of its discourse, that school adopts the reductionist strategy characteristic of most science since the Enlightenment: an extreme methodological individualism, the assumption that human beings are essentially self-interested and an impoverished account of human reason. This ‘presumes a deeply utilitarian understanding of social life...severed from connections to any concrete sense of identity, purpose, or meaning. Morality, religion, and the whole normative dimension of social life get either pushed out of sight or explained away as resultants of more important, or more real factors.’<sup>38</sup>

It is a starting point that makes it difficult for economists and economic fundamentalists to understand how economic action is constrained and shaped by the structures of social relations in which we are embedded.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, its methodological individualism is not a morally neutral stance, but an ideological conviction—one that is confined largely to the Western world. Not only does it contain within it a view as to how societies are formed and how they function, it contains a strong distinction between the ‘me’ and ‘you’, which brings with it a strong distinction between ‘mine’ and ‘yours’. While economists seek to tell us how our society should be organised, their methodological assumptions undermine their ability to engage adequately with the values that underpin our society.

Of course, some might argue that there is no necessary logical connection between the acceptance, or rejection, of individualism as a methodological principle and one’s attitude towards individualism and individual liberty as moral and political ideals. Nevertheless, there is a close connection between these ideas historically and they come together in the context of welfare economics, which attempts to account for welfare improvements in terms of the subjective preferences of individuals. Martin Hollis has, however, warned us that the atomised individuals of neoclassical economics are entirely reactive to the environment, with no freedom of movement.<sup>40</sup> The consequence is that neoclassical economics denies human agency. It is therefore inconsistent with Libertarian political philosophies that stress human autonomy. It follows that there is a fundamental inconsistency at the heart of economic fundamentalism. We will turn to a more detailed discussion of those relationships in Chapter 8. In any event, contemporary economic fundamentalists claim to hold to individualism as a fundamental value as well as a methodological principle. It is, however, an individualism shorn of any compassion for real people in their daily circumstances as opposed to a claimed—and highly qualified—concern for their right to make their own decisions. It does not, for example, extend to a genuine concern for the autonomy of those who have no money or no job.



This qualified adulation of individual autonomy is itself deeply flawed. It seeks to gauge our individual worth in terms of our ability to ‘distance ourselves from commitment to society’<sup>41</sup> and elevates selfishness from the status of a ‘deadly sin’—the equivalent of idolatry—to the status of the essential human characteristic. In sharp contrast, most of our religious traditions teach us that to be authentically human, and even to find ourselves, we have to lose ourselves in the service of others and in the contemplation of the divine—a contemplation that is said to extinguish the sense of self and to promote a sense of the unity of all existence. Of course, this selfish view of humanity is also untrue as a scientific, psychological description of real human beings. The truly autonomous human being—*Homo economicus*, ‘economic man’—is autistic, incapable of entering into normal human life with its continuous emotional engagement with others—engagement that is essential to normal human development. Indeed, that emotional responsiveness to others is more basic than symbolic thought, providing the basis for the acquisition of language and the development of symbolic thought.<sup>42</sup>

One important consequence of this adherence to methodological individualism has been a stubborn refusal on the part of economists to examine the formation of preferences—the basis of our choices. They do so on the grounds of what is called the doctrine of consumer sovereignty—the idea that we are all free to form our own preferences without having to justify them. As such, it is simply a restatement of the economic profession’s commitment to individualism. It privileges so-called individual preferences—as opposed to social institutions and collective rules of behaviour—on the assumption that preferences have been chosen individually. This view ignores the extent to which our choices are conditioned by our positions in the social system—positions that involve normative obligations and power relationships enforced by society. It ignores the fact that we justify our choices to ourselves in the language of contemporary culture and the social construction of that language and culture. It also assumes that we know what alternatives are open to us and that we know what we want. So it simply refuses to examine the great extent to which preferences are learned and not chosen. It also ignores the particular influence that others have on those preferences, the extent to which they depend on previous choices and the extent to which they are either incomplete or inconsistent. What is more, it ignores the highly manipulative nature of much advertising. Furthermore, the economists’ assumption that preferences are consistent has been proven to be false<sup>43</sup>—a finding that undercuts rational choice theory, which, in turn, underpins the theory of demand.

In this regard, Ormrod argues that the assumption that tastes and preferences are fixed is one of the most restrictive assumptions of orthodoxy, severely limiting the capacity of economics to illuminate real-world problems. This is because the alteration of tastes and preferences—particularly under the influence

of others, including advertising—is pervasive in the real world.<sup>44</sup> We might note in passing that this obsession with individual preferences and individual autonomy does not extend to our treatment of children—and no economist is arguing that it should. It follows that they are accepting tacitly that there is a legitimate social role in the shaping of individual preferences: consumer sovereignty does not extend to children, or to the mentally disturbed, or to some aboriginals—that is, that there are other values to be served that override their autonomy. What, then, about the merely confused, or the poorly informed, or the badly misled? To label concerns for such people as simply paternalistic is not to mount a cogent argument but to make a questionable moral judgement.

Importantly, such preferences are said to include our internalised values and roles, with action and role-playing seen as being always instrumental and gratifying.<sup>45</sup> That is, they believe that human motivations are universally reducible to the competitive maximising of personal gain. Of course, such an account renders the words ‘preferences’ and ‘choice’ empty of meaning. Nevertheless, as contemporary critic and economist Michael McPherson<sup>46</sup> tells us, mainstream economics has been defined by the principle that the nature and origins of tastes and preferences lie outside the proper domain of economic inquiry. It provides the entry point into neoclassical economics—‘the essence of all properly scientific economic thinking’<sup>47</sup>—and consequently excludes other forms of economic analysis. American pacifist and economist Kenneth Boulding (1910–93) jokingly referred to the immaculate conception of the indifference curve.<sup>48</sup> These boundaries are essential to the deterministic, reductionist and mechanical systems thinking that constitutes the neoclassical method. Of course, the constructionist perspective outlined above involves a quite fundamental challenge to this impoverished theorising, because it directs attention towards the social processes through which our choices are legitimised to us and to each other and away from what are wrongly assumed to be individual psychological processes.

Importantly, this refusal to examine seriously the formation of preferences is an ideological stance and an *ad hoc* strategy designed to protect the structure and methodology of economic thought from a fatally destructive criticism. If the consumer is not entirely sovereign, the ideological use of the concept of Pareto-optimality in welfare economics collapses. This untenable stance flows directly from economic theory’s commitment to Cartesianism—the philosophical movement at the heart of the Enlightenment—and to a Newtonian cosmology. We will explore the consequences of those commitments in some detail in subsequent chapters. For the moment, it is sufficient to note that economics does not want to explore the complex of motives or feelings that lies behind real human choices. Rather, it renames people as economic actors and sets out to explore the so-called ‘rational choices’ of these ‘idealised’ actors. In this unreal,

idealised, rationalist, but impoverished world, instrumental calculation is enthroned as the distinctive quality of human reason while the emotions are repudiated.<sup>49</sup> This is a debased, impoverished rationalism that is remote from the original Greek conception of reason as humankind's highest faculty—a sharing in the divine nature conceived of as pure mind<sup>50</sup>—and from the more modest concept that arose with humanism and is again being explored in contemporary thought.

A further fundamental objection can be raised to this focus on preferences and the optimisation of choices. It privileges the role of consumption in human affairs compared with the role of production. *Homo economicus* is a consumer, rather than a producer. It is quite clear, however, that for most people, their roles in the workforce are a crucial part of their sense of identity.

### **Social Order is an Evolved Complex Moral Order**

Philosophers and theologians in the Western tradition have tended to draw a strong distinction between humankind and other animals, believing—at least in earlier times—that humankind alone shared in the divine nature and that this set us apart radically from other animals. It is now quite clear, however, that we are descended from other social animals. Even our earliest hominoid ancestors lived as members of structured social groups. Our closest contemporary relatives—the other primate species—also live in social groups that exhibit cooperative behaviour involving parental care, cooperative foraging, mutual protection, self-denial and reciprocal kindness.<sup>51</sup> This social behaviour among primates appears to extend back millions of years. Therefore, it seems fair to assume that human cooperation is partly a legacy of our primate origins.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, contemporary research is attributing a central role to collaboration and trust in human evolution and, in particular, to the evolution of language. It is, therefore, simply not true that we are born entirely selfish.

Humans have an unusually long period of infantile and juvenile dependency on adults and this fact alone should put paid to any excessive adulation of individualism. The basic ability to intensively attend to and respond to others is present at birth.<sup>53</sup> New-born human babies imitate the expressions of others and enter into an exchange of feelings. By twelve months, they show a specific need to share purposes and meanings and to learn how to denote common ideas by means of symbolic expression. It is also clear that the life chances of a person—and the lifelong sense of his or her own worth—is heavily dependent on the experience of being loved as a child.

Human nurture and cooperation more generally are not simply a result of biological inheritance. Even among other primates, behaviour is not determined purely genetically; social learning is also important. Primate behaviour is a consequence of a complex mix of genetic, cultural and environmental factors

with some recent research tending to emphasise the significance of the cultural element. Cultural learning is even more important to humans because human cooperation involves a much more complex range of behaviours and far wider networks than does cooperation among other primates. It is our ability to fashion more complex and more varied forms of social life that distinguishes us from them—an ability that depends on language and story-telling.

It is, therefore, now generally considered that humans are distinguished uniquely from other animals by our capacity for—and possession of—complex cultures and language. The possession of culture played an active role in shaping the final stages of human development.<sup>54</sup> The evolution of the human race—and particularly the emergence of intelligence and symbolic capacity—entailed a complex in which the organised hunting of large animals, life in organised social groups and the making and the use of tools were interconnected.<sup>55</sup> As contemporary anthropologist Roger Keesing (b. 1935) puts it: '[T]he whole pattern evolves together; changes in physical structures and changes in behaviour, both genetically and socially transmitted, are tied together.'<sup>56</sup> Michael Carrithers emphasises the evolution of social intelligence as playing the key role in this development<sup>57</sup> —a position consistent with the social function of intellectual hypothesis advanced by British psychologist Nicholas K. Humphrey.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, Philip Lieberman believes that our ability to talk is one of the keys to understanding the evolutionary process that made us human.<sup>59</sup>

It also appears that there is no necessary opposition between the influence of instinct and of learning in this evolutionary process. Among recent commentators, anthropologist Peter Reynolds<sup>60</sup> rejects explicitly the proposition that human evolution has been characterised by the replacement of instinct by culture. Rather, human behaviour and animal behaviour more generally appear to involve a complex interaction between instinct and experience. He argues that there is a great deal of behavioural continuity and that the instinctive systems that function in animals have parallels among humans. There appears to be a 'progressive' development of social behaviour, particularly among primates. We also appear to share much of the same emotional equipment. Reynolds concludes that a theory of human evolution that presupposes the development of reason at the expense of emotion, or of learning at the expense of instinct, conflicts with the evidence. Importantly, he argues that the relationship between reason and emotion is not one of hierarchy, but of specialisation by function—the brain integrating different kinds of information into a unified course of action. Consequently, the progressive evolution of primate cognition did not depend on the replacement of innate behaviour by learned behaviour, but on the selection and control of innate behaviour by conceptually stored information. The comparative evidence also supports progressive changes in the capacity for

conceptualisation, in instrumental skills and in the volitional control of behaviour during the course of human evolution.

Keesing argues that our behavioural potential appears to be many-sided, complex, culturally shaped and socially expressed:

[T]he human behavioural repertoire entails countervailing tendencies. Humans probably do have behavioural tendencies to dominate, to compete, to be aggressive (though probably not to be territorial in a strict sense). But they also have tendencies to share, to cooperate, to be altruistic. Institutions and customs may intensify competition, reinforce dominance, or express aggression in warfare and combat; but they may reinforce our propensities to share, cooperate, be egalitarian and peaceful.<sup>61</sup>

Similarly, Mary Midgley argues that there is no need to choose between explanations based exclusively on social or innate human tendencies, because she believes that such causes do not compete; they supplement each other.<sup>62</sup> For example, she suggests that such innate tendencies as fear and anger are necessary motives and elements in a good life. Further, she points to the complexity of human motives and of the states labelled as aggression, spite, resentment, envy, avarice, cruelty, meanness and hatred and the complex activities they produce. Importantly, she argues that we are capable of these vices because we are capable of their opposites—the virtues. The capacity to form long-term relationships necessarily involves the possibility of rejecting or abusing that relationship. Aggression is only one among many motives that can lead to wickedness. Nor is it true that all aggressive behaviour is evil. She argues that we need to think of wickedness not primarily as a positive, definite tendency such as aggression—which needs special explanation—but rather as a negative, as a general kind of failure to live as we are capable of living. This, she suggests, involves recognising a whole range of natural motives associated with power: aggression, territoriality, possessiveness and competitiveness. The positive motives that move people to evil conduct are often quite decent ones such as prudence, loyalty, self-fulfilment and professional conscientiousness. The appalling element for Midgley lies in the lack of other motives, which ought to balance these—in particular, a proper regard for other people and a proper priority system that would enforce it.

It should be quite clear from the above that it would be a mistake to devalue the critical influence of cultural evolution in trying to correct the excessive distinction made between nature and nurture in earlier accounts of human evolution. It is also important to note that an evolutionary account of human development does not involve any necessary acceptance of the biological determinism connected with such contemporary theorists as Edward O. Wilson (*Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*) and Richard Dawkins (*The Selfish Gene*). The

more extreme pronouncements of these theorists are simply wrong. Their story is simply another attempt—in a long line of attempts in the Enlightenment tradition—to find a deterministic, mechanical explanation of human behaviour. Their selfish-gene metaphor is simply not helpful. Genes are not selfish; they lack the agency that would enable them to be described appropriately in that way. Nor are living organisms reducible to their genes, as recent research into the human genome has shown.

Contemporary biologist Brian Goodwin says it quite bluntly: organisms cannot be reduced to the properties of their genes and have to be understood as dynamic systems with distinctive properties. He argues that a more dynamic comprehensive theory of life focused on the dynamics of emergent processes would reinstate organisms as the fundamental units of life. In this view, organisms are not simply survival machines for genes. Organisms assume intrinsic value, having worth in and of themselves.<sup>63</sup> For Goodwin, such a realisation arises from an understanding of organisms as centres of autonomous action and creativity, connected with a causal agency that cannot be described as mechanical. It is the relational order that matters. Of course, this applies with particular strength to humans, and Goodwin extends this conclusion to social structures where relationships, creativity and values are of primary significance. As should be clear from the above, this social order is acknowledged to be a moral order; it determines how we *should* act. As pioneering French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) pointed out:

[W]e are involved in a complex of obligations from which we have no right to free ourselves...Thus, altruism is not destined to become, as Spencer desires, a sort of agreeable ornament to social life, but it will forever be its fundamental basis. How can we ever really dispense with it? Men cannot live together without acknowledging, and, consequently, making mutual sacrifices, without tying themselves to one another with strong, durable bonds. Every society is a moral society.<sup>64</sup>

The study of social life is therefore a study of social norms, the institutions in which they are embodied and the stories we tell about them. It involves not simply regularities in conduct, but regulated conduct.<sup>65</sup> It is the shared values embedded in those stories that act as the mortar that binds together the structure of each human community, with rewards and punishments based on those commonly held values. It is also the pervasiveness of these values and rules that gives each person a sense of belonging, a sense of community.<sup>66</sup> Our very survival depends on such conformity. For the most part, conformity is a result of the internalisation of values and conceptions of what is desirable. These provide security and contribute to personal and social identity. Such cultural knowledge is, however, often tacit; it is so regular and routine that it lies below a conscious level. Michael Polanyi tells us that paying express attention to such

knowledge can impede the skilful application of it in much the same way as giving express attention to a motor skill can impede the application of that skill.<sup>67</sup> Such skills are not exercised by following the rules explicitly. The aim of training is to free us from the need to follow such rules consciously.<sup>68</sup>

Sociability, then, is not simply a natural trait. Rather, social phenomena are due to nature and nurture. What is distinctive about human beings is our capacity to control our behaviour—what Stark calls our ‘animality’—a capacity that other species on the whole lack.<sup>69</sup> The process of nurture, the process of socialisation, is a process of moralisation.<sup>70</sup> The survival of sociality requires a system of discipline that sets limits to, and works against, the drives that we have inherited. It is this control that makes human civilisation possible and it is only then that higher values can influence human conduct. American cultural anthropologist Marshall Sahlins (b. 1930) puts it this way:

It is an extraordinary fact that primate urges often become, not the secure foundation of human social life, but a source of weakness in it...In selective adaptation to the perils of the Stone Age, human society overcame or subordinated such primate propensities as selfishness, indiscriminate sexuality, dominance and brutal competition. It substituted kinship and cooperation for conflict, placed solidarity over sex [and] morality over might.<sup>71</sup>

Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711–76) made a similar argument: ‘It is certain that self-love, when it acts at its liberty, instead of engaging us to honest action, is the source of all injustice and violence...We must allow that the sense of justice and injustice is not derived from nature, but arises artificially, though necessarily, from education and human conventions.’<sup>72</sup>

For Stark, it is the control of greed exercised by the social norms that, in particular, constitutes a crucial victory of culture over animality.<sup>73</sup> He sees what he calls society’s primary laws as emerging out of these social norms. These norms—a society’s *ethos*—are not only taught to us by our parents, as indicated above, we learn them from our stories, our popular music, our fairy-tales, fables, sagas and legends, symbolism and ceremony, and from popular, artistic and educational literature. In the contemporary world, radio, television, film and the Internet provide much of the medium for this learning. These norms always operate in conjunction with ethical and religious teachings.

Importantly, for Stark, religion lies behind the other *ethos*-building institutions, filling the gaps left by custom and law—a view consistent with that of Geertz cited in Chapter 1. Because only crude offenders are detected, the pressures encouraging obedience to the law cannot be fully effective. They leave inner dispositions largely unaltered and cannot enforce the performance of good deeds. In these circumstances, the belief that our moral conduct will ultimately be

rewarded or punished by some transcendent judge provides a powerful incentive for moral conformity. Stark, drawing on the work of French philosopher Henri Bergson (1858–1941), doubts whether society and culture could survive without a metaphysical prop of some kind. As indicated in the previous chapter, even in our partly secularised society, religious conceptions have not been eliminated. Not only do traditional religious views survive in a significant proportion of the population, powerful religion substitutes such as the deification of nature and of history have a similar influence.

The evolution of social norms and institutions has involved a long process of moral search and experimentation. Stark, drawing on the work of American social evolutionist William Sumner (1840–1910), describes it as follows:

What Sumner saw at work, in the lap of society, was a process of selection separating by way of trial and error, useful and disappointing expedients, and leading to the adoption of the former and the discarding of the latter. The guide in this never resting and never ending stream of experimentation is not pure but practical reason, not ratiocination, but, rather, common sense. General principles of action may and do in the end emerge, but they are merely abstract formulations, summings up, of concrete experiences.<sup>74</sup>

The conviction that humans have themselves created the social system within which they have their being is central to this point of view. For Stark, the self-creation of society is the greatest of all social phenomena. What have been selected in this historical process of evolution are ways of behaving that mitigate the war of all against all. Hayek, the darling of economic rationalists, also described a historical, evolutionary process of trial and error for the development of social rules.<sup>75</sup> Successful action results in the rule being selected, whereas unsuccessful action results in the rule being discarded.

Importantly, if humankind has made society in the process of its own evolution, it is not the pure product of 'nature'. In the words of Berger and Luckmann, '[s]ocial order is not part of the "nature of things" and it cannot be derived from the "laws of nature". Social order exists *only* as a product of human activity.'<sup>76</sup> Equally, if humankind has made society, it has also made the economic system.

These insights have considerable significance for the study of human behaviour itself. The social and economic systems and their constituents are not natural types or entities such as sodium chloride—exhibiting natural regularities to be described by the natural sciences—they are social artefacts. It is also clear from the above that culture is not a once-for-all influence; it is a continuing process constructed and reconstructed during human interaction.<sup>77</sup> Consequently, contemporary anthropologist Bruce Knauft tells us: 'Culture is now best seen not as an entity, tied to a fixed group of people, but as a shifting and contested



process of constructing collective identity...This is as true in New Guinea as it is in New York.<sup>78</sup> The entire cultural and institutional environment within which the institutions of governance are embedded is the product of history and is subject to a path of dependency to at least some extent.<sup>79</sup> Consequently, history matters.

In their account, Berger and Luckmann explain that institutionalisation arises out of the habituation of actions that tend to be repeated frequently and their associated typifications.<sup>80</sup> These actions can then be reproduced with an economy of effort, making it unnecessary for each situation to be defined anew. Institutions control conduct by setting up predefined patterns of conduct, and are experienced as possessing a reality of their own that confronts members of the group as an external and coercive fact. The objectivity of this created world of meaning hardens as those patterns are passed on to children, and are experienced by them as an objective reality and an authoritative claim. Among groups, it ensures predicability of behaviour, stabilising actions, interactions and routines, which are then taken for granted. As such, they make possible a division of roles and labour in the widest sense.

Such an institutional world, and its associated roles, requires ways in which it can be explained and justified—that is, it requires legitimisation, giving rise to legitimising formulae. These legitimisations, these stories, are also learned during socialisation. In the evolution of human society, a widening canopy of legitimisations has been created, backed by the mechanisms of social control. For Berger and Luckmann, this edifice of legitimisation uses language as its principal instrument, with the fundamental legitimising explanations being built into the vocabulary. Importantly, society, identity and reality are each crystallised in the human subject in the process of internalising the language, which provides the means and the content of socialisation.

Language also provides the means for objectifying new experiences, allowing their incorporation into the existing stock of knowledge and the means by which these sedimentations are transmitted in the tradition of a collective. In this way, legitimisations can be adapted so as to reinterpret experience without necessarily upsetting the institutional order. Berger and Luckmann stress that this process of legitimisation does not primarily involve a preoccupation with complex theoretical systems because ‘the primary knowledge about the institutional order is the sum total of “what everybody knows” about the social world, an assemblage of maxims, morals, proverbial nuggets of wisdom, values and beliefs, myths [and] so forth’.<sup>81</sup> With the evolving complexity of a society, however, there similarly arose specialised bodies of ‘theoretical’ knowledge providing a stable canopy of meaning for the society and ultimately creating symbolic universes in which all sectors of the institutional order were integrated in an

all-embracing frame of reference. In the process, they attained a measure of autonomy capable of modifying, as well as reflecting, institutional processes.

As more complex forms of knowledge arose—and as an economic surplus developed—there also arose specialist legitimisers, who devoted themselves full-time to integrating the meanings attached to disparate institutional processes. In the process, they became increasingly removed from the necessities of everyday life, claimed a novel status and claimed knowledge of the ultimate status of what everyone did. These legitimisers, these story-tellers, these ‘priests’, form part of the system of social control, justifying the institutional order and giving normative dignity to its practices. The symbolic universe provides order for the subjective understanding of biographical experience and the history of society more generally—our sense of who we are.

The entire society now makes sense. Particular institutions and roles are legitimised by locating them in a comprehensively meaningful world. For example, the political order is legitimated by reference to a cosmicThe entire so order of power and justice, and political roles are legitimated as representatives of these cosmic principles.<sup>82</sup>

This human projection of meanings onto reality creates the world in which we live, but these symbolic universes are social products with a history. Of course, no symbolic universe is entirely taken for granted, with variation in the way in which the universe is conceived, with competition between rival groups of experts, the repression of dissent and the evolution of the tradition to ward off heretical groups. Importantly, an ideology develops when a particular definition of reality comes to be attached to a concrete power interest. So it has been with our society and with our market system. Of course, in modern pluralist societies, there tends to be a taken-for-granted shared universe and different partial universes existing in mutual accommodation and tension.

Berger and Luckmann go on to give an account of what they call the conceptual machineries of universe maintenance, pointing to the role of mythology, theology, philosophy and science in creating and maintaining the symbolic universe. For them:

Modern science is an extreme step in this development, and in the secularisation and sophistication of universe-maintenance. Science not only completes the removal of the sacred from the world of everyday life, but removes universe-maintaining knowledge as such from that world. Everyday life becomes bereft of both sacred legitimation and the sort of theoretical intelligibility that would link it with the symbolic universe in its intended totality. Put more simply, the ‘lay’ member of society no longer knows how his universe is to be conceptually

maintained, although, of course, he still knows who the specialists of universe-maintenance are presumed to be.<sup>83</sup>

In summary, social life is made possible only through the disciplining of what Stark calls our animal nature or our animality.<sup>84</sup> Not only have our instincts been tamed, they have been transformed into factors making for social cohesion. Nevertheless, underneath human culture, animal nature is still present and needs permanent discipline. At best, the average socialised person is only semi-moralised up to a moderate standard of law-abidingness. We adjust to social life by internalising and operating its norms and by internalising and manipulating them. We learn how to seem social as well as how to be social—not only how to serve, but how to hold our own, to manipulate and how to exploit. Of course, we often also lie to ourselves about our own motives. Consequently, there is often a deep discrepancy between human ideals and real conduct. Every society must therefore guard against antisocial conduct; it must have and apply sanctions, to deter as far as possible criminal behaviour in the widest sense of the word.

It is important to note before we move on that the above evolutionary account of the development of human society and of culture does not involve any acceptance of the social Darwinism that is identified with Spencer or Sumner in the late nineteenth century, and which attempted to justify the dominant social hierarchies of Victorian society.

## **The Maintenance of Social Order Also Involves the Creation of Moral Institutions**

Clearly, punishment—or the threat of punishment—is necessary for a general climate of obedience to social norms. What is more, there is an element of force in all forms of property, marriage and religion. In smaller and simpler communities, unorganised social pressure could have been sufficient to maintain the social control necessary to guard against a war of all against all,<sup>85</sup> though some genetically based sense of hierarchy could also have been important. What is perhaps more certain is that, in its early days, law was barely differentiated from other forms of social pressure.<sup>86</sup> The evolution of larger, more complex and more anonymous societies involved splitting the social code into two parts—custom and law—with organised law enforcement by people forming part of a governmental apparatus.

This perspective sees the State as having grown out of a basic social need for a coordinating mechanism especially to ensure safety and order, with the State as the guardian and enforcer of the key norms.<sup>87</sup> Plato (427–347 BC), Aristotle (384–22 BC), the Stoics<sup>88</sup> and the Epicureans<sup>89</sup> all thought of the State as coterminous with society itself. Much more recently, Stark argued that society solved one of its most difficult problems by placing a monopoly of the means of

compulsion in the hands of the State.<sup>90</sup> For his part, Norbert Elias<sup>91</sup> also sees the advancing division of functions involved in the civilising process—including the division of labour—as going hand in hand with the monopolisation of physical force and the growing stability of the central organs of society. It is the monopolisation of force—this narrowing of free competition—in conjunction with increasing pressures for self-constraint that create the pacified social spaces in which the functional dependencies between people can grow, the social fabric can become more intricate and economic activity can flourish.

In his account of the origins of the State and civilisation, based on the study of the six original civilisations of which we have knowledge, Elman Service specifically denies the class-conflict theory of the origin of either the State or of civilisation. He agrees that the creation of culture was *the* human achievement, the means by which societies tamed and governed their members and created and maintained complex social organisations. This depends on the ability of the political aspects of a culture to integrate and protect the society. Some societies, however, have done more than perpetuate themselves, having found political-cultural solutions that enable them to grow to ever-greater size and complexity. Service argued that the origins of government lay essentially in the institutionalisation of centralised leadership, which in developing its further administrative functions grew into a hereditary aristocracy.<sup>92</sup> Primal government worked to protect and legitimise itself in its role of maintaining the whole society. In this view, political power organised the economy rather than the reverse.

Despite all claims and appearances to the contrary, the law is really a liberator not an oppressor, and so is the State as the ultimate enforcer of the law. These moral functions can, however, easily be subverted so that the State becomes an oppressor. This experience provides the motivation for much political philosophy, and for political programs aimed at regulating the role of the State itself.

Unorganised social pressure in support of key norms and the organised enforcement of law is not enough to ensure social order. We cannot do without a sense of guilt—the guilt flowing from the breach of internalised norms.<sup>93</sup> The survival of a community depends on its moral cohesion and the coercive force of the law cannot maintain that moral cohesion alone: secular restraints are not enough to deter evil, antisocial or merely illegal acts. The healthier the society, the less it relies directly on legal sanctions. Ideally, life in society should be lived above the law, not by it. Australian theologian Bruce Kaye, in particular, emphasises that social interaction degenerates when it is construed narrowly in terms of legal obligations.<sup>94</sup> The law is a framework and a guide as to the character of the civic system, but is not an adequate dynamic for the civil community. Similarly, within organisations, an effective dynamic goes beyond narrow legal definitions. The *ethos* or culture of such organisations is a vital motivating and shaping factor in the civil community that the organisation exists

to create and serve. Kaye argues that, if a company interprets its place in the civil and market systems in narrow legalistic terms, it will not create the civil community within its own life, or in its relationships with the host society, which will enable it to fulfil its basic purposes. More prosaically, much contemporary management literature points to the role that goals, values and missions perform in maintaining organisational efficiency.<sup>95</sup>

Voluntary efforts to behave morally and to uphold the law are necessary for complex social organisations; otherwise law enforcement would become impossible as well as tyrannical. These inward voluntary limitations—so necessary for corporate life—are the product of conscience, conviction and inward persuasion and belief, and cannot be imposed directly from outside. Convention is therefore society's strongest defence against anarchy and the tyranny of an all-pervading disciplinary and coercive law. G. R. Dunstan's account emphasises the role of institutions as the means by which moral insights are given stability and permanence.<sup>96</sup> Without such institutions, moral insights would be lost in times of need. This emphasis on conventions places a primary emphasis on morality as a common possession rather than as a matter of individual choice or decision.

For Dunstan, such conventions incorporate expectations as well as imposing limitations. We take the predictability necessary for social life for granted because we assume that we know what to expect of one another in roughly comparable situations. We can do so because a large part of our socialisation—our elementary social and moral education—involves training in the meeting of such mutual expectations. Such expectations involve a prescriptive element because social situations are understood as relationships in which certain conduct is expected as appropriate to the roles of the people involved.<sup>97</sup> Fidelity, in this context, means meeting the expectations appropriate to one's role. Simply following the moral rules—including obeying the law—is not enough. Personal integrity requires one to be on guard against formalism and to be conscious of the live, human, ethical reality behind such obligations. In times of rapid social change, such expectations can be fluid or imperfectly understood, but there is a recognisable continuity and cohesion in them. Frequently, there are conflicts between these roles and their accompanying obligations and consequently the need for moral judgement cannot be avoided.<sup>98</sup> Such role behaviour—and the mutual support of people in their groups—is a significant part of everyday life, bound up with our awareness of ourselves as agents. Consequently, Mead believed that a person was built up of internalised roles, so that the expectations of others became the self-expectations of a self-steering person.<sup>99</sup>

These conventions are very demanding because they flow from what the community believes to be of worth. They include specific beliefs about the worth of people regardless of their specific characteristics. These include beliefs about

the value of human relationships and the common interest in the truths on which they stand. Such beliefs have a history and, in the case of Western societies, can be traced in the twin roots of our culture: Greek culture and Judaeo-Christian religion. A mature religious ethic, such as the Judaeo-Christian tradition, makes demands well beyond mere utilitarian considerations to the supreme worth of sacrifice, in the transcendence of self in subordination and service to the other.

These learned moral traditions are complex and usually tacit. Such moral judgements are neither simple deductions from principles nor simply calculation of consequences; but, as I pointed out earlier, they have been built into our vocabulary and our stories. Such moral judgements involve a skilled performance.<sup>100</sup> Even the moral abstractions of our legitimisers express general aims, which cannot be made operational in a straightforward way through clear-cut 'means-to-ends' calculation, though such abstractions supply a general orientation for living. Also, as we have already seen, there are conflicts in the roles we perform and there also conflicts between the abstractions we use. What this means for American philosopher Hubert Dreyfus is that skilled social behaviour transcends the analytical application of universal rules in a way of thinking that is rapid, intuitive, holistic, interpretative, experientially based and context dependent.<sup>101</sup> Importantly, for Cambridge economist Tony Lawson, the social system is an inherently dynamic process, which emerges from and depends on human practice, but which is not reducible to individual human agency. In short, it is an emergent evolutionary system.<sup>102</sup>

Consistent with the account given earlier, British moral philosopher Robert Downie emphasises the emotional element in social morality: the ties generated by kinship, common religion, custom, language, traditional ways of earning a living, traditional loyalties of all kinds and, more generally, shared broad cultural traditions.<sup>103</sup> Nevertheless, there are limits to the degree of variability in social rules. Social moralities must have certain structural features in common. Downie lists a number of obvious truths as limiting the scope for variety: our lack of self-sufficiency, our limited benevolence, our approximately equal power, our limited understanding and skills and limitations imposed by the environment and scarcity.<sup>104</sup> Consequently, we require means of limiting violence, exploitation and competition and means for encouraging cooperation. All of this implies that there is necessarily a strong element of consequentialism in social morality. This does not mean that social morality is, or must be, limited to an examination of the consequences of action. The beliefs on which we act extend our moral values well beyond such consequentialism.

Not only are there social rules and expectations, there are said to be social rules about social rules. Downie describes second-order rules of recognition, of change and of empowerment and procedure. For their part, Australian public-choice philosopher Geoffrey Brennan and American Nobel Prize-winning economist

James Buchanan<sup>105</sup> emphasise the importance of rules at the constitutional level. They argue optimistically that the natural tendency for conflict in the interests of individuals is moderated substantially in the choice of rules. In their view, it is these second-order rules and moral principles that help us determine the moral legitimacy of government action. This view presupposes the existence of sufficient social capital and freedom from violence to enable discourse about such rules. It also ignores the extent to which there are real conflicts of interest involved in those constitutional rules. Additionally, there is no reason to believe that these add up to a coherent, consistent system. Nor, as Brennan and Buchanan point out, is there any reason to believe that the forces of social evolution will always ensure the selection of the best rules.

In summary, while there is wide range of views about the basis of our moral and legal principles, there is strong support for the proposition that the moral and legal principles, along with a sense of community, provide crucial elements in the governance structures of our societies.

## **The Maintenance of Social Order Involves Moral Choice and Struggle**

The maintenance of social order involves a struggle within the individual, a struggle to control our behavioural tendencies to dominate, to compete, to be aggressive—those behavioural tendencies that Stark reduces to greed and lust. That this is consistent with our daily experience is acknowledged widely, but this is not a new intuition. Various religious traditions have been talking about such issues for as long as we have written records. For example, for the Hebrew prophets, the existence of evil in the world was a consequence of humankind's overreaching pride, of human freedom reaching beyond its limits, leading to alienation from God. For Zarathustra of Balkh (c. 626–551 BC), the potential for good and evil was born in all of us—a consequence of what he saw as a cosmic battle between good and evil, the battle between the supreme god, Ahura Mazda, and the evil god, Ahriman. This teaching points to the prevalence and strength of evil in the world, and of the resulting conflicts within us.<sup>106</sup>

The *Bhagavadadgita* (*Song of the Lord*), a popular Indian religious poem forming part of the *Mahabharata* (*The Great Epic of the Bharata Dynasty*), dating from the fifth century BC, teaches that human beings are distinguished from animals by the knowledge of right and wrong. The world is the field of righteousness and the battleground for mortal struggle between the good and evil in each of us. Drawing on this Indian tradition, Sidharta Gautama (the Buddha, 563–483 BC) taught that all life was suffering and that human suffering could be transcended only by seeing through the illusions of worldly reality and the individual self—and by cultivating a personality that was free from the deluded desires and passions that caused suffering.<sup>107</sup> In this view, suffering arises out of selfish cravings and such cravings can be overcome by following the eightfold

path of Buddhism. About the same time, in China, Confucius (Kong Fuzi, 551–479 BC), drawing on the idea of the interdependence of all things, was concerned to define and help cultivate the way to a harmonious society. His teachings were concerned with the avoidance of vice and the cultivation of personal virtue, proper government, the values of family and community.

The ancient Greek conception of hubris—the human bent towards self-aggrandisement, pride and all associated forms of egotism—has similarities with the Judaeo-Christian conception of the Fall.<sup>108</sup> In this view, a shadow lies over every human being because we do not have the ethical stamina we need. This Greek concept emphasised the tragic dimension of this darker side of human beings. Hubris, in this sense, is not pride but the self-elevation of the great beyond the limits of its finitude.<sup>109</sup> In this tradition, Socrates (c. 470–399 BC) was concerned to explore the concepts of the good life and of virtue. While there is some difference of emphasis, the moral metaphysics of ancient Athens is similar to the fundamental moral stance of the Christian Church.

For the Christian Church also, moral evil is omnipresent. As Saint Paul (10–67), some time in the middle of the first century AD, said:

I have been sold as a slave to sin. I cannot understand my own behaviour. I fail to carry out the things I want to do, and I find myself doing the very things I hate...for though the will to do what is good is in me, the performance is not, with the result that instead of doing the good things I want to do, I carry out the sinful things I do not want.<sup>110</sup>

Again, contemporary Christian theology talks about humankind's 'torn' or 'broken' condition<sup>111</sup> in alluding to what has more traditionally been called original sin. The Fall involves strong claims about how the human world is, rather than simply a mythological story of how it came to be that way. As contemporary Anglican theologian David Tracey would have it: 'The one piece of Christian doctrine that is empirically demonstrable is that there is something awry with the world.'<sup>112</sup> The Christian tradition goes on to suggest that an effective social order is possible only through a covenant relationship with God—a relationship that is corporate and individual.<sup>113</sup> Importantly, mainstream contemporary Christian theologians see the myth of the Fall as incorporating a profound insight into the human condition—a fall to moral responsibility—and not as a historical account of the origin of evil. Balancing this negative view of the human condition, the somewhat dualistic Christian tradition also sees humankind as having been made in the likeness of God, and as having been saved by Christ, who initiated the Kingdom of God, within which we can experience our true calling as children of God, open to love and the possibility of radical goodness.



It is largely the doctrine of original sin as developed by Saint Augustine of Hippo (354–430) and transmitted through the Protestant reformers that found philosophical expression in English philosopher Thomas Hobbes' (1588–1679) 'war of all on all'.<sup>114</sup> Hobbes believed that we were all motivated by a restless desire for power, which we required to assure us of the means to live well. In Hobbes' view, in a 'state of nature',

there is no place for industry; because the fruits thereof is [sic] uncertain: and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious buildings; no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no Arts; no Letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continuous fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.<sup>115</sup>

This is simply a secularised version of Calvin's natural man.<sup>116</sup> For Hobbes, it was only as a consequence of the discipline enforced by government that a civilised life was possible.

The more optimistic Enlightenment view that humankind and human structures are perfectible is found in the works of Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78). This optimism—that humankind was basically good—was condemned by a number of councils of the Christian Church as the Pelagian heresy in the fifth century, by the Catholic Council of Trent in the sixteenth century and by a number of Protestant councils about the same time. Rousseau thought that human beings were endowed by nature with compassion for their fellow humans—a view he derived from Smith and Hume. He also believed, however, that human life in a 'state of nature' was one of solitude: 'Having no fixed habitation and no need of one another's assistance, the same persons hardly meet twice in their lives, and perhaps then without knowing one another or speaking together... They maintained no kind of intercourse with one another, and were consequently strangers to vanity, deference, esteem and contempt.'<sup>117</sup>

It is now clear that this individualistic anthropology is nonsense. Our primate ancestors lived in social groups and we evolved as social animals. Nevertheless, while generally holding that humankind in this mythical 'state of nature' was inherently good, Rousseau conceded that the weight of human experience demonstrated that human beings were wicked. He claimed that it was human society that induced people to hate each other and to inflict every imaginable evil on one another. He also disputed that private interests were linked to the public interest; rather, they excluded each other. The laws of society were a yoke that everybody wished to impose on others, but not themselves.<sup>118</sup>

The point of this account for current purposes is not theological but empirical. It is not intended to promote particular religious beliefs or a particular or masculine image of God, or to encourage an orgy of guilt feelings.<sup>119</sup> Rather, this account is intended to encourage a more realistic understanding of the human condition. These traditional theological concerns about human sinfulness have been absorbed into secular discourse and then—under the influence of Enlightenment optimism—forgotten. Worse, economic orthodoxy has been dominated by the claim that self-interest provides an adequate basis for modelling human behaviour and, in the process, is legitimising selfishness.

Human moral finitude is, however, alive and active in the world. These traditional religious concerns incorporate a profound insight into the human condition, an insight pointing to the fragility of our social order and an insight that we ignore to our peril. Certainly, in our daily life we do not, and cannot, ignore the fact that to be human is *inter alia* to be proud, to be vain, to want to dominate others, to become angry, to be vindictive, violent, vengeful, greedy, dishonest, untruthful, weak-willed, easily led, self-destructive, frightened, confused and to become discouraged.

Of course, we find it easy to see these faults and failings in others. What is frequently overlooked is the insidious and ever-present influence of these tendencies on our own actions and values and on social values more generally. We need to protect ourselves from our own dark side and we should not ignore this particular reality in our institutional arrangements. One consequence is that even our moral vocabulary—and our moral, religious, political and legal institutions—can be subverted into instruments of immoral conduct.

The whole Enlightenment project has been based on a much more optimistic view of the human condition through a secular appropriation of the Christian eschatological hope. It involves a strong belief in the power of rationality to lead to moral and technological progress and greater human happiness. This is despite a human history that includes countless wars, massacres, tortures, cruelty, exploitation and abuses of every kind. Surely the history of the twentieth century demonstrates conclusively that such optimism is misplaced and that we live always on the edge of chaos. Rather than being assured, a peaceful, just social order is something that has to be striven for constantly. The twentieth century saw human viciousness and barbarism on a scale that is hard to imagine. For example, William Eckhardt estimates that in the period 1900–89, 86 million people were killed in war.<sup>120</sup> The Soviet regime alone killed about 62 million people in the 70 years after 1917, with 9.5 million of those killed in the 1930s.<sup>121</sup> These are only some of the grosser statistics. There are other incidents of inhuman treatment of our fellows without number. In Sigmund Freud's (1856–1939) judgement: '[T]he tendency to aggression is an innate, independent, instinctual disposition in man...constituting the most powerful obstacle to culture...there

is no likelihood of our being able to suppress humanity's aggressive tendencies.<sup>122</sup>

One response to this catalogue of violence might be to argue that it reinforces suspicion of government. This is not, however, an adequate response. While governments—even nominally democratic governments—can behave very badly, not everything they do is bad. Also, in the above cases, government leaders found ready accomplices for their crimes among ordinary citizens. Similarly, while business does great good, it also does much evil—including such things as the design and manufacture of gas chambers, the manufacture and distribution of weapons, assisting the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the corruption of governments, the sale of addictive substances known to cause vast numbers of premature deaths, the sale of unsafe and shoddy products more generally, the pollution of the environment, the evasion of taxation, the exploitation of workers and the systematic deception of customers and shareholders.

Taking cigarettes as an example, Simon Chapman, Professor of Public Health at the University of Sydney, has estimated that 4.9 million people world-wide are killed by smoking every year—19,000 of them in Australia. This is a rate of death rivalling the worst examples of twentieth-century tyranny. The number of Australian smoking deaths is larger than the deaths caused by breast, cervical and skin cancer, AIDS, suicide, alcohol and road crashes combined.<sup>123</sup> There is well-confirmed scientific evidence for these estimates and the cigarette companies have known about the adverse effects and the addictive properties of their products for many years. Indeed, they have manipulated these addictive properties. Consequently, there is no way that cigarette producers and their distributors—including the local supermarket and corner store—can avoid some moral responsibility for these horrible premature deaths. While we have a war on terrorism, however, we do not have a war on cigarette production and distribution—presumably because this mass killing occurs as a part of everyday economic transactions, because of the superficial acquiescence of the victims and the political power of the perpetrators.

Worse still, we do not have a real war on poverty, hunger or disease. Our tolerance of these particular continuing evils involves the premature deaths of vast numbers of people in Third-World countries.

If these historical insights are not enough evidence to convince the reader of the capacity of human beings—just like us—to engage in the grossest evil in the pursuit of power and economic gain, let us now turn briefly to slavery—one of the cruellest institutions in human history. Slavery apparently first appeared in subsistence pastoral economies, but the transition to a semi-market economy brought a significant expansion in the number of slaves and much harsher treatment of them.<sup>124</sup> Slavery played a dominant role in production in early

semi-market economies. For example, plantation slavery was common in ancient Greece and in the Roman Empire, while slaves were also used in mining, industry, commerce, domestic service and brothels and in harems. As a consequence, slavery was accepted as normal for a significant proportion of the population. In ancient Athens—the exemplar of the democratic *polis*—slaves made up about one-third of the population. Warfare, slave raiding, kidnapping, punishment, debt, the sale of children and birth to a slave mother provided the supply. Aristotle even argued that some people lacked the higher qualities of the soul necessary for freedom and were born to be slaves. To its shame, the Christian Church for most of its history did not condemn this base institution, even if it advised slave owners to be kind to their slaves. Islam took a similar view.

In relatively recent times, the European colonisation of the Americas exploited a pre-existing African slave trade to provide slaves to exploit the lands stolen from the indigenous populations to produce goods for export to Europe. This obscene trade to the West Indies and South America began in 1517, growing rapidly by the end of the seventeenth century. In British North America, the trade started in 1619 and developed slowly until new arrivals totalled about 260,000 in 1754. Overall, it is estimated that more than 15 million African slaves were transported to the Western Hemisphere before the suppression of the trade. It is thought that approximately one-third of the African slaves shipped—usually in appalling conditions—died as a consequence of their treatment on the voyage and in the ‘hardening’ process of their exposure to European diseases. While slaves in the Americas and throughout the Western world were emancipated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the institution lingers on in some underdeveloped states and in some hidden ways.

It has been estimated recently that there are currently as many as 20 million sex slaves throughout the world, including some in Australia. This tendency towards the exploitation of others—which allowed this evil institution to persist for so long—is still with us. Furthermore, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that 8.4 million children work as slave labourers, prostitutes or soldiers world-wide. Of these, 1.2 million are kidnapped, sold or smuggled each year.<sup>125</sup> The United Nations Children’s Fund, UNICEF, describes the trafficking of children into prostitution and slavery as a billion-dollar business. Importantly also, the descendants of emancipated slaves have struggled throughout the Americas to free themselves from the low socio-economic status to which they were condemned by the ruthless exploitation of their ancestors.

The conclusion is obvious. We are all capable of unspeakable acts and an extraordinary indifference to the suffering of others. Before we get carried away, therefore, about the perfectibility of modern humans, or even about labour-market deregulation, it would be wise to remember that within every person there exists the capacity to be a slave driver, a slave owner, a death-camp

guard, a camp commandant, a torturer and a tyrant—writ large or in the minutia of everyday life.

This is the reason why people have long sought to put in place structures to inhibit the accumulation of excessive power and its abuse. It has been one of the primary justifications advanced for liberalism and the market system in the past two centuries. There has also, however, been a recent strong tendency to overlook the exploitation and the abuse of power that occurs within the market system itself. It is not simply governments that are capable of tyranny. With the passing of the Soviet Union, we might have been better served if we had looked more closely at the warts within our own system, rather than giving ourselves over to triumphal gloating at the collapse of the utopian socialist dream.

## Summary

This chapter started off by pointing to the influence of the economics profession and economic fundamentalism on public policy and expressing concern at that influence. I suggested that economic fundamentalism assumed that social relationships were reducible to transactions between self-interested individuals—that is, that economic relationships were the fundamental social relationships. It has been argued that as a consequence, the vocabulary of economics with all its entailments now provides the dominant vocabulary for the evaluation of public policy choices.

My more detailed analysis began with an examination of the basis of the social order, starting from a position that saw the individual as embedded in society. I pointed out that there is no such thing as a pre-social human nature and that the formation of our values—and even of our consumer preferences—is a thoroughly social process. In support, I pointed to our earliest hominoid ancestors as having lived as members of social groups. Our evolution involved a complex in which the organised hunting of large animals, life in organised social groups and the making and use of tools were interconnected. That evolution is inseparable from the evolution of human culture. That culture is something we learn as children—discovering how our parents and those around us interpret the world. This evolved social order is acknowledged widely to be a moral order—an order that determines how we should act. The study of social life is, therefore, the study of social norms, institutions and the stories in which they are embodied—not simply regularities in conduct, but regulated conduct. These regulations set limits to, work against and channel the drives we have inherited. It is the control of greed, broadly defined, which constitutes a crucial victory of culture against animality—a victory that permitted complex organisations to emerge. Central to this view is the idea that human beings as they have evolved created the social system in which they have their being. This evolution of human culture is not a once-and-for-all process; it is a continuing process.

The maintenance of any social order involves, then, a moral struggle within and between individuals—a struggle to control our behavioural tendencies to dominate, to compete and to be aggressive. There are severe limits to our successful control of these tendencies. This fact has been acknowledged widely throughout human history and in different cultures, particularly in the context of religious teachings. In particular, it is reflected in the Christian doctrine of original sin—a doctrine secularised by Hobbes in his war of all on all—and then largely forgotten. It is a doctrine that incorporates a profound insight into the human condition—an insight that we ignore to our peril, particularly in the design of our institutional and organisational arrangements. It is unorganised social pressure, organised enforcement of law and our own sense of guilt flowing from any breach of internalised norms that provide the moral coercion that permits the social system to survive.

It is also clear that no society can survive without stable moral traditions backed up by effective means of coercion. Leading moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre tells us, however, that our day-to-day moral vocabulary derives from several different and incompatible moral traditions.<sup>126</sup> Consequently, the moral foundations of modern society are incoherent and fragmented. This would seem to pose a significant threat to that social system and some commentators have sensed deterioration in the social, intellectual and philosophical capital of the Western civil order.

Having concluded that human civilisation is always under threat from what used to be called human sinfulness—including human greed—in the next chapter, we will go on to examine the relationship between the economic system and the social order. It will suggest that the economic system, like society itself, is a social artefact and, far from being autonomous, is dependent on the systems of social control discussed above.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Smith 1757, Part VI, Section III, Ch. 1.
- <sup>2</sup> Shotter 1985.
- <sup>3</sup> In his mature work, he added the qualification 'always'. Pareto 1896, cited in Guala 1998.
- <sup>4</sup> Secord 1986.
- <sup>5</sup> von Bruck 1986.
- <sup>6</sup> Saul 2001.
- <sup>7</sup> Stark 1978, p. 66.
- <sup>8</sup> Stark 1983, p. 191.
- <sup>9</sup> Simons 1995.
- <sup>10</sup> Rabinow 1983.
- <sup>11</sup> Carrithers et al. 1985.
- <sup>12</sup> Midgley 1984.
- <sup>13</sup> Geertz 1975, p. 50.
- <sup>14</sup> Geertz 1979, p. 229.
- <sup>15</sup> Bernstein 1983.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* and Crotty 1998.
- <sup>17</sup> Brown 1988.
- <sup>18</sup> Berger and Luckmann 1971, pp. 36, 51–2.
- <sup>19</sup> Fleck 1979, p. 42.
- <sup>20</sup> Carruthers 1990.
- <sup>21</sup> Goodman 1968.
- <sup>22</sup> Wittgenstein 1951.
- <sup>23</sup> Whorf 1967, p. 256.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216.
- <sup>25</sup> Wittgenstein 1978.
- <sup>26</sup> Lakoff and Johnson 1980.
- <sup>27</sup> Mannheim 1936. Mannheim also believed that while idealogising influences could not be eradicated entirely, they could be mitigated by the systematic analysis of as many of the varying socially grounded positions as possible. It is a view that should encourage us to resist strongly the imperialist pretensions of economics.
- <sup>28</sup> Shotter 1985, p. 168.
- <sup>29</sup> Fortes 1983.
- <sup>30</sup> Spradley and McCurdy 1994.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.
- <sup>32</sup> Noble and Davidson 1996.
- <sup>33</sup> Berger and Luckmann 1971, p. 55.
- <sup>34</sup> Cited in Goody 1995.
- <sup>35</sup> Abbott 2002.
- <sup>36</sup> Sartre 1964, cited in Bruner 1987, p. 5.
- <sup>37</sup> Harre 1985.
- <sup>38</sup> Madsen et al. 2002.
- <sup>39</sup> Granovetter 1991.
- <sup>40</sup> Hollis 1977.
- <sup>41</sup> Saul 2001, p. 23.
- <sup>42</sup> Hobson 2002.
- <sup>43</sup> Cherniak 1986.
- <sup>44</sup> Ormerod 2001.
- <sup>45</sup> Hollis 1985.
- <sup>46</sup> McPherson 1983.

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- <sup>47</sup> Amariglio et al. 1990, p. 126.
- <sup>48</sup> Boulding 1970.
- <sup>49</sup> Toulmin 1990.
- <sup>50</sup> Tarnas 1991.
- <sup>51</sup> Midgley 1994.
- <sup>52</sup> Key and Aiello 1999.
- <sup>53</sup> Carrithers 1992.
- <sup>54</sup> Fortes 1983.
- <sup>55</sup> Keesing 1981.
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.
- <sup>57</sup> Carrithers 1992.
- <sup>58</sup> Humphrey 1976.
- <sup>59</sup> Lieberman 1998.
- <sup>60</sup> Reynolds 1981.
- <sup>61</sup> Keesing 1981, p. 21.
- <sup>62</sup> Midgley 1984.
- <sup>63</sup> Goodwin 1997.
- <sup>64</sup> Durkheim 1993, pp. 227–8.
- <sup>65</sup> Emmet 1966.
- <sup>66</sup> Spradley and McCurdy 1994.
- <sup>67</sup> Polanyi 1958.
- <sup>68</sup> Brown 1988.
- <sup>69</sup> Stark 1976.
- <sup>70</sup> Stark 1983.
- <sup>71</sup> Sahlins 1960.
- <sup>72</sup> Hume 1966, pp. 187–205.
- <sup>73</sup> Stark 1983.
- <sup>74</sup> Stark 1978, p. 198.
- <sup>75</sup> Frowen 1997.
- <sup>76</sup> Berger and Luckmann 1971, p. 70.
- <sup>77</sup> Williamson 1994.
- <sup>78</sup> Knauff 1996, p. 44.
- <sup>79</sup> Williamson 1994.
- <sup>80</sup> Berger and Luckmann 1971.
- <sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.
- <sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.
- <sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.
- <sup>84</sup> Stark 1976.
- <sup>85</sup> Stark 1978, p. 124.
- <sup>86</sup> Llewellyn 1931–32.
- <sup>87</sup> Stark 1978, p. 201.
- <sup>88</sup> Stoicism was a school of Hellenistic philosophy, founded by Zeno of Citium (333–264 BC) in Athens, which became popular throughout Greece and the Roman Empire.
- <sup>89</sup> Epicureanism was a system of philosophy based on the teachings of Epicurus (340–270 BC), founded about 307 BC. Epicurus was an atomic materialist.
- <sup>90</sup> Stark and Sumner believe that class dividedness and even class warfare can be accommodated fully within the framework of their analysis. Stark agrees that each class or group in society has its own mores and that the upper strata tend to force their own customs on the lower strata. Indeed, he acknowledges that chiefs, kings, priests, warriors, statesmen and other functionaries have often used their authority to promote their own interests. In any event, there is no need for us to deny the possibility that dominance played a role in the historical processes that created societies and states. Of course, it



would also be entirely consistent with Stark—and with the liberal tradition—to argue that our desire to acquire such dominance requires control. Indeed, the coercive nature of social control necessarily raises the question of the legitimate limits of such cohesion—a question of central concern for this analysis.

<sup>91</sup> Elias 1994.

<sup>92</sup> Service 1975.

<sup>93</sup> Dunstan 1974.

<sup>94</sup> Kaye 1994.

<sup>95</sup> See, for example, Senge 1992b.

<sup>96</sup> Dunstan 1974.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Emmet 1966.

<sup>99</sup> Cited in Gerth and Mills 1954.

<sup>100</sup> See Dunstan 1974; Emmet 1966.

<sup>101</sup> Cited in Flyvbjerg 2001.

<sup>102</sup> Lawson 2003.

<sup>103</sup> Downie 1972.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Brennan and Buchanan 1985.

<sup>106</sup> Midgley 1984.

<sup>107</sup> Solomon and Higgins 1996.

<sup>108</sup> Of course, mainstream contemporary Christianity would interpret the story of the Fall as myth rather than as history. The story of the Fall in 'Genesis' is not a historical account of the origin of human sinfulness; rather, it is an expression of the insight that sin originates in human pride and self-will.

<sup>109</sup> Tillich 1963, p. 93.

<sup>110</sup> Romans 7:14–20.

<sup>111</sup> von Bruck 1986.

<sup>112</sup> Tracey 1976, as reported by Edwin Byford, personal communication.

<sup>113</sup> Of course, the traditional Christian view sees this human brokenness not simply in terms of one's alienation from one's fellows, but, more importantly, in terms of humankind's alienation from God and consequently from the rest of creation. In this view, evil is the result of a human turning from God. Receptivity to the presence of God is replaced by ego projections. Consequently, every human is apt to fail when put to the test. This tragic flaw is seen as the cause of humankind's inability to build a truly satisfactory society and a truly integrated social whole. As Pope John Paul II said in *Centesimus Annus*:

A man is alienated if he refuses to transcend himself and to live the experience of self-giving and of the formation of an authentic human community...A society is alienated if its forms of social organization, production and consumption make it more difficult to offer this gift of self and to establish this solidarity between people.

<sup>114</sup> Simons 1995.

<sup>115</sup> Hobbes 1651, p. 186.

<sup>116</sup> Loy 2002.

<sup>117</sup> Rousseau 1935, p. 188.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> In particular, I do not intend to be interpreted as endorsing Christianity's traditional ambivalence towards human sexuality. That ambivalence places an undue emphasis on only one aspect of human behaviour, it reflects an individualistic bias and down plays the corporate, structural nature of much evil in the world. Neither is the above account intended to support fundamentalist interpretations of religious doctrines, creationism or the political program of the so-called religious right. Neither is it intended to condone the innumerable evils—large and small—done in the name of organised religion throughout history—from human sacrifices and religious wars to mass killings, the burning of witches, the torture and murder of 'heretics', the exploitation of guilt as a source of institutional and personal power, the abusive indoctrination of young children in the service of long-term dependency and the

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toleration of the physical and sexual abuse of children by the clergy. Our spiritual yearnings are open to the grossest of abuses by leaders claiming to speak on behalf of God. Furthermore, history has demonstrated that spiritual pride is among the worst of human failings. If God is truly the Abba of the New Testament, there is no place for fear in any relationship with such an intimate, loving parent.

<sup>120</sup> Eckhardt 1989.

<sup>121</sup> Glover 1999.

<sup>122</sup> Freud 1932, cited in Webb 1995, p. 15.

<sup>123</sup> Chapman 2004.

<sup>124</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica 1981.

<sup>125</sup> Bitá 2002, p. 9.

<sup>126</sup> MacIntyre 1966.