



Moral Indignation and Middle Class Psychology.

Svend Ranulf

Introduction

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Foremost among these are Max Weber and the considerable number of inquirers who have contributed to the discussion of the problems raised in his famous essay *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*. From this literature the conclusion may be elicited that the ~~most~~ disinterested tendency to inflict punishment has always been especially strong in that social class which may be loosely described as the "small bourgeoisie" or the "lower middle class". This result is confirmed by a study of certain works of literary history, notably a book by the Danish scholar Valdemar Vedel and another by the American writer V. F. Calverton, and is further confirmed by even a perfunctory glance at the Nazi Movement in Germany. Furthermore, it seems possible to ascertain on the basis of existing literature that a disinterested tendency to inflict punishment practically does not exist in communities where the lower middle class is of little significance. The literature just quoted shows that the tendency in question tends to disappear in the middle class, as soon as it has acquired a certain standard of wealth and prestige.

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Positive Instances. 1. The Nazis

It seems to be generally admitted that National Socialism in Germany is essentially a movement of the lower middle class. This is the



result at which Professor Geiger arrives by a computation of the election returns from 1930 and 1932.¹ Professor Schuman says: "The

¹ Th. Geiger, Die soziale Schichtung des deutschen Volkes, Stuttgart 1932, pp. 111 seq.

maladjustments of other classes were likewise important; the resentment of pious, thrifty, and debt-ridden peasants at urban creditors, bankers, atheists, and liberals; the disillusionment of proletarians with Marxist leaders whose promises of revolution, socialization, and salvation came to nothing; the disgust of bankrupt Junkers of the state in which aristocrats and soldiers were at the mercy of democratic politicians; the feelings of social and economic insecurity among the upper bourgeoisie. But fundamentally the disorder was a disease of the Kleinbürgertum. The group suffered from acute paranoia, with all its typical delusions of persecution and systematic hallucinations of grandeur. In Hitler it found at last an articulate voice. In the Weltanschauung of the NSDAP it found solace for all its woes, forgiveness for all its sins, justification for all its hatreds, scapegoats for all its misfortunes, and a millennial vision for all its hopes."² The predicaments of the small bourgeoisie are further

² Schuman, The Nazi Dictatorship pp. 108 seq. (reprinted by permission of and special arrangement with Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. authorized publ.

described by Professor Laswell as follows: "Insofar as Hitlerism is a desperation reaction of the lower middle classes it continues a



movement which began during the closing years of the nineteenth century. Materially speaking, it is not necessary to assume that the small shopkeepers, teachers, preachers, lawyers, doctors, farmers and craftsmen were worse off at the end than they had been in the middle of the century. Psychologically speaking, however, the lower middle class was increasingly overshadowed by the workers and the upper bourgeoisie, whose unions, cartels and parties took the centre of the stage. The psychological impoverishment of the lower middle class precipitated emotional insecurities within the personalities of its members, thus fertilizing the ground for the various movements of mass protest through which the middle classes might revenge themselves.¹

¹ Harold D. Lasswell, The Psychology of Hitlerism, in: The Political Quarterly, vol. IV, 1933, pl 374.

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...its leaders addressed their teaching, not of course exclusively, but none the less primarily, to the classes engaged in trade and industry, who formed the most modern and progressive elements in the life of the age."² What was true of Calvinism in the sixteenth

² Tawney, Religion p. 104

century was true of Puritanism in the seventeenth, which religion was then embraced by some of the gentry, by the yeomen, but above



all by "the trading classes of the towns, and of those rural districts which had been partially industrialized by the decentralization of the textile and iron industries."¹ Kraus also

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Op. cit. p. 202

describes English Puritanism as a movement of the lower middle class.² Robertson speaks of "the less noticeable commercial capacity

²
Kraus, Scholastik pp. 156 seqq.

and zeal of the Catholic minorities in Protestant countries as compared with the business skill and industry of the Huguenots in France or the Puritan minorities in England."³ Sombart too adduces

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Robertson, Economic Individualism p. 168

some evidence to the effect that the leaders of industry and trade in France were in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for the most part Huguenots.⁴ According to Calverton, the early Puritan

⁴
Sombart, Der Bourgeois pp. 376 seqq.

immigrants to America belonged to the "lower middle class with its old traditions."⁵

⁵
Calverton, American Literature p. 44 n. 3 (quoted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers).



2. The Protestants - Upper Middle class.

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Professor Kraus also is explicit in laying down that the Puritan view of life was limited to the lower middle class, and abandoned by the members of this class as soon as they became sufficiently rich.¹ He intimates that the real instigators of the Puritan

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Kraus, Scholastik pp. 187 seq. 306, 304

Revolution in England were men of the ^{upper} middle class who did not care much for religion themselves, but used it as a means to gain the support of the populace ² against the humane, but rather ungodly royal government.

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Op. cit. pp. 187 seq. 190, cf. Calverton, American Literature pp. 42 seqq.

Upper middle-class.

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Originally, the South was colonized by petty bourgeois people of the same kind as those who settled in New England.³ Accordingly

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Calverton, American Literature p. 91 (quoted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers).

the prevailing moral attitude was very much alike in the two parts of the country.⁴ Yet it was more difficult to enforce Puritan moral

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Op. cit. pp. 92 seq.

Purit.
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Lower middle class.



in the South than in the North, and one reason for this was that the planters, as they grew rich and acquired social prestige, did not want to see any ascetic rules of conduct enforced amongst them. The plantation ideology "gave Southern morality the leniency and latitude of a feudal society, institutionalizing by practice if not by precept its system of Negro concubinage as a substitute for the white concubinage which had prevailed in European social orders."⁴ Sunday was in the South nota sanctimonious day

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Op.cit. pp. 30 seq.

as in the North. The Episcopal Church recommended itself to the

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Op. cit. p. 98

planters by cultivating virtue without too strongly denouncing vice, and because it was more willing to condone than to condemn.⁶

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Op. cit. p. 114

Music and the theatre were encouraged in the South.⁷ At the time

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Op. cit. pp. 115,116.

of the Revolutionary War it was not unfashionable to be a freethinker,⁸ as may be seen from the example of Thomas Jefferson. There were

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Op.cit. pp. 99 seq.



however, sections of the South where petty bourgeois psychology continued to be dominant, thus especially North Carolina, a state that never came under the hegemony of the planting aristocracy.

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Op. cit. pp. 101 seq.

The Civil War brought about the ruin of the aristocracy, and the petty bourgeoisie became once more the ruling class of the South. The cultural result of this rule may be gauged, among other things, by the famous anti-evolution bills.¹⁰

¹⁰
Op. cit. p. 108

Upper middle~~er~~ class.

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In the North the economic development gave rise to an upper bourgeoisie to whom seventeenth-century Puritanism was distasteful. And, consequently, ever since the eighteenth century the conflict between the ideology of the upper and the lower bourgeoisie has continued "to provide the dominant dividing line of attitude which has colored our history."¹ "As the wealth of the upper bourgeoisie grew, its interest

¹
Op. cit. p. 164

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in morality waned." Its revolt against Puritanism proceeded by

²
Op. cit. p. 400



degrees. The first step was to put respectability in the place of virtue. Already in the eighteenth century Jonathan Edwards was discharged from his church by the parishioners because he insisted on examining "the wickedness and vice of individual members of his parish, exposing their sin in open display before his congregation."

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Op. cit. pp. 173 seq.

The result was the emergence of a new type of clergymen who were without the ferocity of the seventeenth-century theocrats.⁴ As the

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Op. cit. p. 177

members of the American upper bourgeoisie ceased to be savage in their reprobation of sin, the character of their God changed accordingly. "The Jehovah-like deity of the Puritans, warlike in mien and merciless in judgment, was supplanted by a gentlemanly and compromising Creator."⁵ The upper bourgeoisie took to luxury in

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Op. cit. p. 84

apparel, to the building of palatial mansions, to feasts and pageants, and to dancing.⁶ It became interested in art.⁷

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Op. cit. 155

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Op. cit. p. 210



It began to patronize the theatre. "The right to enjoyment was

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Op. cit. p. 119

openly defended, and the right of the religionists to prevent the enjoyment of others was vigorously denied."⁹

⁹
Op. cit. p. 156

E. The Theory of Resentment.

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Trying to explain the origin of the bourgeois virtues, Professor Sombart incidentally also suggests an explanation of the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment. His starting-point is the fact that the small shopkeeper "must be thrifty and sober and industrious and chaste and so on, if he did not want to jeopardize his whole existence. These virtues have been called Christian virtues, and so they were. And to practise them without compulsion from the outside world was certainly a commendable piece of self-control. But it must not be forgotten that these virtues were forced upon the shopkeeper and the woollen weaver as parts of his life; he must arrive at the conclusion that the contracture of debts and the wasting of his time in amusements and love affairs will reduce him to beggary. So we observe everywhere that in the course of time necessity turns the craftsmen into good 'bourgeois'." But "the concurrence of other factors is

³
Sombart, Der Bourgeois p. 438

Lower middle class morality



necessary, in order that people who could afford to lead a free and unhindered life should see their highest ideal in industry and frugality. One of these forces.....is resentment.¹ "Men who were

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op. cit. pp. 438 seq.

bourgeois by occupation, but probably in most cases declassé noblemen who looked upon the aristocrats and their doings with jealous eyes, have declared that these doings were vicious, and preached abstention from all aristocratic ways of life (which in their hearts they loved and longed for, but from which for outward ~~and~~ or ~~either~~ inward reasons they were excluded). The fundamental trait in the family books of Alberti is resentment.... The savage abuse in which Alberti indulges as soon as he comes to speak of the 'signori',....shows that resentment is perhaps the strongest of the forces which induced him to adopt his petty bourgeois view of life."² "At all times this has remained the strongest support for

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20p. cit. pp. 439 seq.

bourgeois morality. A virtuous 'bourgeois' proclaims even today this sentence in which he finds his best consolation: 'The grapes are sour'. And when anywhere and at any time the guilds - in which the bourgeois virtues were forced into being by dire necessity, but which were also fain to 'make a virtue of necessity' - acquired prestige and influence then it could not be but that their standard of values was acknowledged by all as praiseworthy. Their spirit became the general spirit. This course of events was especially



pronounced in Florence, which therefore was leavened with bourgeois psychology already in the fifteenth century."³

³
Op. cit. p. 440.

Now this explanation is not altogether clear, and it is even a little inconsistent. It is intelligible that people who are forced to a painful self-control should regard this self-control as a virtue, and desire to impose similar restraint on others. But it is less intelligible how people who are not compelled by circumstances to practise the bourgeois virtues could be induced to do so by resentment. Yet Sombart says that they are, and then, as an example, he speaks of declassé noblemen who are excluded from the life led by their former peers. Obviously such men are in exactly the same case as the ordinary bourgeois; moral restraints are imposed upon them by practical necessity. Sombart does not adduce a single clear instance of the Puritan virtues being practised by any one voluntarily, although he affirms that it happens rather frequently, and emphasizes how very remarkable this is.⁴ Until the

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Op. cit. p. 139

contrary has been proved it will be better to assume that the bourgeois virtues have been practised in the main only by those upon whom they were forced either by the material conditions of their lives or by the moral rigorists among whom they were living, and that resentment against all who were more fortunate has been the regular outcome of this forced self-control. The disinterested tendency to



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inflict punishment may be identified with this resentment.

The probability of this hypothesis will be enhanced if it can be shown that lower middle class people have generally felt their lives to be unsatisfactory, or even miserable. Some observations to this effect have indeed been made by Vedel, with regard to the Middle Ages, and by Groetnuysen, with regard to eighteenth-century France.

A forced suppression of instinctive urges has been described by Professor Vedel as an important characteristic of the medieval small bourgeoisie. "Men had become sedentary....This change in their existence made them on the whole uglier and in part weaker...The tailor grows short-legged and flat-breasted, the weaver and the glass-grinder weak-chested, the rope-maker turns his toes in. The quiet indoor life affects the lungs and the respiration, modifies the circulation and the composition of the blood, and thus transforms the whole emotional and spiritual life. Men become less rude and wild, but also less active and resolute, more melancholy and stale, more reflective and circumspect....Life proceeds more monotonously and quietly than it ever could in the open land....Life suddenly loses its excitement and its variety, its surprises and its dangers; the horizon is closed by a grey series of week-days. A certain dull indifference and indolence may be the result of this change; men become orderly and regular, and slaves of their habits ('philistine' the emotions lose their semi-savage excitability and instability and become constant and enduring." ¹ Romantic love has no place in this petty bourgeois existence where marriages are arranged on the basis of strictly rational considerations, without any regard for personal ² wishes or for emotional fooleries.

¹ Vedel, By og Borger pp. 70 seqq.

² Op. cit. pp. 96 seq., 106 seq.



And the medieval burghers never escaped from a humiliating sense of being plebeians.³

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Op. cit. pp. 215, 222.

According to Professor Groethuysen, the ultimate psychological fact behind the Jansenist belief in original sin and in predestination was a feeling of misery. Groethuysen insists repeatedly on this feeling. The Jansenist God is terrible, but the fact that "their experience of God is rooted ultimately in the tragic character of life itself gives him his power and profundity."⁴ "We cannot under-

⁴
Groethuysen, Bürgerliche Weltanschauung I, p. 180.

stand why we have been consigned to misery and death. We must have incurred a guilt; otherwise life would not be intelligible. Our misery is a punishment; we have deserved our fate..... We have the misery in common; so we must also have the guilt in common."¹

¹
Op. cit. I, p. 199.

The Jansenist experience of life is tragic without mitigation. Therefore, unlike St. Augustine, they emphasize the prospect of damnation more than the prospect of salvation, when they meditate on the secrets of predestination.²

²
Op. cit. I, p. 312. If this is a true explanation of what the doctrine of predestination has meant to men in modern times, there is reason to suppose that the psychological background for this doctrine has been



different in the age of St. Augustine. Cf. Op. cit. I, pp. 311, seq.

Such is the view usually expressed by Groethuysen. Yet on one occasion he intimates rather inconsistently that the belief in predestination and the fear of damnation may be the cause of the tragic temper which is peculiar to the Jansenists.³ Of course this is imaginable, but what, then, could have caused them to embrace such a torturing belief?

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Op. cit. II, p. 49.

It would appear that, in the opinion of Groethuysen, the psychological satisfaction derived by the Jansenists from the belief in predestination consists in a masochistic contemplation of the possibility that they themselves may be damned, rather than in a sadistic contemplation of the possibility that others may be damned. However, it was mentioned above that sadism and masochism seem to be interchangeable as methods of relief for an economically and psychologically thwarted middle class.⁴ So resentment, disguised as moral indignation,

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Cf. supra p. 9.

tion, and a masochistic belief in predestination may well have been rooted in the same fundamental feeling of misery.

If this explanation is correct, it seems natural that neither moral rigorism nor predestination should arouse much enthusiasm in the upper bourgeoisie, as in fact they did not. For the upper bourgeoisie had no sense of being miserable. Groethuysen says: "From now on that tragic background of life is lacking, which alone affords an adequate explanation of the great love yearning of the Jansenists."⁵



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Op. cit. I, p. 187

The very conditions of life which had given rise to the experience of original sin are now disappearing.⁶ "The assumption of human guilt is not any more necessary to justify God. God is justified in his work: man is not miserable. So he is not bad either."⁷ "What need has man for the art of being unhappy, since

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Op. cit. I, p. 200

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Op. cit. I, p. 227

it now depends only on himself to be happy? Sin, grace, redemption are interpretations of an experience which is now unknown to man, answers to a question which is not asked any more, since the man who asked this question has been replaced by a new human type whose attitude towards life is fundamentally different."¹

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Op. cit. I, p. 230

Thus the facts seem to agree very well with the theory suggested by Sombart that the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment is identical with the resentment created in the lower middle class by its unsatisfactory conditions of life. The correctness of such a view is, however, contested by Max Weber who argues against it as follows: "The ~~xxx~~ theodicy of suffering might be tainted by resentment. But the need of a compensation for the shortcomings of fate in this world did not always, and did not even



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generally assume the colour of resentment as a dominating character. The belief that the wicked are lucky in this world because they are spared for hell, and that the sins which even the pious occasionally commit are to be expiated here because there is an eternal bliss reserved for them, must certainly have appealed strongly to the desire for revenge. But it is easy to ascertain that even this view, which actually did exist, was by no means always determined by resentment, and that above all it was by no means held exclusively by the lower social classes. We shall see that there have been only few examples of a religion which was, in its essential characters, determined by resentment, and only one example where this was the case with all its characters.² It is, however, true that resentment always might

² Nearest to this description comes, among the religions studied by Weber, that stage of the Jewish religion which is represented by the psalms of the Old Testament (cf. Religionssoziologie III, p. 421). However, as Weber's studies were interrupted by his death before they were finished, it may be that the example he had in mind is not to be found at all in those parts of his contemplated researches which have been accomplished and published.

be and often has been of importance, as an element among others, in those religiously motivated rationalizations of human life which have prevailed in the less privileged social classes. But this has, according to the nature of the various religions, been the case to a highly various, and often only to a negligible degree."³

³ Weber, Religionssoziologie I, p. 247.

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Those assertions are to be met with the question: how is Weber able to determine the role of resentment in a given religion? He refers "above all" to the alleged fact that belief in the punishment of the wicked is not limited to the lower classes, and he even contends that the fortunate, for the sake of justifying their happiness are particularly given to a resentment which causes them to regard all misfortune as a just punishment for sin.¹ But he fails to support

¹
Opc. cit. I, pp. 241 seq.

this view by any kind of evidence, while we, in the present work, are collecting evidence to show that the desire to see anybody punished is generally much more intensive in the lower than in the higher classes, and that it is especially intensive in the lower middle class. Apart from this Weber might maintain that he has determined the role of resentment in human societies by a comprehensive study of religious, legal and other literary documents. We shall, however, have occasion to show that his collected essays on the sociology of religion contain nothing that may be said to bear out the general view he has announced in the passage just quoted.

The regular co-existence of a petty bourgeois environment and a strong disinterested tendency to inflict punishment lends itself to a psychological interpretation which implies that the environment is the cause of the tendency mentioned. But it might also serve to support the theory that moral rigorism is the cause which calls a petty bourgeois environment into existence, if such a theory could be plausibly imagined. Max Weber indeed finds that Protestant ethics are marvellously well adapted to foster the needs of capitalism. Protestan



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ethics prohibit man from taking a serious interest in anything else but economic acquisition,² and they almost necessitate the

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Op. cit. I, p. 36.

accumulation of capital by their ascetic compulsion to save.³

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Op. cit. I, p. 192.

Before this moral attitude "could be 'selected', i. e. be victorious in the competition with others, it must obviously somehow have come into existence, and not merely in some isolated individual, but as a view of life that is shared by a whole group of men."⁴

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Op. cit. I, p. 37.

So, if the creation of a petty bourgeoisie is a necessary stage in the development of capitalism, and if this development is dependent on the existence of an "innerworldly asceticism", it might actually be urged that this moral attitude is the cause of which the petty bourgeoisie is the effect. We need not here discuss the correctness of this assumption which is at any rate not incompatible with the view that an "innerworldly asceticism" is also the product of a petty bourgeoisie environment. To urge that there must be an egg before there can be a hen is not to disprove that, according to the laws of nature, all eggs are laid by hens.



The Protestants
F. Plausible Guesses.

p. 48

The same author further says: "It is true that a great economic expansion coincided with a widespread adoption of Calvinism in the Southern Netherlands in the sixteenth century. It is true, moreover, that Calvinism spread more widely amongst the merchants and entrepreneurs of the ports and industrial districts than amongst the farmers of Luxemburg or the small independent workmen of the district of Liège."¹ As to the explanation of these facts, Robertson

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Op. cit. p. 173

suggests: "It was only to be expected that well-to-do merchants of all creeds should have been readier to discuss and to accept new opinions than the more stolid and more isolated peasantry....As the merchants were strongly opposed to the policy of interference of His Most Catholic Majesty of Spain and to the introduction of the inquisition they had a natural tendency to favour the religion which joined them in opposing it; and as it was impossible, for commercial reasons, to employ the Inquisition in the business centres with the same ruthless success in extirpating heresy as elsewhere, there was every reason why Calvinism should have been strong there."²

²
Op. cit. pp. 173 Seq.

Unquestionably this may seem quite plausible. It can, however, be proved only by showing that well-to-do merchants have always been



more inclined to heresy than people in general, and that an opposition against a Catholic monarchy will generally be disposed to turn Protestant, at least when there is already a Protestant party in the country, in which it can hope to find allies. Whether or not this be so, may here be left undecided. Robertson himself claims, only two pages earlier, to have decided the question. According to him, Holland's commercial greatness cannot, even in the sterner age of the seventeenth century, be ascribed to a rigid Calvinism. For "some of the chief exponents of commercial methods in Holland were Catholics. "And "this is not to be wondered at when it is considered that the revolt against Spain was in the first place a revolt for freedom against the Spanish system of government, in which Calvinist against Catholic played but a small part, Calvinism long continuing to have comparatively few adherents, who were, like the followers of most schismatic movements, confined in the main to the lower classes." ³ Thus in the sixteenth century

³
Op. cit. p. 171.

the open-mindedness of the rich merchants caused them to turn Calvinists, while in the seventeenth century they remained Catholics for no particular reason indicated, and in the sixteenth century people turned to Protestantism because of the struggle against Catholic Spain, while in the seventeenth century they remained Catholics because the struggle against Spain was (not especially in this century, but generally) political and not religious. One guess may be as plausible as the other, but at least Dr. Robertson ought not to have been so openly inconsistent in his guesses.



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The Protestants
II. National Character

p. 55

To explain Puritan mentality as an outcome of Germanic or more especially of English national character is, according to Max Weber, impossible. "To ascribe a single 'national character' to the Englishmen of the seventeenth century is simply historically false. 'Cavaliers' and 'Roundheads' felt themselves to be not merely two different parties, but two radically different kinds of men, and a careful observer must admit that they were right. And on the other hand: neither between the English merchant adventures and the traders from the old Hanseatic towns, nor more generally between the English and the German people at the end of middle Ages, is it possible to discover a difference in character which is not explicable by the difference in political conditions. Only the power of religious movements has - not alone, but in the main - created the differences which we feel nowadays."¹ "What is felt

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Op. cit. I, p. 51

as 'Gemütlichkeit' and 'Natürlichkeit' in the Germans, as opposed to the Anglo-American atmosphere, which is even now effected by such a thorough annihilation of the cheerfulness of the status naturalis that the impress thereof is visible in human physiognomie and by a narrowness, pettiness, and spiritual bondage which will usually estrange the Germans - these contrasts of conduct depend essentially on the less thorough ascetic remodelling of life in Lutheranism than in Calvinism."² It is even arguable that the

²
Op. cit. I, pp. 127 seq.



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English originally had less "innate dispositions" than other peoples for the reception of an ascetic code of ethics and of the bourgeois virtues. - The views of Weber as to the development of

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Op. cit. I, p. 194 n. 4

English national character are largely adopted and confirmed by Professor Parker.⁴

⁴Ernest Barker, National Character and the Factors in its Formation, London 1927, pp. 1 and 207.

p. 60

Partly for the sake of showing how in my opinion the problem at hand really ought to be handled, and partly in support of my general thesis, I insert in the present chapter two first-hand contributions to the study of Puritanism which I have managed to undertake. The material is drawn from the Thomason Collection in the British Museum, which is a collection of pamphlets, newspapers, sermons, etc. published in England in the years from 1640 to 1663. Their number is about 21,000. The best practicable method to deal with them has seemed to be an exhaustive study of the material from a number of shorter periods selected at random, but I have been able to cover in this way only two months within the 23 years over which the collection extends, namely the months of September 1642 and of March 1645. It is true that the production of controversial literature was, in these first years of the Civil War, much more profuse than later.



p. 66

The view that God will bring down sin and ~~six~~ disaster upon innocent men is directly stated in eight out of the twenty-five publications.³ In eight others it is implied in the statement that man can avoid sin and be saved only when God chooses to extend his grace to him.⁴ Obviously these views are connected, if not identical, with the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination.

Irrepressibility, presumption, and pride are considered

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E ~~272~~ 272, L. 273 (1), L. 273 (8), E 274 (16), E 278 (17), E 279 (2), E 279 (3), E 289 (5).

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E 271 (6), E 273 (17), L. 274 (12), E 278 (16), E 279 (4), E 345 (6), E 1185 (1), E 1189 (6).

to be grave sins: "There must be a quiet contentedness, to be content with what God bestowes and we receive; else we cross our selves, we crave for bread, and will have what we list. We do not pray for dainties and costliness of apparell, but for bread, that pittance the Lord shall be pleased to bestow upon us....That of Hagar should be our prayer; Give me not too much, lest I be proud, nor too little, lest I put forth my hand to wickednesse, but give me food convenient."⁵ "No man should boast of, or confide in his own

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E 273 (1), p. 49

righteousnesse....If men have excellencies, they should be humble



and fearing, not boasting and confident, especially when their excellencies are in the number of movables, and changeables."⁶

⁶
E 272, p. 356

"God loves to shew his Irerogative, and make great ones know, that he is not beholding to them to do his work; he will let them see, that he can do his work without them."⁷

⁷
E 279 (3), p. 41

"Let us abase our selves lest God abase us. God threatens a severe curse by the mouth of his Trophet, unto those that humble not themselves in times of common calamitie."⁸

Thus the Puritan God demands by threat of punishment that men be humble, refrain from pride and from boasting and from immoderate desires. Why? The answer that suggests itself is: Because God would be jealous of too much human happiness.⁹ That was what the Athenians actually said about their gods.

⁹
Cf. The Jealousy of the Gods I, pp. 63 seqq.

I. 69

The obligation to inflict punishment on sinners is inculcated² in ten publications. Its equivalent in Athenian mentality is

²
E 271 (9), E. 272, E ~~272~~ 273 (1), E 274 (15), E 274 (16), E 274 (29), E 279 (2), E 279 (3), 279 (4), E 279 (5).



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the idea that pestilence and famine will overtake a country where unpunished criminals are allowed to live, and that the consequence of indulging in pity for a murderer may be the loss of a son.³

³
Cf. The Jealousy of the Gods I, pp. 40 seq., 43, 128

Thus the Puritans believed that men must be made to suffer, and that God actually inflicts suffering upon men in a number of circumstances where we should think any kind of punishment unjustifiable: when men fail to be sufficiently censorious against one another, when they are happy and self-confident, when they have sinned only under compulsion of temptation from God, or even sometimes when they cannot be ~~any~~ blamed for anything at all. This acceptance of every possible pretext for the infliction of punishment makes it natural to suspect that the Puritans in reality took a delight in human suffering for its own sake, quite apart from the question whether there was any sin to be atoned for or not. We have not yet exhausted the evidence contained in our twenty-five publications that may be quoted in support of the suspicion mentioned.

A description of punishments meted out by God to the Germans and the Irish reads as follows: "Gods judgements would be so hard and heavie, that the nations should marvell, and be unsatisfied at them, till they should heare how they have dealt with God. Hath not God of late been against Germany, and executed extraordinary judgements there, such as cause astonishment? Have not mens eyes been twisted out with cords, their skins flead off alive, their faces plain'd with chesils, their noses and ears off



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to make le tbands, their mouths gagg'd, pisse and filthy liquids povred down; Have not men been hung up by the hands in the smoak? put into hot ovens, roasted with straw fires? have not Divines been cut in pieces, and their limbs thrown to dogs? have not many fed and liv'd upon the flesh of dead men and women, eaten their own children, kill'd one another for relief against hunger; strange judgements God brought upon Germany, and as strange upon Ireland, hath it not been the land of Gods ire, and the people the generation of his wrath; and felt more for so short a time, then Germany or other nations? have not women with child been ravish'd, ript open, the bed of conception viewed, the child taken out, and thrown into the fire? have not the Protestant Ministers been stript, bound to trees or posts, their wives and daughters ravished before their faces, then hang'd up before them so ~~xxxx~~ ravished, cut down half dead, quartered and dismembred? have not many been turn'd out naked, forc'd into waters, famished to death under hedges: some have been mortally wounded, their bellies ript, bowels let out, and left upon dunghills, that they might not be soon out of their misery." ¹ The document quoted

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E 272, pp. 445 seq.

is Greenhill's commentary on Ezekiel. He does not mean to denounce those who have perpetrated the atrocities described. On the contrary, God is expressly said to be responsible, and there is evidently no intention of blasphemy. The writer is not at pains to make it clear what the victims have done to deserve their terrible fate. The Irish victims are not the generally detested Catholic rebels, but Protestants, that is to say men and women of the same



religious faith as the writer and the public for whom he wrote. All this, together with the number of horrifying details contained in the description, seems to indicate that the author and his public really, as suggested above, found a kind of satisfaction in contemplating the atrocities for their own sake. A disposition to sadism appears to have been a part of Furian mentality.²

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Cf. supra pp. 9 seq.

There was also a disposition to masochism. Our documents contain passionate exhortations to self-abasement which are intelligible only on this assumption. There are furthermore complacent descriptions of human suffering in a context which fails to show whether the victims are supposed to be the pious readers themselves or somebody else. One writer says: "Let us often meditate upon the fire of Hell. The Scripture calls it, A Bottomlesse Pit, Tophet, a Dungeon, large and deepe, the burning whereof is fire and brimstone, The Lake of the second death. If a man cannot indure a little fire in one part of his body (as on his little finger) but one hour, how intollerable shall the paine of the damned be when they shall burne within and without. Who can dwell with everlasting burning (saith the Prophet Esay). And yet our fire here is but a picture of that unquenchable fire there in Hell, where one drop of cold water will be more worth than all the Jewels of the World, though only to coole the tongue."³ There

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E 1189 (C), p. 9



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is nothing to show whether the fascination of this description of Hell depends upon the expectation that other people will have to burn there eternally, or upon the fear that one's self may be threatened by such a fate.

The Directory for Publique Worship seems well calculated to satisfy the sadistic-masochistic disposition of the Puritans. The ministers are instructed to remind their congregations every Sabbath that in strict justice they all deserve to be tormented eternally in Hell, and that they can hope to be saved only by the great mercy of God.¹ There is to be "a holy cessation, or resting

E 273 (17) pp. 14 seqq.

all the Day, from all unnecessary labours, and an abstaining, not onely from all sports and pastimes, but also from all wordly words and thoughts."²

²
E 273 (17), p. 56

The time is to be devoted exclusively to religious duties. And men should conform to this, "accounting the Sabbath a delight."³

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E 273 (17), p. 57

Now, if a Puritan had been asked why he wanted to enforce such stringent, and to many painful, rules concerning the Sabbath, he would have answered: because it is the will of God. But why did



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the Puritans impute such a harsh will to their God? The Cavaliers, who also believed in the Christian religion, did not. Must not these different views concerning the supposed will of God be explained as symptoms of the fact that the Puritans themselves found a kind of satisfaction in making life painful, while the Cavaliers did not?

In addition to the Sabbath, the Puritans plagued themselves and others with public fasts. The Church of England had enjoined fasting as an abstinence from meat on certain days, but the Puritan Directory goes the length of saying: "A Religious Fast requires total abstinence...from all food (unless bodily weakness does manifestly disable from holding out till the Fast be ended, in which case somewhat may be taken, yet very sparingly, to support nature when ready to faint."⁴ In other respects

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E 273 (17), p. 75

the fast day is to be celebrated very much like a Sabbath. Public fasts are to be held "When some great and notable Judgements are either inflicted upon a People, or apparently imminent, or by some extraordinary provocations notoriously deserved; as also, when some special blessing is to be sought and obtained, Publique solemn Fasting... is a Duty that God expecteth from that Nation, or people."⁵ "Besides solemn & generall Fasts

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E 273 (17), pp. 74



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injoynd by Authority, we judge, that at other times, Congregations may keepe dayes of Fasting, as Divine Providence shall administer unto them speciall occasions. - And also that Families may doe the same."¹ Indignation aroused by trespassers on a public fast day has been mentioned.²above.

¹
E 273 (17), p. 79

²
Cf. supra p. 68

The Directory furthur contains instructions to ministers about their visiting the sick. Sick people are supposed to be more than ordinarily concerned with their conscience, and the ministers should take advantage of the opportunity. If a sick person appears to be too sure of his salvation, "endeavors ought to be made.....to awaken his Conscience; and rouse him out of a stupid and secure condition, to apprehend the Justice and wrath of God, before whom none can stand, but he that being lost in himself, layeth hold upon Christ by Faith."³ It is true that the ministers were also instructed

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E 273 (17), p. 67.

to console those sick who felt too despondent about the prospect of their salvation. It is further true that a Puritan would have justified his cruelty towards the sick by the allegation that leniency now could only mean worse suffering for them in Hell afterwards. Yet why should the Puritans, in contradistinction to other Christians, think it impossible for the not very repentant sick to be saved from Hell unless they were subjected to moral torture on their sick-bed? In the Book of Common Prayer the minister, who visits the sick is not



instructed to emphasize the possibility of damnation to such an extent as in the Directory.

Utterances indicating a sadistic-masochistic disposition in the Iuritans are to be found in thirteen of our twenty-five publications. As regards the Athenians, there are no indubitable traces of masochism but it does indeed seem natural to designate the character they ascribe to the gods as sadistic.⁵

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E 272, I 273 (1), E 273 (17), E 274 (12), E 274 (16), E 278 (16), E 278 (17), E 279 (3), I 279 (4), E 279 (5), E 286 (19), E 1185 (1), E 1189 (6).

⁵
Cf. The Jealousy of the Gods I, p. 53 and II, pp. 173 seq.

It is part of the Christian tradition to believe that God is full of love and mercy. The Iuritans do not discard this tradition. They simply reaffirm it side by side with and in open contradiction to whatever else they may have to say about God: "Our love to God may be renewed, by considering the infinite variety of the expressions of God's love to us, in forbearing, giving, and forgiving, and especially, in the unspeakable sufferings of Christ."⁶ "God walks not

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E 1185 (1), p. 11.

into the way of judgements, till men do walk out of the way of his statutes.....God's delights are in ways and works of mercy; Judgements are his strange acts.....he is provoked unto them as a Bee unto stinging; it's the child's wantonness causes the father to use the rod."¹ The following passage from the very same publication is a patent contradiction of the passage just quoted: "God takes



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E 272, p. 434.

pleasure in executing judgement, in accomplishing his wrath, and causing his fury to rest upon impenitent and incurable sinners, he will be comforted in it: Prov. I. 26. I will laugh at your calamities God will bring calamities upon them, just judgements for the setting at naught of his counsels, refusing his reproofs, and rejoice in them for as judgements are satisfaction to divine justice, they are delightful unto God, Isa. 30. 30."

God's mercy and love to mankind are mentioned in fourteen publications.

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E 272, pp. 460 seq.

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E 271 (18), E 272, E 273 (1), E 273 (10), E 273 (17), E 274 (12), E 274 (16), E 274 (29), E 278 (17), E 279 (2), E 279 (5), E 286 (19), E 1185 (1), E 1189 (6).

The Puritans were obliged to believe that God is good and merciful, and that love of mankind is a virtue. They also wanted to believe that God is severe with sinners, and that a similar severity was a duty incumbent upon men. Generally, they were

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Cf. supra pp. 68 seq.

not much disturbed by the logical incompatibility of ideas which they chose to accept as religious truths. Opponents of the Doctrine

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Cf. supra pp. 64 seq. and 72 seq.



of Predestination did not fail to advance the argument against the Puritans that a belief in God's goodness is inconsistent with the Calvinistic belief in his damnation of innocent men.⁶

⁶ Cf. John Hunt, *Religious Thought in England from the Reformation to the End of the Last Century*, London 1870 seqq., I pp. 149 seq. and II, p. 100.

But none of the authors of our twenty-five publications thought it necessary even to mention this difficulty in order to allay possible scruples in their readers. Yet the Puritans did have a theory which might enable them to affirm without inconsistency that genuine love of mankind must lead to severity towards men rather than to leniency. The theory was that any kind of suffering inflicted upon human beings may be expected to contribute to the moral or religious improvement of the sufferers: "Affliction is a fit time for instruction.....; when people are in misery, they see the uncertainty of life, the insufficiency of all creatures, the sinfulness of sin, that the wrath of God is a dreadful thing; thoughts of death and eternity are upon them, and now is a good season to bring the truths of the eternal God unto them, Vexatio dat intellectum, it makes men consider, look about, inquire how they may be delivered; where to get safety."¹ "There is a bonum ex malo; good arising out of evil, which doth much conduce to the happiness of Israel; were there no thorns in the flesh, how should we be humbled? no devill, how should we be winnowed; no tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, sword, how should we be more than Conquerors? no death or dissolution, how should we come to be with Christ?"²



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E 278 (17), p. 3

The assumption that suffering is good for the soul of man is expressed in eight publications. Evidently such an idea is likely

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E 272, E 273(1), E 273(11), E 273(17), E274 (16), E 278(17), E 279(3),
E 279 (4).

to be accepted without proof by Christians who have a desire to practice cruelty and would like to be able to do it with a good conscience. The assumption is not unrelated to the belief mentioned above that too much happiness is dangerous for men's morality.

⁴
Cf. supra pp. 66 seq.

There are cases, however, in which it is not believed that men are improved by suffering: "Sometimes it proveth so, that afflictions make us the worse, like waters being restrained they swell higher and threaten heaven itselfe, so corruptions being restrained ; they swell and threaten the ruine of States, Families, of souls and bodies to all eternitie." Correspondingly, God punishes sinners not only

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E 272 p. 42.

for the sake of their improvement and ultimate salvation. He also does it "for the demonstration of his justice, to make it appear, as David saith, that doubtlesse there is a God that judgeth the earth. For, should the Lord suffer the wicked to run on in their wickedness



without any danger of cutting down, not onely his justice but his very being too, would be called into question; men would be ready to say in their hearts with Davids foole, that there is no God.

⁶
E 274 (12), pp. 25 seq.

Thus God is believed to punish sinners not merely for the good of mankind, but also for the sake of his own glory. It should here be recalled that he is also believed sometimes to inflict suffering upon perfectly innocent men out of regard for his own glory. It

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Of. supra pl 64

seems that people who could fin satisfaction in a belief like this must indeed have enjoyed the contemplation of human suffering for its own sake. The pedagogic theory that suffering is for the good of the victim was voiced by Aristophanes in the Clouds for demagogic purposes, and must therefore have had some sincere adherents at Athens.

¹
Of. The Jealousy of the Gods II, pp. 238 seq.

But the Athenians did not commit the inconsistency of asserting that their cruel gods were full of mercy and love for mankind. The Puritans were undoubtedly forced to assume a different attitude by the fact that they were faced with a Christian tradition which they had to adopt. Yet this is perhaps not a sufficient basis for the conclusion that the Puritans never really meant what they said about God's goodness and mercy, and that they were never animated by a genuine



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sympathy for their fellow-men. The human heart is not subject to the laws of logic, and even a fundamental disposition to sadism may perhaps sometimes subside and make room for gentler feelings.

The Puritans' insensibility to self-contradictions is probably in some way connected with the fact that they were not appreciative of intelligence: "How many worldly wise men have you knowne sincerely religious, or to submit to the simplicity of the Gospel, in conforming their lives thereunto...very few, I dare say, in comparison of meaner spirits."² "Undertake publique service with personall Reformation, get a sure interest in Christ....The greatest naturall parts will not fit men for publique service, the sweetest showers that fall into the salt sea, become brackish like it selfe."³ Intelligence is dis-

³
E 279 (4), p. 29.

paraged in two further publications besides the two quoted.⁴ But the

⁴
E 273 (11), E 274 (12)

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opposite view is also expressed once: "God imployes not the ignorant silly ones in his service, but those are intelligent, Angels that are wise and very knowing; such should the Angels of the Churches be."⁵

⁵
E 272, p. 35

In Athens too demagogues tried to gain the favour of the people by expressing a distrust in intelligence and an appreciation of morality



as the only thing that counted.

6

Cf. The Jealousy of the Gods II, p. 62)

p. 108

Some rules quoted by Lea from contemporary sources may serve to illustrate the working of the system of commutations. If a penitent is unable to fast he can, if rich, buy off seven weeks for twenty sols, if less wealthy, for ten sols, if very poor, for three sols, the money to be used for the redemption of captives or to be given to the poor or to the priest. Or a month can be commuted with 1200 psalms recited on the knees, or 1680 otherwise, or a week for 300 psalms. He who does not know the psalms and cannot fast can for twenty-six sols redeem a year to be spent on bread and water, but he must fast on Wednesdays till noon and on Fridays till vespers, and every three weeks weigh what he eats and give half as much in alms. The price of a day is one denier, or the whole psalter in summer; during the rest of the year fifty psalms, though some substitute twelve stripes. For a three years' penance the redemption for the first year is twenty-six sols given in charity, for the second twenty, for the third eighteen, or sixty-four in all. But there

¹Op. cit. II, p. 152

were also redemptions outside of the regular tariffs formulated in the Penitentials. Rich men can raise a church to the glory of God and endow it with lands so that holy men can minister there to God and pray for them; or they can build bridges, help the poor, manumit slaves, and seek intercession with masses, while poorer men can visit



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the churches often with alms, and all should mortify the flesh and chastise the spirit. This method of redemption had the high² sanction of papal authority. So thoroughly had this system

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Op. cit. II, p. 155

of redemptions been established by the eleventh century that St. Peter Damiani complains that no layman would endure to fast three days in the week, and that either redemptions must be abolished or³ the penitential canons be cast aside as obsolete.

³

Op. cit. II, p. 156



**Appendix
P. 304**

Scheler's essay is expressly stated to have been written under the influence of the "phenomenological attitude" brought into vogue by Husserl.³ One of the chapters is headed "On the Phenomenology and Sociology of Resentment". The analysis we have attempted would seem to indicate that "phenomenology" in this connection means nothing but an excuse for regarding plausible guesses as a perfectly sufficient and reliable method in sociology. If the excuse is accepted as valid, the whole of the present book, as well as *The Jealousy of the Gods*, is naturally wasted labour, since, in that case, detailed empirical research can do nothing to confirm or to invalidate the guesses arrived at in leisurely contemplation by a "phenomenologist" without any exact knowledge of the facts. But if sociology is ever to be a science, and not merely a collection of such guesses as for some odd reason may happen to appear plausible to one sociologist or another, and to the public for whom the sociologists are writing, it is necessary that a methodological standpoint like that of Max Scheler should be met with general and absolute condemnation in the scientific world.

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Scheler, *Vom Umsturz der Werte I*, p. 60
