

Moral Cultures and Moral Logics*

Vytautas Kavolis

Dickinson College

The most comprehensive concept for analyzing major sociocultural alternatives that have actually existed in particular spheres of social life is the sphere-of-life culture. While political cultures have been widely studied, sociologists have not given much attention to the comparative study of moral cultures. A moral culture is a particular constellation of ideas and feelings pertaining to the basic responsibilities and limitations of human beings. Moral logics are guidelines for acting with regard to the right-wrong distinction – deriving obligations, justifying claims, making decisions in cases where right and wrong are not clear, and evaluating the goodness or culpability of actual behavior. The basic structures of several kinds of “traditional” and “modern” moral cultures and moral logics – primarily Chinese, Indian, and Western – are analyzed. The systems of moralization on which particular types of moral cultures tend to rely are described.

While various kinds of collective moral structures can be identified in the historical record, the most encompassing structure of moral experience can be conceived of as a “moral culture.” *Moral cultures* are constellations of emotions and ideas, occurring within identifiable collectivities, pertaining to the basic responsibilities and limitations of human beings. If it is not assumed, in a moral culture, that behavior in accordance with its conceptions of responsibility is always completely spontaneous, some machinery, either social or cosmic, by which good behavior is enforced must be provided for. Such machineries of enforcement will here be conceived of as *systems of moralization* and defined as complexes of assumptions and practices designed to produce an adequate degree of conformity to the expectations of particular moral cultures. The organized social components of a system of moralization may be thought of as *moralizing institutions*.¹ Any moral culture also contains, explicitly or implicitly, a particular “package” of *moral logics*, which are guidelines for acting with regard to the right-wrong distinction. As moral cultures develop, their components undergo revisions, elaborations, refinement, or situational specifications. A full description of a moral culture should also indicate the societal context in which it is placed, with its specific possibilities for and the limits on acting in accordance with the orientations central to that moral culture.

Moral cultures (Ossowska, 1972; Lidz, n.d.) belong, together with legal (Rudolph and Rudolph, 1967; Bozeman, 1971), artistic (Kavolis, 1974), and therapeutic (Leslie, 1976; Bloom, 1976) cultures, to the “family” of sphere-of-life cultures.² Moral cultures, which

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¹I take the concept of “moralizing institutions” from Lecky (1908:291): In imperial Rome, “On the one hand, we find a system of ethics [Stoic], of which . . . it is not too much to say that though it may have been equalled, it has never been surpassed. On the other hand, we find a society almost absolutely destitute of moralising institutions, occupations, or beliefs, existing under an economical and political system which inevitably led to general depravity, and passionately addicted to the most brutalising amusements.”

²One of the assumptions of the school of thought which Rogowski (1974:6) criticizes, that “norms and values” central to a political culture “are principally inculcated during childhood and adoles-

are historically durable and normally find some expression in the organization of social institutions and their modes of operation, need to be distinguished from *moral moods*, temporary emotional states experienced by large numbers of people that produce "moralities of the moment" which may sharply contradict the established moral cultures, but do not endure as traditions (although they may influence, in various ways, the development of traditions). Thus the "sensibility of the sixties" in the United States has remained a moral mood, though connected with several more durable moral cultures. Moral moods which have enough activist thrust to shape major social institutions may be conceived of as *moral energies*. The distinction between "mood" and "energy" seems to depend at least in part on the social viability of the moral impulse manifested.

The Sacred-Secular Dichotomy in Moral Cultures

We may try to distinguish between "primordial" (tribal and folk) moral cultures, the "traditional" or "classical" moral culture of the historic (regional) civilizations, and "modern" (world-wide) moral cultures. However, the "modern" moral cultures, not only in the West, are anchored in "traditional" moral cultures and can be viewed, especially in the West, partly as their secularizations; and in any contemporary setting, even the most "modernized," one finds diverse mixtures, alliances, and struggles between "primordial," "traditional" and "modern" moral cultures.

Moral cultures can be identified as "secular" either substantively, by the character of the prohibitions they postulate, or genetically, by the source of origin of the obligations they impose. Using the first of these criteria, "secularity" in moral cultures may be defined by the rule: *What is prohibited is that which injures other human beings, that is, acts which by their demonstrable, understandable effects produce needless suffering* (Moore, 1973). "Sacredness" in moral cultures is definable by the rule: *What is prohibited is that which transgresses against obligations inherent in the structure of the moral universe, acts for which the transgressor himself (or, where collective responsibility prevails, his relatives or his community) will suffer necessary punishment*. In practice, no "sacred" moral culture can afford not to recognize the criterion of "secular" morality. Conversely, contemporary ecological consciousness forces even "secular" moralities to acknowledge a kind of "sacredness."

The distinction between "secular" and "sacred" structures of morality is made in at least some preliterate societies, such as the Saoras, a hill tribe of Orissa in India. "The Saoras distinguish between breaches of custom (*ukka*), which may be punished by tribal authorities, and certain actions, described as *ersi*, which may arouse the wrath of a god. It is against *ukka* to lie, steal and murder, but it is *ersi* to lie in the name of a god, steal the food offered at a sacrifice, and kill a dedicated animal . . . Offenders against *ukka* may be ostracized or fined, but their punishment is not automatic and can be modified by pleas, arguments and apologies. But a breach of *ersi* leads to automatic supernatural retribution" (von Fürer-Haimendorf, 1967:214).

By the second criterion of secularity-sacredness, that of the origin of obligations, *a secular moral culture is one in which obligations arise from human action (either individual or collective), and a sacred moral culture is one in which obligations arise from the immutable structure of the "moral universe."* In Hinduism, obligations arise in the sacred manner, but the Biblical Covenant is, by this definition, a joint sacred-secular production, a Hobbesian or Rousseauist social contract a purely secular one. Secularity in this sense is not to be identified with modernity either.

cence; thereafter they can be changed only with difficulty" is, in the present usage of "cultures," explicitly rejected. The central problem, in the civilization-analytic perspective (Nelson and Kavolis, 1973; Nelson, 1974), is not the perpetuation of "cultures," but their formation, transformation, and dissolution.

Traditional Moral Cultures

In China secularity has itself been a very strong tradition and in one respect, the whole of China has always been more secular than virtually anyone in the West until the seventeenth century; namely in the assumption that written law is an exclusively human production, with nothing godlike or divinely commanded about it.³ But written law, in China, is not fundamental to either of the domestically generated traditional moral cultures:⁴ the *Confucian*, with its central obligation of fulfilling with examined sincerity the customary obligations in social relationships to which these obligations are appropriate, and the *Taoist*, with its suggestion of submitting with spontaneity to the softly-acting tendencies of nature. Law, "inextricably woven together with custom" (Lingat, 1973:259), is very much a part of one of the main traditional moral cultures of India, the caste-ritualistic of *orthodox Hinduism* (with its different moral codes for the various castes). The other traditional moral culture of India, if it can be treated as one, is the, in principle, universally compassionate, detachment-seeking moral culture of *Buddhism, Jainism, and Vaishnavite bhakti (devotional) religiosity*. (In practice, the Vaishnavites have not been devoid of sectarian fanaticism.)

The Confucian system of moralization contains three basic components: (1) Presumed ability of the individual mind/heart to recognize the principles by which the natural/social/moral order operates, this ability being innate but fully developed only through education and self-examination and therefore sufficient as a moral guide only for the educated self-examiner, the "true gentleman"; (2) A purely social legal system to punish transgressions against the natural/social/moral order, intended for those who are not "true gentlemen," by whose punishment the harmony of the natural/social/moral order is restored; (3) Rare acts of heaven, in response to major deviations from the natural/social/moral order for which the emperor is considered responsible, and expressed through natural misfortunes indicating that he has forfeited the "mandate of heaven" to mediate between society and the rest of the moral/natural universe, and should be replaced if harmony in the moral universe is to be restored. Their own moral intelligence suffices for the intellectual elite, courts are needed for ordinary men, and heaven concerns itself only with the ruler. The moralities of ordinary people and of rulers are controlled by external punitive sanctions, those of true gentlemen by their own (nonpunitive) inner insights into the nature of the universe (Munro, 1969; Fingarette, 1972; Bodde and Morris, 1967; Wu, 1976; Bauer, 1976).⁵

In contrast to Confucianism, which postulates a single system of moralization, with three different "forces" (intelligence, courts, and heaven) operating, toward the same effect, for different human populations, popular Hinduism seems to postulate three separate systems of moralization, operating on the same people, but on different levels, or in different structural components, of the universe. (1) There is a "wholly cosmic" system, in which transgressions against universal moral norms, those valid independently of one's

³In China alone among the historic civilizations "no one at any time has ever hinted that any kind of written law—even the best written law—could have had a divine origin." It originates in the acts of individual "sages" (or, in the Legalist tradition, in those of the emperor). (Bodde and Morris, 1967:10).

⁴In contrast, "Japan has a long tradition of seeing in the body of law a statement of morals; the government always used the codes as a basis of moral education . . . The members of the legal profession generally, and particularly professors and judges, are considered teachers of morals" (von Mehren, 1963:190).

⁵Forfeiture of the mandate of heaven can, however, occur also for the reason that the "end of an era" is approaching, a cosmic process of shifting balance of elements that operates regardless of the moral quality of the emperor's (or anyone else's) acts (Bauer, 1976:72-73).

caste position (such as prohibitions of lying and cheating), or curses imposed by the powerless on those who have mistreated them, result automatically in a diminution of an individual's store of merits. This will not affect his position in society during his current life, but will produce a reduction in status in a subsequent reincarnation. Demerits can, however, be balanced by meritorious deeds, including penance.⁶

(2) There is a "socio-cosmic" (or socio-natural) system, in which transgressions—which may be wholly unconscious, such as unknowingly drinking water drawn from a well by a menstruating woman—against the regulations governing particular castes (that is, rules of social hierarchy) automatically result in pollution (through a "natural" process operating regardless of its social recognition). Pollution is a kind of "contagious shame" which makes the individual dangerous to society, since his impurity can infect others of the same or higher status. He is therefore prevented from performing his social roles (and must be ostracized). But he has not incurred a "sin" for which he will be punished in a subsequent life. His pollution can—except where permanent expulsion of the individual is socially desirable—be expunged without trace by an automatically effective purification ritual which society, having been endangered by the individual, must insist that he perform. Thus, *while universalistic morality is supported by the eternal (life-transcending) "moral" mechanism of the universe, which recognizes "worth" and "guilt" where they exist, particularistic morality is sustained by the temporal (operating within this life) "natural" mechanism of the universe which, with the assistance of organized society, distributes "respectability" and "shame."* Some acts, such as incest or women's adultery, or desecration of sanctuaries, apparently engage both of these mechanisms.

(3) There is, finally, a "wholly social" system of moralization, which operates when village councils, the *panchayat*, deal with disputes among individuals. Any verdict of guilt is avoided in this "no-fault" system and all efforts are made to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution, a reharmonization of society. Neither the "natural" nor the "moral" mechanism of the universe is involved in this purely "social" matter (von Fürer-Haimendorf, 1967:151-179, 213-216; also cf. 140 on the non-Hindu Gonds and 180-202 on Tibetan Buddhism).

In view of the general similarity in ideological backgrounds of all types of prevalent orientations in medieval Europe, it is perhaps justifiable to distinguish the main types of medieval European moral cultures not primarily in terms of their ideological contents, but in terms of their organizational patterns. Such an approach yields four types of "traditional" moral cultures, with historically specific variants within each type: (1) the moral culture of *churchly imperialism*, with authority for making universally binding moral decisions located at the top of an organizational structure controlling access to salvation; (2) the moral culture of *routinized interiority, service, and sexual guilt*, the "mass" basis and chief product of the culture of churchly imperialism, with regularized ritual and externally directed self-examination as its main mechanisms of moralization, a structural basis in monasticism and an especially strong appeal to women; (3) the moral cultures of *self-governing communalism*, with authority to make moral decisions binding upon it vested in a community acting collectively and with different kinds of rights possessed by individuals as members of different kinds of communities (villages, guilds, professions,

⁶In the traditional system (before its dislocation by Moslem invaders), the Hindu king was thought capable of acting as the personalized executor of the cosmic mechanism in cases of crime, which it was his cosmically given obligation to punish: "Criminals who have been punished by the king are purified and go to heaven, like virtuous people who have done good deeds," as Vasistha puts it (Lingat, 1973:68). But if the king punishes improperly (or fails to punish), he will himself be punished by the cosmic mechanism. The king's acts can be evaluated only by the cosmic mechanism, but not by any human agency.

commercial associations, universities, cities, rabbinical Judaism); and (4) the moral cultures of *inspirational antinomianism*, Christian or Jewish, in which each individual separately makes moral decisions as "spirit" moves him—an impermanent type that, if successful, tends to evolve into one of the other three, leaving, however, the memory of its original form for a subterranean tradition which continuously, over long periods of time, generates moral cultures of this type. The assumption that man can, with full knowledge of the difference between good and evil, consciously choose evil is a particularly distinctive feature of the first two types of medieval moral cultures. The belief that, in principle, all men are capable of creating (or discovering) new kinds of moral obligations is an especially important element of the latter two kinds of medieval moral cultures. From the moral culture of self-governing communalism a "secular" morality begins to emerge (Troeltsch, 1960; Ullmann, 1966; Cohn, 1961).

Modern Moral Cultures

Four types of moral cultures can be regarded as peculiarly "modern": (1) the liberal, (2) the romantic-anarchist, (3) the nationalist, and (4) the ascetic-revolutionary. Their most essential defining characteristics can be formulated as follows: (1) the *liberal* moral culture starts with the individual, who is regarded as a "person" capable of rational choices and therefore responsible for them; who orders his relations with others, and constructs societies, through such choices; who retains rights (among which the right to seek meaning for his existence in his own way is the most basic) of which others, or society, cannot legitimately deprive him; and who, having ordered all that is social, retains the right to reorder it. The liberal moral culture has been most fully developed in the "contractualist" Anglo-Saxon tradition, but its roots lie in Greek urban, Roman legal, and medieval feudal (as contrasted to monarchic) histories. As its political style, the liberal culture tends to prefer "civility," as its moral style, "generalized everyday decency" (Ullmann, 1966; Baum, 1978; Gay, 1969).

The system of moralization of the fully developed liberal moral culture would seem to consist of five essential components: (a) Universal education to develop everyone's intellectual capacities to the fullest; (b) Public courts to deal with antisocial transgressions and disputes between individuals, treating everyone equally and on the assumption that everyone has his intellectual capacities equally developed; only that which either breaks contracts voluntarily entered into by individuals or "artificial persons" or injures the life, health and, less consistently, "human dignity" of other members of the society can be treated as a criminal transgression (though not all acts of such injury are in fact so treated); (c) Spontaneous and organized granting of social respect to reward services to the community (cf. Rousseau on "honor"); (d) Self-direction by innate "conscience," "good" or "moral" sense, or "reason," presumed to exist independently of education and expectable in all medically "normal" human beings; (e) Psychiatric procedures for certifying the presence or absence of "naturally" (that is, without the individual's fault) diminished capacity for self-direction. (Psychiatric treatment itself is not a part of the system of moralization, but of therapy.)

At first sight, the liberal system of moralization involves only individual persons and the society which derives solely from their acts of establishing it. Nature seems to enter only as the source of the general human capacity for reason and conscience—which for liberals are not usually sharply separated—and as a modifier of a particular individual's ability to use these resources for morally responsible self-reliance. However, in the more mythologized versions of the liberal moral culture an automatically operating element, independent in its consequences of human choices and therefore "natural," is seen as inherent in society: the invisible hand harmonizing the supply-demand relationship in the economy of Adam Smith, the corruption of power of Lord Acton. Two attitudes are

possible toward such "natural" mechanisms in society: the establishment of artificial social controls over them, or the dismantling of any social impediments to their operation. The choice between these policy alternatives depends on whether the "natural" mechanisms in society are seen as ultimately moralizing or demoralizing in their effects. In this sense, as an element of society seen as "natural," nature enters into the liberal moral culture. It is, however, not the empirically demonstrable nature, but a mythological design in the guise of a natural mechanism—God for Adam Smith, Satan for Lord Acton. For a demythologized liberalism, nature is morally relevant only as *human* nature.

(2) The *romantic-anarchist* moral culture also begins with the individual, who is regarded not as a rational "person," but as a "self" capable of expressing its qualities (or fragrances) and culpable only for lack of genuineness in expressing them; who enters into relations with others, and generates private communities, communions, or spiritual conspiracies (but not whole societies), through spontaneous convergences of sensibilities and who, having rendered his world meaningful by investing emotion, or a depth of experience, into it, retains the capacity to make it meaningless by withdrawing his deep experiences, or emotion, from it (Abrams, 1971; de Rougemont, 1974; Trilling, 1974; Carroll, 1974). The fateful European distinction between "the 'classical' ethics of reason" and "the 'romantic' ethics of pity," which has originated in the confrontation of the classical Greco-Roman world with Christianity (Ferguson, 1958; Lecky, 1908), becomes associated, in a secularized form, with the differentiation between liberal and romantic moral cultures (Sypher, 1939). There is, however, the added complication that modern liberals, more in the Anglo-Saxon than in the French or the German tradition, are frequently also romantics.

While the liberal moral culture is exclusively Western in its origins (and indeed can be implanted only with difficulty in traditions outside of the West European and its derivatives), counterparts of romantic-anarchist moral cultures can be found in non-Western civilizations as well.⁷ While the liberal moral culture is relatively homogeneous, though historically evolving, the romantic-anarchist stream is characterized by divisions and confluences of its diverse elements. The political style of the romantic-anarchist moral culture, in its pure form, tends to be "ecstasy," the moral style, "revelation of authenticity" (either of an individual or of a "transcendent" self or of a particular collectivity). Like the antinomian tradition which has provided prototypes for the romantic-anarchist moral culture, the latter has been unable to subsist by itself as an organizing framework of life, but had either to constitute a subterranean stream, erupting occasionally into visibility, or to be embedded in a more durable tradition as a nuance of its "language."

Systems of moralization of romantic-anarchist moral cultures tend to consist of such elements as: (1) expressive social (or "spiritual") movements, (2) spontaneous sympathy, (3) imaginative literature and other arts, (4) some ideology or example of "return to nature" or "deepened experience of one's own nature," to which (5) friendship may be added, as a moralizing institution, in the more individualized types of romantic-anarchist cultures.

(3) The *nationalist* type of moral culture starts with a "primordial," historically concrete, community which the individual commits himself to sustain or revive by "heroic" actions

⁷Gandhi has called himself an "enlightened anarchist." His anarchism has at least as deep Indian as Western roots. "Although elements of socialism, liberalism, and anarchism are found in Gandhi's notion of political obligation, in the ultimate analysis, however, the anarchist elements dominate his thinking" (Leys and Rao, 1970:441). "The philosophic anarchism that Gandhi preached and practiced owed its origin to Tolstoy's influence . . . But it is probably less negative [toward the state] for the historic reason that it is rooted in the indigenous tradition of India" (Murti, 1968:60-61).

of which he becomes capable when he makes his commitment; whose primary loyalties are to those—past and present—with whom he has joined in making a commitment to such a community; and who, having received much of the moral substance of his life from his experience of this community undertakes to transmit this substance to the next generation of its members. Chinese and Jewish traditionalisms (insofar as the former can be separated from its familism and the latter from its universalistic prophecy) may be regarded as premodern prototypes of nationalist moral cultures. “Re-enactment of history,” real or imagined, tends to be the style of political practice, and “loyalty” is the style of moral practice in the nationalist moral culture (Ranum, 1975; Mosse, 1975; Shafer, 1972; Leach, 1972).⁸ Family, ceremonial, mass media, and the army are typical mechanisms of moralization used (though not exclusively) in contemporary moral culture of the nationalist type.

(4) The *ascetic-revolutionary* moral culture is oriented to an “eschatological,” or abstract, community which the individual is obligated by God, fate, or history to bring about by “creative” or “destructive” acts for which he acquires the capacity when he recognizes his obligation (which he is not entitled to refuse to accept); whose relations to others are wholly controlled by this obligation (to the exclusion of all personal loyalties); and who, having received all of his moral substance from the goal which he serves must demonstrate by his actions how much more than *everything* else in human experience this goal means. “Ethical prophecy,” in Max Weber’s sense, is the ultimate historical root of ascetic-revolutionary moral cultures. “Unique drama” tends to be the style of political practice, and “discipline” the style of moral practice in ascetic-revolutionary moral cultures (Mazlish, 1976; Walzer, 1965; Murvar, 1971; Lasky, 1976). The act, frequently an extreme act, by which conviction is confirmed, tends to be seen as the only reliable means of moralization in ascetic-revolutionary moral cultures.

An *ecological* moral culture might be distinguished as a fifth type, but it has a peculiar history in relation to the modernization of moral cultures. The ecological culture is ancient as an element embedded in more encompassing “traditional” moral cultures (e.g., Benedictine monasticism as an “ecological community” [Nisbet, 1973:319-382]); it is “modern” as a totality extracted from its embeddedness in other ideologies and presumed to provide the overall, and the sole adequate, orientation for the “post-industrial” society (Ferkiss, 1974). It is distinguished by a wholistic-naturalistic-conservative orientation opposed, by its logic, more to the liberal and romantic-anarchist than to the nationalist and ascetic-revolutionary moral cultures; but it seems, of all modern moral cultures, most capable of serving as a basis for a stable “post-modern” re-traditionalization. It can incorporate the mechanisms of moralization of all types of modern moral cultures. But it is doubtful whether it will soon become as potent as the other four types of modern moral cultures.

A modern counter-moral culture, formally analogous to the moral cultures but “counter” in the sense that it tends to eliminate the notion of individual moral responsibility without taking collective responsibility seriously, is the *culture of determinism*. In this culture it is assumed that individuals are shaped and moved by biological or social forces in all essentials beyond the control, or even the possibility of major choices, of individuals affected by them. Many spokesmen for this culture, at least in Western academic circles,

⁸“Nationalism, as I shall speak of it, is the desire to preserve or enhance a people’s national or cultural identity when that identity is threatened, or the desire to transform or even create it when it is felt to be inadequate or lacking” (Plamenatz, 1976:23-24). Nationalist moral cultures can converge either with liberal, or with romantic-anarchist, or even, temporarily, with revolutionary-ascetic moral cultures, the first most strongly in the United States, the second in nineteenth-century Italy and Germany, and the third in twentieth-century totalitarianisms.

tend to assume that they themselves exist in the liberal moral culture, and that the culture of determinism is only for the "subjects" they study or treat. This duality of standards, a rather "traditional" characteristic, is not found in any of the modern moral cultures, in each of which spokesmen and their followers are assumed to participate in the same moral culture. The behavioral science-therapeutic movement is a key element of the counter-moral culture of irresponsible determinism.⁹ When this movement fuses with the romantic-anarchist moral culture, the result tends to be that both the teacher-healer and the student-patient are perceived as equally irresponsible victims, commiserating with each other (or floundering together) (Gutman, 1975; Bloom, 1977).

It would seem that, judged by the criteria of sacredness-secularity previously proposed, the ascetic-revolutionary moral culture approximates the "sacred" type, whereas the liberal moral culture approaches as closely to "secularity" as it is possible without ceasing to be a moral culture. Even the liberal culture contains a "sacred" (though not, in a traditional sense, religious) component in the idea of inalienable rights. The culture of irresponsible determinism, in the West, frequently retains this "sacred" element, but detaches it from individual responsibility. In the main, it looks like a movement toward the collectivization of responsibility without undertaking the major institutional changes necessary for sustaining collective responsibility. Thus it is either fundamentally unserious or implies a reliance on some harmonizing mechanism beyond human control and, if so, constitutes a movement away from the relatively consistent secularity of demythologized liberalism toward a more "sacred" type of moral culture.

Each of the moral cultures has its own historical trajectory, and its specific characteristics, beyond the defining ones, depend both on the point of the trajectory at a particular time and on national differences in the trajectories themselves.

Challenges to an established moral culture, or to its specific components, take the form of *moral struggles*, which are seen here not as internal experiences of the individual (although they are that as well), but as historical processes to which the individual is exposed or in which he participates. Moral struggles can occur between moral cultures or within a single moral culture. We may correspondingly distinguish between inter-cultural and intra-cultural moral struggles.

A Typology of Moral Logics

The analysis of the *moral logics* requires an initial presentation of several taxonomies. Moral logics may be conceived of as abstract, relatively context-free types of arguments for performing the intellectual tasks involved in distinguishing right from wrong. Moral logics are not to be confused with *moral doctrines*, which are concrete ideologies of moral direction, formulated in a particular, "history-laden" moral rhetoric. Not all moral logics actually employed are necessarily embodied in publicly accepted moral doctrines. There are usually several moral logics available in a complex historical setting, each of which has its own historical trajectory. The morally conscious individual chooses which of these logics to affirm, under what conditions, in what mixtures, and in what manner to adhere to the moral logics which he either accepts or is coerced to conform with.

I distinguish four types of moral logics, each with a number of historically significant variants. The first type, the logics for *establishing obligations*, answers to the question: In what do moral obligations originate? Obligations can be seen as originating in: (1) Group

⁹As one of the values of "the counseling ideology," Halmos (1970:18, 16) lists the belief that: "The notion of blameworthiness, of moral responsibility, of culpability, and the correlate sentiments of punitiveness, avengefulness, and the like are senseless, and therefore, morally wrong in a universe in which we cannot control the most decisive phase of our learning," which takes place "in intimate social relationships and mostly so in the initial years of life . . ."

custom (obligations acquired by inheritance or assumed automatically by joining a group and valid only for its members—e.g., *noblesse oblige*); (2) Universal principle inherent in the structure and operations of the universe or of its “meaningful” part—i.e., history (and therefore binding on all of its components, regardless of their particular traditions, choices, and mutual agreements); (3) Utilitarian reciprocity (obligation to return goods or services, incurred by acceptance of goods or services of corresponding value). (4) Collective agreement to establish an obligation binding on all members, present and future, of the collectivity making the agreement, either permanently or until the agreement is set aside or revised in the manner provided for in the agreement itself (the Biblical covenant, social contract); (5) Personal moral intuition (obligation derived from spontaneous responses to conditions observed, but not governed by any formulated norm). Fear of external punishment would seem to be one of the supports for fulfilling one’s obligations, moral or not (except those which derive from personal moral intuition and are not susceptible to external sanctions); but fear is not by itself a source of moral obligations.

The logics which derive obligation from group custom and from utilitarian reciprocity are the most universal. Deriving new moral obligations from collective agreements to establish them has its roots in Hebraic-Greek-Roman-medieval sources and is thus essentially Western. All world religions—and Marxism—derive moral obligations from the structure of the universe (or, in the case of Buddhism, from the moral order to which the universe stands as an illusion). The logic which derives moral obligations from personal moral intuition, from a “moral sense” not secured by any formulated doctrine, is implied in the myth of Prometheus, even in the Chinese tradition of knights-errant (Liu, 1976)¹⁰ but it has become fully explicit only in eighteenth-century humanitarianism (Fiering, 1976).

Particular rights (or, especially in pre-modern contexts, “rightful claims”) are established by reference to one or more logics of *justification of claims*. Individual or collective claims for goods, services, or symbolic recognition can be justified (made “rightful”) by interpreting what is requested or demanded as: (1) Equitable compensation for goods provided or services rendered, burdens carried, or suffering (the logic of “justice”); (2) Necessities for survival, health, technical efficiency or “being fully human” (the logic of “need,” both justice and need constituting “rational” criteria for justifying claims); (3) Due rewards to possessors of meritorious qualities, such as virtue, faith, creativity, sensitivity, talent, knowledge, loyalty, or capacity for judgment (the logic of “recognition of quality,” the qualities to be rewarded usually, but not always, defined by tradition); (4) Rights called “sacred” or “natural” and attached by custom to social positions, whether such universalistic positions as those of human being or citizen, or particularistic positions, such as those of the father in Confucian China or of a member of one of the estates in medieval Europe, regardless of the personal qualities of the occupants (the logic of “tradition”); (5) Supernatural “command” or historical “fate” to perform a mission (the logic of “transcendental assignment”); (6) Self-justifying demands, not needing any support beyond desire itself or, as in classical economics, beyond desire supported by purchasing power (the logic of “wants” or of “desire and power”).

The last type has been elaborated into a *moral* claim, not only for princes, but for everyone, only since Hobbes. But the logics of justice and of need have also been most fully worked out in modern times, though the former has deep roots in various religions, especially those derived from Irano-Semitic sources. In the dominant traditions of non-Western civilizations the logics of tradition and of recognition of quality have tended to be most salient—and in Brahmanic Hinduism the two virtually coincide. This tends to

¹⁰Chinese knights-errant represent a “traditional,” yet completely secularized moral culture.

be the case in moral cultures dominated by securely established priesthoods. "Prophetic" movements, whether religious or secular, tend to favor the logic of transcendental assignment.

The third type of moral logic identifies the agency responsible for deciding how to act in morally ambiguous cases, when contradictory obligations are imposed or contradictory claims made, and the capacity by which the deciding agency is enabled to make decisions. The logics of *moral decision-making* can be: (1) Magical, when oracles or chance, rather than human beings, are called upon to make the decision on their own inscrutable grounds; (2) Communal, when a whole collectivity must adjudicate (as a "jury of equals," representing "common sense," "public opinion," or "community standards"); (3) Elitist, when the overall rulers must decide (by virtue of their possession of "legitimate power"); (4) Expert, when specialists in the particular type of issue give direction (on the grounds that they possess superior "knowledge" or "discipline"); and (5) Individualized, when the individual himself must rely on his own moral intelligence (usually conceived of as natural "reason" capable of understanding "enlightened self-interest," or a permanently commanding "conscience," or spontaneous "moral sense," or a cultivated "reasonable sensibility" in which reason and sensitiveness are fused).¹¹ A sixth logic of moral decision-making is currently emerging—mechanized pattern discernment, when computers are fed all the information which they are capable of absorbing, in the expectation that "empirical guidelines" for human decisions will thereby emerge. Only the communal, elite, expert, and individualized modes of decision-making involve *conscious moral choosing*, though all six modes constitute methodologies for *solving moral issues*. But magic and mechanized pattern discernment are amoral methodologies for solving moral problems.

When it comes down to differentiating between "expert" and "individualized" logics of moral decision-making, the question usually arises under what circumstances, and for what kinds of people, the individualized logic can take priority over one or another type of expert logic. That is, by what is the claim to be entitled to "moral self-reliance" justified? The answers most frequently given are "adequate education," "purity of heart," or "natural reason" (Leites, 1974; 1976).

In the high traditions of both India and the modern West (since the 12th century), the dominant logic of moral decision-making has been individualized, but with the aid of expert "spiritual guidance" (which has more recently, in the Western democracies, tended to become advice, the experts themselves frequently becoming "opinion leaders"). The Indian logic concentrates the functions of the moral expert into a single *guru* whom an individual freely chooses but then binds himself to obey his directives.¹² The Western post-medieval tendency, which has proceeded concurrently with the democratization of the society, has been to distribute the functions of moral guidance to a variety of "specialist" advisors whose advice the individual who chooses them can normally choose

¹¹It is not to be assumed that the order of listing represents an evolutionary schema and that individualized logics of moral decision-making are self-evidently the most "advanced," "mature," or, for that matter, viable ones. They might be such if the presence of "reason," "conscience," or "moral sense" *sufficient* for deciding morally ambiguous cases not only in personal life, but in the historical situation of mankind could be *universally* presupposed.

¹²"Although Gandhi often referred to the duty or right to disobey laws because of a question of conscience, he did not uphold the 'common' individual's conscience as an infallible guide to making a decision between the state's directive and the moral law if they were found in conflict. When a case of possible disobedience arose, determining the right answer was restricted by Gandhi to his own enhanced insight or, at most, to the deliberations of an executive group. Gandhi considered that very few men have the foundations for initiating conscientious disobedience, i.e., religious merit of his degree, which will enable them to authorize lawbreaking in the name of conscience" (Power, 1971:178-179).

to accept or to reject. It is also assumed in the West (with greatest confidence in the Anglo-Saxon countries since the eighteenth century) that a morally adequate existence can be led without any such expert guidance.¹³ The communal logic of moral decision-making is employed mainly in adjudicating disputes on the local level, common-law courts in the Anglo-Saxon countries, village councils in India.

The fourth type of moral logic defines what to look for in evaluating actual behavior. The logics of *moral evaluation* employ one or several of the following criteria: (1) Propriety (dutiful conformity to established norms of action), (2) Principle (fulfillment of moral norm claiming superiority over established custom regardless of practical effects), (3) Results (actual outcome of actions), and (4) Intention (inner effort in the mind of the actor). Among the "results" by which actions can be judged, historically the most important have been survival, welfare, happiness, power, fame, or efficiency for its own sake.

Results (fame in the heroic tradition, common welfare—as well as fame—in the polis) counted most heavily in Greece.¹⁴ Propriety was more important in republican Rome. Christianity tends to give priority to intentions and principle over propriety. Confucianism fuses intention with propriety.¹⁵ Orthodox Hinduism comes close to operating, in regard to the obligations of particular castes, by propriety alone.¹⁶ Buddhism recognizes only intention (the intention of detachment from desire). In secular liberalism, the principle of protection of the rights of the individual is supreme; both intentions and results (usually welfare, happiness, or power) count, with some waffling as to which has priority; propriety is discounted. Marxism also discounts propriety, but tends to put "objective" results above "subjective" intentions; the importance of principle varies, for different kinds of Marxists, from supreme to nil. A characteristic of both totalitarian and managerial ideologies is to place ("practical") results (power and efficiency) above

¹³The rise of the confidence in the capacity of the individual for morally adequate self-direction is reflected in the emergence in the eighteenth century of such self-compounds as "self-control," "self-government," "self-possession," "self-renunciation," and "self-restraint." It is the eighteenth-century English self, capable of reliable self-direction, that becomes the object of "self-respect": the term "self-respect," which in the seventeenth century meant "a private, selfish end," "self-love," "self-conceit," is now legitimated as "proper regard for the dignity of one's person." For the evidence, see Kavolis (1976). But even in England, the erosion of traditional religion in the nineteenth century activated doubts, in the middle classes, about the effectiveness of internal restraints in the lower class, if not supported by supernatural sanctions (Houghton, 1957).

¹⁴Adkins (1960:29, 253, 310-311): In Homer, "the punishment for [unintentional] homicide is clearly the same as that for premeditated murder"; "The Greek moral sense does not provide, and never has provided, even the raw material from which a categorical imperative could be fabricated"; "The analysis of Plato's theory of punishment shows that . . . if a man's existence proves inimical to the *eudaimonia* of the state for whatever reason, he must be removed. Nothing may take precedence over civic *eudaimonia*."

¹⁵"Ironically, the ideal Confucian gentleman has frequently been delineated in exactly the type which Confucius and Mencius both strongly condemned, namely, the 'good villager' (*hsiang yüan*) who, though he acted as if he was following the Confucian norms, was actually following only the convention without being consciously engaged in moral practice at all. Confucius called this type of person 'the thief of virtue,' because the magic touch, self-cultivation, the conscious effort to bring oneself in line with *li*, is absent" (Tu, 1968:37-38).

¹⁶"All high caste Hindus are primarily concerned with the maintenance of their caste-status which depends on the rigid observations of caste-rules, and their supreme preoccupation is the avoidance of pollution which may adversely affect their social status. They see the individual not so much as an independent agent, guided in his conduct by the promptings of his own conscience, but as a member of a tightly organized community, whose actions affect not only his own status but also the status of those closest to him" (von Fürer-Haimendorf, 1967:154-155).

intention, propriety, and principle. Moral doctrines which give priority to intention could probably all be designated as ultimately "esoteric" (whether in a "religious" or a "secular" sense). But they are rarely concerned with nothing but intentions.

An Analytical Outline

The basic problems in the comparative study of collective moral structures of any kind may be formulated as follows:

1. What are the normative constitutions of particular moral structures, including (a) their identifiable basic principles or rules, (b) the modes of adherence to them, at particular stages of their historical trajectories?

2. What are the elements and influences, "material" as well as "ideal," that have shaped (and transformed) particular moral structures?

3. Who participated, and to what extent, in particular moral structures or adhered to their requirements? Who was excluded or chose not to participate? What alternative modes of participation existed within particular moral structures?

4. What were the systems of moralization, if any, sustaining a particular moral structure?

5. How much influence have particular moral structures had on their adherents, both when other circumstances of their lives supported the demands of the moral structures to which they adhered, and when other circumstances put them under pressure to act contrary to the demands of the moral structures to which they subscribed?

6. How have particular moral structures come, in particular historical settings (though perhaps not everywhere), to the "decline and fall" of their influence—changes in the characteristics of their adherents, changes in situations of action, losses of vitality of "spiritual" leadership, increasing inadequacies in communication and organization, destruction perpetrated from outside of the community of adherents?

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