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THE PRINCIPLE OF

NORMALIZATION

IN HUMAN SERVICES

with additional texts by

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SPONSORED BY THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION
FOR THE MENTALLY RETARDED

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*'I have become a stranger to my brethren
An alien to my mother's son'*

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The predominant portion of human management services is rendered by generic agencies (*i.e.* agencies not oriented toward a single condition such as mental retardation, visual impairment, *etc.*), and to typical citizens. However, a highly visible portion of human management concerns itself with individuals whom the public, or a significant segment of it, views as 'deviant'. In all likelihood, this book will be read primarily by those persons who are concerned with management of deviant behavior. Since the maintenance or attainment of nondeviant, or normative, behavior is the ultimate concern of the normalization principle, we must here explore the nature of deviance before we can profitably discuss the principle itself.

The social definition of deviancy

The concept of deviancy has been elaborated in the recent past by social scientists, and it is a very useful one. A person can be said to be deviant if he is perceived as being significantly different from others in some aspect that is considered of relative importance, and if this difference is negatively valued. An overt and negatively valued characteristic that is associated with the deviancy is called a 'stigma'.

Some sociologists (*e.g.* Farber, 1968) do not consider the terms 'deviant' and 'deviancy' as appropriate for some groups, such as the retarded, because to these sociologists, the definition of deviancy implies an intent to be deviant. I find this definition to be very weak, since it would necessitate the determination of the presence or absence of intent in each individual instance, and in practice, this would imply reliance on a mentalistic and intangible construct that is rarely ascertainable in a convincing manner.

It clearly must be kept in mind that deviancy is of our own making; it is in the eyes of the beholder. An observed quality only becomes a deviancy when it is viewed as negatively value-charged. And the same quality that may be negatively valued in one culture may be positively valued in another. Obesity in women is a good example, being valued in some mid-eastern cultures. As a German proverb proclaims: what is an owl to one person is a nightingale to another.

Handicapped individuals are frequently perceived as deviant. One only needs to consider the history of attitudes toward and the management of the mentally retarded and disordered; the visually, aurally, physically, or speech handicapped; the cosmetically disfigured; the aged and epileptic; and the

I acknowledge the strong influence which the sociologist Richard Kurtz has exerted upon the formulation of this chapter which has drawn partly upon an earlier publication (Wolfensberger, 1969b).

delinquent and legal offenders. Even those whose differentness may not constitute a disability may be perceived as deviant, for instance those who are unusually tall, short, thick, or thin; members of ethnic, racial, or non-conformist minorities; and even those who stand out because of special talents, high intelligence, or virtue.

The generality of attitudes toward deviancy

Too often, we are only concerned about attitudes toward one type of deviancy, perhaps the type that is of primary concern in our own work. Yet frequently, the attitude that we may see expressed toward a person with a certain deviancy may not really be specific to that deviancy at all; such an attitude is very apt to be part of a more generalized attitude-complex about a group of deviancies, or perhaps about deviancy in the broadest sense.

We should keep in mind that such assertions have considerable empirical and historical evidence behind them. Persons rarely appear to be prejudiced against only one type of deviancy. For instance, English (1971) showed that negative attitudes toward blindness were related to similar attitudes toward racial and ethnic minorities. Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, and Sanford (1950) identified an 'authoritarian personality' type that is particularly apt to be prejudiced. Also, history shows that different types of deviancies were often managed in very similar ways, and that a wide range of deviancies may elicit similar responses or expectancy patterns from people.

To explain such generalization of response, Wilkins (1965) suggests that our attitudes toward deviance derive from the platonic notion that goodness, truth, and beauty are related to each other, and that any deviations from norms *i.e.* truth are 'errors' which, by analogy, must be related to evil and ugliness.² For instance, a person may react with similar emotions toward retardation as he does toward blindness, delinquency, and senility.

In early New England, the Puritans looked with suspicion on any deviation from behavioral norms, and irregular conduct was often explained in terms of evil supernatural powers, such as witchcraft. There is reason to believe that retarded and/or disordered persons were tortured, hanged, and burned on this suspicion. Later in New England, records show that lunatics, 'distracted' persons, people who were *non compos mentis*, and those who had 'fits' were all classed together, and perhaps with vagabonds and paupers as well. Connecticut's first house of corrections in 1722 was for rogues, vagabonds, the idle, beggars, fortune tellers, diviners, musicians, runaways, drunkards, prostitutes, pilferers, brawlers – and the mentally afflicted. As late as about 1820, the retarded, together with other dependent deviant groups (such as aged paupers, the sick poor, or the mentally distracted) were publicly 'sold' ('bid off') to the lowest bidder, *i.e.* bound over to the person who offered to take responsibility for them for the lowest amount of public support (Deutsch, 1949).

² This view may go back even further than Plato. In the Old Testament (Leviticus 21, 16-18), '... the Lord spoke unto Moses saying "Speak unto Aaron saying whosoever of thy seed in their generations it be on whom there is any blemish shall not approach to offer the bread of his God. For whatsoever man it be on whom there is a blemish shall not approach: a blind, or a lame man, or one that hath a flattened nose or a man one of whose limbs is too long".'

The tenth (1880) United States census first combined 'defectives, dependents, and delinquents' for reporting purposes. In its reports, the Public Health Service combined criminals, defectives, and delinquents as late as the 1920's. Between about 1875 and 1920, one of the most important organizations of human service workers in the United States was the National Conference on Charities and Correction, and in its proceedings during this time span, it often grouped the idiotic, imbecilic and feeble-minded with the deaf, dumb, blind, epileptic, insane, delinquent and offenders into one general class of 'defectives'. Few of us today are aware of the fact that the more contemporary term 'mental defective' was coined to distinguish the retarded from these other 'defectives', and it is no coincidence that there were many public institutions serving both the retarded as well as epileptic nonretarded. During the eugenic alarm period (*circa* 1890-1925), an incredible variety of deviancies were believed to be associated with retardation; indeed, they were seen to be caused by it: illness, physical impediments; poverty; vagrancy; unemployment; alcoholism; sex offenses of various types, including prostitution and illegitimacy; crime; mental illness; and epilepsy. All these were called the 'degeneracies'.

'The chronic insane, the epileptic, the paralytic, the imbecile and idiot of various grades, the moral imbecile, the sexual pervert, the kleptomaniac; many, if not most, of the chronic inebriates; many of the prostitutes, tramps, and minor criminals; many habitual paupers, especially the ignorant and irresponsible mothers of illegitimate children, so common in poor houses; many of the shiftless poor, ever on the verge of pauperism and often stepping over into it; some of the blind, some deaf-mutes, some consumptives. All these classes, in varying degree with others not mentioned, are related as being effects of the one cause - which itself is the summing up of many causes - 'degeneracy' ' (quoted by Johnson, 1903, p. 246).

The first institutions for the retarded in North America were built (*circa* 1850-1870) in a period of optimism regarding mental disorder and the education of the deaf and blind, and many facilities for these other deviant groups were erected at that time. The later disillusionment about retardation was also not isolated, but part of a more generalized aversion toward, and virtual persecution of, deviancies. Isolated and segregating farm colonies were a logical development in the history of residential institutions of many types.

During the early part of the century - a very chauvinistic period - numerous writers claimed that a large proportion of the retarded and otherwise degenerate came from foreign-born stock, contributing to the call for more restrictive immigration laws (Wolfensberger, 1969b). This is perhaps an extreme example of how retardation was linked in the minds of many to other types of deviance. One could go on endlessly demonstrating the point that societal responses toward one type of deviancy were not specific, but were part of a more generalized pattern of response toward deviance.

Major historic roles of deviant persons

When a person is perceived as deviant, he is cast into a role that carries with it powerful expectancies. Strangely enough, these expectancies not only take hold of the mind of the perceiver, but of the perceived person as well. It is a well-established fact that a person's behavior tends to be profoundly affected

by the role expectations that are placed upon him. Generally, people will play the roles they have been assigned. This permits those who define social roles to make self-fulfilling prophecies by predicting that someone cast into a certain role will emit behavior consistent with that role. Unfortunately, role-appropriate behavior will then often be interpreted to be a person's 'natural' mode of acting, rather than a mode elicited by environmental events and circumstances. There is profound truth in what Shakespeare said.

'All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts'

As you Like It. Act II Scene VII 139-142

When we review history and literature, it becomes apparent that regardless of time or place, certain roles are particularly apt to be thrust upon deviant persons. The way in which these roles transcend time, distance, and culture is remarkable. Most of these socio-historical role perceptions reflect fairly clear-cut prejudices which have little relationship to reality. However, as with many prejudices, the lack of objective verification is not a crucial element in the shaping of a social judgment or social policy. The major roles to be reviewed below include those of the deviant person as subhuman, a menace, an object of dread, a diseased organism, an object of ridicule, an object of pity, an eternal child, and a holy innocent. Most of these roles will be discussed again in chapter 6, where the architectural design implications of various role perceptions are reviewed.

THE DEVIANT INDIVIDUAL AS A SUBHUMAN ORGANISM

Historians and sociologists have long recognized that deviant subgroups within a culture may be perceived as not fully human. To this day, for example, there are large segments of our population which deny full human status to members of certain minority groups, such as Negroes and Indians. Even ordinary army recruits may be said to need 'being broken' or tamed, like wild beasts or horses. But the retarded are particularly apt to be unconsciously perceived or even consciously labelled as subhuman, as animal-like, even as 'vegetables' or 'vegetative'. The literature of retardation is richly endowed with allusions to the alleged subhuman nature of retarded individuals, and with labels that suggest subhuman status. The term 'garden variety' retardation, widely used by professionals in the past to refer to so-called cultural-familial retardation, has definite vegetative connotations.

It is interesting to note that the vegetable concept may, in part, have been derived from an inappropriate transfer of the medical concept of 'vegetative functions'. In medicine, the 'vital functions' controlled by the autonomic nervous system and/or the hypothalamus may be referred to as 'vegetative'. These functions, which include temperature, heart rate, blood pressure, respiration rate, *etc.* are possessed by all humans and most animal species, and yet the concept of vegetative functions is sometimes translated into the social context in such a way as to abrogate even animal, not to mention human, qualities.

One historic perception of the malformed child as a nonhuman entity is expressed in the common myth of the changeling (Haffter, 1968), deposited in lieu of the real human infant either by good fairies (e.g. in Ireland), or by evil spirits or the devil (e.g. in central Europe). For instance, Martin Luther, in describing what appears to have been a severely or profoundly retarded child, denied the child's humanity and interpreted him as a changeling as follows: 'Eight years ago, there was one at Dessau whom I, Martinus Luther, saw and grappled with. He was twelve years old, had the use of his eyes and all his senses, so that one might think that he was a normal child. But he did nothing but gorge himself as much as four peasants or threshers. He ate, defecated and drooled and, if anyone tackled him, he screamed. If things didn't go well, he wept. So I said to the Prince of Anhalt: 'If I were the Prince, I should take this child to the Molda River which flows near Dessau and drown him.' But the Prince of Anhalt and the Prince of Saxony, who happened to be present, refused to follow my advice. Thereupon I said: 'Well, then the Christians shall order the Lord's Prayer to be said in church and pray that the dear Lord take the Devil away.' This was done daily in Dessau and the changeling died in the following year.' When Luther was asked why he had made such a recommendation, he replied that he was firmly of the opinion that such changelings were merely a mass of flesh, a *massa carnis*, without soul. 'For it is the Devil's power that he corrupts people who have reason and souls when he possesses them. The Devil sits in such changelings where their soul should have been!'³

A recent children's book in a Scottish setting (Duncan, 1965) incorporates a pseudohistorical retarded character by the name of 'Simon the Changeling', in connection with the old myth of some infants being 'touched' by the fairies or 'little people'.

Deutsch (1949) pointed out that the mentally disordered were often apt to be stripped of their human attributes, together with their rights and privileges as human beings. Logically, if one dehumanizes a person who once had reason but lost it, then it is even easier to dehumanize a person who never possessed much reason in the first place, such as a retarded individual. For instance, a comment in the *Atlantic Monthly* (October, 1967, p. 49), called for '... sacrifice of mentally defective humans, or human vegetables ...' to provide organ transplants and '... increase the intellectual betterment of mankind ...'.

Mowrer (1965) proposed that operant conditioning is so effective with autistic children because it is also effective with animals, and the autistic individual 'is least removed from the 'animal level'' (p. 208). In a footnote, he then also referred to the good results of these procedures with retarded children. Dehumanization of the retarded is so accepted, even in this day, and even by workers in the field, that we can witness a public statement by a contemporary superintendent of a state institution referring to some of his retarded residents as '... so-called human beings ...' '... below what we might call an animal level of functioning ...' (*Frontiers of Hospital Psychiatry*, 1968, 5(1), 5-6).

³ There are several versions of this account, derived from the various editions of Luther's Tabletalks, e.g. *Luther's Works*, Vol. 45, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1967, p. 396; and Aurifaber, Jr., *Tischreden*, Vol. 5, Weimar Edition, p. 9. In all editions, the account is item No. 5207.

Some of the implications of the subhuman role perception to human management are obvious. Aside from these obvious points, the following corollaries of the subhuman perception are of note: attribution of animal-like qualities or even skills; belittling of the learning capacity; abrogation of a sense of esthetics; need for extraordinary control, restriction, or supervision; denial of citizenship rights and privileges, which may partially explain why, since about 1900, retarded residents in public institutions have been treated in a fashion that today is being (or will probably soon be) ruled illegal or unconstitutional; abrogation of human emotions, sensibilities, shame, and even sensation and perception.

In regard to the last point, the idea that the mentally afflicted lack sensory acuity, *e.g.* that they are insensitive to heat and cold, was popular into the mid-1800s (Deutsch, 1949). This myth resulted in their often being denied heat during the winter for their cold institution cells, and may well have contributed to the image of the retarded as insensate vegetables. Indeed, even new buildings designed specifically for the disordered did not provide for heating of the residents' cells, nor were their windows glazed (Tiffany, 1891). Parallels to this interpretation of a devalued group as being insensate non-humans can be found even in contemporary society. As recently as 1972, the South African government was planning to build high-rise housing for non-white laborers, in which these laborers would be 'kept' segregated by sex, four persons to a room, and without any heating (*Time*, May 15, 1972).

Devaluation of a human being into a subhuman role is so contrary to other ideals and values which a perceiver may hold as to prohibit the conscious recognition and labelling of the dehumanization. Therefore, it is important to be aware that while many persons hold subhuman perceptions, they cannot admit these perceptions to their own awareness because the implied interpretation of a human being would clash with other, concurrently held, perceptions and values. Thus, it is very common to encounter a person who dehumanizes a group of devalued individuals without being conscious of the meaning of his overt behavior and the reality of his attitudes. Only by understanding this process of repression of an unacceptable impulse can we also understand certain dehumanizing behaviors, or why some dehumanizers are remarkably unaware that their behaviors and attitudes are dehumanizing and are perceived to be so by others.

Vail (1967) has probed this problem with considerable sophistication. For instance, how can the fact be explained that individuals who, by all ordinary criteria, can be described as model citizens, suddenly become the cold-blooded killers of millions. This can only be understood if one understands the reality and process of the dehumanization of devalued individuals. The explanation is that if an organism is perceived as being not fully human, then it does not matter whether this organism is destroyed, dislocated, disowned, or otherwise used at the convenience of those perceived to be human. Animals are thus used all the time.

What is remarkable is that individuals who are relatively moral in every other sphere of their lives are capable of imposing nonhuman role perceptions upon certain groups, and are then very readily capable of treating such groups no better than animals. Only this reality can explain how otherwise moral and loving individuals can be unfeeling and dehumanizing human managers in certain spheres of their functioning. For example, this has not

been an unusual phenomenon with many superintendents of institutions. It explains a phenomenon such as the senior personnel of an institution with about 75 years of experience in work with retarded children designing a new building for severely handicapped children which has toilets that are too large and high to be usable by such children, and soap dishes and towel racks attached so high on the wall as to be unreachable by the children. Had the designers been charged with planning a building for human children, they would have anticipated such problems; designing for entities perceived to be nonhuman, it was impossible for the designers to muster the empathy necessary to anticipate this problem, even with generations of experience behind them.

Only by fully understanding the dynamics and the accompanying unconsciousness of dehumanization will one be able to fully perceive and relate to the symbolic ways in which dehumanization often manifests itself. For example, there are many documented instances in which a parent has destroyed his handicapped child. The motives have been varied, and have included disappointment, frustration, hostility, pity, *etc.* However, it is not often that a middle-class parent not merely destroys his own child, but also commits the highly symbolic act of discarding the child literally in the garbage, as has happened recently in a large North American city.

As Buddenhagen (1971) points out, there may be similar symbolism in the fact that severe aversive punishment is particularly apt to be used with the retarded, and perhaps for reasons which are not quite conscious. With less impaired individuals, we are much more apt to use rewards, and while it might take some ingenuity to devise an appropriate reward system for the profoundly retarded, such ingenuity is probably quite within the scope of ability and grasp of most experimenters. Thus, their sometimes too ready recourse to severe aversive stimulation when dealing with the profoundly retarded may well derive from an unconscious perception of these individuals as nonhuman.

Similarly, the use of the electric cattle prod to administer aversive stimuli in the shaping of the behavior of the profoundly retarded may carry with it profound symbolic meaning. Assuming for the moment that the administration of electric shock were more humane than permitting the person to engage in extreme self-destructive behavior – as some of the profoundly retarded and disturbed may do – one can still ask the question why such stimuli are not administered in a fashion which strips the symbolism of animal-handling and particularly of 'dumb cattle' from the methodology that is chosen.

Finally, Rowland and Patterson (1971) suggest that past and recent efforts of prominent scientists to explain the social problems associated with certain minority groups as being due to genetic intellectual inferiority is merely a sophisticated way of interpreting such minority groups as sub-human.

THE DEVIANT INDIVIDUAL AS A MENACE

Unknown events or objects, if alien enough, tend to arouse negative feelings in both man and beast. Man's history is filled with incidents of man's persecution of fellow men of different features, skin pigmentation, size, shape, language, custom, dress, *etc.*, and it is apparent that man has been very apt

to see evil in deviance. Therefore, it is not surprising that one role perception prominent in history is that of the deviant person as a menace. He might be perceived as being a menace individually, because of alleged propensities toward various crimes against persons and property; or he might be perceived as a social menace because of alleged contribution to social disorganization and genetic decline. This role perception has been a very prominent one during the so-called genetic scare or alarmist period (*circa* 1890-1925) when most of society's problems were attributed to inherited defect.

THE DEVIANT INDIVIDUAL AS AN UNSPEAKABLE OBJECT OF DREAD

Somewhat related to other role perceptions of the deviant person as sub-human or a menace is the perception of him as a dreadful entity or event. In some respects, this role perception is similar to the one of 'Man as other' defined by Vail (1967). Man as changeling, discussed earlier, may fit here, as may perceptions of a deviant person as sent by God as a punishment for the sins of his parents, discussed further below.

THE DEVIANT INDIVIDUAL AS AN OBJECT OF PITY

Frequently, a deviant individual is viewed as a person who is handicapped because of a misfortune for which he bears no responsibility, and who therefore should receive special attention, services, *etc.* The deviant person may even be seen as 'suffering' from his condition, even though such an interpretation may be highly subjective and even inaccurate. While there may be made efforts to relieve this alleged suffering, the person may also be seen as possibly unaware of his deviance. Much as in the sick role perception, the pitied person is likely to be held blameless for his condition, and perhaps unaccountable for his behavior. He is very apt to be viewed with a 'there but for the grace of God go I' attitude.

Usually, this form of the pity perception is benevolent and is accompanied by compassion and acceptance, although it may be devoid of respect for the deviant person. However, there also exists another variant of the pity perception, upheld more by a sense of duty than compassion. Particularly persons possessing a strongly moralistic conscience but not much genuine humanism are apt to perceive deviant persons as objects of sour charity. This attitude can be likened to the one widely held in the Victorian age toward orphans, and is epitomized by the Victorian response to *Oliver Twist's* request for 'more'. While the affected person was usually (but not necessarily) viewed as innocent, his parents often were not. Thus, the advent of a handicapped child was sometimes interpreted as a punishment for parental sins, and occasionally, the handicap was even attributed to a sin committed by the handicapped person himself prior to the presumed onset of his impaired condition.

For instance, colonial New Englanders often looked upon handicaps as the consequences of a stern providence meting out judgment for wickedness. According to Suraci (1966), such a view is quite common today in the Puerto Rican subculture in New York City. Where such a view prevails, the family members of a malformed or impaired person are likely to feel shame, and outsiders are more apt to be contemptuous rather than sympathetic toward them and the handicapped individual. Any charity extended with

such views can be expected to be cold, and the person receiving such aid might be labelled rather aptly a 'burden of charity'.⁴ Thus, the sour humanist may look upon a deviant recipient of services as a 'kept' object of charity, and while such charity clients may be seen as entitled to basic assistance and sustenance, they are not seen as entitled to anything interpretable as luxuries, frills, or extras. The object of such charity is expected to be grateful, and to work as hard as possible for his 'keep'.

As Coll (1969) pointed out, the Puritan Ethic had a strong influence in the formulation of the 'less eligibility' doctrine in the history of welfare services and charitable agencies. The doctrine states that no matter what the need of a person may be who is supported by public funds, assistance to him must be below the level of the lowest prevailing wage.

THE DEVIANT INDIVIDUAL AS A HOLY INNOCENT

In a number of cultures and eras, deviant individuals, particularly the mentally afflicted, have been accorded a religious role interpretation as the special children of God, as saints, or as holy or eternal innocents. Those incompetent to perform everyday tasks might be perceived as having religious thoughts on their minds, or as being endowed with saintly powers. It may also be believed that such persons have been sent by God for some special purpose. Perceived in a religious light, the afflicted are usually seen as incapable of consciously or voluntarily committing evil, and consequently they may be considered to be living saints. Religious role perceptions of some kind were reportedly prevalent among the Eskimos, North American Indians, and Arabs; and in Russia, Central Asia, and medieval Europe.

The first institution founded for the disordered in the Western world (Valencia, Spain, in 1410) was intended by its originator, Father Juan Gilabert Jofré to be 'for the innocent ones, that is, the insane', and it was called the 'Hospital of Innocents'. In France, the retarded person has been referred to as 'l'enfant du Bon Dieu'. In English, the term 'Christling' or 'God's Infant' might be used (Norris, 1963-64). Even a theater review in *Time* (December 8, 1967) referred to the main character in 'Pantagleize' by Ghelderode as 'a fool in Christ, one of nature's eternal innocents'. In the Gaelic tongue (at least as spoken in Ireland), the retarded may be referred to as 'innocent', 'artless', 'guiltless', and even the contemporary term for a retarded person translates as 'one of God's people' (Kidd, 1970). In Russia, the retarded were called 'holy idiots' (Edgerton, 1970).

At times, deviant persons have been perceived as not merely incapable of sin, but as actually being representative of, or possessed by, a sacred spirit. In such cases, a certain awe or even cult may surround such persons, as was reportedly the case among some North American Indian tribes. A person perceived in such a way may be quite valued, and he or his family may be perceived as specially favored by the Lord. To this day, certain Central American Indian cultures perceive their albino members as being on special terms with the sun god, and as being less inclined to commit evils (Shatto and Keeler, 1971).

⁴ Here, the burden of charity is discussed as a variant of the pity perception. However, the two roles almost could be given co-equal standing, as is done in the chapter on 'Additional architectural-environmental implications of the normalization principle', because the two perceptions can lead to quite distinct management implications.

Vanier (1971) relates the story of an Algerian who said to the parents of a retarded child 'How lucky you are to have a child like that. We believe that a family that has a child like that is blessed by Allah.' In the Arab world, the word 'saint' may actually be used for persons of altered mind, including the retarded, disturbed, epileptic, and religious ascetic. The term 'marabut' might be applied equally to the lowly retarded servant girl or to a respected saintly figure (Edgerton, 1970).

Jewish tradition, like many, is divided as to attitudes toward handicap. While one current of attitudes is very devaluing, another provides a positive and religious interpretation. Thus, the following ancient Hebrew prayer, over 3000 years old, is intended to be said upon encountering a deformed person: 'Praise to you, Lord God, king of the universe, who varies the forms of thy creatures.' A Jewish proverb states that 'the power of prophecy is given to children and fools.'

In Western culture, the holy innocent perception is still particularly prevalent in Catholicism. There is a 'Prayer for Holy Innocents' in the Roman ritual, and one encounters many poems on the theme, such as the much-publicized 'Heaven's Very Special Child'. One recent article by a Catholic nun is entitled 'The Religious Education of the Holy Innocents', and another one (Anonymous, 1970) 'The Saint in our House'.

The holy innocent perception is one of the most benign role perceptions in human management. However, it has one element that is objectionable. It implies a reverse form of dehumanization, by elevating a human being almost above the human level, and by suggesting a 'little angel' status. Vail (1967) subsumes such role perceptions in his profoundly insightful conceptualization of 'man as other'.

However, the perception of the holy innocent must be differentiated from the interpretation of the impaired person as innocent but not necessarily holy. This is a perception forcefully synthesized by Vanier (1971), and if applied with discretion to some impaired persons (such as to some of the retarded), it may be quite accurate for them. This interpretation is based upon certain child-like traits which may be found especially in retarded persons, without implying that such persons are either holy or eternal children. In other words, selectively applied, this perception can be a highly realistic one which, in a sensitive and properly motivated person, can elicit a rich and enriching response style toward the perceived person.

THE DEVIANT INDIVIDUAL AS A DISEASED ORGANISM

An additional historically prominent role perception is that of the deviant individual as sick, *i.e.* as an incumbent of what sociologists refer to as the 'sick role'. Much has been said and written about the medical model which generally implies the perception of a deviant person as a 'sick' 'patient' who, after 'diagnosis', is given 'treatment' or 'therapy' for his 'disease' in a 'clinic' or 'hospital' by 'doctors' who carry primary administrative and human management responsibility, assisted by a hierarchy of 'paramedical' personnel and 'therapists', all this hopefully leading to a 'cure'. Conditions which have been widely subsumed under such a model include homosexuality, mental disorder, mental retardation, stuttering, alcoholism, and drug addictions.

When a deviant person is thus seen as sick, then education, work, and recreation can come to be interpreted as educational, industrial, and recrea-

tional therapy; those who 'administer' such therapy (perhaps in 'doses' rather than lessons, *etc.*) may be called therapists; finally, there often exists a pessimistic preoccupation with the issue of curability versus incurability because of the perceived 'chronicity' of a condition.

Perceived as sick, the deviant person may be seen as entitled to the privileges, as well as subjected to the demands, that have been proposed by Parsons (1951; Parsons & Fox, 1958) as characteristic of the sick role generally, and as partially verified empirically by Gordon (1966). The privileges include exemption from normal social responsibilities, and recognition that the condition is not the individual's fault; the demands are that the individual must want to get well or at least better, and must seek suitable and appropriate remedy for his condition.

It should be noted that the disease model can be expressed in two variants, one of these embodying the best tradition of medical service to fellow humans, and the other one being concerned with health but not with human values. The latter model can be likened to veterinary medicine, and is particularly apt to be encountered in residential institutions.

THE DEVIANT INDIVIDUAL AS AN OBJECT OF RIDICULE

This role perception is closely associated with another one in which men are perceived as 'trivium' (Vail, 1967), *i.e.* as unimportant or not to be taken seriously. Thus, for many years, the Negro was virtually always depicted by the mass media, such as movies, in the role of a servant; a comic figure (*e.g.* the eye-rolling superstitious porter); or, at best, a light entertainer. Similarly, the retarded have frequently been cast into the role of village idiots, and in folk humor they are almost without exception depicted as an object of ridicule. A relatively recent manifestation of this role perception is the so-called moron joke of a few years ago, and an outstanding depiction of the retarded person as an object of ridicule was contained in the award-winning film *Charly*, based on Keyes' (1966) book *Flowers for Algernon*.

In medieval society, the retarded and deformed achieved some distinction as court fools or court jesters who would dress in garish costumes and engage in comic and silly antics for the merriment of the high-born. Thus, Horsfield (1940) relates that 'the court of Philip IV of Spain, 1621-65, was crowded with a horde of zanies, jugglers, tumblers, clowns, buffoons, jesters, an incomparable assortment of dwarfs, in fact almost every sort of person that might be included in fooldom. This motley pack was probably unequalled in any other time or country, except perhaps by that at the court of the Aztec king, Montezuma. These individuals, most of whom were probably mentally deficient folk, many with marked physical defects, were gathered from the highways and byways of the kingdom and brought to the palace, primarily for the amusement of royalty. At the court of Montezuma, these unfortunates were housed after the manner of a modern park zoo' (p. 152).

THE DEVIANT INDIVIDUAL AS AN ETERNAL CHILD

A very strong role perception of some deviant individuals is that of persons who are and perhaps always will be much younger than their age. For instance, the book *The Child Who Never Grew* by Pearl Buck (1950) and a Canadian film entitled *Eternal Children* render such a depiction of the re-

tarded person. A recent article (Fendell, 1969) is entitled 'Israel's Eternal Children'.

Generally, those who hold the eternal child role perception do not place strong or even reasonable developmental and adaptational demands upon the person so perceived. Instead of expecting the person to adapt to the environment, those who see him as a child would adapt the environment to him. For example, Eaton and Weil (1955) report that when a child is recognized as retarded among the Hutterites, extensive adjustments are made in his social environment. His baptism may even be 'cancelled', so that he can do no wrong as an adult. In no case is the retarded person institutionalized, as happens in the mainstream North American culture when the social systems surrounding a retarded person cannot or will not adapt to his limitations.

Societal management of deviancy

When we review society's efforts to handle deviancy, we can readily classify these efforts into four categories: destruction of deviant individuals, their segregation, reversal of their condition, or prevention thereof.

In the past, some kinds of deviance were seen to be the work of the devil or other malignant forces. As such, the deviant person was perceived as evil too, and was persecuted and destroyed in order to protect society. Destruction of the deviant has often been advocated – even today – for reasons related to self-preservation or self-protection. For instance, many societies have condoned the destruction of weaker, less adequate, or handicapped members. This was true of ancient Greece and Rome, of the Eskimos and bushmen, and of Nazi Germany. In North America, the increasing sentiment for, and legalization of, abortion of high-risk fetuses can be viewed, at least in part, as a variant of this theme.

As a more humane alternative to destruction, the deviant person who is being perceived as unpleasant, offensive, or frightening can be segregated from the mainstream of society and placed at its periphery. We have numerous examples of this: we segregate the Indian in reservations, and the Negro in the ghetto; the aged are congregated in special homes, ostensibly for their own good, and these homes are often located at the periphery of, or remote from, population centers; the emotionally disturbed and the retarded are commonly placed in institutions far in the countryside; and we have (or have had) 'dying rooms' in our hospitals to save us the unpleasantness of ultimate deviancy.

Deviance can be seen to be someone's fault or perhaps a sign that the deviant person's parents had sinned and were therefore being punished by the Lord. The belief that blemished offspring is a punishment for parental wrongdoing appears to be deeply ingrained in the unconscious of the people. Often, this belief is overtly expressed. It is a belief that had been held by Howe (a leading American pioneer in the field of blindness and mental retardation) and was repeatedly expressed by him. Another early authority on mental retardation (Greene, 1884, p. 270) said: 'Our wards are innocent of crime or fault. In the large majority of instances, they are the feeble and deformed expressions of parental sins or sorrows.' Parental alcoholism, for instance, was widely believed to be a major cause of retardation (*e.g.* Kerlin, 1886, p. 297). In fact, many deviancies were perceived to be due to a

person's own sins. Howe asserted that even retardation might result from a person's own wrongdoing (Howe, 1848, 1852, 1866), *e.g.* 'It appeared to us certain that the existence of so many idiots in every generation must be the consequence of some violation of the *natural laws*; – that where there was so much suffering, there must have been sin' (1848, p. 4). Perceived to be the result of sin, deviance is something to be ashamed of, hidden, and 'put away'. Thus, the Puritans held views very much along these lines (Deutsch, 1949).

The third and fourth alternatives for handling deviancy are to reverse or prevent it. Reversal is generally pursued by means of education, training, and treatment, which may also apply to prevention. Since deviancy exists by social definition, it can also be prevented or reversed by social redefinition, *e.g.* by not attaching negative value to certain types of differentness. For instance, medieval Catholicism and the more contemporary Hutterites (Eaton & Weil, 1955) did not place excessive value on intellectual achievement, and therefore were less likely to view a retarded person as deviant.

In essence, prevention and reversal of deviancy are what this book, and normalization, are all about. As the reader will find, the means encompassed to achieve these goals will be not only physical and psychological, but will also include methods of social redefinition.