

Katarzyna Paprzycka, Marcin Paprzycki

HOW DO ENSLAVED PEOPLE MAKE REVOLUTIONS?

0. In his recently published book (1991), Leszek Nowak presents a theory of the dynamics of power for real socialism. What is particularly interesting is the defence mechanism he describes whereby an enslaved society at the brink of totalization manages to reconstruct its interhuman bonds. It is thus that the fate described by Orwell in his famous *1984* is impossible. L. Nowak relies (at least partially) on his non-Christian model of man (1987, 1991) in reaching these conclusions for the whole of society. We will attempt to show that the explanation of the defence mechanism provided yields some questions as to its adequacy. We shall propose a supplementation of the model of man which will provide the missing explanation why it is indeed that societies have mechanisms that fend off the prospect of totalization.

In Section 1, we sketch the background as well as locate the problem of the paper more precisely. We briefly relate the basic tenets of the non-Christian model of man as well as the basic model of social response which relies on the mentioned model of man. In Section 2, we explore and criticize the author's explanation of the phenomenon in question. Moreover (Section 3), we point out that it presupposes a faulty analysis of enslavement and propose a suitable correction. Section 4 sketches a solution to the problem of the revolutions of the second type by correcting the basic model of the non-Christian theory of man. The concluding Section 5 presents some complementary comments about satanization and the phenomenon of solidarity of the second type.

1. According to the non-Christian model of man, if certain strict idealizing assumptions hold (Nowak 1987, pp. 2-3, Nowak 1991, p. 10), a person *Y* will respond with a corresponding degree of evil to the evil inflicted by another person *X*, i.e. she¹ will respond in accord with the Christian model of man (Fig. 1) in a certain narrow range of *X*'s actions — those characterized by a rather low degree of evil. The more malevolent *X*'s actions, however, the less malevolent will be *Y*'s responses. Were *X* to act with a still greater degree of evil, *Y* would not respond with malevolence at all but rather with benevolence; *Y* would be thus enslaved (Fig. 1²).

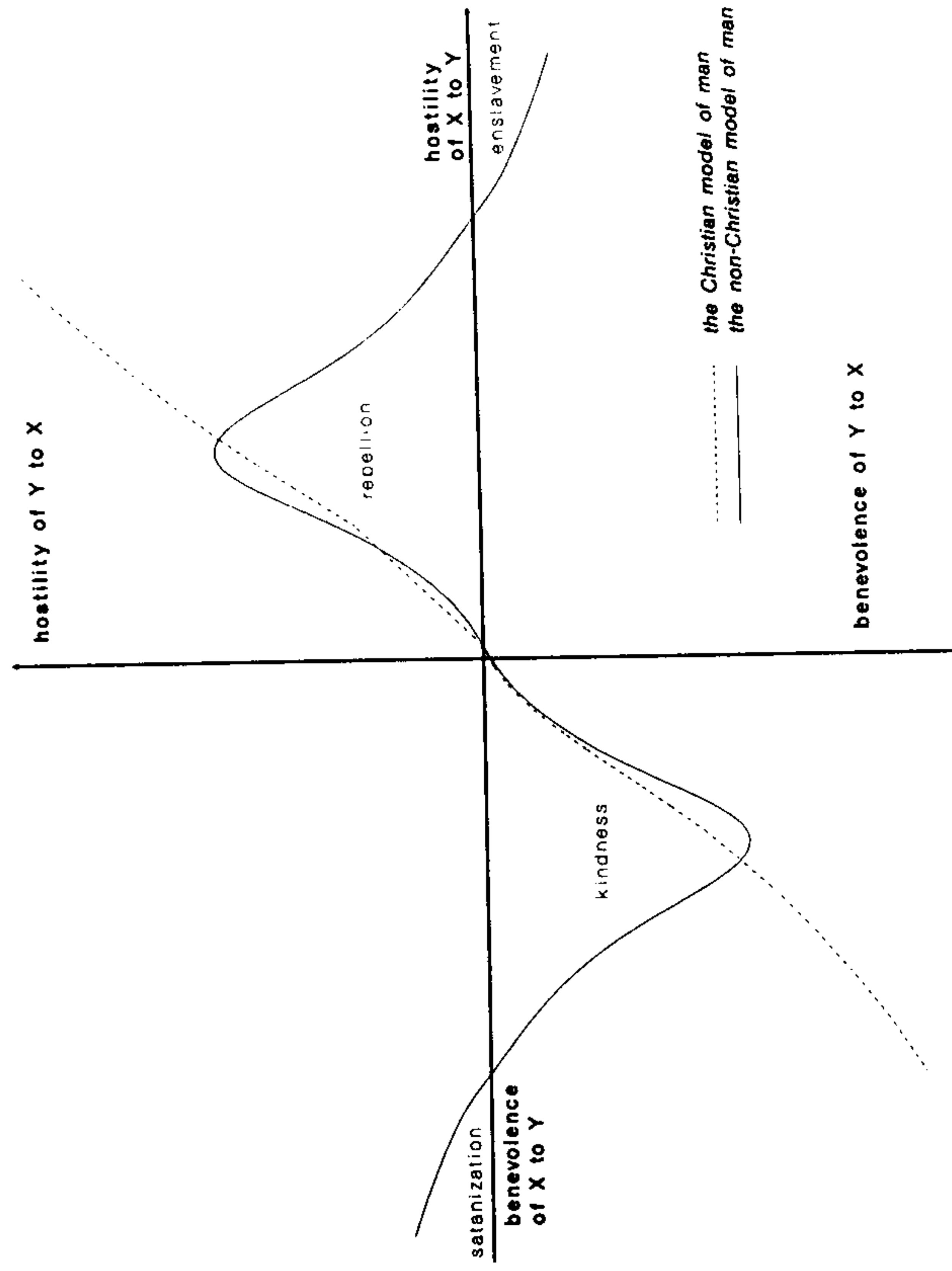


Fig. 1. The Christian and non-Christian model of man.

This model helps to explain the more global effect of power on society. L. Nowak conceptualizes power in terms of the control the rulers have over citizens' actions. The natural interest of power is to maximize its sphere of regulation. The ratio of the number of actions actually controlled to the total number of actions is referred to as civil alienation. The greater the control exercised by the rulers the greater the civil alienation and *vice versa*.

The author hypothesizes that there exists a dependence between the level of civil alienation and the reaction of the society as a whole, which takes the shape partially similar to that of the non-Christian model of man (Fig. 2). When civil alienation is low, people will be responding with some evil to the attempts on the part of the rulers to control their activities. The level of thus resulting resistance will be relatively low; the society finds itself in the state of class peace. When the level of civil alienation increases, however, so will the rebelliousness among people increasing the level of resistance; the society enters the first revolutionary area. Still higher levels of civil alienation will not, however, lead to still greater resistance but to the contrary they will lead to a decrease of resistance (the state of declassation) finally reaching the area of enslavement, where people instead of resisting the tyrants actually consent to the oppression.

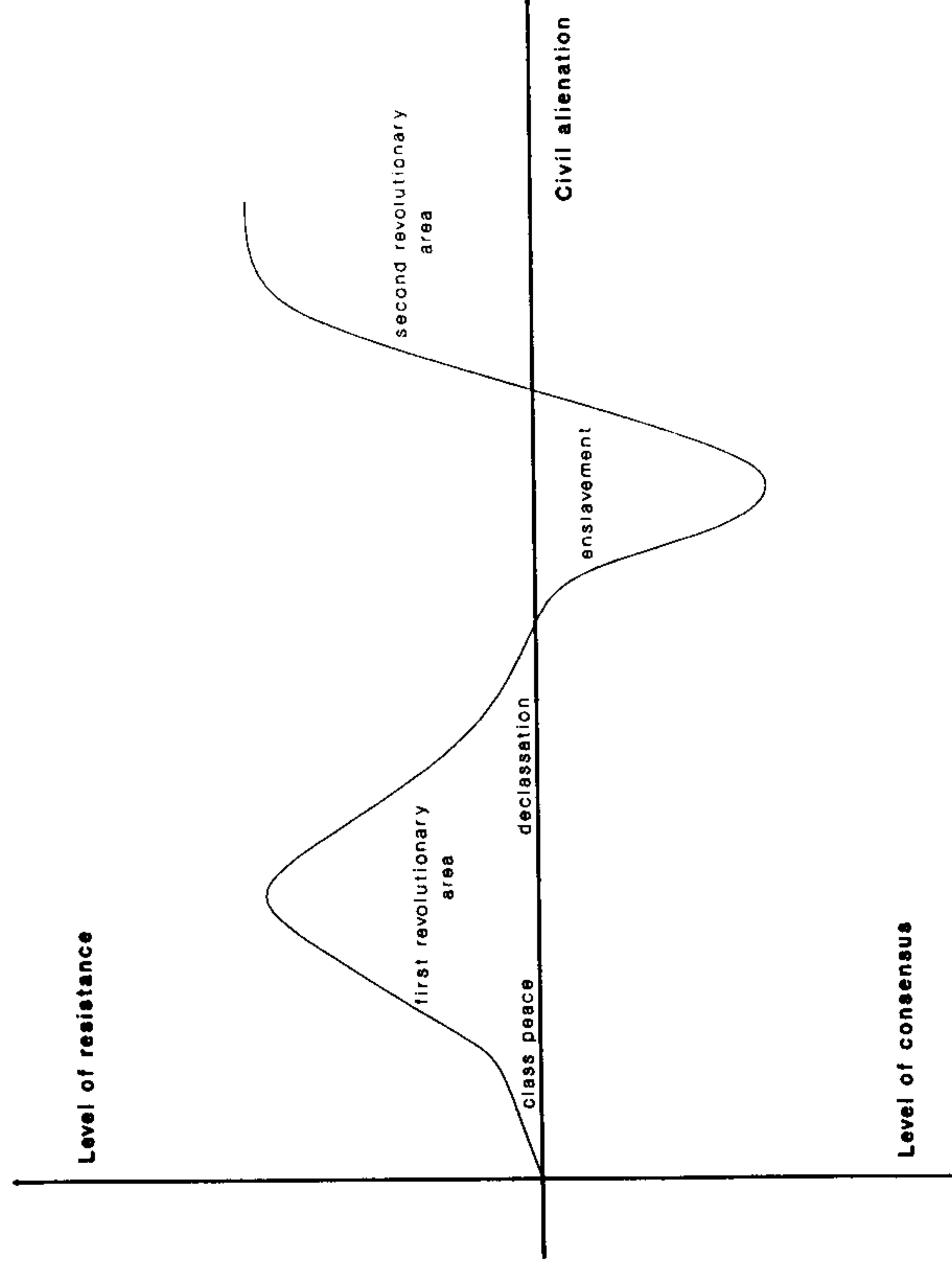


Fig. 2. The dependence between social response and civil alienation.

Thus far the global model of the social response and the model of individual response coincide. In fact, the latter helps in explaining the former. If the non-Christian model of man were to guide the global model of social response further, additional increase in civil alienation would lead to still deeper enslavement finally reaching the state of totalization. If that were so, the vision of 1984 would be real and the process of enslavement presumably irreversible. But this is not how societies (even so idealized ones) develop. According to L. Nowak, there is a built-in defence mechanism which allows the citizens to rise again (for the second time) in view of the danger of total control over their lives. The increasing levels of civil alienation do not lead to a still greater level of consensus but instead the society dissents entering the area of the revolution of the second type. The citizens defend themselves from total subjugation.

2. This is a rather positive turn of events. Despite its axiological beauty, we should emphasize the fact that it appears to be ungrounded. Contrary to the previous areas of class peace, of revolutions of the first type, of declassation and of enslavement, the area of the revolutions of the

second type does not follow from the non-Christian model of man. In fact, it appears to be contradicted by it. Why does it occur then? Is it a manifestation of a mere assumption? If so, then the claim that the Orwellian vision is incorrect relies on an assumption that it is incorrect, and as such does not appear to carry too much interest.

But L. Nowak seems to think that there is an explanation for such a self-restoring behavior of the society albeit it does not rely on the non-Christian model of man in ways in which the explanations of the other areas do. Let us cite his explanation:

Above certain [extreme] values of [civil alienation] (the threshold of civil awakening), a tendency to enslavement decreases and ultimately turns into a tendency to rebellion (the area of revolution of the second type). This may be explained by the fact, that in this kind of extreme condition, posing a threat of totalization, the social influence is acquired by one of the peculiar attitudes that of the revolutionaries. When situation threatens the total elimination of civil society (or the incorporation of the entire society by the structure of enslavement), the revolutionaries, which so far constitute a marginal minority, win support. The attitude of the rebellion spreads, until it finally encompasses the masses. (Nowak 1991, p. 36)

We should explain that the author explicates the attitude of an (ideal) revolutionary as an individual who cannot be enslaved, i.e. who will continue to respond with evil to increasingly malevolent actions of his oppressors (cf. Fig. 4).

L. Nowak's explanation can be reconstructed as follows. The non-Christian model of man, M , is postulated on the basis of many idealizing assumptions. Among them is the assumption that:

I_M : No individuals or groups of individuals exert any influence on X and Y .

Although this assumption can hold for the individual model of man — it is straightforwardly violated when the model of the global reaction of the society is considered. In order to explain the global phenomena, I_M would have to be removed and model M concretized accordingly; let us call the concretization of M with respect to I_M " M^* ". L. Nowak's hypothesis is thus that it is the concretized model M^* that provides an explanation of the revolutions of the second type.³ Even if in a two-person relationship described by M , it is impossible to rise from enslavement, when other people and their influences are taken into account in model M^* , an individual enters into a second area of rebelliousness. It is thus that the influence of the revolutionaries is responsible for the phenomenon under consideration.

We will leave aside the fact that L. Nowak does not actually provide us with model M^* , nor does he point to any theory that would account for the effects of social influence on the interaction between X and Y . What is remarkable, however, is the asymmetry in the way in which the global phenomena are explained. For in order to explain the areas of the class peace, revolutions of the first kind, declassation and enslavement, model M is employed. In the explanation of the area of revolutions of the second type, on the other hand, M^* is used. This disparity in the use of models is rather puzzling as I_M is violated not only in the explanation of the area of revolutions of the second type but already in the explanation of the other areas. This suggests that M^* ought to be used throughout — in explaining all the areas of the global curve and not only of the troublesome phenomenon. If so, however, then we seem to be committed to a particular shape that the curve of M^* must take, viz. a double-bell curve similar to that of the global model (Fig. 2).⁴

It is rather easy to see why L. Nowak has refrained from actually concretizing the model in this way. For if social influence has so profound an effect on enslaved people, making them rise from enslavement, it becomes rather difficult to see why people under social influence (model M^*) should become enslaved at all.

Moreover, the core of the author's explanation relies on the fact that in the enslaved society, people will suddenly come to accept revolutionary ideas. The question, How does the society come out from enslavement? is thus replaced by the question, How is it possible for revolutionary ideas to spread among enslaved people? The latter question does not have a clear answer. In an almost totalized society most people are enslaved; they love their oppressors. This phenomenon can be well understood on the grounds of attribution theories (Bem 1970, Heider 1958), for instance. A person who is inclined to respond benevolently to a mean act of another will have to explain this phenomenon to himself and to others. And what better explanation is there than to claim — and believe — that one loves one's malefactor? Consequently, if a given citizen is enslaved he will reject revolutionary ideas as endangering his vision of the world. Even if the love of Big Brother is imposed on Winston Smith, this love from his point of view is as true as any love can be. If we are in love we do not listen to our pseudo-friends telling us that the person we love has a bad influence on us. In a similar fashion, if we are enslaved there is no way for us to start believing that our oppressor is an oppressor. The party members who confessed to treason during the famous trials in the Soviet Russia in 1930s, were not unaware of counter-revolutionary ideas. The captives were not unaware that there are people who think their captors to be

evil. Yet, the presence of such ideas did nothing to revert their attitudes. But if that is so for the paradigm cases of L. Nowak's conception of enslavement why should we expect the opposite behavior in his model? Moreover, we must remember that it is the majority of the enslaved society and not merely a few aberrant individuals who must be inclined to resist and follow the revolutionaries in order for the society to reach the area of the revolutions of the second type.

3. What the above considerations point to is that an enslaved person changes his or her attitude completely. This is a fact, which is not appreciated in L. Nowak's analysis of enslavement. He considers enslavement as an *area* of a person's responses. It is the area where a person is inclined to respond with benevolence to (extremely) evil acts of his oppressor. If the oppressor were to loosen his grip, however, and suddenly act with lower degrees of evil, the person would be "liberated" from "enslavement." This is exactly the point in which his analysis does not follow his own intuitions⁵ and misses the very essence of enslavement.

A person who responds with good to very evil actions and with evil to mildly evil actions is not enslaved at all. An enslaved individual simply loses his ability to respond with malevolence completely — however mildly or strongly evil the actions of his oppressor are. Winston Smith will respond with a constant all-encompassing love towards any action whatsoever that Big Brother undertakes.⁶ In other words, when a person is enslaved, he loses his capacity of responding with evil *entirely*, and does not retain his human dignity for a limited area, as suggested by L. Nowak's model. To any malevolent action of his oppressor will he respond with benevolence (Fig. 3).

An obvious question arises. Does this new account of enslavement contradict the non-Christian model of man? It would certainly appear to do so since L. Nowak's representation of the normal individual's responses differs significantly from those of an enslaved person (Fig. 3). There is a qualitative difference between the ways in which a normal person is disposed to act and the ways in which an enslaved person would. But this need not suggest that the model cannot accommodate this distinction. Furthermore it is likely that a normal person can *become* enslaved under certain circumstances. Although L. Nowak's model is purely static⁷ it presumably can be supplemented by a dynamical model. This is what we will venture to do below.

A normal person *Y* (whose dispositions to act are pictured by the standard curve of the non-Christian model of man, Fig. 3) can reveal a certain potential to respond *as if* she were enslaved under certain

extreme circumstances. Equally, if those circumstances did not occur she would respond with a certain degree of rebelliousness. However, if these extreme circumstances were to persist, not only would she be inclined to act with benevolence towards her oppressor, but his malevolent acts would actually have a lasting effect on her subsequent actions. Her dispositions to act would in effect be gradually transformed from those characterizing a normal person to ones that characterize an enslaved person (Fig. 3). Conversely, if the oppressor were to persistently act with a rather low degree of evil — such that it would fall into *Y*'s area of rebellion, she would become more and more resistant — her dispositions to act nearing the attitude of a revolutionary (Fig. 4).

Let us conceptualize this process. Let us suppose that *Y* is initially a normal person (Fig. 3). We will remember that beyond the point of equilibrium, where *Y* responds with the highest degree of evil towards a malevolent action of *X*, *Y* will have a tendency to give in — gradually becoming more prone to respond benevolently to her oppressor's evil actions. Let us thus call *X*'s action towards *Y* *enslaving* if it falls into *Y*'s area of enslavement. *X*'s (malevolent) action is maximally enslaving when *Y* is inclined to respond with the maximum of her benevolence towards *X*. *X*'s action towards *Y* is *liberating*, on the other hand, if it falls into her area of rebellion. *X*'s evil action is maximally liberating, or revolutionizing, if *Y* is disposed to respond to it with the maximum of her malevolence towards *X*.

We have to make ordinary idealizing assumptions, of course. We thus suppose that only *X* has the initiative in acting, that *Y* is not exposed to any other individual but *X*. Furthermore, we assume that *X* performs a sequence of actions that occur in a sufficiently close temporal proximity and that all of them are characterized by the same degree of evil. Thus equipped we can consider two pure situations.

Let us first consider a sequence of maximally enslaving actions of *X* towards a normal *Y*. Her response will be *ex hypothesi* maximally benevolent. Our hypothesis is that the overall pattern of *Y*'s dispositions to respond to her oppressor will change at this point. Her inclination to respond to *X* with evil will gradually decline. The maximum of her rebelliousness will gradually sink ("she will lose her energy to fight back"). As a result, the area of enslavement becomes more and more encompassing until the individual is transformed into a totally enslaved person (Fig. 3).

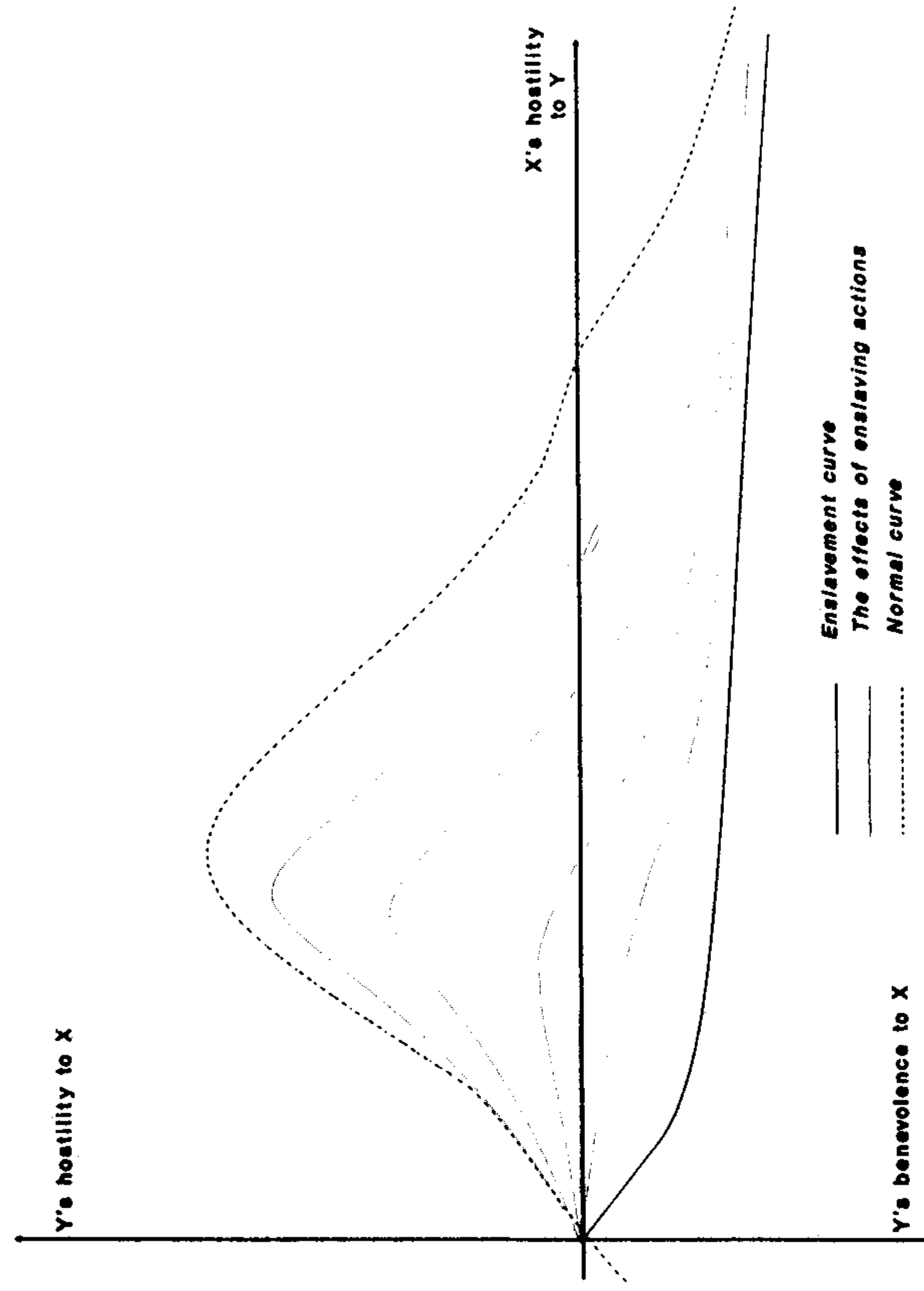


Fig. 3. The effect of X's enslaving action on Y.

It is noteworthy that with the changes in Y's constitution, the oppressor can ease his malevolence. His acts which would have elicited a rebellious response in a normal Y will now subdue her further. This is also what is so striking to outside observers when captives express positive feelings to nasty but relatively minor acts of their captors, towards which anybody but an enslaved person would respond with anger.

Conversely, let us suppose that X performs a series of revolutionizing acts towards a normal Y. Rather than decreasing Y's rebellious attitude he will actually strengthen it. Y will gradually become more resistant to X's evil actions. The enslavement part of the curve will move upward. If this process continues for long enough (if X is foolish enough to keep Y at the maximum of her powers), Y will approach the attitude of a revolutionary — who can respond with maximum resistance to any evil action of the oppressor's (Fig. 4).

In ordinary situations, the sequences of actions are typically interspersed by other interactions so that these sequences of monotonous actions on the part of only one individual are hardly anything but very abstract models of the situation. However, they seem to approach reality where it reveals itself at its extreme and pure points — the enslavement of people in captivity is a well-known fact. And it will not be surprising to reflect that those conditions are conducive to precisely this kind of monotonous one-sided series of actions on the part of the oppressors.

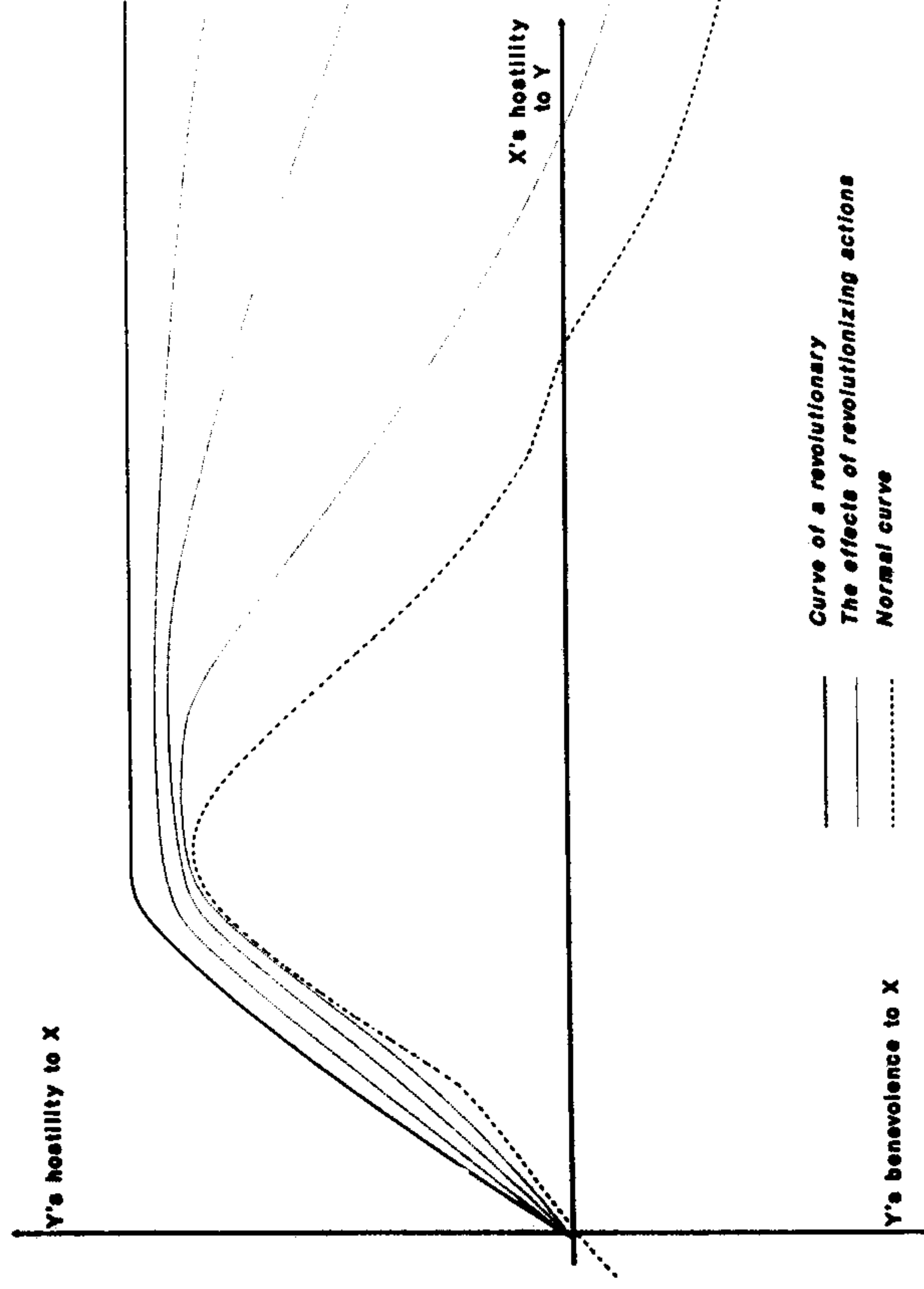


Fig. 4. The effect of X's revolutionizing actions on Y.

Finally, we ought to address the question whether this improved understanding of the phenomenon of enslavement can help us in explaining the phenomenon of the revolutions of the second type. The answer must be again negative. The situation is actually even worse insofar the explanation of the phenomenon of the revolutions of the second type is concerned. When the majority of the society is enslaved, even if the authorities were to lower their control over the citizens people would not rise against their oppressors as their areas of rebellion would have been entirely annihilated. But, of course, in case of the revolutions of the second type, authorities do not ease their grip on the citizens but tighten it even further.

4. The attempts to explain why revolutions of the second type occur have failed. Even the improved understanding of the phenomenon of enslavement has not been able to help in the situation. But there is yet another, relatively minor modification of the non-Christian model of man, which will be able to provide a simple explanation of the phenomenon in question.

Let us have a look at the enslaved society. They are confronted with increasing evils inflicted by the oppressors whom they have persuaded themselves to love. They will bear ever greater evils. However, it will get harder and harder to explain to themselves their own submission. Some

will be able to do it. For most of them, however, there will come a point where they cannot carry the burden any longer. They will reject their love *only thus* opening their eyes to the ideas of the revolutionaries.

We can thus distinguish two basic attitudes of an intellectual and a simple man. The attitude of an *intellectual* is characterized by the normal curve of the non-Christian model of man. A *simple person*, on the other hand, will behave indistinguishably up to a certain point beyond which the exercise of evil of drastic proportions will result not in subjugation but rather in rebellion. The simple person is able to enter the second area of rebellion. The curve characteristic of a simple person will be thus more similar to the global curve (Fig. 5).

L. Nowak's assumption that the non-Christian model of man properly describes the (idealized) dispositions of all people to respond to evil actions should thus be rejected. It only describes the ways in which (ideal) intellectuals are disposed to act. It excludes another and more important class — the simple people. The crucial difference between these two types of (idealized) individuals is that whereas both have the potential of being enslaved completely (signified by the presence of the area of enslavement in their normal curves), the simple people have the capacity of being liberated from enslavement.

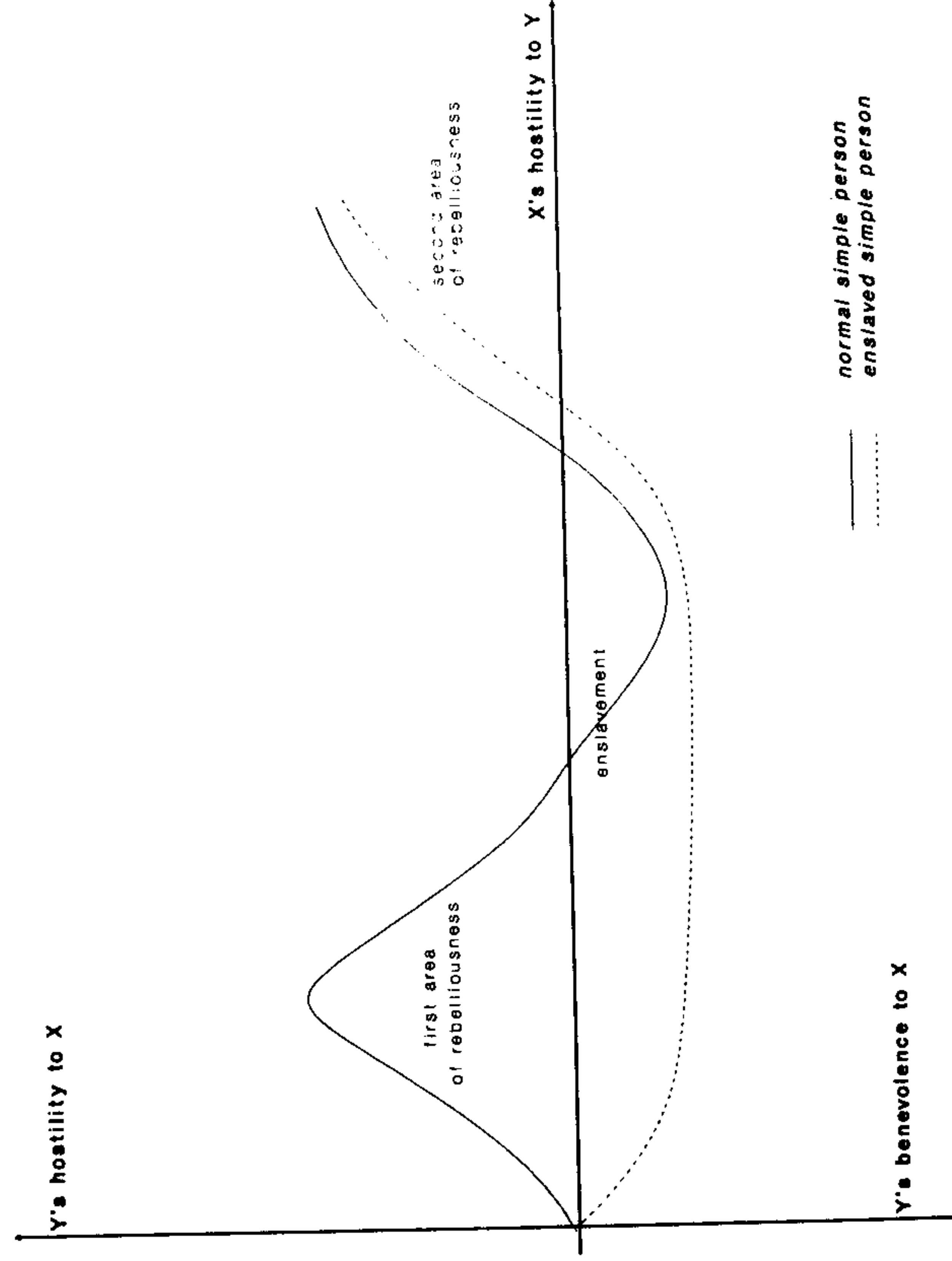


Fig. 5. The normal and enslavement curves of a simple person.

It will be justifiably asked why simple people in contrast to intellectuals, have the capacity to rebel for the second time. Why can they rise from enslavement? This phenomenon may be explained on the basis of attribution theories to which we already referred. The intellectual and the simple person will differ in the degree of complexity of their attributional schemes. The (ideal) intellectual is akin to an (ideal) philosopher — he can think of an explanation and justification of anything whatsoever, even his own non-existence. The lack of these sophistical tools characterizes a simple person. She will have a relatively simple common-sensical attributional scheme utilizing basic categories of what is good or bad. Such a person will be able to stand a great deal, she will be enslaved for a time, but there will be a point when the situation will not be justifiable any longer; she will rebel for the second time.

It is only thus that an enslaved (simple) person can become open to the influence of the revolutionaries. The effects of social influence are secondary however. What is responsible for revolutions of the second type is the basic constitution of simple people who can "fool" themselves only up to a point. They retain their ability to respond with evil to very great evils.

Of course, not only will the normal curve of an intellectual and a simple person differ but so will their enslavement curves. Whereas the intellectual will be completely enslaved, the simple person will not (Fig. 5). There will be a point beyond which enslavement can go no further. The second area of rebelliousness is resistant to enslaving. The liberating revolutions of the second type thus reside in the individual make-up of simple people.

Given the fact that the majority of the society is comprised by simple people (most so-called intellectuals are simple in this sense), the phenomenon of revolutions of the second type can be explained. When the level of civil alienation passes beyond the area of enslavement, the global level of resistance will increase because simple people will rise from enslavement into the area of the second rebellion. The rebellion will be due to them as well as to a few revolutionaries. The majority of the intellectuals will be still enslaved.

It is thus to the simplicity and down-to-earthness of simple people that the society owes its defence mechanism. It is small wonder then that it is precisely the simple people who have the power to move the social gears.

5. So far we were trying to explain the revolutions of the second type. There is also the other extreme — the area of solidarity of the second type by which the society fends off the threat of anomie (Nowak 1991,

pp. 36-37). It seems natural to suppose that most of the above discussion can be repeated for this case. Let us conclude by applying our proposals to the phenomenon of solidarity of the second type and the underlying phenomenon of satanization.

Y becomes satanized if she responds with malevolence to any benevolent action of *X*. The dynamical picture follows the description presented above. We can distinguish satanizing actions — those benevolent actions of *X* to which *Y* responds with malevolence, and civilizing actions — those benevolent actions of *X* to which *Y* responds with benevolence. A series of *X*'s satanizing actions pushes *Y*'s response curve up decreasing her ability to respond with goodness; she becomes satanized. A series of civilizing actions, on the other hand, extends the area of *Y*'s kindness; her attitude will approach the attitude of the godfearing.

In order to explain the phenomenon of solidarity of the second kind, two basic attitudes have to be distinguished. A *chap* is a person who will be satanized to some extent but who cannot live without some kind of social bonding and will thus enter the second area of kindness. The attitude of a chap will thus be characterized by a double bell shaped curve. The other attitude is that of a *loner*. A loner can be entirely satanized just like an intellectual can be completely enslaved. If the above assumptions and postulations are accepted, the explanation of the phenomenon of solidarity of the second type follows accordingly.

Katarzyna Paprzycka
Department of Philosophy
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

Marcin Paprzycki
Department of Mathematics
and Computer Science
University of Texas
Odessa, TX 79762

NOTES

¹ For purposes of clarity, we shall differentiate between *X* and *Y* by the use of the masculine and feminine pronouns, respectively.

² We are concerned primarily with one side of the curve of the non-Christian model of man, i.e. with the phenomena of enslavement and revolutions of the second kind. We make some corresponding comments about the phenomena of satanization and solidarity of the second kind in the final section.

³ "According to the global hypothesis discussed here, the tendencies toward enslavement ... which are irreversible on the individual level, may be reversed on the macrosocial level. In other words, social life is characterized by a sort of built-in defense mechanism that protects against ... totalization." (Nowak 1991, p. 37)

⁴ One alternative would be, of course, to have the individual curves (which could vary in shape) average into a shape of this kind.

⁵ Many of L. Nowak's remarks seem to suggest that he thinks of enslavement as a permanent attitude of an individual. He says, for instance, "Enslaved persons are those who are no longer able to carry out their own evaluations of good and evil, who use the evaluations of others imprinted in their subconsciousness, and who thus see the world with the eyes of others." (1991, p. 16) This description does not seem to relativize the phenomenon to a narrow area of responses to an oppressor's actions. Enslavement thus understood affects the whole of the human psyche.

⁶ L. Nowak gives an example of this kind to illustrate enslavement. He points to a recruit who enslaved by the corporal then laughs at the vulgar jokes of his superior. Telling such a joke cannot, however be, thought of as an act of malevolence of proportions even comparable with the kinds of evils that tend to subordinate recruits. It is precisely an action of a mild degree of evil. And yet, the enslaved recruit will not protest but laugh.

⁷ We ought not to be misled by the fact that in his presentation L. Nowak often seems to use a dynamical language. For example, he says "After the growth of *Y*'s hostility evoked by *X*'s hostility towards *Y* reaches its maximum ... further increase of *X*'s malevolence evokes lesser and lesser hostility of *Y* towards *X*" (1987, p. 9). It is clear that this description assumes that we are able to talk about the increase of hostility as a process in time, which is not licensed by the purely static model. The quotation must be understood as: if *X* performs anyone of his more hostile actions, *Y*'s response will be such and such.

REFERENCES

- Bem D.J. (1970). *Beliefs, Attitudes, and Human Affairs*. Belmont: Brooks/Cole.
Heider F. (1958). *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
Nowak L. (1987). Man and People, *Social Theory and Practice* 13, 1-16.
Nowak L. (1991). *Power and Civil Society*, trans. K. Sawala. New York/Westport/London: Greenwood.