

English Society in the Later Middle Ages

Class, Status and Gender

S. H. Rigby



Contents

Preface	ix
Abbreviations	xii

Introduction: Social structure as social closure 1

- (i) Marxist social theory 2
- (ii) 'Liberal' stratification theory 6
- (iii) Closure theory 9

PART I CLASS STRUCTURE AS SOCIAL CLOSURE

1 Agrarian class structure: exclusion and dual closure 17

- (i) Relations of production as social exclusion 18
- (ii) Feudal relations of production:
exclusion by ownership 21
- (iii) Feudal relations of production and
extra-economic coercion: the manor,
villeinage and monopoly rights 25
- (iv) Free peasants 34
- (v) Lords, labourers and artisans 37
- (vi) Manorial variation: by region and by landlord 40
- (vii) Agrarian class structure: gradation and
dual closure 45
- (viii) 'Extra-economic coercion': some problems 49
- (ix) Exploitation and surplus labour: some problems 52
- (x) Conclusion: closure, structure and agency 57

2 Agrarian class structure and the forces for change

I: trade, population and the money supply 60

- (i) The rise of a money economy? 61
- (ii) Malthus and Ricardo 66
- (iii) Population, the manor and economic change,
c.1180-1348 69
- (iv) Population, the manor and economic change,
1348-1500 80
- (v) The 'Malthusian' model: a balance sheet 87
- (vi) Prices and the money supply 95
- (vii) Conclusion 102

- 3 Agrarian class structure and the forces for change**
II: usurpatory closure 104
- (i) Rural class conflict in the pre-plague period 104
 - (ii) The Peasants' Revolt of 1381 110
 - (iii) Rural class conflict in the post-plague period 124
 - (iv) Agrarian class structure and economic development: 'the Brenner debate' 127
 - (v) Conclusion 143
- 4 Urban class structure and usurpatory closure 145**
- (i) Urbanisation and its limits 145
 - (ii) Urban class structure 150
 - (iii) Borough privileges and town government 160
 - (iv) Urban social and political conflict: usurpatory closure 165
 - (v) Conclusion 176
- PART II ORDER, GENDER AND STATUS-GROUP AS SOCIAL CLOSURE**
- 5 Order as social closure I: the nobility 181**
- (i) Orders, status evaluation and the functional perspective 182
 - (ii) The functional perspective: some problems 186
 - (iii) Aristocratic lineage as social closure? 195
 - (iv) Conclusion 203
- 6 Order as social closure II: the clergy 206**
- (i) The clerical order 207
 - (ii) The clergy: numbers, wealth and power 213
 - (iii) Clerical status and class structure 223
 - (iv) Conflict of laity and clergy: usurpatory closure 231
 - (v) Conclusion 239
- 7 Gender as social closure: women 243**
- (i) Ideologies of gender in medieval England 246
 - (ii) Women in the countryside 252
 - (iii) Women in the nobility 262
 - (iv) Women in the towns 270
 - (v) Women and usurpatory closure 278
 - (v) Conclusion: a 'deep structure' of social closure? 281

8 Status-group as social closure: the Jews 284

- (i) The Jews and the Crown 284
- (ii) The Jews and the Church 290
- (iii) 'Popular' anti-semitism 296
- (iv) Conclusion 301

9 Social ideology: closure legitimated? 303

- (i) The 'dominant ideology' thesis 304
- (ii) Theodicy as 'dominant ideology' 306
- (iii) Theodicy as social critique 310
- (iv) The social dysfunctionality of the Church's teachings 316
- (v) Ideology as 'practice' 320
- (vi) Conclusion 322

Conclusion 324

Notes 328

Select bibliography 354

Bibliography of references 357

Index 395