

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

BASES FOR A METHODOLOGY, CONTENT AND PSYCHOLOGY OF MORAL EDUCATION

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## PART 1 METHODOLOGY

### INTRODUCTION

Moral Education could be described as the Cinderella of the Primary and Secondary Curriculum: whilst many would admit its importance and agree that children should be exposed to some form of moral education, it would probably lose out in the apportioning of the school's yearly capitation allowance with just about any other area of the curriculum one would care to mention.

It would be nice to think that there was only one answer as to why this should be, one that was neat, compact and remediable. However, what little research there is on this issue, indicates that the problem is far more complex.

The research by May(1) of the early 1970s, for instance, seemed to show that approximately two thirds of the teachers in his survey approved of the idea of teaching moral education in school, though the reasons why and how these teachers thought this should happen, and the reasons of those who thought it shouldn't were extremely varied and complex(2). Whilst the material for such a course suggested by teachers centred around the personal development, ethical training, and training in social awareness of children(3), this did not answer the more crucial issue of which stance was to be taken in the presentation of moral and ethical issues. May himself suggested three main possible positions(4):

- (a) that of relativism - a set of values determined either by group,

society, or individual choice;

(b) what he called an 'existentialist' approach(5) - a highly personal interpretation of situational ethics; or

(c) the discovery of certain absolute principles.

None of his suggestions needs to be accepted as they stand. With his first alternative, May appears to be confusing subjectivism with relativism. With his second alternative, he appears to be setting up an unnecessary either/or choice: either one accepts the making of moral choices purely from within a situation, or one accepts an absolutist impersonal ethic. His own prescription, a variant of the third alternative, was for an absolutist Christian standpoint. However, it must be said that some of his remarks are contentious in the extreme:

"Of the various religious and idealistic codes of conduct, the Christian ethic is the most self consistent and distinctive."(6)

"It is the most clearly worked out of all codes..."(7)

"...this is still an officially Christian country..."(8)

"...many non-Christians openly support the teaching of the Christian moral law."(9)

In the present post-Swann period(10), with the issues of multicultural and anti-racist education seemingly more difficult and intractable than ever, confidence in solving such problems by the universal adoption of one particular viewpoint is no longer a real possibility. Common ground has to be found for a meeting of minds, and not, as some perceive it(11), by the demand from the white Anglo-Saxon majority for other cultures to assimilate to their cultural and ethical values.

Indeed, such a position is not only impossible, but is also undesirable as a starting point, for, it will be argued, it is one which may be arrived at towards the end of the process, but it is not the position from which one should begin.

This thesis will argue that there is a fourth alternative, one which does not accept relativism, but allows for degrees of subjectivism, which suggests that consideration of an impersonal ethic, and details of the particular situation, are both vital for the proper understanding of an issue. It will be argued that an explanation of why moral education occupies the lowly position it does in the educational hierarchy is, in the main, a function of problems within the spheres of epistemology, content, and psychology. By examining these in detail, and by suggesting ways in which the issues may be clarified, it is hoped that some teachers may feel more confident in teaching this area of the curriculum, whilst others, paradoxically, may not be so dogmatically confident.

The description of this area of the curriculum will begin with a description of the kind of curriculum model necessary for a comprehensive understanding of this area to be gained. After all, the practice of moral education, like any other part of the curriculum, must surely aim to improve itself. In order to do this, its practitioners must be very clear about what they are doing and why they are doing it: they must have a clearly conceived plan in mind. It will be apparent, then, that using random personal interests, the following up of intuitions on no set plan, all helped out by a dash of serendipity, can be no model from which to work. This in no way means that such things do not have immense

contributions to make, but only that on their own they probably will not do the job effectively enough.

Thus, in this thesis a model of the curriculum will be utilised which looks like this:

Description and Justification of:

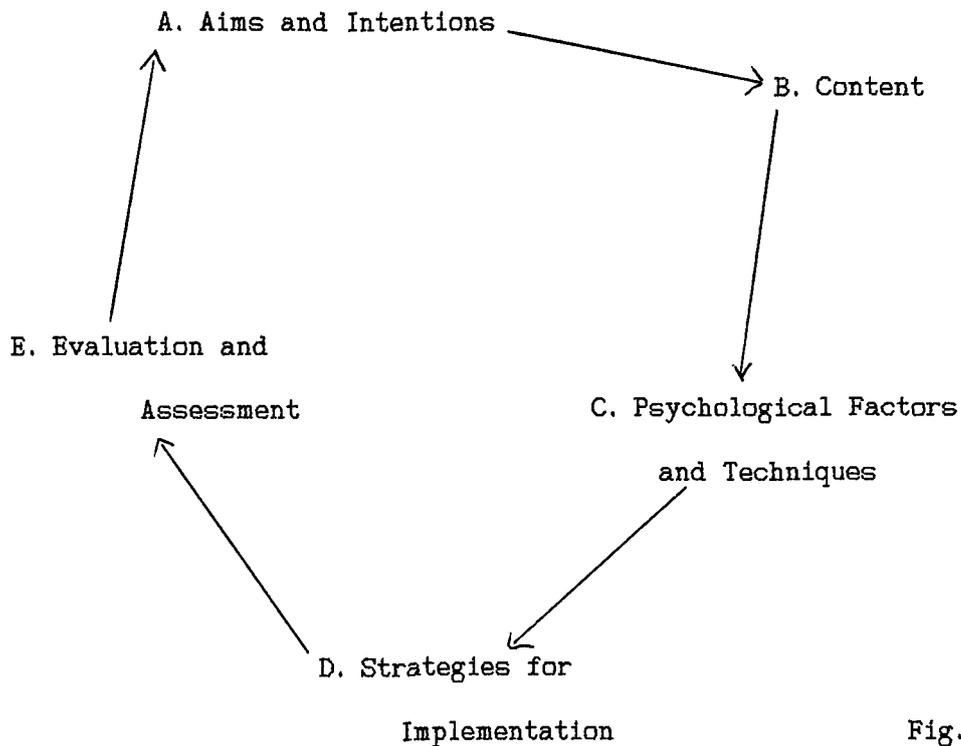


Fig.1.

Such a model appears to indicate, and approve of, a circular, uni-directional movement. This is true, but needs to be supplemented by two further notions.

Firstly, that the movement should be of an upwardly spiral nature, rather than of a simple circular one, as a circular movement would indicate precisely the kind of behaviour which should be avoided - that of making no improvement in understanding. An upwardly spiral nature, on the

other hand, indicates that once a circuit has been accomplished, understanding has improved, and therefore that returning to an area does not mean beginning from the same situation again. Consequently, the re-appraisal of the area in the light of previous understanding should suggest a continuous, cumulative improvement.

Secondly, progress in understanding can be made by jumping past some factors, or by moving back to ones previously dealt with. However, a model which attempted to show this could look misleading, and might suggest that the movement is in no particular direction, merely hopping to and from areas. It might well look something like this:

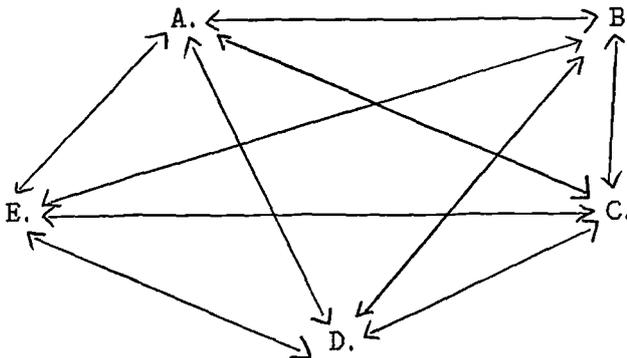


Fig.2.

Figure 2, then, as it stands, will not do. Figure 1 would seem to be the better model, as there are sound logical reasons for believing that there is a priority in its ordering. In order to explain this further, the stages of Figure 1 must each be examined in turn.

(A) Description and Justification of Aims and Intentions

It will be apparent that a great deal can be done regarding the justification of an area's inclusion by dwelling at some considerable length on the justification of its aims and intentions, for if these are seen to be valid, praiseworthy, and important, then its position on a curriculum timetable should reflect this heightened appreciation.

It is at this stage of the model, then, that this thesis will really begin. Furthermore, it will be argued that such a description and justification of the aims and intentions of a curriculum in moral education is best served by the investigation of a much wider question: what is the nature of enquiry, and of human understanding in general? It will be argued that if the strands to this question can be teased out, then a position will be reached where it can be argued that these should both inform and constrain any description and justification. Therefore, the natures of language, epistemology, and science will be examined in some detail, and an attempt will be made to show that they share similar structures in their processes of enquiry to that of morality, and that it is in the description and teaching of these processes that, at the cognitive level, the core of moral education will be found. .

#### (B) Description and Justification of Content.

The description of the content of moral education is not specified by a description and justification of aims and intentions in this area, though it might be suggested by them: thus if x is the object aimed for, then dwelling on subject matter y may be just the vehicle needed.

Moreover, the justification of content is not specified either: how can one justify content y and be opposed to content z if they both do the same job equally well? How, then, does one arrive at either?

In the baldest sense, the description is determined by the subject area. As moral education is concerned with the kinds of choices human beings have to make, a start will be made with a description of those areas within which we are all forced to make choices. It will be argued that there are five of these areas:

- (1) the natural;
- (2) the personal;
- (3) the interpersonal;
- (4) the mystical/religious;
- (5) the social.

An attempt will be made to show that they are distinct by arguing that any theory which conflates these moral areas, necessarily produces contradictions in its own arguments.

Thus the description of these areas is determined empirically, but the justification of the selection within or between them cannot be so determined. It is not an empirical matter. It is a matter of choice. It will therefore be argued that the justification of content is a function of the original aims and intentions, of the nature of enquiry, and of the constraints working upon this area.

Finally, it should become apparent, during the exposition of these areas, that they clearly imply a modification in the original aims and intentions: as the possible content is more clearly understood, so the original aims and intentions will be enriched, clarified, and changed.

This will be the first of the 'feed-back' situations - that is, where the examination of a later stage in the curriculum model, (Fig.1), should not wait until implementation and evaluation have been gone through - where the earlier stage should be immediately returned to, and adjusted in the light of the latest findings. This, then, is the true meaning of figure 2.

(C) Description and Justification of Psychological Factors and Techniques.

It will be apparent by the time this section is reached, that the description of psychological factors and techniques is not value free. It will have been argued in earlier sections that a thoroughgoing empiricist description of any scheme - scientific, psychological, moral, or otherwise, is simply not viable, as any conceptual scheme is necessarily selective in what it regards as valuable and relevant data. A psychological theory, therefore, must be assessed and appraised like any other. Furthermore, the original aims and intentions, which have been clarified by means of a description of the nature of the enquiry, and enriched by a description of content, will be seen to suggest the kind of psychological theory needed for an adequate description of the moral functioning of the human being. By so doing, the use of other theories will be limited or excluded. Three major theories will be examined, those of the Behaviourists, the Social Learning Theorists, and the Cognitive-Developmentalists, and an attempt will be made to show that they are as value-laden as any other conceptual schemes. An examination of their claims will highlight their inadequacies as much as our human limitations.

This examination will suggest the kind of psychological theory needed for a full analysis of moral functioning. It will therefore attempt an outline of what such a psychological theory should include, and will also imply that no one theory currently in vogue is sufficient to capture the richness and diversity of moral motivation, thought and action.

(D) Implementation and (E) Assessment and Evaluation.

This thesis will not deal with Implementation, Assessment and Evaluation in any detailed manner. This is not because they are regarded as unimportant. Far from it: they are crucial parts of the process of constructing a curriculum in moral education. Without skilled implementation, theory is useless. Without sensitive and intelligent assessment and evaluation, only the most haphazard understanding of the successes and failures of a scheme can be achieved.

However, it will be argued that the crucial areas for disagreement and misunderstanding with regard to a curriculum for moral education are generated with regard to the prior areas of the spiral model. Implementation, assessment and evaluation, for the purposes of this thesis, are seen as functions of these earlier processes, and without a clear understanding of these processes there can be nothing to implement, assess or evaluate. Thus whilst techniques from these later stages will be suggested throughout the thesis, they will arise as the consequence of deliberations on the earlier stages.

The first stage, then, is that of the description and justification of aims and intentions. In this, an attempt will be made to show that this is much bound up with the problem of epistemology.

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- (1) May P.R.(1971) Moral Education in School Methuen.
- (2) *ibid.* Chapter 6.
- (3) *ibid.* Chapter 7.
- (4) *ibid.* Chapter 12.
- (5) *ibid.* p.140.
- (6) *ibid.* p.143.
- (7) *ibid.* p.147.
- (8) *ibid.* p.147.
- (9) *ibid.* p.147.
- (10) Education for All (The Swann Report)(1985) HMSO.
- (11) See, for example, Troyna B. and Williams J.(1986) Racism, Education and the State Chapter 1. Croom Helm.

## CHAPTER 1    FACTS, VALUES, AND THE NATURALISTIC FALLACY

Having already asserted in the introduction that the nature of moral enquiry is best understood by examining other areas by which, or through which, man comes to understand the world, it will be as well to explain at this stage why the areas of language, science and epistemology have been chosen.

Language, after all, is the primary means of expression about the world. Indeed, if Wittgenstein(1) is to be believed:

    "...the limits of language (of that language which alone I understand) mean the limits of my world."

As he explains(2):

    "We cannot think what we cannot think; so what we cannot think, we cannot say either."

Language, then, is the medium through which comprehension is expressed. So it seems that an examination of its construction, its structure, and its use, will help to express the limits of an understanding of the world; it may also say something about the way the world is approached and categorised. It seems more than likely that the way in which language is used will be intimately linked to thought processes in general.

Science could be described as that branch of human enquiry which embodies par excellence the quest for the truth. It would be marvellous if, upon examining the question of what constitutes scientific enquiry, it were possible, firstly, to come up with a problem-free definition, and, secondly, find that this method was at least in part transferable to the moral domain. Certainly, to the extent that any moral enquiry must

depend at least in part on an understanding of the world around us, then a description of that field which claims pre-eminence in methods investigating the 'truth' of things, namely the scientific, must have some bearing upon this investigation. Of course, if it turns out that science is something approaching an "anarchistic exercise"(3), that no straightforward, objective account can be given, then this is both better and worse for the enquiry. It will be worse in that it casts even graver doubts upon the possibility of a straightforward, objective account in morality; it will be better, in a perverse sort of way, in that admitting difficulties in the moral area may be no worse than in any other area. If everyone else has the same problems, even the scientists, then those involved in the nature of moral enquiry won't be engaged in a totally different kind of exercise.

Epistemology, the way in which knowledge is gained, is obviously related to the two other areas. But it has a licence and a range which the other two do not. It is a philosophic exercise which takes the path its investigator chooses, whether he be Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Hume, Kant, or anybody else. The influence of these thinkers has directly affected the understanding of language and science, as these areas have affected them. An investigation will be conducted again to see if any correspondence can be found between these areas and morality. If such a correspondence is possible, if the same features occur in all these manners of enquiry, a description of the nature of moral enquiry may not be too far away. If that can be achieved, a prescription for the conduct of moral education may then be near at hand. This will be the approach in this first section.

However, before starting these enquiries, it would be well to begin by an examination of that most perennial of problems, the supposed dichotomy between facts and values. It is all too easy to founder upon this problem, and be accused of committing the 'Naturalistic Fallacy', the supposedly improper movement from 'is' to 'ought'. The issue raises a number of vital questions which it is necessary to be clear about before going further. These questions include:

- (a) what is a 'fact'?
- (b) what is a 'value'?
- (c) where do values come from?
- (d) to what extent does the adoption of a value depend upon an understanding of the facts?
- (e) if they do depend upon facts to some extent, then what exactly is the relationship?

The classic statement of the naturalistic fallacy is that of Hume(4):

"In every system of morality, which I have hitherto met with, I have always remark'd, that the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary way of reasoning...when of a sudden I am surpriz'd to find, that instead of the usual copulations of propositions, *is*, and *is not*, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an *ought*, or an *ought not*. This change is imperceptible; but is, however, of the last consequence. For as this *ought*, or *ought not*, expresses some new relation or affirmation, 'tis necessary that it shou'd be observ'd and explain'd; and at the same time that a reason

should be given, for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it."

The Naturalistic Fallacy, then, can be taken to be the principle which states that one cannot derive ethical conclusions from factual premises, that one cannot derive an 'ought' from an 'is', or that descriptive and evaluative languages inhabit different linguistic universes. To give an example: one cannot say that garotting cats is wrong from the fact that nobody does it. Estimating and reporting on how many people garotte cats is a factual statement: deciding that such actions are wrong is an evaluative one. In order to make a correct transition to the statement that garotting cats is wrong, one would have to have an initial evaluative premise to the effect that causing pain to cats is wrong, or that garotting is not a pleasant occupation, or some such thing.

In this sense, then, the adherence to the naturalistic fallacy is, it seems, correct. But it would be absurd to assert that no factual statements are taken into account when making evaluative judgments. For instance, one must know both what to 'garotte' means, and also various facts about cats before being able to make any evaluative pronouncements upon an act of this nature. If future scientific research were, incredibly, to prove that partial garotting was actually beneficial to cats, in that it increased their life expectancy by causing the flow of some age-retarding hormone, or some such thing, then evaluative attitudes to such acts would no doubt change substantially. What would we think of dentists if their occupation had no beneficial effect?

Thus, at the most basic level at least, factual statements do influence evaluative statements. But what of the approach of Moore(5), the other famous exponent of the fallacy? Now, as a number of commentators have pointed out(6), Moore's 'naturalistic fallacy' is something of a misnomer: it has connections with Hume's version, but these are tangential at best. What Moore is interested in doing with his 'naturalistic fallacy' is arguing against any theory which equates any two notions as identical when they are logically distinct. Thus his fallacy is not necessarily interested in the factual and the evaluative, and possible confusions between them: it could as generally be applied to two logically distinct factual notions - for example, equating as identical the sensation of pleasure and that of playing football. So really Moore stirred up something of a dust cloud unnecessarily, and he still leaves unanswered the question - are the factual and the evaluative logically distinct? Perhaps Moore's fallacy should be re-titled, as Frankena(7) suggests, the 'definist fallacy', and then one could get on with arguing whether the definist fallacy is committed.

Moore's argument doesn't really get very far. Intuitionism is hardly in favour in philosophic circles these days, and for good reason. 'Intuiting' something does little more than short-circuit philosophic argument. As Warnock(8) says:

"Fundamental moral terms were said simply to be indefinable,  
and fundamental moral judgments to be simply, transparently,  
not further explicably, self-evident."

The intuitionist stands there saying "I see two qualities - goodness and a.n.other", whilst the naturalist stands there saying "I see only one,

a.n.other, which is goodness." Really there is little more here than the two protagonists repeating their opinions at one another. Ewing puts it nicely when he says(9):

"...it seems unsatisfactory to most philosophers to admit as a final account of ethics a theory which just leaves us with a heap of unconnected and underived prima facie duties, to be accepted as self-evidently obligatory, without any reason that can be adduced for saying these acts are our duties."

It is a terribly stultifying way of going on, and yet the reason it happened in the first place may well be that there is right and wrong on both sides.

Despite the limited nature of Moore's intuitionism, it still had something valuable within it. Moore's feeling that ethical viewpoints could not be a simple translation of a factual viewpoint has substance. Naturalism as it is normally presented will not do either. For a start, there are just so many variations of the naturalistic viewpoint, all claiming to be the real thing.

There is the naturalistic hedonist like Bentham who would declare(10) that:

"...nature has placed mankind under the guidance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do."

Or there are evolutionary ethics, probably the most blatant derivation of an ethical system from information about the natural world. It is still a little breathtaking to read Spencer, full of Darwinian theory, declare that:

"...the conduct to which we apply the name good is a relatively more evolved conduct; and that bad is a name we apply to conduct which is relatively less evolved."<sup>(11)</sup>

The social approval theory of Durkheim<sup>(12)</sup> also interprets goodness in strictly naturalistic terms:

"...there are no genuinely moral ends except collective ones.

There is no truly moral force save that involved in attachment to a group."

One could add stoicism, theological naturalism, Nietzsche's variations on the evolutionary theme... the list goes on. By their definitions, only one of them can be the Good - so how can it be there are so many opinions as to what we should translate the Good into, in naturalistic language? The detached observer could not be too heavily criticised for feeling that perhaps the reason is that no one description on its own is the complete answer.

This, of course, is not to dismiss naturalistic answers out of hand. As indicated above, there has to be some factual grounding for an evaluative theory, if only to understand the terms involved. An appreciation of the factual context surrounding that evaluative utterance would seem to be a necessary condition for understanding that evaluative utterance, and of being able to discuss it in any meaningful way. Whether the factual context is a sufficient condition is much more problematical, and it will be argued later, turns on the meanings given to 'factual' context, and 'evaluative' utterance. For the moment, though, an attempt will be made to substantiate the claim that the factual context surrounding an

evaluative utterance is a necessary condition for its proper comprehension.

Epistemology, and knowledge of the self would seem to be good places to begin. Hume(13) considered that there is no self beyond the stream of experience, that the self is nothing but a bundle of such things. This doctrine has now, it would appear, been factually disproved by the experiments of the brain surgeon, Penfield(14), in Montreal. He stimulated, by means of a very small electrical charge, what he called the 'interpretative cortex' of the exposed brain of his patients. They reported that they were experiencing most vividly sensations and feelings of happenings long ago, whilst at the same time being fully conscious of the fact that they were still in an operating theatre in Montreal. In other words, their consciousness of themselves was not affected by their perceptual experiences. Whatever the self is, it is not, as Hume claimed, a mere bundle of such things.

It does seem then, that, occasionally, the resolution of philosophical conundrums comes closer. This is not normally, however, by logical argument, but rather by scientific experiment and empirical evidence. There are bad arguments which can be shot down by a sound piece of reasoning, but it appears more than likely that the puzzlers of philosophy will remain in the realms of metaphysics, until science can find the tools (and man the ingenuity to use them) to throw new light upon the problem and perhaps allow the move from its resolution to other considerations.

Now it might well be argued at this point that all that has been shown is that some small piece of scientific research has seemed to resolve

some problem in epistemology, and that this has not touched morality at all. Fact may solve factual problems, but why should fact solve moral problems? To assert this is to cross the is/ought distinction. and where, so far, is the proof for that?

Perhaps it is time to go on the offensive. Why, it might be asked, should the is/ought distinction not be breached in those areas where facts seem to have relevance? The naturalistic stances quoted above may not be correct, but they have one apparent strength in common - they are all prepared to let others examine what they claim morality to be made of. The person who wishes to maintain an is/ought distinction cannot fall back so easily on the facts of experience, or of what human beings are constituted, or the world, or what have you. He has to resort to either a form of rationalism divorced from the problems of the everyday world, or fall back upon an intuitive apprehension of goodness, with all the difficulties which that involves.

Naturalists may well be justified in arguing that it is not for them to justify their movements from 'is' to 'ought', but rather for the non-naturalists to show why they shouldn't. Perhaps the best argument against such movement is simply that of the definist fallacy - that no natural quality yet asserted to be the Good is, in most people's minds, identical with it. Such an argument is, however, an argument from negation, and does not - cannot - preclude the possibility that such a quality may exist which has not yet been put forward. If, for the moment, it is accepted that there is no one quality on its own which does the job, there are still things in a naturalistic outlook which are very appealing.

Firstly, there is the bald fact of the inadequacies of a totally non-naturalistic outlook. By 'totally' is meant an outlook which completely excludes from consideration in moral matters, facts about human genetic inheritance, social conditions, or the world in general. On such a view, human beings would have to be mere cyphers for a moral order totally divorced from earthly existence. Arguments advanced for this cause would be that of a moral order discovered by reason, or a moral order ordained by God(15). However, the former begs the question of where such an order comes from, whilst the latter gets itself enmeshed in the argument which goes back as far as Plato(16), where Plato has Socrates saying:

"Is what is holy holy because the gods approve it, or do they approve it because it is holy?"

For the purposes of this argument, this should be translated "is it good because God ordered it, or did God order it because it is good?" If the first horn is accepted, one is caught up in problems over evil gods and man's moral autonomy: if the latter is accepted, and morality is placed prior to God's command, God is effectively made redundant. And those who would argue that God is co-existent with the Good, is the Good, may well be guilty of the definist fallacy, but are no nearer proving the crux of this position - the objective existence of the deity.

This may well be the real point of the Prometheus legend, and one the Greeks (or at least the originators of the legend) were coming to grips with: is Prometheus blameworthy for presuming to judge and revolt against the judgement of the supreme deity, or praiseworthy in relying upon his own moral assessment of the situation? Anyone going below the surface

of this legend finds themselves encountering another - the opening of Pandora's box.

Secondly, whilst the applicability of 'facts' in other areas of philosophic discourse - Penfield's work and Hume's theory of personal identity, for example - is no guarantee that this will work in the moral sphere, yet it is a positive indicator. If it is accepted that other areas of philosophy may be clarified and even solved by factual discoveries, there seems good reason to believe that careful usage of such discoveries may be possible in the field of moral philosophy. After all, morals would seem to depend upon the existence of personal identity, so there is a prima facie case to begin with at least.

Perhaps the place of facts in an understanding of morality would be better accommodated if 'morality' were not seen as some monolithic entity. It will be argued throughout the next two sections of this thesis that an approach which views morality as deriving from five distinct areas makes sense of a lot of problems in this field. These areas would be:

- (1) the natural
- (2) the personal
- (3) the interpersonal
- (4) the mystical/religious
- (5) the social.

Now such an approach can locate moral attitudes of the natural, the personal, the interpersonal and the social in the 'facts' of existence on this planet, as naturalistic philosophers have done, whilst still acknowledging that there is another area of morality - the religious/mystical - which explicitly states its distancing from any

naturalistic grounding, and yet which undoubtedly is a very potent force in many peoples' moral attitudes. To exclude this last area from a consideration of the functioning of morality as a whole is simply to fly in the face of experience. Thus a foot is being placed in both camps, because there is truth in both camps. Perhaps, the naturalistic/non-naturalistic argument, and at least part of the is/ought debate, is another example of the difficulties which are encountered when people fail to recognise that morality has its genesis in five different areas. A belief that is located in only one or two of these areas - perhaps the personal and the social - may lead to a naturalistic attitude which cannot do justice to the mystical; whilst a non-naturalistic attitude which locates morality in the mystical has great problems accounting for the fact that many people do not have mystical experiences, and claim not to have a religious orientation, and instead assess morality in the light of the perceived facts of this world. If five areas are crammed into one or two, and their different geneses are not taken into account, then is/ought problems are created which really need not occur.

#### FACTS, VALUES, AND PSYCHOLOGY: A PRELIMINARY

On this argument, then, 'facts' do have a place in a careful consideration of the field, but here 'careful' is the key word, and covers a universe of difficulties, most of which seem to arise from an inadequate conception of the genesis of morality. For example, whilst it undoubtedly is the case that people, as they mature, attempt to develop different, more comprehensive, ethical stances, it might be asked just what should be the relationship between such studies of moral functioning and development,

and that of moral theory. At this stage, only one attempt at an explanation will be examined, and that only in the detail needed for present purposes. Thus, the American developmental psychologist, Kohlberg, at one point(17) seemed to be saying that a study of how people develop morally should be evidence for the greater validity of those philosophical arguments used by people at the higher levels of development. This hypothesis seemed perilously close to chasing its own tail, for one might well ask who defines what counts as 'higher'. If Kohlberg, as he does, defines 'higher' as an amalgam of the moral theories of Socrates, Plato(18), Kant(19), and Rawls(20), then he is taking only one possible philosophic stance, which is derived essentially from the personal, interpersonal, and social areas - or, at least, as Kohlberg interprets them. If, on the other hand, he wants to say, on the basis of his own empirical findings, what is the most comprehensive approach to the moral dilemmas(21) he sets, then he is making a straight 'is' to 'ought' move - another naturalistic philosophy defining the Good in yet another way. It would appear from Kohlberg's latest thinking(22) that he does not wish to do this now, but seems prepared to go no further than saying that a psychological theory of moral development presupposes an underlying philosophical theory, and that finds from psychology provide only 'indirect support' for this underlying philosophical theory. Such a position is much less controversial, as 'indirect support' sounds like little more than 'circumstantial evidence'. Of course, by being this much safer, it loses much of its novelty and daring. If this level of explanation is kept to, one remains fairly safe, but, as Popper(23) remarks, much less is explained. If exponents of theories of moral

development are happy to claim that their theories provide only 'indirect support' for an ethical theory, then there is a great danger of not only losing any punch in the argument by becoming lost in generalities - and of their becoming much less testable - but also of their effectively divorcing themselves from the philosophic discussion. Perhaps, though, Kohlberg is having a change of heart, and is coming round to the point of view which Egan puts forward so forcefully(24). Egan argues that psychological theories, like those of Kohlberg and Piaget, should be essentially descriptive theories, in the sense that what they do is to describe the behaviour and the possibilities of human performance. They are not prescriptive, in the sense that they say what ought to be the case in human functioning. But this is precisely what educational theories do. They select an end point, an ideal towards which the educator works; the educator develops curricula which aim towards this prescription of human behaviour. Psychological theories, on this account, are no more than indicators, pointers, suggestions as to what might constrain our educational theories, or what might be possible as well. If Kohlberg were to accept such an account - and he does seem to be heading this way - then it would mean that his account of the stages of moral development can be no more than a description of what goes on, and that for it to act as an educational theory, it needs something totally different, a philosophic, prescriptive argument which would suggest why this account, as an educational, not a psychological, theory is better in some sense than other educational, prescriptive theories. It may well be that Kohlberg has confused the two notions, and may only be just now disentangling them.

However, even were he to do this, his theory would still seem to be inaccurate because, as it has been argued, he treats morality as the product of, at best, three areas - the personal, interpersonal, and social. He at one time flirted with the notion of the mystical(25), but never more than that. Consequently, he has tried to squeeze five areas into three, with the subsequent problems one might expect. Furthermore, even with the three areas he does utilise, he does not consider that they might be generators of moral demands which are contradictory because of their genesis from separate moral areas. By searching for one overarching principle, he loses sight of the much less orderly manner in which morality is actually produced.

The approach suggested here takes account of these problems. Having argued so far that morality is not all of a piece, but comes to us from five separate areas, it would seem to follow that each individual, throughout his or her life, is faced with a complex of moral decisions, different demands, and these will be generated by the different areas. To the extent, then, that they believe in the importance of principles generated from one or more of these areas, as contrasted to the others, so individuals will give emphasis and take action in ways which make their judgments unique.

Such an approach takes, as a basis for moral reflection, man's predicament in the world - his personal relationships, his role as an actor in society, his view of the claims of other living things on this planet, of his perennial desire to make sense of the reason for his existence, and of the meaning of his life and death, all of this wrapped up in a biological and physical framework of constraining and determining

ideas. This approach argues that these five areas of morality at times contradict one another, and this is the major reason for moral disagreements and problems with moral dilemmas. So in claiming this, an 'is' to 'ought' move is being made, but a simplistic 'one-for-one' trade is not being offered in so doing. On this account, then, the Good is not one, but is as numerous as there are thinking people on the planet, and their conceptions of the Good will change throughout their life, as they constantly strive to adjust and balance this judgement, as they change, as they face new situations, and as they learn and reflect more.

Such a theory makes no obvious definist fallacy, as it at no time equates one natural quality with the Good, but at the same time does not dissolve into generalities, simply because it locates the Good within each individual, rather than attempting to extract a core notion of the Good from each person's belief, and holding it up for public display.

At this stage, though, it might well be argued that this theory does not help too much at all, for whilst it might pass muster for some on the transition from 'is' to 'ought', it does so at a heavy price, that of descending into a hugely relativistic muddle, into a sceptical quicksand from which one might never escape. This is simply because if each person is, in the last resort, the definer of his own Good, then it might be argued that people could have little to say to each other on moral matters, simply because they all start off from different bases. How could moral argument and moral evaluation be conducted? Not only does this become impossible for other countries' practices, it becomes impossible for one's own country's as well. It would seem that in accepting this thesis, therefore, the most savage relativism in morals

would be produced, so extreme that only a fool would open his mouth and pronounce on other peoples' behaviour.

However, such an argument assumes that if there is not a Platonic moral order, existing timeless and unchanging, then there can be nothing save each person's path, that therefore one approach is really as good as another. This is the sort of attitude seen in subjective accounts of knowledge of the external world. On such accounts, people are so imprisoned inside their physical bodies, with the distortions produced by their senses, that they can never be sure of anything. And if they attempt to take the Kantian way out(26) and try to detect those internal constants - the 'categorical apparatus' - which Kant claims are brought to bear on this sensory data, then one may become lost down Hegelian or Marxist roads, faced with the possibility that this apparatus is not a universal constant, as Kant would believe, but is either the product of the ideology of the nation state, or is the product of a class ideology. One form of subjectivism lurches into another.

Is there a way out? It would seem about time to look at that supposed paragon of reason and detachment, the scientific method. If there is a clear, explicit, and rational way forward which may provide the kind of procedure needed to make some kind of non-relativistic sense in morals, then science would seem to be a good first bet.

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## CHAPTER 2 SCIENCE, EPISTEMOLOGY AND REASON

At the end of the previous chapter, a point was reached where it was felt that a procedure was needed which could provide a non-relativistic approach to human affairs. As science is normally thought to be the most logical and rational of human enterprises, it was suggested that an examination of its method might throw some light on the problems encountered in moral enquiry. It is with such an examination, then, that this chapter begins.

It seems fair to say that the man in the street has what might be called a nineteenth century conception of science. If he was talking about history, he might be described as following the 'Whig' School of History(1). The Whig historian assumes that his subject is going somewhere - that it has reached its final stage, that only the 't's' need crossing, and the 'i's' need dotting to round it all off, and that the history of the subject may be read as progress towards present understanding.

In somewhat similar fashion, science can be seen by the man in the street as having reached a final paradigm, and that the history of the subject should be read as a journey towards this level of understanding. When science is viewed in this way, there seem to be four separable assumptions underlying the belief, which may be characterised as:

- (a) that science is the building up of a corpus of knowledge,
- (b) that scientific 'facts' are the 'truth',
- (c) that induction is the scientific method,

(d) that we can apprehend reality.

This approach, then, gives the impression that scientists are gradually coming nearer and nearer to a complete understanding of how the universe works, and that at some stage it may be proudly proclaimed that the end of the journey has been reached.

It was said that the average man-in-the-street has a nineteenth century conception of science, but this is meant as no insult. To some extent the view may still be held by some scientists - perhaps those whom Kuhn(2) would say were working in the area of 'normal science' - an area safely within the boundaries of a well-defined field, where a lot of work takes the character of problem-solving, a kind of intellectual game, which does not demand an explanation of what 'scientific' means, in the way in which other areas of scientific research might.

Such an attitude would cultivate an unconscious endorsement of the nineteenth century view, as would a scientist's ontological commitment to the belief that he is getting somewhere, for, after all, if he didn't believe this, why bother in the first place? However, on top of this, there seems to be a further endorsement of this view by some scientists, in addition to the two already mentioned. If the thesis is accepted that science has taken on almost religious overtones in this century, then certain disturbing and misleading consequences seem to follow. One is that to gain acceptance in the larger world for one's view, one has only to say that this approach has been arrived at 'scientifically', or that the case has been proved scientifically. The man in the street comes to feel that these are all the credentials he needs in order to find out if something is a 'fact', the sort of thing that can be trusted, respected,

and valued. If science endorses the view that there are absolute truths, that it is the business of schools to teach and learn these truths, then a view of knowledge is disseminated which suggests that there are in life some worldly certainties, stepping stones of incontrovertible facts.

Yet such a conception of science is held by hardly any reputable scientist in the world today - or at least by any thinking scientist. The core of the problem appears to lie with the status of the inductive method, which, it is argued, can be no basis for certainty. Hume(3) argued that it is impossible to justify a law by observation or experiment, since it transcends experience - the observation of constant regularity is no guarantee whatsoever that this constant regularity will continue. Just because the sun has been seen to rise every morning since the beginning of recorded time is no guarantee that it must rise tomorrow; just as the observation that metals have always expanded when heated in all previous tests is no guarantee that they will do so on the next test. Hume believed, though, in the psychological power of induction: that it may not be a logically valid procedure, but that it is one which animals and men have made use of successfully as a matter of practical necessity; one performed, he argued(4), because of 'constant conjunction', the irresistible power of the law of association. We are conditioned by repetition.

Now if this is all our scientific knowledge amounts to, then there are real problems here, simply because it amounts to no more than irrational habit or custom. Hume is not just being sceptical, he is moving straight into irrationality. However, Popper's claim(5) that the belief that induction is used is simply a mistake, a kind of optical illusion, would

seem to be simply wrong: most people work on the principle that when all known cases of x have been found to be y, then they presume that all other x's will be y as well, until some particular reason comes along to revise these expectations. However, the central issue remains - this is not the basis for solid, irrefutable, permanent truth. Is there any other account of the scientific method which aims to give such an account? Karl Popper attempts to give such an account.

Popper argues(6) that the key to scientific objectivity is that theories and observations should be publicly testable, that anybody in the world should be able to criticise a theory or reproduce an observation. If we are rational, if we can follow a logical argument, if we can seek empirical error in a theory, then no matter who utters a pronouncement, no matter what initial assumptions one begins with, then, in principle, it should be replicable or falsifiable. Knowledge is objective to the extent that experience of it can be shared. This is Popper's 'World 3'(7), a storehouse of notions, theories, and hypotheses which are not the preserve of an individual, but are, in a sense, semi-autonomous, in that they can be investigated by anyone. However, unlike Plato's world of universals(8), Popper's World 3 contents are only semi-autonomous, for they are the creation of human beings, and will be changed as they are investigated, falsified, and superseded.

For Popper, then, science and knowledge of the external world are essentially matters of guesswork, trial and error, the issuing of conjectures and their refutation. In a sense, Popper doesn't want to say that there are 'facts', if by this is meant hard, permanent truths which are known about the world. All knowledge is transitory, but this does

not mean it is a waste of time. Permanent 'truths' may never be achieved, but by the very fact that the possibility of error can be proved, that falsification is possible, it is possible to see that there is a world beyond an individual subjective viewpoint, and that it is possible to come to a deeper understanding of this viewpoint. Popper illustrates his understanding of the world in the following striking metaphor(9):

"The empirical base of objective science has thus nothing 'absolute' about it. Science does not rest upon solid bedrock. The bold structure of its theories rises, as it were, above a swamp. It is like a building erected on piles. The piles are driven down from above into the swamp, but not down to any natural or 'given' base; and if we stop driving the piles deeper, it is not because we have reached firm ground. We simply stop when we are satisfied that the piles are firm enough to carry the structure, at least for the time being."

Thus, for Popper, the touchstone of the scientific method has nothing to do with positive accumulation of data at all, but rather to do with criticism, with falsifiability: whilst one confirmed instance adds little to knowledge, one falsification, for him, at least puts behind what is not true in any absolute sense, and therefore limits the material needed to be investigated and criticised, because the data falsified can be left out of the enquiry.

All of this, of course, applies to scientific theories : theory A may explain more than theory B, and be able to account for anomalies not covered by A, but there is always the probability that theory C will come along which appears to do a better job. Thus no theory can be claimed to

be 'true', simply because it would take only one other inconsistent observation to throw that theory into doubt.

Now the curious thing about Popper's position is that it is really no more than the reverse side of the positive coin, and must consequently face much the same criticisms. Popper, much as he criticises Plato and scientists of the inductive method, is really after much the same kind of thing - an account of knowledge which has within it something impersonal, static, and permanent. Falsifiability is his method, but it would seem to be open to much the same kind of objections which Popper raised against objective truth. For if knowledge is always imperfect, what right does he have for asserting that the criteria for falsifiability will be adequate? It may well be that such criteria are themselves imperfect, and that what were thought as solid foundations for the falsification of a theory are no more solid than those of the theory itself. It is not that falsifiability can be rejected outright - this would only confirm Popper's thesis - but that no position can be reached from which either positive or negative instances can be adjudged as final.

Thus, when a theory is put to the test, there is more involved than just the theory. There are initial conditions, auxiliary hypotheses and the test conditions. For example, as Chalmers(10) points out, the movement of Uranus appeared to falsify Newton's astronomical theory, yet this was the result of an unknown initial condition, the existence of the planet Uranus. Again, Harris(11) points out that Flamsteed's observations on the moon's orbit did not falsify Newton's theory because there was a failure in Flamsteed's auxiliary hypotheses, namely that he failed to account for

the refraction of light from the moon in the earth's atmosphere. Thus, at this level, one instance of falsification is not enough to justify a theory's falsification. Popper's theory does not seem adequate to cope with such problems.

The very real difficulties which practitioners of the scientific method encounter are even more startlingly brought out in the work of Kuhn, whose seminal work "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions"(12), opens up a whole new dimension to the problem.

Kuhn argues that the replacement of one scientific theory by another is not really based on reason and logic, but on the prevailing perspectives and dogmas of the scientific establishment at the time. To understand fully the way in which science works, Kuhn says, one should look not so much at its logic but more at the cultural and historical background to the period of science which one is studying. Kuhn is suggesting that the rationality of scientific endeavour presupposes the acceptance of a common framework, that rationality depends upon something like a common language and a common set of assumptions, and, further, that rational discussion and rational criticism are only possible if fundamentals are agreed upon.

Kuhn's thesis, therefore, is a relativistic one, one which describes human beings as prisoners caught in the framework of theories, expectations, past experiences and language, and that because of the imprisonment within these frameworks, meaningful communication with other people working within other frameworks is not possible. Kuhn quotes the experiment by Bruner and Postman(13) to explain the sorts of difficulties encountered. In this experiment, subjects were asked to identify certain

playing cards. Most of the cards were normal, but a few were anomalous - i.e. there might be a red six of spades and a black four of hearts. Almost without exception the subjects identified the black four of hearts as a four of spades or clubs, the red six of spades as a red six of hearts or diamonds. In other words, those anomalous instances were categorised by means of conceptual schemes which the subjects brought to the experimental situation - that all red cards could only be hearts and diamonds, that all black cards could only be spades and clubs.

Now when the subjects did come to recognize that something was wrong, there was confusion, hesitation, and then suddenly, an abrupt shift to the new, and correct recognition. A new conceptual scheme had been adopted - there could now be such things in the pack of cards as red spades and black hearts.

Popper's answer to this is simple and straightforward(14):

"...it simply exaggerates a difficulty into an impossibility.

The difficulty of discussion between people brought up in different frameworks is to be admitted. But nothing is more fruitful than such a discussion...a critical comparison of the competing theories of the competing frameworks is always possible."

The problem is, for Popper, however, that if induction is no guarantee of truth, if falsification by instances is no guarantee of falsity, what criteria can Popper put forward for his 'critical comparison'? Must an account similar to that put forward by Feyerabend(15) be accepted, when he says:

"...knowledge is not a gradual approach to the truth...it is

rather an ever increasing ocean of mutually incompatible  
(and incommensurable) alternatives... nothing is ever settled,  
no view can ever be omitted from a comprehensive account."

On such an account, the way in which a scientist views a particular aspect of the world will be wholly determined by the paradigm within which he is working. Science, then, will be an essentially irrational exercise. Feyerabend goes even further for he argues that the only test of the validity of a theory is whether the theory adequately reflects a particular scientist's wishes or not. The poet and the scientist are not that far apart(16):

"...every poet who is not completely irrational composes, improves, argues, until he finds the correct formulation of what he wants to say. Would it not be marvellous if this process played a role in the sciences also?"

On this argument, then, there is a sense in which proponents of rival paradigms are living in different worlds, and this is because a variety of non-rational factors are necessarily involved in the scientist's judgement of the merits of a scientific theory. An individual scientist's decision will depend upon the priority he gives to various factors, such as his own personal likings or dislikings for other scientists, his personality characteristics, his holding of particular sets of social, moral, and scientific standards, and his adherence to certain metaphysical principles. Since supporters of rival paradigms will not accept each other's premises, they will not necessarily be convinced by each other arguments.

However, if the arguments of Kuhn and Feyerabend are accepted, then the consequences must be accepted as well.

Kuhn, for instance, cannot say that scientists who act like a mob are wrong, because he has left himself with no standards to which he can appeal, beyond those which scientists themselves recognise. If they stop thinking that there are good reasons for choosing one theory rather than another, and start using non-rational means of persuasion, all that Kuhn can say is that the nature of science has changed.

Similarly, it is difficult to see how Kuhn could claim to believe that scientific development is 'evolutionary' - one scientific theory is not as good as another for doing what scientists normally do - because by proscribing the possibility of a scientific language that could judge between theories, he surely excludes this possibility of movement.

Feyerabend, on the other hand, can retain neither the concept of knowledge, nor, of course, the notion of improving knowledge. For if nothing is true, then there can be nothing to know, and nothing further to find out.

These arguments of Kuhn and Feyerabend are of the utmost importance because they run to the heart of the problem of the validity of knowledge in general, and therefore of the possibility of valid moral utterances. It would be well, then, to ask in which ways our understanding of the world, of science, and of other people, is limited. If these factors can be identified more acutely, it should be easier to ascertain whether Popper's judgement that Kuhn exaggerates a difficulty into an impossibility is fair or not.

There would, then, seem to be eight major factors affecting our perception of 'reality'.

- (1) Human perceptual apparatus is probably the major constraining factor in this regard, for it is suited to the requirements of a particular biological organism. Human beings are simply not equipped to bounce sound like a bat, detect ultra-violet light like a bee, sense dampness like the humble woodlouse, and have no heat-seeking sensors like the rattlesnake. It is possible, admittedly, to develop instruments to compensate for these deficiencies, but having only come to know of these deficiencies in the last couple of hundred years, there is no reason to believe that all the forms have been detected in this scientific epoch. It means that there must be much of the external world which can affect human beings without their knowledge and understanding, and of which they cannot be aware.
- (2) Physiological and psychological states directly affect this perception. Much of the body of knowledge assembled by Behavioural Psychology demonstrates that factors such as hunger, thirst and fatigue, mediate between a stimulus and its perception.
- (3) Similarly, the behaviourists have shown quite convincingly that previous experiences affect the frequency with which the potential stimuli are avoided or noticed.
- (4) The cultural system of which the observer is a part will affect the person's interpretation of events. Evans-Pritchard describes how the notion of witchcraft is incorporated into the Azande's thinking in such a way that its existence is impossible to disprove. Thus the experienced potter knows how to make pots - he need have no

fear that during firing his pots will crack as a result of error:

"...he selects the proper clay, kneads it thoroughly...builds it up carefully and slowly. On the night before digging out his clay he abstains from sexual intercourse. So he should have nothing to fear. Yet pots sometimes break, even when they are the handiwork of expert potters, and this can only be accounted for by witchcraft. 'It is broken - there is witchcraft', says the potter simply."(17)

- (5) The value scheme adopted affects one's perception as well. Thus, looking into a room, person A sees six people. Person B looks in. He sees four. Two of the figures are Jews. Person B is a Nazi. For him, they do not count as people. Person C, on the other hand, sees five. One of the figures is a negro. This observer is an extreme Afrikaaner. Finally, person D sees seven. This observer sees that one figure in the room is pregnant, and she counts the foetus as a person.
- (6) In like manner, one's sex, race, colour and age will all affect perception. Sex and age may affect one physiologically and psychologically, whilst all four may affect one socially, permitting or disallowing the experiencing of situations which people of the other sex, of another race, or differently coloured, or older or younger, may or may not be permitted to indulge in.
- (7) One's historical and geographical location obviously limit the possible perceptual experiences, and influence their perception. Thus a sneeze by someone on a bus in the 1980's will do no more than cause vague interest: in 1665, during the Black Death, if one is to

believe the popular interpretation of the meaning of the Nursery Rhyme 'Ring-a-ring-a-roses', such a sneeze would have occasioned an altogether different reaction.

- (8) Finally, the complex interplay of these factors upon one another may reduce further the influence of certain stimuli to the point of their total exclusion from one's perceptual awareness, or accentuate them to the point where they become one's primary topic of interest, and thus affect one's perception of other possible stimuli to the point where they pale into insignificance.

If it has been established that the stimuli capable of being received are necessarily limited, and that are therefore capable of being selected, then, necessarily, there can be no such thing as the perception of a 'true reality', nor, and more importantly for present purposes, can there be a truly detached scientific observer. The ideal of science must remain an ideal, but one which no scientist, simply because he is a human being, can approach. The human approach is, necessarily, subjective.

This, in itself, is no way of deciding between Popper and Kuhn, for they would both accept this. The nub of the matter is this: do the difficulties make comprehension between scientists of different approaches, difficult to the point of impossibility for practical reasons, or for theoretical reasons? Popper seems to be saying that the factors affecting our perception of reality do prevent us from ever knowing what 'reality' might be - with that he is in agreement with Kuhn. But he also seems to be saying that though these factors affect people differently, yet it is still possible to work through the misunderstandings until comprehension is reached. Thus, take factor (5)

- the value scheme adopted. Popper would say that the way round this difference of opinion is not to stand there shouting down the other over the number of people you can see. The answer is to go back to basic assumptions and ask on what grounds the Nazi doesn't class Jews as people, the Afrikaaner doesn't accept black people etc., etc. Even if, at the end of the discussion, the Nazi or the Afrikaaner refuses to yield his system for counting figures as people, the observer is still in a position to do something about it. Because the value position he is taking is understood, the next time the Nazi says that there were twelve people in the room, it may be asked "and how many Jews?" When told four, one then knows, that on one's own value scheme, that there were actually sixteen.

Two problems, however, remain. One is that on many occasions, the other person is operating under a different value scheme of which one is unaware, because of different unknown premises, or different factors and constraints are acting on the other. Thus irreconcilable differences are the result. This Popper can accept, adding only that the key must be an eternal vigilance to this possibility.

The second problem is much more difficult. If one person counts to twelve, and another counts to sixteen, and even if the difference is realised, how are the rival theories to be evaluated? This is really the crucial question, and one which urgently needs explanation. One of the dangers with it is that it can turn doubts about the possibility of the development of scientific knowledge, into doubts about logic and rationality, and from there, as the foundations of a coherent epistemology are undermined, into doubts about the validity of any evaluation of moral viewpoints. They all become enmeshed in the sticky glue of cynicism.

Now two things can be said at this point. One is that the reason why someone comes to hold certain beliefs could be a totally different issue from the question of whether these beliefs are true or not. The first demands sociological and psychological explanations, the second demands rational and logical explanations. Most of Kuhn's and Feyerabend's arguments are of the first sort, showing that, contrary to much popular opinion, science has generally not progressed rationally at all, but has been largely a function of these psychological and sociological pressures. But the point is that even if the entire history of science proved to be of this nature, it would still not alter one jot the possibility of something better - the logical and rational investigation.

In the same way, if it is possible to give reasons for judgments, and the Nazi refuses to change his count of twelve, this can be seen as a psychological problem, not a rational one. People are perverse: faced with the strongest reasoned cases possible, they may still refuse to change their mind. This does not indicate a weakness in the principle of rationality, but of the intrusion of other factors into the equation. This, of course, is the well-known gap between knowing something to be right and acknowledging or doing it. Weakness of the will cannot be solved by purely rational means. It is a psychological and sociological problem as well.

Secondly, this cynicism can be countered by highlighting the reasons for using logic and rationality. This is not a circular process, despite its initial appearance as such. For one is merely asking: "which of the various approaches is it best to adopt - that of going by intuition, by accepting someone else's word, by taking pot luck, or by making a

reasoned examination of the pro's and con's of a case?" There is nothing circular in this. Popper(18) is of the opinion that in the final analysis, the commitment to using logic and rationality is a moral one, for a commitment to it involves one in following the rules of a game - a game which has, as part of its structure, the notion of equal respect for people, and impartiality. This is very similar to Peters' argument(19) that using reason involves one in making various second order moral commitments - such as impartiality, willingness to listen to another's point of view, and fairness. In other words, once one boards the train of reason, the train must proceed along certain laid-down tracks, and these tracks, for Popper, lead to 'better' destinations than those which might be arrived at by other means of transport.

Now Popper describes this as a "moral decision", because the decision to adopt either rationalism or irrationalism "will deeply affect our whole attitude towards other men, and towards the problems of social life."(20). Perhaps 'moral decision' may seem at first a rather surprising choice of words, if only because people do not normally make a conscious decision to use reason - this is instilled into the child from birth. However, Popper is really aiming his argument at the adult, who, for one reason or another, is tempted to dispense with rationality, and for him, the argument seems well directed. Adopting rationality can be the conscious adoption of a conceptual scheme, in the same way in which one adopts the Darwinian theory as opposed to the Larmarckian - one sees that it does the job better. Now Popper's argument comes at the end of his celebrated two-volume set, "The Open Society and Its Enemies"(21), on the dangers of irrational tendencies in Western philosophy, and is best understood in

that light, but the point still remains. Faced with resolving any sort of problem, rationality is the safest and surest way, the way which guards against totalitarian governments, for its surrender invites them.

However, another argument may be used to support Popper's, and this is a biological one. Reason and logic have profound survival value for a species. They are immensely useful to those capable of utilising them, and to not use them would make as little sense as walking round with one's eyes shut when they function perfectly. Rationality, then, is something which can be chosen from a moral point of view, but which can also be chosen because it is useful.

From this point of view, then, talk of the justification of the use of rationality makes about as much sense as talk of the justification of the use of one's eyes. They are both their own justification. It is not the irrationalist who should be asking the rationalist for a justification of his mode of thinking - it surely is for the irrationalist to justify what he is doing. The ball is in his court, and it is difficult to see how he could return it.

It is at this point, as well, that Singer's(22) notion of an 'escalator of reason' can be introduced, as an indication of the way in which some progress at least might be achieved through reason. Singer's notion bears some comparison with the metaphor of the train and the tracks used earlier in this chapter, in that once one steps on, one may be carried by the process of logic to places not intended, but to which the processes of logic inexorably tend. In his "Expanding Circle", Singer describes the possible evolution and expansion of moral thought from man's most primitive social beginnings, through his tribal, custom-bound period, to

his present, incomplete, universalisable stage, which appears to be expanding in thought, according to Singer, to an inclusion of not only other races, cultures, and nations, but to other species as well.

The key to this escalator lies in the need for justification in one's actions when these actions conflict with another's wants, for this justification demands reasons that are equally acceptable to all - the very universalisability criterion. As Hume(23) put it, someone giving a justification must:

"...depart from his private and particular situation and must choose a point of view common to him with others..."

This seems to be the essence of Rawls' 'original position'(24) as well, and is the point at which one's foot is placed on the escalator. Once this principle of disinterestedness, for oneself, or for a close family group is agreed to, it needs, it demands, good reasons why such a decision should not be extended to the village, to the society, to the rest of humanity, and to other species as well. If the qualities of empathy and imagination are possessed as well, then what appears logically to be the right thing to do, also feels the right thing to do, and is that much more likely to be implemented.

This is not for one moment to deny the value and needs of the family, the group, the nation or the species. The concrete needs of human beings need to be recognized. A crucial part of the moral framework may be impartiality, but this is not a framework for computers. As Midgely(25) has pointed out, human beings have social needs, possess biological requirements, and exhibit an evolutionary history. However, rationality

is an essential part of the description of the nature of moral enquiry, because it is the form normally chosen to be done in.

So, granting that there are still problems with the scientific method and epistemology, and with their effects upon the nature of moral enquiry, what can be said about the relationship between reason and morality? There would seem to be at least four ways in which reason can be used to assess the validity of a moral theory.

Firstly, reason can be used within the argument, simply by examining the logic of the passage under question. As Weber put it(26), it involves:

"...the elaboration and explication of the ultimate, internally consistent value axioms, from which the divergent attitudes derived..."

Secondly, it can again be used within the argument through:

"The deduction of 'implications'(for those accepting certain value-judgments) which follow from certain irreducible value-axioms, when the practical evaluation of factual situations is based on these axioms alone"(27).

This requires the careful analysis and articulation of the value assumptions.

Thirdly, and again internally, it may be used by contrasting it with other parts of the person's overall moral view. Thus, if one area of morality is given heavy or overall preponderance in the balance of the five areas described in Chapter 1, then one may ask the person to justify this balance.

Fourthly, it may be used in an empirical manner, through:

"The determination of the factual consequences which the

realization of a certain practical evaluation must have:

(1) in consequence of being bound to certain indispensable means, (2) in consequence of the inevitability of certain, not directly desired repercussions."(28)

This, then, goes some way, but not too far. It is as far as Weber will go, and leads Strauss to say(29):

"...Weber's thesis necessarily leads to nihilism or to the view that every preference, however evil, base, or insane, has to be judged before the tribunal of reason to be as legitimate as any other preference."

This is simply because these four ways are all based on a prior acceptance of certain values which, Weber believes, cannot be rationally justified: it is absolutely hopeless, he thinks, to believe that such basic values can be justified; they can only be accepted through prior choice. How similar to Hare(30) who said:

"...we can only ask him to make up his mind which way he ought to live; for in the end, everything rests upon a decision of principle. He has to decide whether to accept that way of life or not..."

Now this argument has already been attacked through a description of the difference between logical and psychological reasons for holding these beliefs, and through an argument for the possibility of a thoroughgoing rationality. However, a positive theory of knowledge acquisition has as yet not been described in any detail. The possibility of its existence has merely been defended.

In the next chapter, this process will be begun with an investigation of the nature and construction of language, one which will go on to show that it shares much the same characteristics with science, epistemology, and morality.

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CHAPTER 3 LINGUISTIC PHILOSOPHY, THE NATURALISTIC FALLACY, AND  
SUBJECTIVITY.

There are at least four very good reasons for looking at the nature of language and a consideration of linguistic problems, in the determination of the nature and genesis of moral thought and enquiry.

Firstly, linguistic analysis, the scientific method, epistemology, and morality may all share much the same problems as regards subjectivity, and all may use tools of a similar nature to lessen the degree of this subjectivity. Thus, such an approach should contribute something regarding the intelligibility of one set of moral notions for people holding another set.

Secondly, it seems valuable because this line of thought has something to say about the genesis of moral concepts specifically at the linguistic level. Whilst such an approach does not necessarily explain why these concepts are held in the first place, they do at least provide the tools to explain how different human beings can produce different ideas on morality.

Thirdly, in addition to the account given in Chapter 1, where it was argued that the naturalistic fallacy was the production of an inadequate conception of the areas of morality, an analysis of the way in which language is used may demonstrate that this fallacy is in some cases based upon an incorrect understanding of the way in which language is used. Thus, in this chapter, the previous analysis of the naturalistic fallacy

will be expanded in order to show that misunderstandings about it stem from more than one source.

Finally, this area will be examined for the simple reason that much of recent philosophy, moral and otherwise, has been couched in the terms of linguistic analysis. Whilst being no devotee of the school, there are undoubted benefits and attractions in its modus operandi; and a consideration of the plusses and minusses of such a system should prove of great value in elucidating the problems to be faced.

This chapter, then, will begin by explaining exactly what it is about linguistic philosophy which, for the purposes of this thesis, would be of value; it will then describe the genesis and nature of language, before moving to apply this analysis to the problems of the naturalistic fallacy, and an understanding of the world in general.

Linguistic Philosophy's predecessor, Logical Positivism, had consigned to the wastebasket whole areas of human investigation - ethics, aesthetics, religion, even some everyday psychological statements, as being meaningless, simply because by their very nature they were not empirically verifiable. It originated in Vienna in the 1930s, but was brought to England by the twenty-five year old Ayer, with his aggressive little book "Language, Truth, and Logic"<sup>(1)</sup>. It had, essentially, three main principles. Firstly, the principle of verifiability suggested that anything which couldn't be verified by sense-observation was meaningless, and that what a proposition meant could be described by saying what would verify it. It reduced all statements to statements of immediate observation.

Secondly, it asserted that all meaningful propositions of logic and mathematics were analytic, and therefore tautologies. As Magee says:

"...the predicate merely unpacks what is already present in the subject."(2)

Finally, philosophy was seen as an "activity of elucidation", as Wittgenstein and Schlick(3) called it - it clarified, analysed, and, where necessary, exposed nonsense.

For a number of reasons, many philosophers now believe that Logical Positivism has been put to rest. The principle of verifiability, in particular, came in for a great deal of criticism. Could it really explain what worked in sub-atomic physics? How could it possibly deal in a meaningful way with things that happened in the past? What could it have to say about other peoples' minds? To dismiss such concepts as meaningless because they couldn't be verified by sense observation was too much for many to take. And to round it all off, was the principle of verifiability verified by sense observation? If not, did that mean that it too was meaningless? Another way would have to be found.

However, Logical Positivism, and Emotivism, its moral philosophic counterpart, had had their effect. As Barrow has put it(4):

"...Emotivism was the last straw that broke the camel's back."

Philosophers conceded that their job:

"...was not to produce elaborate systems of desirable behaviour, nor to prescribe good conduct, but to analyse the way in which we do in fact use moral language...to put it cynically, they lost their nerve."

Whether philosophers did lose their nerve or not, a new orthodoxy took over as the accepted way of 'doing philosophy'. Seminal works such as Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations"(5), and Ryle's "Concept of Mind"(6) asked people to look at the way in which words and concepts were being used, and argued that knowing how a word is used is the same as understanding that word. Thus meaning, it was claimed, was determined by a word's usage, not by some independent entity existing behind the word or concept. For example, knowing what the word 'truth' means is the same as understanding all the correct uses of that word.

This naturally revitalised whole areas of philosophy discarded by logical positivism, simply because it argued that it is a perfectly legitimate function of philosophy to enquire how words and concepts are used, and that this does not involve the throwing out of areas of discussion which cannot be verified in an absolute sense. The promise of linguistic philosophy was that it would not so much solve as dissolve philosophical problems(7). Thus, if the traditional problems of philosophy had been phrased by different people with different linguistic uses, and the ways in which language can be used were to be understood, then there seemed a good chance that some of these problems could be solved simply by unravelling misunderstandings in usage.

Further, because linguistic philosophy started from the premise that its approach - the analysis of the use of words - was a very catholic one, rather than an approach of limiting philosophy to being a handmaiden of science - as logical positivism had threatened to do - it offered the prospect of a great expansion in the field of philosophy to virtually any area where language is used, simply because it could be the means of

bringing out into the open problems within the field, and then insisting on greater rigour and clarity in the use of these words.

It is very noteworthy, however, that in treating, for example, the language of religion in this way, a number of things happen. One is that by discussing only the usage of this language, one tends to deal with those areas involved in the causation of such language, partly psychological, partly sociological. Second, and related to this, such an approach to philosophy, by examining usage, tends to fall short of examining the truth of the subject matter. As Adelstein(8) points out:

"...we must ask whether it is assumed that reality conforms to the concepts which are being analysed. If the answer is 'yes', the entire question is presumed answered without any grounds whatsoever being given. 'Yes' implies that an extremely contentious theory, that reality conforms to the usage of everyday speech, is proposed and accepted without a shred of evidence."

Further, if such an analysis does purport to examine the truth of the subject matter, it tends to assert it from a humanistic perspective: man uses the language, it expresses human needs, and is therefore a form of discourse not significantly different from any other. This doesn't have to happen, but because of the initial 'set' of those engaged in the exercise, it is the most likely outcome. Look, for instance, at Braithwaite's(9) description of religious language:

"...the primary use of religious assertion is to announce allegiance to a set of moral principles."

Now it seems fair to say that the average religious believer would reply that he or she was saying something about an existent God, or about a metaphysical reality transcendent to this earthly one. They would probably be most offended to be told that they were only talking about their own outlook on life. Braithwaite really has no right to arbitrarily reduce references to the transcendent or miraculous, to the sociological and psychological. As Trigg puts it:

"...what is offered is not so much a philosophical analysis of religious belief as a denial of its truth."<sup>(10)</sup>

Further, any bright young thing, if he thinks all he has to do is to analyse the ways in which words are used, can start his own branch of philosophy of virtually any discipline - the philosophy of stamp collecting, for instance. But this won't do. Particular fields of study have their own concepts which are not discrete items, and cannot be studied in a piecemeal manner. They need a frame of reference to be understood, and that frame of reference can only be provided by a profound knowledge of that area of study. This knowledge might include that of being an experienced practitioner within the field, of being well versed in the theories and beliefs of the field at the present time, and also of an historical understanding of the subject, so that insight is gained into how the meaning of terms current in the field, have changed with time. This is, perhaps, the central insight of the later Wittgenstein<sup>(11)</sup> - that the part cannot be understood before its relationship to the whole, and the whole itself, is understood.

The final danger, and the one most relevant to this thesis, is that linguistic philosophy can become too preoccupied with its own method. By

this is meant four things. Firstly, an insistence on clarity and rigour is an admirable notion, but it can strangle something at birth. Any new idea, by the very fact that it is new, has problems expressing itself. This does not mean that this new idea is necessarily wrong, only that it is not yet properly formed. Pedanticism can be a weedkiller which kills weeds and struggling new plants alike, and an orthodoxy like linguistic philosophy can become a tyranny all too easily. Indeed, with concepts like Freud's 'unconscious', there may be no words adequate to express what is said. Secondly, an insistence on clarity and rigour in analysis must not make the mistake of thinking that there is a clear and rigorous definition underlying the variation. This is a Platonic fallacy which can, and does, creep into much linguistic analysis. Take the word 'indoctrination' for instance. It can, and has been, defined in terms of aim, method, and content, either in combinations of these criteria, or in terms of just one(12). This chapter will attempt to show that words do not have rigid, permanent, objective meanings - and this will be a considerable help in an understanding of human enquiry in general.

Thirdly, in the last few years there has been a reaction to this whole approach, stemming from the feeling that there is more to philosophy than the analysis of words(13). What about the issues of great moment in the world today - injustice, the use of violence, abortion, foetal research, voluntary euthanasia? Are not issues of this kind as of similar or greater importance than armchair nit-picking over the meanings? No doubt Marx would have included the linguistic philosopher in his thoughts when he said(14):

"The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various

ways; the point is to change it."

Finally, and as indicated earlier in the chapter, such a method may come to think that because it is concerned exclusively with how language is used, that language necessarily expresses the 'truth' or 'reality' behind it. There are times when Wittgenstein appeared to talk in this vein(15):

"...the limits of my language mean the limits of my world..."

- that what the language says is the truth, because the language is the conceptual apparatus used, and therefore determines the truth or falsity for the user, because it is the conceptual world. Wittgenstein is at least equating the meaning of a word with the way it is used; and it is a very short step from that to saying that the meaning of a statement is 'the truth'.

Now this seems to be wrong because it is too simple an account of how language is used. For a start, to discover all of the current uses of the meaning of a word gives one no more than a psychological, sociological, and anthropological background to the word: it does not necessarily give much valid epistemological information. The word may simply have been inadequate in its meaning because of a lack of understanding of how the world works in that area of understanding. Take the word 'mad', for example. A thousand years ago, people meant by it something like 'acting strangely because possessed by devils'. Nowadays, there are, by present standards, perhaps half a dozen valid definitions of the word. The word has stayed the same, but perceptions of what lies behind it, its epistemological content, have changed. And there is nothing to suggest that its meaning won't change again with advances in knowledge.

Further, the information behind the word may be deliberately limited. Thus, whilst there is only one meaning for the word 'snow' in the English language, the Eskimo has several in his(16). This is quite simply because he needs those variations as a matter of his very survival. It might be a matter of life and death for him as to which sort of 'snow' another Eskimo is talking about. But the crucial point is that there is nothing stopping the English-speaking world from picking up these Eskimo differentiations and using them if so desired. But it is not desired. There is no need. If another ice age swept Britain, then there seems a good chance that the distinctions supplied by the Eskimo would be used. And they could be used as well. Practitioners of a language are not so concept-bound that they cannot, with training and practice, understand the subtleties of other concept systems. The first connection in this chapter with subjectivity may now be brought out. If people are not bound to concept systems in the way suggested above, if they can learn to utilize the applications and insights of other systems, then the notion of a complete conceptual subjectivism at the level of systems of thought is simply fallacious. It may be the case that people don't understand other languages and concepts, but it is not the case that they cannot.

It might be argued here that language systems have been confused with conceptual schemes, and that whilst one might well understand a language system, one need not understand a conceptual system. If this stand is taken, it would seem to verge into incoherence. After all, a conceptual system is built upon and from language; and any system of beliefs is a system of concepts which therefore is a system of words of a language. Person A may not share Person B's beliefs, but surely they can come to

understand the concepts being used. The only conceivable way, it would seem, for a person to argue that other people cannot understand his conceptual system at all is for him to claim that he is a solipsist - and of course how could he claim this for others, for he has already asserted that they cannot understand him?

Yet there would seem to be truth in a subjective standpoint, but the full appreciation of this cannot be brought out at the level of conceptual systems. It must be sought ~~within~~ a system. Wittgenstein once said(17) that if a lion could talk, we could not understand him. As with most of Wittgenstein's remarks, this is pretty cryptic, but what he appears to be suggesting is that a lion is so different from us in every way that we really have nothing in common with it. The lion's entire sensory apparatus, the driving forces in its life, its desires and wants, the things in the world that it abstracts as important, are so totally alien to the human point of view that if the lion could speak, we simply would not understand each other.

Whilst Wittgenstein has propounded an important truth here, it would be of limited value if its intention is to make us generalise this statement to human beings in other cultures, or with other belief systems from our own. Such people may see things in a different way from ourselves, they may have different likes, dislikes, desires and wants, but the essential point is that we are of the same species. We can learn, because physically, physiologically, and psychologically, we all function in the same way. What Popper was quoted as saying in the last chapter applies equally well here: that "it simply exaggerates a difficulty into an impossibility"(18). The lion, on the other hand, is an impossibility. Human beings are not the

same shape or size, our bodies do not function in the same way, our brains do not either. And they never can. This is the essential difference and is the reason why complete conceptual subjectivism among human beings does not stand up, though it probably would if we tried to communicate with lions, dogs, little green men from outer space, etc., etc.

The truth, then, is not to be found at the level of conceptual systems, but at the level of the individual, and to expand on this, another old chestnut in the philosophical cupboard must be examined, that of the notions of public and private languages.

It seems reasonably self-evident that whilst there may be some Chomskyan pre-programming in our brains, we learn to speak by listening to others, by imitating them, by exploring with different combinations of words and sounds, and generally develop our facility by interplay with others. In the most general sense, then, language is public. It is there for all to use, and for all to mis-use as well. This last point is important, for whilst some words like 'dog' and 'football' are in such common usage that only the most pedantic would want to argue that their meaning is not public, yet there are other words, which do not quite have this publicness about them. Take, for example, the word 'paradoxical'. It is certainly public in the sense that one can go to a dictionary and look up its meaning. But there are probably many people in this country who simply do not know its meaning at all. If it were used in conversation with them, and the context in which it was used did not give enough clues for these people to be able to work out its meaning, then they would simply be lost. Again, there must be other people who have heard of the word, have perhaps read it, but have only taken sufficient note of it for them to

believe that it has something to do with a situation or experience being 'odd' or 'puzzling'. Thus, some of the time, conversations may go on quite happily, and misunderstandings of the word not produce any real difficulties, whilst at other times, it may profoundly mislead the person who only partly understands its meaning, or may mislead someone else, if the person of only partial comprehension attempts to use it in their sentences.

This is, in a very real sense, an example of a private language, for words understood in one way by one person may totally mislead another. This is a very common way for misunderstandings and disagreements to happen.

Now Wittgenstein(19) excluded the possibility of a private language simply because the criterion for determining whether language is being used properly or not is by whether it proceeds in accordance with the rules of language - and those, he argues, are intersubjective and public in nature. Now of course human beings try to maintain public standards of comprehension by constant inter-communications - "the twittering machine", as Klee(20) calls it - but there seems to be no reason why there should not be a temporary misapplication of rules by individuals, and in this sense, then, people could be said to be practising a private language.

But private languages can occur in other ways too. Words may be deliberately misused in order to give a new sense to a sentence. Chesterton once described an incident in which a person received an unexpected message at the breakfast table, and as a result, a 'surprised' piece of toast fell from his fingers. This playing with words is, of course, most often seen in poetry, and is also one of the principal sources of the joke. By such actions, language is explored, developed, and

expanded by individuals who use public terms in a novel way, an utterly private way at first, but which, given sufficient currency, become part of the public language. It is a mistake of the first order to think of language as static, 'out-there', to be examined. Languages are alive and changeable. And the main reason for this movement, change, and development, is the interplay between language in the public domain and its mis-use, deliberate or not, by individuals in the private. The two depend and live off one another.

This is particularly true with regard to moral language. Groups of people, whether they be groups within society, or whole societies, come to have generally accepted 'public' notions of moral terms. And mis-use of these terms, for whatever reason, has the effect of making these moral notions a private conception which at first only the user will understand (assuming that he does!), and only later on is it possible that this private understanding may be fed back into the group understanding and thus become public currency.

But to really understand the mechanics of moral notions - and it is vital that this is done - their construction must be examined as well. Only through such an exercise will a point be reached where a totally subjectivist account of morality can be dispensed with, as well as facilitating a more complete comprehension of the relationship between the naturalistic fallacy and the nature of language.

A moral notion is an example of what Kovesi(21) calls a 'formal element'. A formal element is an umbrella term, whose meaning is defined (either publicly or privately) by its function, its organising principle. A moral example of one of these formal elements would be 'murder', a non-moral one

would be 'property'. An act is described as a murder if it fits certain conditions - if a person is killed, if someone else performed the killing, if the performance were deliberate, and if the performance was from malice or for profit. Thus someone being pushed off a cliff, and another being poisoned with arsenic, are both 'murders', if they conform to the conditions described above. There may be very little similarity between the two cases, apart from the fact that somebody died, and yet both are called 'murder', because they fit the previously stated conditions. Further, the word 'murder' is a formal element because it enables the classification of new actions never seen before. Thus, if a person were born with the psychic ability to 'think' a heart attack on someone else, and they did this to someone to gain some inheritance money, then this would come under the formal term 'murder'.

Now two things must be said here. One is that it is possible that people may disagree with the list of conditions given to describe the formal element 'murder'. This, in fact, indicates something to be dealt with later - that if we disagree over such matters, we are merely stating one of the ways in which ordinary people do come to blows (literally and metaphorically) over what constitutes 'moral' terms. Secondly, 'murder' is but one instance of a 'bad' act, again indicating that a hierarchy of formal elements is being discussed. This fact will be returned to as well. Much of the same sort of things can be said about the word 'property'. It will have a list of conditions for its proper usage, over which people may disagree, and it will be the kind of concept which will enable the classification or pigeon-holing of new, less complex words as they are encountered.

In neither case of the words 'murder' or 'property' do empirical similarities between various instances of these formal elements need to be looked for. What needs to be known in each case is why they were called by that name in the first place, what was the purpose, what are the criteria. To use another of Kovesi's terms(22), the 'material elements' of each formal element may be totally different, on each occasion - we may shoot, strangle, knife, suffocate or drown someone, but this would still be 'murder' if it conformed to the conditions used to describe a murder.

At this point, it may well be worth pointing out that Kovesi's esoteric use of 'formal' and 'material' elements may be not only superfluous, but positively misleading. Their usage does have the merit of letting one know that less complex formal elements come within the control of the complex formal elements, but the impression is given that they are different animals, and they simply are not. They are both examples of more or less complex concepts, nothing more and nothing less, and it is the use of these concepts, prior to sense experience, which determines the structure of what is seen. Thus Kovesi can say(23):

"...in an important sense, in the world, there is no value and there are no murders, tables, houses, accidents, or inadvertent acts...the world of raw data cannot be described for the sense of that world also lies outside it, and the very description of it, likewise, lies outside it."

In other words, an order is imposed upon the world, and without this prior imposition, the world would be unintelligible. This is why Kovesi can take Hume to task for using the word 'murder'(24), for this is a concept which is brought to an external event, and the event is interpreted in the light

of this concept. On Hume's empiricist stand, he is simply incapable of this act. Moreover, because of the nature of concepts, Hume could not give another example of murder. As Kovesi says(25) "...evaluation is not an icing on a cake of hard facts", but, rather, to continue the metaphor, it is the cake tin in which the cake is first shaped.

But there is something else to point out, as well, and this is that all facts are products of concepts, and that these concepts rank from the lowliest - the concept of 'yellow' perhaps - to the most complex, which go higher than Kovesi's formal terms of 'murder', 'good', 'bad', or 'justice', but which go to the level of what may be called 'conceptual schemes'. Now a distinction between 'concepts' and 'conceptual schemes' is normally accepted, but it seems wiser to think of the difference as being one of degree, rather than of kind. Viewing concepts in this way suggests that misunderstandings between people over concepts and conceptual schemes is in principle no different. Thus, there may be disagreement over the meaning of the words 'yellow' or 'table', but very few people would say that they cannot, logically, understand one another. Similarly, there may be disagreement over the meaning of the word 'murder', but people still understand each other. And finally, then, it can be argued that the scientist who practises vivisection may have difficulty understanding what the anti-vivisectionist is saying, but the same kind of disagreement as the two previous examples is still being described, only at a more complex level. As Trigg(26) put it:

"... to posit different moral traditions for every fundamental moral disagreement is to reduce to absurdity the notion of a form of life..."

and is to separate off as different in kind what is really only different in degree.

This strongly suggests that an understanding of the nature and function of concepts, and of their hierarchies, is essential if a full understanding of the naturalistic fallacy is to be gained. After all, what is an evaluative utterance, but the use of one of Kovesi's formal terms? In this respect, the word 'murder' has strong similarities with the word 'property', and both have only distant connections with the word 'yellow'. Both 'murder' and 'property' are conceptual terms, the use of which determine the material elements, or lower conceptual terms, to be assigned to them. 'Yellow', on the other hand, is considerably less complex, and is, in a very real sense, much nearer to being a part of the external world than 'murder' or 'property' are. But none of them exists independently of the user, for they were invented as concepts, and the manner and type of lower concepts used in the construction of higher concepts is a human invention as well. Now the mistake sometimes seen with the naturalistic fallacy is when a person says that one cannot move from the descriptive to the evaluative, and quotes as an instance of this the example of not being able to move from 'the boy is at school' to 'the boy ought to be at school'. With this, no-one could disagree. However, it misses the point. 'The boy is at school' may be a description of certain conceptual elements, but they are the wrong conceptual elements for the construction of the statement 'the boy ought to be at school'. Such a complex conceptual notion demands the use of other, less complex, conceptual elements - such as, perhaps, the notions of a mother ordering him to school, a belief in the right of the

parent to do so, a belief in the value of education, etc.,etc. As Kovesi says(27):

"...our different sorts of notions do not cross the floor of the house: in order to get to the other side they have to go back to their constituencies and be elected for the other side. If certain material elements have been elected to serve a purpose, then they serve that purpose. In order for them to serve another purpose, they have to go through the same process again that enables them to serve a particular purpose, they have to be elected again."

Now it may be said against such an argument that there may be disagreement with the reasons given for believing the boy ought to be at school. But this is perfectly all right, simply because the nature of the argument is implicitly accepted. Such an argument agrees that reasons for moral judgements are valid ways of arriving at these moral judgements: they only disagree about the content.

Thus every time one of the more abstract conceptual terms like 'justice' or 'fairness' is used, implicitly included within this term is a lot of less complex conceptual terms which go to build it. This seems to explain why few people argue over the meaning of 'yellow' or 'dog' or 'wife', but there are libraries of argument over the more complex conceptual terms. Words like 'yellow' or 'sweet' have one or two terms under their command, words like 'dog' or 'wife' rather more, whilst the most complex have whole armies under their command. Now if the previous findings about public and private meanings of words are applied to that which has just been stated, the opportunities for misuse, invention, neglect of certain lower

conceptual elements within a more complex conceptual element's definition, are vastly more likely with the more complex than the less complex. Thus a comparison, as Moore(28) does between the words 'yellow' and 'good' simply isn't on. The former is near the bottom of a conceptual hierarchy, whilst the latter is very near the top. To say that the two are both describing words is to be hugely over-simplistic. To say that they are different because they are from different areas of discourse, the factual and the evaluative, is also to miss the point completely. They may be used for different purposes, but this does not mean that they are from different areas of discourse, if by that is meant that there is a huge divide between the factual and the evaluative areas of our discourse. This simply isn't true. The difference lies in their positions within the hierarchy of the whole of human discourse, which should be treated as a unified whole, but which obviously has within it different areas of interest. But these areas show a subtle interplay all of the time, and at all levels, because there is an essential unity between them. Morality, being an area concerned with some of the more subtle and complex concepts, being an area which, for its concepts to work effectively, must take into account those concepts to do with our physical world, tends to occupy the higher levels. However, it still rubs shoulders with concepts like rights, meaning, and impartiality, which would not, all of the time, be included within the moral area. It is because Moore(29) failed to notice that there is this unity and this hierarchy that he could see the naturalistic fallacy as so plausible. Moral notions are invariably near the top of our hierarchy of discourse simply because they are normally among our more complex notions, and to argue for or against them, complex

notions at the same level, or immediately above or below, need to be introduced. Those below may act as reasons, but with the possibilities of misunderstandings multiplied spectacularly, not only with people's different ideas of what count as reasons, but also through the interplay between private and public languages, it is little wonder that people do not always see eye to eye. Indeed, it speaks volumes for man's capacity to overcome misunderstandings that there should be so much homogeneity in the world.

A final point concerning objectivity and subjectivity in morality, epistemology, and linguistic analysis may now be brought in. There is a very real danger that such an argument will become divided into two separate camps, the totally subjective and the totally objective. Whilst this chapter may have managed to show that the totally subjective stance in this field is simply untenable, it should also be added that the totally objective stance is untenable as well. As long as there is the individual, and as long as he or she is capable of developing his or her own ideas, as long as there is the possibility of misunderstandings, then there is no possibility of a totally objective stance. This implies that there are degrees of subjectivity, and that these can be lessened by the use of patient analysis, consideration of the relevant facts, tolerance and rationality. Total objectivity may never be achieved, but this does not mean that it is not possible, nor worthwhile, to get nearer to this goal. In the final chapter of this section, an attempt will be made to extend this analysis of language into an account which adequately describes the nature of moral enquiry.

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#### CHAPTER 4 THE NATURE OF MORAL ENQUIRY.

This chapter will try to tie in a variety of threads which have been untangled in earlier chapters, and will try to show that there is a unity in their structure which leads back to the concept of the person which not only suggests but justifies a particular approach to moral education, and also prescribes the kind of theory of human functioning which a psychology of moral behaviour and moral development must have if it is to be described as adequate. The headings, then, will be:

- (1) Language;
- (2) Epistemology;
- (3) Science;
- (4) The Social and Moral Being;
- (5) The Human Organism;
- (6) Implications;
- (7) Discussion.

The chapter's main thrust will be to argue that progress and criticism are possible in the area of moral education, but that a proper recognition of the (necessary) impeding factors to a total understanding must issue in an attitude of tolerance, patience, and care.

(1) LANGUAGE.

In the previous chapter, the manner in which language evolved was described, which argued for a complex inter-relationship between public and private uses, where the one trades off the other in meaning; and further, that there is a pyramid of terms, with complex conceptual notions being built upon the less complex. It was by the use of these two processes - public/private interactions, and hierarchies of terms, and of the complex interplay between these two processes, that an attempt was made to explain how language was used, how languages grow, and change, and how the possibility of misunderstandings could arise.

To this account, two further points implicit in the argument but not sufficiently drawn out, will now be added.

The first is the notion of the language-game within which a word is used. This is the principal move, which Wittgenstein made in his change of view from the 'Tractatus' to the 'Philosophical Investigations' - from seeing language as a set of independently existing atomic propositions, to seeing it as a unified coherent system, wherein individual terms depend for their meaning upon the rules of the language game being played. Passmore(1) gives the example of a builder teaching a labourer that a 'slab' is a 'slab', a 'brick' is a 'brick' etc. Now this pointing to a particular object is only a very small part of learning a language, for when the builder shouts 'slab' to the labourer when he is half way up the shell of a building, he is not merely displaying his knowledge of what the term refers to, or testing the labourer's knowledge of the meaning of the

term; rather he is indicating what he wants the labourer to bring h m  
But to understand this, the labourer needs to know m ch more than just  
to what the term refers; he must already be 'initiated into the pur se  
and rules of the particular 'game' to which the word belongs.

Now this goes one stage further than the public and private  
definitions of words - though this account still holds good. It goes  
one stage further because it is insisting upon the examination of  
words as part of an overall scheme, paradigm or game, and arguing that  
to really 'know' the meaning of a term, the game in which it is  
located has to be understood In other words, to understand the part  
the purpose of the whole must be understood first.

This, incidentally, excludes the possibility of a private language  
Wittgenstein argues (2), because the criterion for determining whether  
a language is used properly or not, is by whether it proceeds in  
accordance with the rules of language - and these are public and  
intersubjective in nature Now an argument has been presented  
previously(3), arguing for private meanings to words, on the basis  
that each person comes to their understanding by a different path, and  
a private language to some extent at least seems to be viable on the  
same grounds Thus, new creative attempts at expression,  
misunderstandings, and misapplications, are all basically private in  
nature. However, to the extent that these activities are essentially  
parasitic on public rules, then Wittgenstein was surely correct in  
asserting primary position to the public domain.

Nevertheless, the private application of words leads on to the second  
point to be added. This is that language concepts are never static,

but constantly on the move, being modified by the occurrence of new instances. At the universal level, there is the notion of a word - 'table' - but each new instance which comes along - this one is a purple and yellow aluminium star suspended in mid-air off which we eat - causes the expansion or modification of existing notions slightly. However, and importantly, in so doing other concepts near to 'table' are also modified. Now there are at least two views possible as to how words modify each other. The first could be called the 'jigsaw' theory of language - where the words fit together into a complete picture, and the expansion or contraction of one piece affects the linkage with other pieces, and thereby distorts the whole picture. The second could be called the 'sliding plate' theory - where the meaning of one word slides over or under the meaning of another. This suggests that even before a change in meaning, there is already a considerable ambiguity in the relationships between words, and that change in the meaning of one word simply changes an already difficult process of understanding.

It would be nice if the 'jigsaw' theory were true; it seems more likely, from what has been said so far, that a 'shifting plate' theory is. But whatever is the truth in the proper description of the relationship between words, this notion of the modification of existing concepts by new instances is not particularly problematical when it comes to the meaning of 'table'. It becomes much more so when a move is made further up the language pyramid to the more complex conceptual terms, and when a move is made into more esoteric areas -

such as the new sciences, where terms have not the direct validation or life span of more everyday words.

This approach - the continual modification of general terms by the assimilation of new instances - is sometimes called 'finitism'(4). Its core notion is that proper usage is developed step by step, in processes involving successions of on-the-spot judgements. It further denies that concepts have inherent meanings, and argues that the truth and falsity of a concept is something which communities, and the individuals within these communities, decide upon.

However, it is not being argued that 'truth' and 'falsity' per se are decided by communities - statements, after all, refer to something - but it is being argued that because of the finitist nature of language, determination of the 'truth' and 'falsity' of the reference of concepts can be extremely hazardous.

One final point is that if words, concepts, and meanings depend upon the larger game in which they are played, it is important to point out that the purpose of the game does not prescribe the exact number of participants in the game - it is an open-ended game with an indefinite number of terms, the number being defined only by the limits of the desire, or the ability, to express thoughts about the world. This openness, this ability of systems to expand themselves to accommodate new interests and purposes within the system, will raise grave doubts about the validity of using terms like 'paradigms' and 'revolutions' too rigidly in talk of science, for it would seem that movement can be effected much more sensibly in a lot of cases by talk of a shift in focus, or an expansion in the existing field.

To summarise, then, five things are being argued.

- (a) There are hierarchies of terms, the more complex depending upon the less complex for their meaning.
- (b) The meanings of words change through an interchange between private understanding and public usage.
- (c) The meanings of words change because of the finitist nature of language -that each new instance to some extent affects the current usage.
- (d) Terms cannot be fully understood in isolation - one must understand the 'game' in which they are being used. The parts can only be fully understood when the purpose of the whole is. Teleology raises its head, and will continue to do so throughout this thesis.

What are the implications for such a position? There seem to be at least five.

- (i) There will always be misunderstandings - because of confusions between the private and public, the public application of a term, the meanings of terms within hierarchies of discourse.
- (ii) 'Objectivity' is an unattainable notion, but one which draws us on; and there can be degrees of subjectivity.
- (iii) Language is never static, but constantly, inevitably, on the move in its meaning.
- (iv) The purpose of the 'game' needs to be understood before the meaning of the usage of individual terms can be understood - and the purpose of the game is decided by prior choice.

Thus, values precede facts. But these values are based on prior facts, so there is a constant circle of evaluation and resort to the 'facts'.

- (v) Facts cannot be separated from values because language systems are constructed to make sense, and sense is made by the selection of external reality.

## (2) EPISTEMOLOGY.

If the understanding of the meaning of words is a subjective, non-static, purposive one, then so is the epistemology.

For a start, epistemology is expressed through language, it is the medium used, the interface between human beings and the world. The characteristics of language, drawn as they are out of epistemology, are attempts to map the world, and so will tend to express to a greater or lesser extent the perception of this world. But secondly, language works back upon this epistemology, for it is certain to influence understanding. Thus, the very way in which comprehension is framed necessarily places limitations upon the ways in which the world can be thought about, and in this way necessarily structures the perceptions made and received.

So, at the very start, the influence of language shunts understanding of the world onto a particular track, just as understanding goes to frame how we express language. If this is the case, and epistemology takes of the nature of language - partly private, partly public, subjective, constantly on the move, purposive, and framed in terms of

these purposes then it bears little resemblance to the majority of descriptions put forward throughout the history of Western philosophy. The key to this difference lies, it would appear, in the overwhelming desire to relate how explicit, impersonal, permanent knowledge can be attained. Plato attempted to achieve it through his notion of the Forms - eternal, transcendent universals, existing above this world of flux and decay. Aristotle saw not a world of flux and decay, but a stable, permanent world which only needed to be ordered and sorted out. Sense-perception is certainly the beginning, but the move to universals, once made, is permanent. Descartes thought he had achieved permanence and objectivity through the notion of clear and distinct ideas, an expression of his time in the power of human reason. Kant, in attempting to counter the nihilist conclusions of Hume, revolved reality around the spectator, and looked for the categorial apparatus of the mind, the synthetic a priori truths which would give him and us that objective permanence so much sought after. But each of them, in some way, went wrong. Why? It is most instructive for present purposes to look at the reasons for each. Beginning, then, with Plato, it must be asked how he arrived at the notion of the Forms. The argument, can be seen most clearly in the 'Meno'. Here, Socrates professes his ignorance, but suggests that others, by contact with him, may at least achieve his ignorance, that is, come to question what they formerly took for granted. Socrates concludes(5):

"...and now, as far as excellence is concerned, I don't know what it is; you perhaps knew before you came into contact with

me, but now you are like someone who doesn't know. All the same, I want to consider it with you and join with you in searching for whatever it is."

They will therefore seek together for what they do not know. But now the slave boy asks the crucial question which either forces the Forms out of Plato, or leaves him with no answer(6):

"...and how are you going to search for this, Socrates, when you don't have the faintest idea what it is? Which of the things that you don't know will you suppose that it is, when you are searching for it? And even if you do come across it, how are you going to know that this is the thing you don't see?"

And so it is that Plato is able to present the Forms, the immortality of the soul; and this wonderful notion of a suprasensible world of universals more real than the real world, comes into being.

It must not be forgotten why Plato is appearing in this chapter. A form of knowledge totally at odds with the Platonic conception is being argued for. The only point of contact is that both agree that there is a reality, but further than that and there is little in common. But how can Meno's question be answered? It can't be answered in any other way but Plato's if his premises are accepted. But it has already been shown in the discussion of language that the parts cannot be understood on their own - both their relationships with each other, and with the purpose of the game, need to be understood before a full understanding can be achieved. But this full understanding is always, necessarily, at the personal level, and so

can never really be a full one, in the sense of being totally objective.

Now the same would seem to apply with knowledge as with language, and Polanyi's(7) distinction between 'focal' and 'subsidiary' awareness would seem to be what is being looked for. Focal awareness is "knowledge by attending to", whilst subsidiary awareness is "knowledge by relying on." Polanyi's central argument is that no knowledge can be wholly focal - human beings are directed to a problem by their subsidiary awareness - by their present state of knowledge suggesting that there are anomalies in their understanding - and their focal awareness centres on the problem. But implicit in this argument are three major assertions:

- (a) that comprehension of an area of knowledge is dependent upon comprehension of surrounding areas;
- (b) that total comprehension is subjective because it must be personal;
- (c) that complete reality can never be encountered, simply because a total picture can never be achieved. Human beings are always on the move trying to make sense, more sense, different sense, of their experience, of reality.

Knowledge, then, is not impersonal, static, and objective, as Plato would have us believe, but personal, transitory, subjective, and possibly wrong. As Polanyi remarked in respect of our cultural heritage(8), it comprises "everything in which we may be totally mistaken."

What of Aristotle? Meno's question can only really arise where there is genuine puzzlement and search, and as Aristotle's account of the world(9) is one in which the groping towards new insights, new understandings, is missing, Meno's question has little relevance. Aristotelian universals are not Platonic universals, they are not real in the way that the individual is for us, or the Platonic universal is real for him, but they are expressions of a tidy, ordered, unchanging world which is there to be classified and sorted out. As Barnes says(10):

"...in Plato's opinion, whiteness is prior to white things, for the existence of white things is simply a matter of their sharing in whiteness...in Aristotle's opinion, white things are prior to whiteness, for the existence of whiteness is simply a matter of there being white things...."

How different from the universals which Polanyi describes(11):

"...the problem of how a universal concept is formed is part of the problem of empirical *induction*. All attempts to formulate strict rules for deriving general laws from individual experiences have failed. And one of the reasons is again, that each instance of a law differs, strictly speaking, in every particular from every other instance of it."

Thus epistemology and science must move continuously between particulars and universals in both directions. The particulars continually change notions of the universal, and the universal gives structure and background to the particulars. There will always be a groping further into the problem, but never a completion of its

resolution. For this thesis, then, truth is open and contingent, for Aristotle it is closed and complete.

It is this Aristotelian notion of science which seems to have had more profound effects than its Platonic counterpart. For whilst both suggest that it is in principle possible to grasp the permanent, objective, and static truth, Aristotle's notion is much more amenable to the scientist. It posits no necessary knowledge of the mystical realm, but invites investigation of the world of here-and-now, and guarantees the desired end result. Little wonder, then, that with a philosophic tradition beginning with these two giants, and with man's natural desire to know, that a counter-tradition which offers far less, and is intuitively so unappealing, would have had such a hard time to establish itself.

Does Descartes provide any more help? Not really, because Descartes offers the same stable truths, though arrived at, admittedly, from a new direction:

"Concerning the subjects proposed for investigation, we should seek to determine, not what others have thought, nor what we ourselves conjecture, but what we can clearly and evidently intuit, or deduce with certainty, for in no other way is knowledge obtained." (12)

The secret of Cartesian method, and its intuitive appeal, lies in its mathematical precision, the move from those truths which cannot be doubted through to the more complex, via the notion of clear and distinct ideas, a clear and distinct idea being something the mind does which cannot be doubted. Thus:

"...we reject all knowledge which is merely probable and judge that only those things should be believed which are perfectly known, and about which we can have no doubts." (13)

Descartes structure, then, works something like this: there is knowledge which one cannot doubt, and this knowledge, because of its objective nature, is obviously the same everywhere, and is perceived by a rational faculty which is not constrained or impeded by the body. The body is thus perceived as only a machine which houses the intellect.

However, this approach can be doubted immediately. Descartes summarised his method in what is known as the principle of clarity and distinctness, which in the words of 'The Discourse' is:

"...the things we conceive very clearly and very distinctly are all true..." (14)

And yet there is the classic example of Priestley clinging tenaciously to the phlogiston theory and refusing to admit the existence of the oxygen he had 'discovered' (15). In this case, which is the clear and distinct idea? Priestley would have said the phlogiston, so another approach must be sought if he is to be disproved. It will have to be admitted that the advance of knowledge, far from being an inexorable process through these clear and distinct ideas, is actually a tangled web of partial truth and partial error. All knowledge is capable of doubt, and this is so precisely because of the manner in which it is approached - via ourselves as persons, in particular, rooted, historical situations, groping from the subjective conception of the slightly less, and always, because of the nature of focal and

subsidiary awareness, capable of error and mistake. Again, a major philosopher offers an account of knowledge guaranteeing stability, objectivity, and permanence, and again it must be rejected. This time it is because, as Merleau-Ponty(16) said:

"...we are not in some incomprehensible way an activity joined to a passivity, an automatism surmounted by a will, a perception surmounted by a judgement, but wholly active and wholly passive, because we are the upsurge of time."

Curiously, however, Descartes set in motion something which was to result in the last great system of objective knowledge leading into the present day.

A Cartesian clear and distinct idea is an act of understanding which the mind performs. But what if the mental performance is extracted, and those data that come to the mind are concentrated upon instead? Locke's version of ideas does just this(17), and it only takes a tweak from Hume(18), to turn such a theory into one which argues that sensory awareness never carries its own interpretation, that human beings are the prisoners of those stimuli impinging upon them, the possessors of minds which can never know the truth or falsity of anything. Here is an empiricism so deep and biting and sceptical that if its inexorable logic is followed, the possibility of the knowledge of anything must be denied - of the reality of the world, of causation, of personal identity, and of ethical principles.

This is the extreme empiricism which was the forefather of the logical positivists and behaviourists of the twentieth century, and they suffer from the same problems as it does. If such a thoroughgoing

empiricism is adopted, its own principles lead to the demonstration of its own inadequacies, for as was demonstrated in the discussion on language above, it is not the data which wholly determine the conceptual system adopted; sense of external reality is made by being selective of its content. Thus choice and selection precede the incoming data, and any description of human activity which is nothing more than a description of the data impinging upon the organism must be grossly deficient. As Grene says(19):

"...purely passive contents of experience cannot build themselves up into systems of knowledge, unless given shape and significance by the person whose experience they are."

The recognition of this personal nature of perception at least goes part of the way to an epistemological link-up with the nature of language, and Kant is the man to introduce this personal element. Kant, as he says, was woken from his dogmatic slumbers by Hume, and attempted in philosophy(20) what Copernicus had attempted in astronomy to revolve reality around the spectator, rather than the spectator around reality. But he came to the problem with certain crucial presuppositions which led him astray.

Kant was looking for necessary absolute truths via the mind's contributions to knowledge - the synthetic a prioris. These synthetic a prioris - the products of the categorial apparatus which the mind brings to bear upon the data impinging - are guaranteed for Kant by three main things:

- (a) a belief that contemporary Newtonian science was the final, secure, unalterable stage of this branch of knowledge;

(b) his profound faith in a benevolent deity who would not deceive humanity;

(c) the belief that the synthetic a priori, because of the categorial apparatus being the same for everyone, were also the same everywhere.

Thus Kant in his approach is not aware of, nor incorporates into his account, the possibility that different cultures might adopt different conceptual schemes, different synthetic a priori, that no part of science is final and complete, nor the possibility that a benevolent deity may not be there to guarantee the validity of this categorial apparatus.

So it is not possible to go along with Kant, as it is not possible with Plato, Aristotle, or Descartes in their accounts of the guarantee of an absolute, certain epistemology. But there are certain things with which agreement with Kant is possible.

Firstly, it is possible to agree that experience is not atomic, but rule-governed, and that these rules are supplied by the mind's categories - even if there can be no absolute guarantee for them.

Secondly, it is possible to agree that human beings are constantly searching, groping for the truth.

Thirdly, it is possible to agree that there is a truth, a reality which is being searched for.

Finally, it can be agreed that the search for knowledge must be located within the individual, even though this must be taken much further than Kant, and be argued that not only is each person a transcendental Unity of Apperception, but something much more, an

individual located within an historical scheme, and with all his or her genetic attributes interacting with this environment. Kant has begun the personalisation of knowledge, but it must be carried much further.

What, then, are the conclusions to be reached? Having looked at the theories of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, and Kant, and having rejected the notion of knowledge as a public, static, permanent entity, this does not mean that the notion of a reality can be dispensed with as well. The notion of something to which we refer must be held in mind if the more subjectivist and relativist positions are to be escaped. Nor does a personalised view of knowledge mean that either the notion of universals, or of the public nature of conceptual schemes may be rejected. For a start, experience can only be made sense of through the use of universals, for they act as the standards for the evaluation of experience. Indeed, it seems fair to say that there could be no sense to experience without universals - it is only that they hold the same sort of impermanent, finitist character as the rest of knowledge; or, to be more exact, they are impermanent, but less so than individual instances because they have the strength of the collected wisdom of past instances. Thus the shift in a universal's meaning is likely to be small in the short run: it will take the accumulated weight of a great many instances to move it substantially. However, the fact remains that universals do come under pressure and do change.

Similarly, conceptual schemes share the same sorts of tensions - the tension between private and public understanding, the effects of

individual acts of categorisation upon the entire scheme, the effects of the scheme upon attempted acts of categorisation. The best way to see exactly what is meant is to look at these tensions in practice. This can be done through an examination of the practice of Science.

### (3) SCIENCE.

The inquiry into language and epistemology generally has led to the conclusion that knowledge of the 'real' is either impeded by, or proceeds from four processes.

Firstly, the personalised and subjective nature of the operation is a limiting but necessary condition.

Secondly, there is the constant dialogue and possibility of misunderstanding between the public and private conceptions.

Thirdly, the framing of language and knowledge within conceptual schemes is a directing and possibly misleading process, but one, again, which is a sine qua non of the process.

Finally, universals are essential as guides, but are of a constantly modified nature because of the finitist nature of human understanding.

The tensions produced by such a process have been clearly demonstrated in the debates proceeding the philosophy of science. As in epistemology, so in science; there is the initial belief in the possibility of a perfect, static, permanent, objective science. This, as mentioned in Chapter 2, is similar to the Whig view of history, in which historical change is seen as progress, and change is interpreted as the move towards more advanced and complete forms of political and

social organisation. Thus Whig historians saw the explanations for past periods in the events of a future time.

This tendency to see the pattern of the present as the explanation of the events of the past, of past events as development towards the future, is not so current in liberal circles today, though perhaps, in science, it would have rather more justification. After all, it can be argued that there are profound differences between history and science. History could be described as the record or interpretation of man's attempt to make sense of his environment and life, in a world uncontrolled and mostly uncontrollable, where he tends to react to situations rather than to impose a plan upon them, where the variables are so numerous and ungoverned that all too often history becomes the story of response rather than premeditated action. In this situation, to talk of history as progress is selective in the extreme.

Science, on the other hand, has conventionally been seen as planned investigation: where a small part of the environment is separated off, isolated, all the relevant variables held under control, and in so doing, man, by his logic, reason and planning, is able to totally control, and therefore to understand. There is, then, good reason, at least initially, for believing that science might be equated with progress - assuming that 'control' is progress. However, some views take this one stage further, and see the knowledge of modern science as the very pattern of reality itself.

It has already been seen that there are severe problems with such an account, and that these problems appear to rest upon the status of

the inductive method. However, the argument of Popper was noted, which argued that the hallmark of the scientific method has nothing to do with induction at all, but rather to do with criticism and falsifiability. It was pointed out that the curious thing about Popper's position is that it is no more than the reverse side of the positive coin, and must consequently face much the same criticisms. The alternative views of Kuhn and Feyerabend, however, are discomfoting in the extreme. It is, however, easy to see how Kuhn, for instance, could arrive at his position. Kuhnian paradigms are not seen by him as somehow an impediment to making sense of reality, but rather as the only manner in which this activity could take place. Thus, in his account of the training of neophyte scientists(21), in the pattern that research takes(22), he describes activities which impose a necessary pattern, which are not just cultural variants, but are the kinds of selection needed if the activity is to take place at all. Thus, just as in language, where the language has to have a purpose, and only with this purpose can words within the system have a meaning, just as in epistemology, where it is only by the selection and choice imposed by the person and culture on experience, can events be given any meaning, so with the scientific 'fact' - only within the context of the scientific paradigm can the fact gain acceptance. As Barnes has said(23):

"...observations accepted by scientists are not simple protocol reports, standing on their own. To become part of science, they must be relevant to the interests of science. They must be attuned to standards of scientific value, acceptable not only

to the individual experimenter, but to the consensus of scientific opinion whose authority he accepts."

As Grene points out(24), this is why Mendel's brilliant work in genetics failed to attain the significance it deserved during his lifetime, why no one noticed or accepted his results. It was not until much later, when the values of the scientific community were such as could incorporate his work, when the subsidiary awareness was such, and the focal awareness was directed towards his area of research, that his true stature could be recognised.

Kuhn, however, wants to be much more radical than to merely describe the social and psychological factors which might prevent valid work from being recognised as such: Kuhn wants to assert that the scientific paradigm of the time, the conceptual scheme then in operation, was such that Mendel's work was incapable of being recognised because it belonged to a different paradigm, one whose values were different, and therefore whose research was incommensurable with the paradigm of his time.

Kuhn is in effect asserting that the notion of 'progress' in scientific understanding, in conceptual schemes in general, is really an archaic notion which has no mileage - as paradigms describe and measure different things, so they cannot be compared with each other. They work for the communities who employ them, they can be changed, but only by a change in gestalt, a scientific revolution, and then it cannot be said that one is better than the other - simply because there is no criterion of judgement.

Now Kuhn's work is as an historian of science, and his observations are detailed and specific. But it is instructive to compare his account with that of seven appraisals in the volume "Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge" (25). Five of these appraisals are by philosophers, and their criticisms of Kuhn are not empirically based at all. It would be unfair to say of Popper et al. that they do not care a fig whether Kuhn has produced an accurate description of the history of scientific thinking or not, but it wouldn't be far off the mark. Popper and the other philosophers are concerned with what science ought to be, and produce their definitions. Thus, for a Popperian, science is what Popperian philosophy asserts it should be. Never mind that in the past scientists haven't performed in a Popperian manner: this simply means that they weren't doing science properly.

Kuhn, on the other hand, draws out his normative considerations from his empirical, historical study: if this is what science has been, this is what science is, this is all science can be. Now it is important to note that Kuhn isn't exactly committing the naturalistic fallacy - if his account of the incommensurability of scientific paradigms is correct, then he is saying that there is no 'ought' in it - science cannot take place except within these incommensurable paradigms, and to say, as Popper does, that science ought to be like this or like that, is nothing more than whistling after the wind. However, the onus would seem to be on Kuhn to prove his thesis - that these paradigms are incommensurable - otherwise his account may be of psychological and sociological interest, but little more.

As was seen in Chapter 2, there are good reasons to doubt his account. Further, Kuhn's descriptions of the move from one paradigm to another by scientists is sketchy in the extreme. What is a revolution? Is it a massive reconstruction in the entire way a branch of science looks at the world? Or is it a large scale re-orientation because of the impact of the influence of a new, but related, branch of study coming to bear? Or is it esoteric changes among specialists? The problem is that Kuhn's description of 'normal' science and 'revolutions' appears to give a clear-cut picture which, in reality, does not necessarily exist or work in the way he suggests.

Take Mendel's case again. Was it a scientific revolution which allowed the incorporation of his findings? Or was it more likely the Polanyian description of focal and subsidiary awareness - that during his lifetime, scientific communities' focal attention was on other aspects of the field, and only later did their attention, their awareness shift to areas which needed the inclusion of Mendel's insights.

Moreover, there seem to be very real problems with the need for scientific revolutions in the first place. If there is no way in which one is justified in claiming that one paradigm is 'better' than another, then one might well ask why there is a revolution in the first place. And yet Kuhn's description of the build-up to a revolution - the anomalies, the inadequacies of the present paradigm to incorporate new findings, suggests that there is more to this revolution than a duck/rabbit gestalt shift. There is the personal nature of investigation, the tension between private and public

understanding, the subjectivity of knowledge, but there is something more, the groping towards something - which might well be characterised as a more adequate description of reality. It seems that at times Kuhn's theory takes on almost idealist overtones. There are the competing paradigms, but Kuhn sometimes seems to forget that they are competing with a purpose, and about something which can be classified as their criteria of usefulness - external reality.

It would appear that talk of 'normal' science and 'revolutions' is a misleading way of describing this - and by implication - other human activities. Science appears to work, like most other human pursuits, in terms of a whole series of different activities, among which are the following.

Firstly, there is the chosen normative scheme. In the case of science, its normative content is usually the search for the truth, but it can be influenced by the social and psychological factors of the practitioners and the community involved. Thus Lysenko's work in genetics(26) was influenced by another normative paradigm -that of squaring with existing Marxist-Leninist theory.

Secondly, there is the noting within this scheme of the repetition of similar occurrences - the use of analogy, comparison, and induction.

Thirdly, there is the attempt to predict and falsify.

Lastly, there is the construction of conceptual schemes to account for validated instances.

On the account given so far, then, there are strong reasons for believing that the work by Lakatos(27) in the philosophy of science parallels quite closely the description of the nature of universals

given previously in this chapter. Lakatos advances a sophisticated version of Popper's falsification hypothesis, and argues that falsification is the basic indicator of the 'progressive' or 'degenerative' status of research programmes. However, he is at pains to argue that such programmes are never totally proved or disproved, indicating the folly of ever totally discounting any programme, and of the extremely complex nature of bringing arguments to bear, either for or against the worth of any programme. It will shortly be seen, when attention is focussed upon the status of social, political and moral theories, that this closely parallels the account given there. All of this will happen within the epistemological and linguistic constraints noted above, particularly that of the personalist nature of focal and subsidiary awareness. It would appear that Popper and Kuhn have got hold of part of the elephant and thought they could thus extrapolate from the part they held to an adequate description of the whole

#### Recapitulation and Forward.

So far, then, it has been argued that language, epistemology, and science share the same basic characteristics. It may well be asked why they should do so. The answer given here, the reasons for which will shortly be given at length, is because they are activities of the same organism - the human being. The next task, therefore, will be to describe those characteristics which produce these similarities. In so doing, the aim will be to show that the moral activities of mankind necessarily partake of the same structure, and must be characterised in the same manner. If this argument can be achieved, then, it would

seem to be an adequate base for a description of the cognitive side of moral activities. This is crucial for three reasons.

Firstly, it will provide the justification for the approach to the subject matter of moral education, which might be characterised as the tentative approach. If this is what human beings are, by their very nature, then moral education, and education in general, must educate people to the awareness of these limitations - assuming of course people should be educated to an understanding of what is.

Secondly, it prescribes the least necessary description of an adequate psychology of man's moral thinking and development. In so doing, it sets limits to what can be expected of the individual, and, also, extends his capabilities and possibilities.

Lastly, it does not suggest the matter directly, but describes the manner in which it can be approached and dealt with. It therefore directly affects policies of the implementation of moral education.

#### (4) THE SOCIAL AND MORAL BEING.

A description of man via his language, his epistemology, and his science is only a partial picture. What of him as a social, political and moral being? The former areas cover the ways he tries to understand and describe the world. But from this is it possible to get to a description of the way in which he judges and acts? There is, as well, an important complication to add to any description of these areas, which refers back to the Wittgensteinian notion of a language game, but now with an added twist. As Berlin says(28):

"...men's beliefs in the sphere of conduct are part of their

conception of themselves and others as human beings; and this conception in its turn, whether conscious or not, is intrinsic to their picture of the world."

Now what becomes crucial is that the investigation of social, political and moral actions, if it is to perform adequately, must therefore fully take into account the interpretations, motives, desires, conceptual schemes, and paradigms of the agents involved. However, this means that a concept of a social science based on perceived regularities in behaviour cannot be a full and proper description. This is the major flaw with behaviourist accounts in psychology. If an understanding of what human beings are is to be gained, then the models that dominate their thoughts and action must be understood as well. Any conception of the empirical that ignores or underestimates the power and pervasiveness of these models is emasculated. Thus a conception of the empirical that restricts itself to publicly observable behaviour, and relegates such models and interpretations to what is 'merely' subjective, radically misrepresents human action.

Berlin(29) notes that the models set by Plato, Aristotle, Christianity and others, vie and contend with one another for legitimacy in men's minds. But he makes a very revealing point when he says that:

"...if men or circumstances alter radically, or new empirical knowledge is gained which will revolutionise our conception of man, then certainly some of these edifices will cease to be relevant and will be forgotten..."

All of which can, and it seems, should, be interpreted on the model of human behaviour so far presented. The universal, in this case, is a social, political or moral value, which is under the same sort of stress from private/public interpretation, and finitist individual additions to its central concept, and is thus constantly in the process of change of meaning. Now these individual additions to the universal, either in the form of occurrences which might or might not be interpreted as coming within its boundaries of definition, or in the form of factual knowledge which directly relate the value to the situation in the world, all inform values and change them. At the same time, though, these values determine the selection of individual occurrences and 'relevant' facts as well, thus producing a constant interplay. These universals, values, paradigms etc. cling on tenaciously through, firstly, not being falsifiable or rejectable by one fact alone, and secondly, by conditioning the selection of the facts brought to bear.

Thus these universals tend to have a very long life-span, and may never be totally rejected. Rather, they may come to seem to have insufficient agreement with the 'facts', and may also fail to harmonise with other universals within the value scheme. Madness as the possession by demons is a good example. Such a concept does not square with the scientific facts current in our society, nor does the notion of demons and hobgoblins square with current notions of the meaning of good and bad. The universal, then, gradually drifts out of fashion, but is never entirely dispensed with. The similarities with the work of Lakatos(30), mentioned earlier, are large and obvious.

The links with Wittgenstein are explicitly brought out by Winch in his writings on the idea and possibility of a social science(31). He argues that the idea of a social science based upon the natural sciences is a mistake. Now according to Winch(32):

"...the notion of a human society involves a scheme of concepts which is logically incompatible with the kinds of explanation offered in the natural sciences."

Winch argues that human behaviour is rule-governed, which presupposes the existence of intersubjective conventions and agreements, and that to understand the behaviour, the rules underlying the behaviour must be understood as well. The close parallels with Wittgenstein and language, with scientific paradigms, with Berlin's thesis, are very apparent. Winch's own example is striking. He suggests that an activity like voting makes no sense whatsoever unless the reasons for the physical behaviour of placing an 'x' on a piece of paper and putting it in a tin box are taken into account.

So far, so good. But what, for Winch, marks off such activities from being called social science is that there can be no standards of evaluation. As he says(33):

"Two things may be called 'the same' or 'different' only with reference to a set of criteria which lay down what is to be regarded as a relevant difference. When the 'things' in question are purely physical the criteria appealed to will of course be those of the observer. But when one is dealing with intellectual (or indeed any kind of social) 'things', that is not so. For their being intellectual or social, as opposed to

physical, in character depends entirely on their belonging in a certain way to a system of ideas or mode of living. It is only by reference to the criteria governing the system of ideas or mode of life that they have any existence as intellectual or social events."

This relativistic thesis can be countered to a large extent, it would seem, by examining Carr's (34) notion of historical truth. In Carr's thesis, an understanding of past events is conditioned by the present's set of criteria for evaluation, and when earlier historians' views of the same period are read, it is possible to see their biases. It is rather like looking through different prisms at an object, and then comparing the distortions of the prisms in order to gain a more accurate view of what the object really looks like. Again, as in previous accounts, there can be no absolute objectivity, but there can be different degrees of subjectivity.

Now Winch (and ourselves) do not need to look through the temporal prisms historians must use because of the nature of their subject. Rather, prisms may be used to look at the same time period, so Winch's pessimism would seem to be misplaced. As Berlin(35) says:

"The ultimate test of the adequacy of the basic patterns by which we think and act is the only test that common sense or the sciences afford, namely, whether it fits in with the general lines on which we think and communicate; and if some among these in turn are called into question, then the final measure is

direct confrontation with the concrete data of observation and introspection which these concepts and categories and habits order and render intelligible. In this sense...any form of thought that deals with the real world, rests on empirical evidence..."

There seems to be something of a movement then, which feels that because the absolutes of Plato, Aristotle, etc., are no longer viable, the baby must be thrown out with the bathwater. Louch(36), for instance, in his discussion of the similarities and dissimilarities between the physical and social sciences, argues that universals not only are not static, permanent, and objective in human endeavour, but that the belief and use of them is a positive danger. Actions, for Louch, can only be judged in context, and there is no universal context. What is vital, he argues, is the variety and detail, not the general features of situations which social scientists have tended to concentrate on in order to formulate laws like the physical sciences.

It will be apparent by now that not only would this be an incorrect characterisation of the social sciences, it would, on the present account, be incorrect for the physical sciences as well. By concentrating on the particular, Louch loses sight of the fact that the only way knowledge can be gained is via a conceptual scheme, which in turn necessitates the use of universals. These universals, though, do not have the permanent, evil nature Louch ascribes to them. And, certainly, there is no need for his conclusions - reminiscent of more extreme existentialism - when he says of morality(37):

"...the only moral recommendations...a move here, a move there, zig and zag, after the manner of Aristotle's recommendations with regard to the Mean, everything tentative and subject to change...men and situations represent a variety and a changing variety, which makes the application of general laws trivial or false, and universal moral principles a positive evil."

Bernstein(38) argues that what appears to be squeezed out as illegitimate on this account is the genuine need to gain some perspective on the many varied contexts in which human beings find themselves, in order to understand and explain such contexts. However, as the previous pages have argued, the reasons for thinking Louch is wrong go deeper. In language, epistemology, science, and now morality, knowledge can only be sought through the employment of conceptual schemes, and one of the fundamental units within these schemes is the universal - the impermanent, changeable universal but the universal all the same. And for Louch, or anyone else, to attempt to dispense with them is simply to cut from under themselves the ground from which they begin their search.

#### (5) THE HUMAN ORGANISM.

Language, Epistemology, the activities of Science, Politics, Social Life and Morality, are all thus linked in characteristically similar fashions. Why is this? What is the factor which enables the application of the same kind of description to each of the areas of human activity which has so far been examined? The linking factor would seem to be that they are human activities; in particular, that

they are expressions of man's purposive, teleological nature. Human beings are not, as Merleau-Ponty said(39), an automatism surmounted by a will, but an organism, an individual, a person - someone who experiences the 'thrownness' of being in the world, who for his very survival must constantly look to, plan, seek the future. The pursuit of knowledge, all knowledge, is teleological, by its very nature, and this, in one form or another, is an abiding passion of man, for his very existence depends upon his ability to face life's contingencies, to be prepared for the unexpected. This means, necessarily, a mind directed forward in time. The past is determined and gone: the future can be open and free. This is the crucial insight of the Existentialist. Heidegger(40) could look upon the future as the exhibition of free will within the constraints of a temporary duration upon this earth - before our death; Tillich(41), on the other hand, can concentrate upon a freedom "...in an act of moral decision", and upon a freedom to receive or accept "...the presence of the divine Spirit..." But which ever way one views it, all existentialists can see this freedom. It is not a mere literary phenomenon, but a real feature of human existence. If the past is determined and gone, but the future can be open and free, then only to the extent that the past is carried into the future does free will and determinism become a major philosophic issue. Freedom, as those in the existentialist school saw, is a liberation, but it is also a heavy responsibility to oneself and to the social and physical world around one. This is truly where the moral side of this account takes centre stage.

This account, then, comes to the description of the features possessed by the person. Human beings possess all of these characteristics:

- (1) They are selective and evaluative in what they extract.
- (2) They are self-defining in terms of the conceptual schemes they adopt.
- (3) They are purposive, teleological creatures, defined in terms of temporality.
- (4) Their understanding is permanently groping, finitist, and necessarily subjective.
- (5) They constantly attempt to construct schemes to explain what they find and thus are pattern seeking.
- (6) They generally accept that their best method of attack is to adopt the value of impartiality - the trademark of science.
- (7) They are based within a community whose conceptual scheme they are constantly re-interpreting.
- (8) They are determined by the past, but are capable of freedom in the future.
- (9) They are individuals, persons.

#### (6) IMPLICATIONS.

##### (a) Justification

If the above is an adequate description, then it suggests - one might say demands - that the area under inspection - the person and his world - be treated educationally in the manner in which it is encountered and understood. This means that, with educational material dealing with knowledge of the external world, there must be

incorporated within the educational paradigm those constraints which act upon perception and limit understanding. This would suggest an approach in education generally which is rather more tentative in its presentation of 'facts' than is normally the case. It suggests that rather than including this perspective at the end of the child's education, if at all, steps must be taken as early as possible to appraise the child of the tentative nature of knowledge in general. It must surely be the case that if a child is given an education in which, throughout this time, facts are presented as solid, permanent, and objective, then any attempt at the very end of this period to change this view will have very limited success. The process must begin on the ground floor and move up with the child, rather than being given to him when his attitudes are firmly inculcated.

If this is true with respect to the sciences proper, how much more so with the social sciences? If there is, as has been argued, this extra layer of ambiguity and distortion in an appreciation of the subject matter, then how much more should this tentativeness be incorporated at an early age? The justification for such an approach - tolerance through the appreciation of ignorance - is implicit in the nature of an epistemological search.

(b) Psychology

It will be apparent that the above description prescribes a least necessary theory of the psychology of moral functioning and development. Thus, it must be a theory which, in its initial orientation, acknowledges the factors outlined above, and which

investigates the moral functioning and development of the human being as a consequence of all the above factors. As Cicourel said(42):

"...the moment to moment programming each member accomplishes for himself and others, re-establishes the normative order because of post-hoc linking with general policies or rules. In attempting to socialise children this, as yet ambiguous process of linking particular cases with general policies or rules becomes a perpetual laboratory for discovering how social organisation is made possible through the child's acquisition of social structure."

Even the most cursory inspection of the features will make it very clear that no one psychological theory at the present time is sufficiently well-grounded or comprehensive enough to incorporate all of the demands of the preceding description. However, the cognitive-developmental approach appears to have more mileage in it than most. Thus, insofar as it and the description are both personal, constructionist, and teleological, there is a considerable degree of overlap. There are, however, failings within the school, the most notable probably being the way in which developmental psychologists like Kohlberg(43) develop a theory of morality upon the notion of a final, objective, impersonal conception of justice. On the preceding account, such a description is not viable. It needs to be grounded much more in the personal and subjective, whilst still allowing room for criticism, clarification, and agreement.

Of the other failings, the two most important may be characterised as failing to take account of higher and lower causes.

With regard to the higher causes, the school generally fails to incorporate within its framework the effects that adopted explanatory schemes can have upon the selection and evaluation of the subject. Though such a deficiency is not one ruled out by the theory's general orientation, it would provide methodological problems, in that the finitist nature of such conceptual schemes makes precise description of them most difficult, as would the fact that their influence could only ever be inferred.

With regard to the lower causes, it must be accepted that, despite this section's general orientation towards the intellectual faculties of mankind, the non cognitive, non rational part of man's make-up does have a profound effect upon the individual's understanding, judgement, and behaviour, just as many and varied external stimuli have rewarding, punishing and modelling effects as well. Indeed, as this thesis develops further, it will become more and more apparent that the view is taken that a perspective limited to cognitive functioning is inadequate practically and theoretically; cognition on its own can never explain why human beings are motivated to act in certain ways rather than in others. To explain the regular occurrence of the weakness of the will, to explain how superordinate actions are possible, there is a need for an examination of those factors early in life which cause the feeling that other people's feelings are important - there is a need to look at that part of human psychology which focuses on these causes. Thus, whilst this chapter has deliberately focussed on the individual as active and judgemental, it is argued that this activity is only possible through and within an

internal and external environment; and any adequate theory of psychological functioning must take fully into account the effects of these variables. However, it is still maintained that moral education must be education in accordance with the features outlined above; and this is an active, questing, and hopefully, responsible person.

(c) Content and implementation.

The description so far given in this essay does not directly suggest the subject matter of moral education as such, and other methods for the description of content will be given shortly. However, the justification of the approach directly leads into its implementation, and again suggests a method advocating tolerance, patience, and personal responsibility; it explicitly rejects any methods suggestive of hard facts and accepted truths, at least in the sense of permanence, and total objectivity.

(7) DISCUSSION.

This is all very well, one can hear the teacher reply, but what am I to teach? What attitude am I to adopt? That there is no truth, that I must make no moral judgements, that I must be tolerant of every opinion, that everything is relative? The danger in this approach, it may well be argued, is the opposite of the danger from the fanatic, but dangerous all the same: that I sit on the fence so long, and dither so long over whether I am justified or not justified in taking action, that I never do take any action at all. Surely one of the major purposes of moral education is to get people to behave in a certain way, to act upon received information. One of the traditional

criticisms of this area is precisely that it never seems to be able to make the link between theory and practice, and this account, it might be argued, is the perfect example of this failure.

To this, a number of things must be said.

Firstly, there are considerable impediments in the way of perception, and to ignore these is to be guaranteed of false perception. Nevertheless, there is a reality which can be referred to, and this gives a defence against relativism, and assures the existence of degrees of subjectivism, and in so doing, enables the belief in the possibility of movement from a less certain to a more certain opinion.

Secondly, tolerance does not imply acquiescence: there are situations in the world where all the evidence that could be mustered points to a certain form of action. In such cases, knowledge that total truth is never to be had, need be no more than of academic interest. Indeed, as responsible adults entrusted with the moral welfare of those too young to be able to form mature judgements on subjects potentially dangerous or even lethal to themselves (such as the dangers of glue-sniffing, or drug addiction), to not take a stand would be a simple abnegation of responsibility. This does obviously raise the problem of indoctrination; for on what grounds does one decide to interfere in one situation, and not in another? This issue will be dealt with at greater length in forthcoming chapters, but for the moment it might be as well to say that the moral agent, being a participant in the world, and not a mere spectator, has to attempt to blend a responsibility for youth, with an understanding of the limits

of all knowledge, and a desire to aid the young to come to a mature understanding of their own problems in much the same way as he hopes that he himself has done.

Thirdly, in those 'obvious' situations mentioned above, academic interest may at least cause reflection and examination in a cool moment on all sides of the problem: the resulting conclusion may well be that the obvious is not quite so obvious. In other words, an attitude to situations is being advocated which is adopted and which is at work at all times.

Fourthly, the universal and particular both have their vital functions to perform. The universal is the repository of past knowledge and past experience. It is not there to be used unthinkingly, but is there as a valuable standard and criterion to which attention should be paid on the road to judgement. The particular is the situation in which we find ourselves. It is always novel, always never quite adequately described by universals, and it is here that we must exercise our judgement, free will and responsibility as adults. As teachers, we must help the young to come to understand the process and the responsibility that this places upon them.

So lastly, moral education, on this account, does not paralyse the actor: but it does make him more reflective, more autonomous, more responsible, and, by insisting that he takes each occurrence on its merits, more personal and more caring. This is because, in so doing, the person must attempt to understand the needs and pressures on the individual with reference to that specific situation, rather than by automatically referring to some universal principles which cannot, by

its very nature, take all the different factors into account. If this means that on some occasions the child looks before he leaps, it also means that he is more likely to arrive at the right course of action and behave in a manner with which others can live. This, at a cognitive level, seems to be a proper basis for moral education.

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## PART 2 CONTENT

### CHAPTER 5 THE NATURAL AREA OF MORALITY.

In the first section of this thesis, it was argued that there are five separable, autonomous areas to morality, and that by adopting such a perspective it explained the difficulties some writers found themselves in, as well as making more sense of problems like the naturalistic fallacy.

In this section, each of these areas will be examined in detail, beginning with the natural area of morality. This natural area is perhaps the most neglected part of morality in western culture. This chapter, by examining attitudes to the place of animals in an overall moral scheme, will attempt to throw some light on this neglect and on a further elucidation of morality's content structure.

There have been a number of books in recent years(1) which have documented in some detail, and explained at some length, the dominant western tradition vis-a-vis thought on animals and morality. This tradition has been, when it has considered them, mostly unsympathetic towards them. For many people today, and for a considerably greater number in past ages, animals and moral thought have had very little in common. One can go through Plato(2), Aristotle(3), Aquinas(4), Descartes(5), and Kant(6), and find that their regard for animals is tangential at best. Animals are really not included in the moral sphere in any serious way. Rather more sparsely in western thought, one can

find thinkers like Rousseau(7), Bentham(8), and Mill(9), declaring that animals and their consideration must be part of any plausible system.

This division of thought is particularly fascinating, because it is not that the great philosophers cannot agree over the question at hand: it is rather that some don't think that there is a real question to be answered at all. Now this variance suggests a number of possibilities.

Firstly, that the tradition of the naturalistic fallacy may obscure an important truth: that moral pronouncements may come of age when sufficient knowledge of the factual area surrounding the moral speculation is believed to be known.

Secondly, that 'seeds' of thought may be laid early in philosophic history, and come to fruition when 'facts' are added to philosophic speculation.

Thirdly, that 'animals and morality' may be an issue upon which people may never completely agree because it depends upon Polanyi's(10) notion of 'focal' and 'subsidiary' awareness - that is, if people focus attention upon one part of the moral field, they may fail to see that another part has a valid claim.

Fourthly, that either the Aristotle/Kant, or the Rousseau/Bentham tradition may be simply mistaken.

Fifthly, that the topics on which morality dwells may shift their ground through the centuries, and so what are moral issues in one era, are no part of another.

Sixthly, that if an argument starts off with inadequate premises, then philosophers may be so caught up in the process of logic that they will fail to see that counter-intuitive conclusions are the fruit.

Seventhly, that if a conception of morality starts off with an inadequate base, then it may have difficulty accounting for groups of things to which one might normally wish to ascribe moral status.

In the first chapter of this thesis, the Naturalistic Fallacy was examined, and it was argued that factual statements do influence evaluative statements. This examination can now be taken a stage further, firstly by a detailed look at the philosophic background to the thought on animals and morality, and then by an examination of the reasons for the current resurgence of interest.

Any survey of western philosophic history will show that the dominant trend has been to not ascribe moral status to animals: they have most often been given no moral rights at all, and duties to them have been, at best, minimal. Perhaps Plato(11) started the problem with his tripartite division of the human being, in which reason comes top, but the emotions within us:

"...bestir themselves in dreams, when the gentler part of the soul slumbers, and the control of reason is withdrawn. Then the wild beast in us...becomes rampant and shakes off sleep to go in quest of what will gratify its own instincts...it will cast off all shame and prudence and stick at nothing..."

There seem to be a number of philosophical problems here: the separation of the cognitive from the affective in man; the denigration of the affective; the association of this denigrated side with animals; hence the denigration of animals. Animals hardly get off to a good start in the western philosophic tradition.

Aristotle, on the other hand, started(12) from the premise that the test of a thing's perfection was its suitability for man's purposes, and thus naturally arrived at the conclusion that animals are created for man's sake. If this is married with a Christian(13) ethic which stated that God gave man the world to use as he felt fit, then a distinct lack of interests in animals' rights is the result. This Christian ethic, it must be said, is not so common now: the ethic at present is more that of the shepherd looking after the master's flock.

One finds a complementary strain of thought in the Stoics, in Augustine, in Aquinas, in Descartes, in Kant - but this time stressing what they believe to be man's supreme quality - his self-consciousness and rationality. Kant(14) wrote:

"Animals are not self-conscious and are there merely as a means to an end. That end is man...our duties towards animals are merely indirect duties towards humanity."

So man is excluded from moral censure in his dealings with animals. Indeed, for Aquinas(15) and Kant(16), cruelty to animals is wrong only insofar as it coarsens human nature and makes us more callous towards human suffering. Descartes(17) took this point to its extreme and argued that only the human mind - identified as consciousness - is a matter of moral concern, the rest, lacking this, being mere machines which we can manipulate without scruples.

This attitude to animals is embedded in our very language - animals have a 'belly', whilst humans have a 'stomach'; animals are 'its', whilst humans are 'hes' and 'shes'. It has led to a cleavage between humanity and the rest of creation, and has added to the notion of humans battling

against nature, rather than as seeing themselves as a connected and interdependent part of the natural world. For Freud(18), the human ideal is:

"...combining with the rest of the human community and taking up the attack on nature, thus forcing it to obey human will, under the guidance of science."

Again, for Marx(19):

"...nature becomes...simply an object for mankind, purely a matter of utility..."

Such an attitude is not dead. China, long a subscriber to the belief of working in harmony with nature, now under its Marxist ideology, can boast headlines such as "The Desert Surrenders" or "Chairman Mao's thoughts are our guide to scoring victories in the struggle against nature."(20)

However, there have been seeds of a contrary strain, and it may well be because of events happening in the last twenty years that these moral seeds are at last beginning to bear fruit. Such seeds can be seen in Rousseau's thought(21):

"...if I am bound to do no injury to my fellow creatures, this is less because they are rational than because they are sentient beings.."

Such an attitude is bound up with certain capacities which both animals and human beings share. Rousseau speaks of(22):

"...compassion, which is a disposition...so natural, that the very brutes themselves sometimes give evident proofs of it."

Bentham put the whole matter very succinctly when he said(23):

"...the question is not 'can they reason?' nor 'can they talk?'

but 'can they suffer?'"

Now there seems little doubt that ordinary people have always been aware that animals feel pain. Philosophers may disagree over the problems of other minds, but there seems little doubt that the person in the street, and even more so in the country, does not bother with such subtleties. They know that a creature not too dissimilar from themselves, which behaves in many circumstances in much the same way as themselves, particularly when struck with a sharp instrument, feels pain in much the same way as they do. So what is the reason for the curious moral blindness to this fact for so long? How can it be that people can be aware that animals feel pain to the degree that they do, and yet it simply not gain entry into their sphere of moral action? Midgley(24) gives a striking example of this divorce of fact from moral feeling when she quotes from a book written in the last century by a certain R.Gordon Cummings, a traveller and hunter in Africa in 1850, who encounters a magnificent specimen of an elephant, shatters its shoulder bone with a bullet, thus rendering it lame and unable to escape, and then proceeds to make camp, have a drink, reflect for a while on what a fortunate man he is, before performing the interesting experiment of seeing in how many places he can shoot the elephant before killing it. Now this was no prototype SS guard: this was (to his own eyes, and, one presumes, the reading public of that time) a jolly decent fellow. He really saw nothing wrong. There was just no link up in his mind between animals feeling, and it mattering that they did. This lack of link-up in his, or other people's minds, can only be down to a number of the following factors.

Firstly, there was a general public ignorance about animals' lives. They were only seen when they came into contact with humans, and that usually meant when they were being hunted. Nowadays, there is not only the benefit of scientists who study animal behaviour in its own right - ethologists like Lorenz(25) and Tinbergen(26) spring to mind - but it is possible to sit in comfy armchairs and watch their lives when not in contact with humans. It has been realised that animals' lives are as interesting and complicated - and in many cases as feeling - as our own. Secondly, and conversely, some of the more 'bestial' things the higher apes do, make them only too like human beings. When Jane Goodall(27) reported that chimpanzees not only catch baby baboons and colobus monkeys and eat them, this caused enough surprise. When, however, she went on to report some years later(28) that they practise cannibalism, and what can only be called vicious tribal warfare, there is the initial destruction of the tea-party chimp image, followed closely by the (uncomfortable?) feeling that they really are nearer to human beings in behaviour than is good for them. One begins to feel a fellow sympathy with a creature capable of human monstrosities.

Thirdly, the infant science, Ecology, has struggled under its necessarily interdisciplinary banner to acquaint humankind with the knowledge that they are a part of nature, that what they do, affects nature, and that what happens to nature affects them. A bothersome species can be exterminated, only to see that the species it preyed upon has unlimited licence. Strains of wheat can be cultivated to produce larger yields, only to find they are made more susceptible to disease. Attempts can be made to eradicate rats and all that is done is that super rats are

produced. Soil can be exhausted and deserts created. Very slowly, the West, and those countries adopting western attitudes, have come to realise that its mistakes will, in some not too distant future, come home to roost, and with that realisation has come an urgency to understand the workings of the world, and, through that, an appreciation of just how wonderfully complex the world still is. Indeed, it has probably brought to greater consciousness not one, but two, relatively neglected areas of morality - that of the moral claims from the world at large, and also the moral claims from a mystical, reverential attitude to life as a whole.

Fourthly, and intimately connected with the above are the twin spectres of pollution and population expansion. Were pollution not a problem which won't go away, if population expansion did not take on more Malthusian overtones every year, then it seems more than likely that all of the animal documentaries in the world, all the ecology degrees under the sun, would not prod society into the sort of moral consciousness it is now paying to the issues of conservation and animal rights. It seems to need a threat to self-interest before society galvanizes itself, and without this threat, the Rousseaus, Benthams, and Mills of this world would probably be only voices in the wilderness.

Fifthly, the very new science of 'sociobiology', with practitioners like Wilson(29) , who attempts to explain all human behaviour , including the moral, in terms of genetic inheritance, has produced an even greater awareness of the close genetic similarities shared with the animal kingdom. It comes as a shock to discover that there is a mere one per cent difference between man and apes(30), but it provides a perspective to work on. As Midgley(31) put it:

"..anything that puts us in context, that shows us as part of a continuum...is a great help."

There seems little doubt that some sociobiologists overplay their hand. By leaving out the personal, rational, and social parts of a description of morality, and attempting a reduction of the subject to genetics, they can become obsessed with a method of explanation for its own sake. In so doing, the method tends to be used where it is unsuitable. Aristotle saw this mistake a good time ago when he wrote:

"...it is the mark of the trained mind never to expect more precision in the treatment of any subject than the nature of that subject allows."(32)

Now these factors - increasing understanding of animals' lives, the studies of ecology and human genetics, the threats from pollution and population growth - are, very baldly speaking, 'facts'. They are the epistemological and scientific data perceived to impinge, or brought to bear, on this area.

Rather more complicated is the final factor. This might be described as the universals, or value schemes, impinging upon this value area. These have been described as having a number of characteristics, and, for present purposes, two of these are most important. Firstly, these universals are never totally proved or disproved, but move into, or out of, favour. And secondly, these universals share a variety of lesser values with other universals, and so are never totally definable. They slide into one another's meanings, and 'facts' affecting one may thus affect another.

Now on this account, change in three particular universals seems important for the change in attitude to the moral status of animals.

Firstly, the decline in religious belief has seen the consequent secularising of beliefs in what man essentially is. No longer the divine spirit in a material body, man becomes a creature of this planet, and thus more attention is paid to fellow inhabitants.

Secondly, the change in Christian attitudes to life mentioned earlier has also had its effect. For those remaining within the traditional religious sphere, the clear moral prescription is no longer to take what you want, but to tend and conserve.

Thirdly, the decline in the belief of the supremacy of human reason has further contributed to the change in attitude. No longer is it given the status Plato assigned to it, but attempts are made to re-integrate it into a model of man in which all parts are seen as contributing to the functioning whole. Man 'regains his nature' - and his emotions are no longer dragged in the mud, along with the animals supposedly mirroring them.

Strangely enough, whilst certain forms of religious belief have undoubtedly declined, others have arisen. For example, there is now a minority, but a vocal minority, which demands a concern for all forms of life, not just the higher ones. This is of course not new - the Jains in India have subscribed to such a belief for centuries - but as an influential force in Western intellectual life, it is something comparatively new. It is an ethic which asks for a consideration of the view that life - any life - is precious and therefore should not be abused. Trees and other plants may need to be utilised, but this must be

balanced against the sanctity of life, of all life. Taking an example, imagine that in centuries hence, when man has mastered space travel, he discovers a planet covered in forests, but devoid of all animal life. Suppose also that wood was in short supply on Earth. Suppose further that man denuded this planet of all its plant life, and left it a barren rock. Would this matter? A likely answer would be yes, he should have given more thought to future human generations. But would it matter, apart from that? Many today would probably say no, that plants are a commodity to be used as man feels fit. But there are others who would argue that regardless of human needs, there is something disturbing, even tragic, in the thought of life, any life, being completely destroyed. It is this kind of mystical belief that Schweitzer(33) adhered to - that life is such a precious, fragile commodity that whenever anything dies, the universe is a poorer place.

So far, then, a number of the possibilities for the lack of interest in the topic of animals and moralities has been dealt with. It has been indicated that the first three possibilities mentioned above may all be correct - that developments of understanding in the factual area, and changes in perspective and conditions in the world, may bring 'seeds' of philosophic thought to fruition, and that people can be guilty of focussing their attention on only one part of the field of morality.

To declare on the fourth possibility, that either the Aristotle/Kant, or the Rousseau/Bentham traditions may be mistaken, one must obviously look at the kinds of arguments used by both sides. The Aristotle/Kant tradition tends to use as its main plank the notion of a supposedly unique possession of man - his rationality, and in Kant's case(34), this

leads him to the notion of a unique quality in the forms of man's self-consciousness and autonomy. Because of these qualities, it is argued, man is superior to the rest of creation, and therefore has moral obligations only to those his equal or superior - man or God. This seems to be a curiously inadequate argument, not only because there is plenty of evidence that higher animals like chimpanzees and dolphins are rational(35), but because, on this definition, babies and the mentally incapable would have no moral rights as well. Such an argument seems to reduce, if the inclusion of babies and the mentally incapable is desired, to one in which the criterion for having a moral right is if one simply is human. Singer(36) makes a fair criticism when he says that talk of 'intrinsic dignity' and 'intrinsic worth' when referring to human beings is only so much philosophic waffle, unless it is backed up by something more substantial. It seems to be an example of the overt 'speciesism' which Singer(37) talks of, and which seems to place the onus of proof on those who would hold it to show some unique human quality which separates human beings off from the rest of creation. This is not necessarily to agree with Singer - his position appears to be one of trying to assert a supra-species morality by means of a combination of utilitarianism and of an 'escalator of reason'(38) , and as will be argued later, a morality founded on reason alone would have too narrow a base. There are, of course, gradations of speciesism. From the extremists like Descartes, there is movement through Aquinas and Kant to people like Passmore(39), who would support a concern for animal welfare, believing that they have a place in the moral scheme of things, but would argue in Kantian fashion that man's culture and civilisation is, so far, the

highest achievement of living things, the things most worth preserving.

Passmore puts it like this:

"...by any criteria, the liberal democratic West stands high in liberty, science, philosophy, and art, it is unequalled...I treat human interests as paramount. I do not apologise for that..."(40)

This seems a rather curious argument for putting man top of the moral sphere. It is nicely deflated by Midgley when she writes(41):

"...if man wants to set up a contest in resembling himself and award himself the prize, no one will quarrel with him..."

...but then the cheetah could give one to itself as the fastest land animal, the ant as the most highly social, the lemming as the most self-sacrificing, and so on. Treating human interests as paramount is fine if it is baldly declared as human self-interest; but if declared as morally better, there seems to be no criteria by which it might be judged.

Midgley herself (42) tries to hold a difficult position between two poles.

She tries to argue that:

"...we should recognise nearness as a perfectly real and important factor in our psychology, and therefore in our morality, but refuse to treat it as the sole or supreme one..."

Midgley is thus attempting to assert that 'facts in the real world' - human psychology, the nearness in physiology of other species to ourselves, should have an effect on moral rules and judgements. Now whilst there must be dialogue in this area, this could be seen as being perilously close to the Naturalistic Fallacy proper. Perhaps, though, what Midgley is saying is that these are natural factors which

necessarily constrain a conception of morality because they define human physical and psychological limitations. The danger is that even if Midgley does escape the charge of committing the Naturalistic Fallacy, she is in great danger of becoming heavily positivist, and stating that what is the case, must be the case. It could well be argued that too little in this area is known about our physical, physiological, and psychological constraints, to be saying what must be the case. Even the briefest excursion into anthropology shows the enormous plasticity of the human being.

Of the others who would include animals as having a proper place in the moral sphere of things, they tend to use an amalgam of three arguments in proof.

Firstly, it is argued that if a creature is sentient and can feel pain, then it should not be subjected to pain.

Secondly, a variation of the golden rule is used, to the effect that we should only do to the rest of creation that which we would wish done to ourselves.

Thirdly, there is what could be called a 'faith commitment' argument, which starts from a belief in the sanctity of all life, and then argues that because of this, animals have rights.

The arguments are moving but not final. After all, arguing that creatures should not be subjected to pain, does not in itself amount to saying that these creatures have rights. It may simply mean that we should not be cruel to whatever there is in the world.

Moreover, the golden rule argument really will not do as it stands. Human beings would not wish to be skinned, sliced up and boiled, and yet

this is done to carrots all of the time, and no moral qualms are felt about it. If the golden rule argument is limited to animals, then no doubt human beings would not like to pull a plough, or be made to dive under water and catch fish for a living, or have their hair used to make clothes. But this is done to oxen, cormorants and sheep, and most of mankind do not see anything wrong with this. The golden rule needs to be trimmed, not only to specific instances, but to the attributes of specific species, and once one begins to ask what is 'natural' for a particular species, the descriptive and the evaluative become so mixed that it is doubtful if the golden rule retains much of its power. At the very least, it is a subject in moral philosophy the surface of which has been scarcely scratched.

There seems to be here a very real tension between moral rules originally intended for human beings, and these rules being transplanted into other areas of morality for which they were not intended, areas which have their own autonomy and which can generate moral prescriptions at odds with prescriptions from other autonomous areas. As argued in Chapter 1, it is again being suggested that there are five, separable autonomous categories, each capable of such prescriptive generation.

Firstly, there are the moral claims of the natural world, the belief that the natural order of the world, its ecology, its inhabitants, have a right to exist, without any reference to the interests of man. Thus pollution, overpopulation, and usage by man, in the forms of hunting and factory farming, have all to be balanced, it is argued, by the moral rights of the world's other inhabitants.

There is a second area, sometimes in accord with the first, more often not, which argues that all life is precious. As Schweitzer puts it(43)

"The world is a ghastly drama of will-to-live divided against itself. One existence makes its way at the cost of another: one destroys the other.

Yet this area of morality argues that we have become conscious of this precious life ethic in a way which other animals and plants of the natural world have not, and that it is this ethic which should guide human conduct:

"...in world- and life-affirmation, and in ethics I carry out the will of the universal will-to-live..."(44)

This second area - which has previously been called the mystical/religious - can also be generated from within the other areas as well.

Thus the third area could be described as moral claims from the point of view of individual human existence. This is the classic existentialist position, and sees man as potentially free but enormously responsible. It can, as Sartre(45) indicated, see man as never at ease with other human beings, or indeed with any other thing.

It can therefore be seen as separate from a fourth area, the moral claims from an interpersonal perspective. Such morality is naturally closely tied to the individual area, and can be produced from it - as with the thought of Heidegger(46) and Buber(47). It is the essence of Kant's(48) moral position, postulating the existence of rational, autonomous beings who interact with other such beings. It is the classic position of the main stream of Western thought on moral matters.

However, it is at odds with a fifth area of morality which stipulates that social congregations of individuals have a prior claim to right over the individual on his or her own, because, as they see it, the society creates the individual. It is the essence of Durkheim's(49) conception of human beings, and of the Marxist(50) position as well.

Because of the different approaches of the areas - the different 'focal awarenesses' - they all tend to assert that their area has primacy. Due to this, on many issues, they will not only fail to agree, but will even fail to use the same language.

It is precisely because there are these autonomous areas, that principles generated by them are contradictory at times, and lead to problems in ethics and everyday life which seem quite unresolvable. To the extent that there is a concentration on being individual human beings, and living within societies, so the third, fourth, and fifth areas will tend to occupy moral awareness. However, as awareness and knowledge of the world in which we live increases, as our interdependency and species' frailty is realised, as these move into our 'subsidiary awareness', so the first two areas force their way into consciousness. Solving moral problems therefore is much about the business of the relative weighting of the importance of the claims of the different areas involved, and is therefore never wholly soluble. This, again, is the third possibility, that 'animals and morality' is an issue upon which people may never completely agree because of the differential weight given by people to areas in their 'focussing'.

It also helps to further understand the fifth possibility, which stated that the topics on which morality dwells shift their ground through the

centuries, and so what are seen as moral concerns in one era, are not in another. This can be taken in two ways. It can mean a moral relativist view, that morals vary with society, and are no more fundamental than its rules; or it can mean that a moral category may lie dormant as a seed throughout an era of thought, but will flower under the right conditions. Whilst not wishing to totally discount the view that certain rules are specific to certain societies, this account favours the latter interpretation. The subject of animals and morality seems a classic case of this tendency. It, of course, suggests a factor not always given prominence - namely that categories are not perfect forms insulated from the currents of social thought. The universals and conceptual schemes this thesis has described are instead impermanent, shifting, generalisations, open to the force of contrary and positive instances, and to the influence of other universals and conceptual schemes around them. Thus, social thought may be so strong that these categories are the province of only a small minority, or are submerged altogether for a while. It might need the 'right events' - an unexpected and unconnected mixture - to bring them to the fore. As it has been argued in this chapter, this is precisely what has happened in the last thirty years with regard to the categories providing moral thought on the status of animals. This, again, is the second possibility, that 'seeds' of thought are laid early in philosophic history, and come to fruition when 'facts' - instances at the empirical, scientific level - are added to philosophic speculation.

What of the sixth possibility, that if an argument starts off with faulty premises, then philosophers are so caught up in the process of

logic that they will fail to see that counter-intuitive conclusions are the fruit? This may seem a little tangential to the main flow of the chapter, but seems to be important for reasons which it is hoped are becoming clear. Take, for example, Rawls' monumental work in political theory, "A Theory of Justice"(51). It is a criticism of some force of his work that there is no place in it for the rights of animals or non-rational creatures. This is because the work is premised upon the notion of an 'original position', in which human beings, in possession of rational faculties, but with no knowledge of their personal circumstances in the world, attempt to design a system of government most favourable to themselves.

It would be most unfair to say that Rawls is unaware of the difficulty. He explicitly states(52) that it is:

"...outside the scope of a theory of justice, and it does not seem possible to extend the contract doctrine so as to include them in a natural way.."

So the problem is recognised, even if it is not resolved. A theory of justice, as he describes it, cannot accommodate the rights of animals, babies, or mental defectives. As they cannot fight their corner, they have no voice. This at face value seems a terrible indictment of Rawls' theory, and yet, looked at from another angle, shows both the strengths and weaknesses of his position, and throws an interesting light on the structure of moral thought as a whole.

The criticism, that Rawls' theory only takes account of the rights of articulate, linguistically rational creatures, only has force if it is seen as the total extent of morality. And yet contract theory is an account

of only one part, one area of morality. Contract theory is intimately bound up with human social justice, with what constitutes a fair and just society. By its very nature, it cannot account for the rights of other kinds of creatures, or of the nature of some interpersonal exchanges (like friendship), or of the feeling of reverence for the sanctity of life, or of other transcendent urges. It cannot incorporate the other areas of morality. It is clearly not meant to do so, and this points, not to Rawls' theory being wrong, but to it only being applicable to and possibly correct for that part of morality dealing with social justice between human beings. It points to the seventh possibility, that if a conception of morality starts off with an inadequate base, then it will have difficulty accounting for people, beings or things to whom or to which moral status would normally be ascribed.

It is little wonder, then, that there have been so many theories of morality over the centuries. So often, the whole of moral experience is squeezed, like an occupant of Procrustes bed, into one perspective, one area of production, with the result that it looks and feels wrong, and fails to satisfy as a complete explanation. However, morality was never meant to be so squeezed. The limits of each area have to be recognised, and it be accepted that morality isn't all of a piece.

Such an account naturally spells out the limitations of a theory of moral development such as that of Kohlberg(53). For a start, any theory which uses, as part of its philosophic base, Rawls' conception, must, on the preceding analysis, be too limited. But secondly, and probably more importantly, the scope of its questions, what it is looking for, will be grossly limited by its initial assumptions of what morality is. If

morality is generated by five separable areas of experience, it would be expected that children's judgements would be considerably more diversified early in life than has generally been thought to be the case. Such a notion would accord much more with findings produced by people like Williams(54), Steward(55), and Huntsman(56), who all found that children's moral attitudes showed a considerable complexity from very early ages, and suggested that developmental sequences found by other researchers might be as much a function of adult socialisation processes as any physiological maturation. This issue will be dealt with at considerably greater length in the final section of this thesis.

There would seem, then, to be four major conclusions.

Firstly, moral ideas may exist independently of social attitudes. Their seeds may lie dormant for a considerable time.

Secondly, 'facts', in the sense of new knowledge of events in the world, of awareness of their implications for other areas of understanding, may bring to flower these seeds. Thus morality cannot and should not be studied independently of other disciplines.

Thirdly, other universals, values, and perspectives, close to a chosen 'seed', may change and thus influence the germination of this 'seed' just as much as 'facts' do.

Fourthly, morality is not all of a piece, and to try to make it so only produces awkward and contradictory positions. The problem of making a coherent, personal, moral map is one which must vary from person to person and age to age. Morality, therefore, can never have an answer.

Having thus looked at the first of these areas of morality, the next chapter will consider what can happen when reflections on this area take on a transcendent dimension. The natural area, it will be argued, is but one point of entry into the mystical/religious area. The thought of Albert Schweitzer - a writer who takes this approach - will be examined in some detail.

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## CHAPTER 6 ALBERT SCHWEITZER AND THE TENSION BETWEEN MORALITIES.

In previous chapters, it has been argued that five origins must be included for a full account of the structure of morality, and that there must be a constant attempt to achieve a balance between the five. The term 'moral' is not used here in a loose or contradictory way: rather this term merely serves to point up that, ordinarily, no differentiation is made between the five areas, that there is thought to be a unified wholeness to the moral sphere. It is only when seemingly equally valid principles conflict, that a disharmony is realised.

This, of course, does not prove that there are separate areas, let alone five. Therefore, this thesis has attempted to establish in two major ways that these areas do have a real independence from each other; firstly, by showing that there is a very real tension between moral rules originally intended for human beings, and their being transplanted into other areas of morality for which they were not intended; and, secondly, by using the idea of the five areas in an attempt to explain the so-called naturalistic fallacy, the illegitimate travel of an argument from the descriptive to the evaluative.

In this chapter, the first method of proof will be continued, a method which points to the stresses and tensions which arise for a view of morality which attempts to unify all five areas. So far, the areas of morality of human social justice, and the natural world have been

examined. In this essay an example of a system of thought representative of the mystical area will be investigated - that of the ethical mysticism of Albert Schweitzer.

At the moment, Schweitzer and his thought is rather out of fashion. Thirty years ago, he was regarded as a virtual living saint, but reassessment has set in, and Schweitzer's better qualities have tended to be clouded by his paternalism, his authoritarianism, and colonialism, and these have done his reputation no good at all. However, these are personal characteristics which have no necessary connection with his system of thought. His system of thought might have produced his actions of going to work in Lambarene, but he could just as well have been a humble, democratic, anti-colonial. But perhaps this is to anticipate. This may only be proved by a consideration of Schweitzer's thought, and this is what will be examined now.

Schweitzer's thought is both remarkably contemporary in the fact that his mysticism does not spring from a conception of the universe, but rather from a conception of himself, and an old-fashioned Cartesianism, in that he should attempt to build a philosophical system from those facts of existence in which he is certain. Not for him a Kantian theory of ethics built upon a questionable theory of knowledge, a life view derived from a total view of the universe. Rather, like Descartes, he asks what is the single fact of which he is certain. But the result he arrives at is not that he thinks, but rather that(1):

"I am life which wills to live, in the midst of life

which wills to live."

We all wish to live, we all have this reverence for life, and this, Schweitzer argues, must be the cornerstone of any ethical system. The 'good', therefore, is the maintenance, furtherance, and fullest development of life, of all forms of life, as they partake of this will-to-live, as we ourselves do:

"It is good to maintain and to encourage life: it is bad to destroy life or to obstruct it." (2)

Schweitzer has thus taken as a primary datum of consciousness that we live, and want to live, and has asserted that this is the fundamental, irreducible element of moral life, and that this life force which we feel within us is present within every other living creature. Schweitzer at times seems almost to be saying that we are mere cyphers for this life force: that it flows in and through us, that we experience it, but it is something more than us. At the same time, though, Schweitzer is at pains not to advocate an abstract ethics, because, for him, ethics is a living relationship to animate life. This is one of the reasons that it is difficult to call Schweitzer a Christian: Schweitzer's reverence for life has its origin and its field of action in the particular living being. The Christian ethic, on the other hand, has its origin in the transcendent.

But, more than this, the will-to-live is divided against itself:

"The world is a ghastly drama of will-to-live divided against itself. One existence makes its way at the cost of another: one destroys the other. One will merely exerts its will against the other, and has no knowledge of it." (3)

Individual wills, then, are constantly in conflict with one another. Indeed, it is their fate to live in this world only at the expense of others' lives. However:

"...in me the will-to-live has come to know about other wills-to-live. There is in it a yearning to arrive at unity with itself, to become universal." (4)

Only human beings can therefore be ethical beings, for only they are conscious of this conflict and tension between what is and what should be, and therefore only they are capable of attempting to achieve what should be, the union of, and with, this will-to-live. Compassion and love are the forces to overcome this division, and the extent of one's compassion and love are the measure of one's ethical force, depth and union with the infinite.

Therefore, if we would attempt to achieve union with the infinite will-to-live, we should devote our own life in the aid of other wills-to-live. As Schweitzer says(5):

"From an inner necessity, I exert myself in producing values and practising ethics in the world and on the world even though I do not understand the meaning of the world. For in world- and life-affirmation, and in ethics I carry out the will of the universal will-to-live which reveals itself in me."

The only escape necessary or possible for the individual, then, is to tear oneself sufficiently free from the workings of the world in order to be able to practise the will-to-live that is implanted in each one of us.

It is curious and illuminating to note that whilst Schweitzer writes of the division within universal will-to-live and the will-to-live that seeks to overcome division, Tillich(6) writes:

"Actualization of one's potentialities includes, unavoidably, estrangement: estrangement from one's essential being, so that we find it again in maturity..."

and of a power of reconciliation that attempts to heal this estrangement. The analogy, it would appear, is not just chance; both seem to have hit upon a similar insight and expressed it in different words. Both appear to be instances of what Happold(7) calls "the mysticism of love and union".

Schweitzer's mysticism is, however, never personalised into a Christian god-figure. There has been considerable argument over whether his will-to-live was God in the personalist sense, or a more pantheistic conception. He stated on one occasion that "pantheism and theism remain in undecided conflict within me"(8), but there does not seem to be much doubt that his thinking - his belief in our ignorance of the world, of the death of ethics through abstraction - would not let him contemplate too seriously a personalist conception of a deity. For instance, in "Civilisation and Ethics"(9), Schweitzer wrote:

"The essence of Being, the Absolute, the Spirit of the Universe, and all similar expressions, denote nothing actual, but something conceived in abstractions which for that reason is also absolutely unimaginable...How does thought come to such a meaningless proceeding as making man enter into a spiritual relation with an unreal creation

of thought?"

However, Schweitzer's system of thought is not quite complete; there may be the ethic of reverence for life, and of the way to union with the infinite will-to-live, but there is no figurehead, no outstanding example of such an ethical stance. It was here that Schweitzer thought Jesus the perfect example. In the "Quest of the Historical Jesus" (10), Schweitzer attempted to demonstrate that nineteenth century liberal Protestantism had got Jesus all wrong. Such Christians were committed to the belief that Jesus had come on earth to plant a seed of spirituality within each person's heart, which would eventually blossom, spread to others, and in this manner result in the kingdom of God on earth. On this view, then, Jesus was primarily a man of moral example and precept who could inspire others to follow his ways, and God's love of humanity was translated into Jesus for all to see and copy.

Schweitzer's view of Jesus was not this. Jesus was an extraordinary figure, that he granted, but of a rather different nature from that normally conceived. Schweitzer's readings of the Bible led him to see Jesus' words and deeds as wholly directed to the task of telling the world of the immanent coming of the supernatural kingdom of god, whether humanity liked it or not. Jesus' was not a message by example, but an eschatological warning.

The tragedy of Jesus, thought Schweitzer, was that this coming did not come, or at the very least was delayed. Jesus, being a man of his time, knowing that the coming of this supernatural kingdom must, according to ancient Jewish apocalyptic belief, be preceded by trial

and tribulation, came to believe that it was his destiny to precipitate this coming by shouldering these trials and tribulations himself. Hence the delivery of himself into his enemies' and captors' hands. The real tragedy lay in the fact that even with his sacrifice, the coming did not come. Jesus was simply mistaken.

This did not, however, dismiss or diminish Jesus' contribution for Schweitzer. Far from it. Jesus' act of self sacrifice was the perfect embodiment of an ultimate belief in a reverence for life. By the exhibition of this degree of brotherly love, this degree of compassion for others, by sacrificing himself for others, Jesus had shown the ultimate in commitment to the universal will-to-live, simply because he had sacrificed his own life in the desire to harmonise other conflicting wills-to-live. As Langfeldt said(11):

"...Jesus' importance...lies exclusively in the fact that He, as a mighty, timeless and still living spirit, stimulates the will-to-live implanted in us through the overwhelming impressions we receive from his ethical personality."

Jesus, then, cannot be an authority for the understanding, but can and is one for the will. Jesus stands, for Schweitzer, as a unique, spiritually and ethically strong personality. As Langfeldt points out(12), there is little doubt that Schweitzer to a large extent identified himself with Jesus. Schweitzer's own will power was quite legendary - studying for his doctor's degree at night, keeping awake during his studies by sitting with his feet in bowls of cold water(13). Here then were two men of seemingly indomitable will, choosing to commit their lives to a universal will-to-live. And so

here Schweitzer believed he had his figurehead, a supreme exemplar for his ethical system. The strange thing is that Schweitzer could not be called a Christian, at least not the sort that previous Christians could recognise. After all, they had belonged, so they thought, to the Church of Christ's teachings. Schweitzer was a Christian, but only in the sense that Jesus now belonged to Schweitzer's system. The sense of belonging was reversed.

So far, then, the foundations of Schweitzer's ethical system have been seen as lying within one's own personal consciousness, of its development through to other living creatures, of the achievement of mystical union through the ethical acts of compassion and love, and of the primary exemplar as being a novel interpretation of Jesus' character. The question to be asked is: will this system hold water? And more exactly, and more importantly for present purposes, will such a system, based as it is on the areas of morality of the personal and the mystical, be able to incorporate successfully the other areas of morality - the natural, interpersonal and social?

The following analysis of Schweitzer's system will be divided into seven questions:

- (1) Can Jesus act as a figurehead?
- (2) Is Schweitzer's will-to-love consistent with his belief in world purposelessness?
- (3) Is reverence for life a necessity of thought?
- (4) Is reverence for life more primary than the will to survive?
- (5) Can an ethic of reverence for life cope with the problems of birth control, of voluntary euthanasia, of the possible

legitimacy of certain forms of suicide?

(6) Where does Schweitzer stand with regard to universal reverence for life and the status of civilised values?

(7) Is Schweitzer correct in believing that social ethics are qualitatively inferior to personal ethics?

It will be argued that the first two questions point to purely logical inconsistencies in Schweitzer's thought. It will be argued, however, that the last five point to inconsistencies of the kind which this chapter set out to prove must always occur when a system of thought, developed within one area of morality, attempts to explain and apply its principles to other areas. Specifically, it will be argued that questions (3) and (4) point to the tension between the natural and the mystical, question (5) points to the tension between the personal and the mystical, question (6) to the tension between the social and the mystical, and question (7) to the tension between personal, social, and mystical.

(1) Can Jesus act as a figurehead?

Schweitzer rejected Schopenhauer's resignation from the world as 'pusillanimous', and passionately believed that his ethic must be optimistic and world-affirming. Ethics must be created, not by talk, but by action, action in and of this world. This was the essence and the motivating force behind his work at Lambarene. And yet Schweitzer, by his own researches, discovered a Jesus who appeared to be denying what Schweitzer was asserting. Jesus' Kingdom of God was coming, regardless of the ethical actions human beings might attempt.

On this account, Schweitzer's own life made no sense. The true irony is that Schweitzer was wrong in two opposite ways. If Jesus' message is eschatological, then the creation of the Kingdom of God by human will is in direct contradiction to this message. And if Jesus allowed for an element of human intervention - the sacrifice of his own life to ease its coming - then Jesus was unsuccessful. It never came. Whichever way he takes it, Schweitzer was wrong.

This is not to deny Schweitzer his use of Jesus as a model, pure and simple. If he wishes to use Jesus in this manner, to show the strength of will capable within each human being, then he is perfectly at liberty to do so. The question comes when we ask: for what end? Jesus was wrong, unsuccessful, so Schweitzer believed, so is it really a wise move to use him as a figurehead? The historical Jesus would have disagreed with Schweitzer's purpose, so is it wise to see a 'purified' version? And lastly, in a world of seeming purposelessness, what can Jesus the model advocate to such a world?

(2) Is Schweitzer's will-to-love consistent with his belief in world purposelessness?

Whilst Schweitzer rejected Schopenhauer's negation and resignation from the world, and condemned the self-fulfilling excesses of Nietzsche's thought, he agreed with the notion that ethics must be grounded in the subjective experience of the individual, for our true knowledge of the world is hopelessly limited, to the extent that we are incapable of discerning any purpose, good or bad, in the external world of events. It seems curious, then, that Schweitzer should build as one of his props a will-to-love, to transform an amoral will-to-

live into an ethical stance. It is a bit like pulling a rabbit out of a hat: from where, and why, did this will-to-love come? With an epistemology as subjective as Schweitzer's, it is hard to explain how he can explain this in a rational manner, and yet Schweitzer's Kantian inheritance led him to attempt precisely this.

(3) Is 'Reverence for Life' a necessity of thought?

This question is much along the same lines as question (2). If one renounces certain knowledge of the world, if one renounces certainty about nature in general, then there seems little justification in claiming certain knowledge about human nature. Schweitzer's argument rests on the premise that, to be consistent, one must accord other wills-to-live the same reverence with which one accords one's own will-to-live. But this definition of consistency rests on a mystical premise - precisely this notion of reverence - and the movement from a mystical premise concerning reverence to a conclusion about the natural world looks to be illegitimate.

(4) Is Reverence for Life more primary than will to survive?

Here, we seem to come to the nub of the problem with Schweitzer's concept of reverence for life, for it could well be argued that the will-to-live, which Schweitzer sees as coursing through every living being's veins, is much better translated as the will to survive. All too often in the natural world, the will-to-live is seen as ruthlessly in competition with other wills-to-live. Indeed, many have argued that the natural world is based on this kind of order. It is a problem which Schweitzer acknowledges without his being able to reconcile it with his total conception:

"...the world is a ghastly drama of will-to-live divided against itself. One existence makes its way at the cost of another: one destroys the other...it remains a painful enigma for me that I must live with reverence for life in a world which is dominated by creative will which is also destructive will, and destructive will which is also creative." (14)

The will-to-live seems to be a constituent of the natural area of morality, and the reverence for life which Schweitzer and many others feel, seems to be part of the mystical area. The will-to-live is a part of the natural world's morality, rather than as purely a brute fact to be evaluated upon, simply because many people are coming to believe that the animals and plants within this natural world have a moral claim all of their own. Such a moral claim includes that of being able to live in the way in which nature designed them, which necessarily means pursuing their own will-to-live at the expense of another. Schweitzer is, it seems, incorrect in describing this as a 'horrible drama' - rather it is a drama of which we have all too little understanding and which, with Schweitzer's own admitted limited epistemology, should have led him to acknowledge that he was in no position to pronounce judgement. This natural area may conflict with the mystical, and consequently Schweitzer's reverence for life, but this contradiction does not mean that one must be wrong and the other right: rather it might mean that it is our lot to try to draw a balanced life-view from the supposed contradictions as they stand. Thus, Schweitzer cannot move naturally from the concept of the will-

to-live to that of a reverence for life, simply because the two do not come from the same areas of morality. By failing to acknowledge this distinction, Schweitzer poses himself a problem he cannot hope to answer.

(5) Can an ethic of reverence for life cope with the problems of birth control, of voluntary euthanasia, or the possible legitimacy of certain forms of suicide?

These three controversial areas are lumped together for one reason: they all argue that, at a personal level, there are, on occasions, acts which should be accorded more importance than a complete ethic of reverence for life would allow. It could be argued that a country like China should, because of the supremacy of the ethic of reverence for life, allow its population to multiply uncontrolled, with the ensuing problems of poverty, famine, and disease. Or that a rational person, racked with pain by the last stages of an incurable cancer, should not have the choice to bring his life to an earlier, more dignified end. Or that a person about to be horribly tortured and brainwashed for his beliefs, and with no chance of rescue, should not take the decision to finish his life at a point prior to these things happening to him. But there must be many in this world who would feel that such actions are valid. If this is the case, this points to a contradiction between the personal and social areas of morality, and that of Schweitzer's mystical reverence for life, which can only be reconciled by the acknowledgement that no area has primacy, but must again be blended into a balanced judgement.

(6) Where does Schweitzer stand with regard to universal reverence for life, and the status of civilized values?

To put the question another way: does Schweitzer's ethic of reverence for life mean that there can be no difference in quality between the life of a warren of rabbits, and that of an advanced civilisation? If Schweitzer wants to make reverence for life an all-inclusive ethic, how can he place one form of life as higher than another?

In fact, Schweitzer does seem to experience difficulties with this problem. He did state that human life is morally more valuable than animal life because man is more capable of a consistent cultivation of altruistic impulses. He continues(15):

"To the man who is truly ethical all life is sacred, including that which from the human point of view seems lower in the scale. He makes distinctions only as each case comes before him, and under the pressure of necessity, as, for example, when it falls to him to decide which of two lives he must sacrifice in order to preserve the other. But all through this series of decisions he is conscious of acting on subjective grounds and arbitrarily, and knows that he bears the responsibility for the life which is sacrificed."

Here it seems that Schweitzer is arguing that reverence for life is an attitude rather than an inflexible rule of conduct, but further, he has no real grounds for decision, these being 'subjective' and 'arbitrary'. This seems a most unhappy position, and has little to offer, as it stands here, as a prescription for action. Anyone giving the advice that a situation could only be solved by adopting an

attitude of mind which must necessarily be subjective and arbitrary, is hardly helping at all, unless there is good reason to believe that a more satisfactory approach is impossible. And there seems greater chance of a satisfactory resolution if one grants that, in this instance, moral values are derived from two different areas, a mystical one, and a social one. From the first area is derived an instinctual reverence for life, whilst from the second we value as a symbol of our life force and creativity those intellectual, aesthetic and cultural productions which capture a uniquely human way of living. As the two may at some point conflict, our best offices must be used to arrive at a balance of both.

It might well be asked at this point if these 'best offices' are any better than Schweitzer's 'subjective' and 'arbitrary' grounds. Certainly, they are to some extent subjective - the analysis in the first section of this thesis accepts that a totally objective account is impossible; but, having said that, there are clear grounds for believing that degrees of subjectivity are possible: this seems a clearly more palatable alternative.

Secondly, these best offices are by no means arbitrary - they are carefully constructed, logical procedures which recognise man's fallibilities and limitations, but also recognise the possibility of progress. On such an account, then, this procedure is neither totally subjective nor in any way arbitrary. Schweitzer's resignation, then, is unnecessary.

(7) Is Schweitzer correct in believing that social ethics are qualitatively inferior to personal ethics?

It is a strange fact that Schweitzer acknowledged the existence of a social area of morality, and then proceeded to reject it totally:

"The great mistake of ethical thought down to the present time is that it fails to admit the essential difference between the morality of ethical personality and that which is established from the standpoint of society and always thinks that it ought, and is able, to cast them in one piece." (16)

Here it is possible to agree with Schweitzer: but instead of drawing the conclusion that a balanced judgement means an attempt at a balance between the two claims, he continues (17):

"The result is that the ethic of personality is sacrificed to the ethic of society. An end must be put to this. What matters is to recognise that the two are engaged in a conflict which cannot be made less intense. Either the moral standard of personality raises the moral standard of society, so far as is possible, to its own level, or it is dragged down by it."

Thus Schweitzer fundamentally objected to social ethics because he believed that such ethics tend to sacrifice individuals to the general welfare. Whilst society can express, through its norms and legal code, some of the elementary principles of morality, yet in the end, Schweitzer believed, only the individual, who actively discovered and constructs through his own life, can practise a true morality.

It is clear from this, and what has gone before, that Schweitzer's ethics are of a mystical nature actively discovered by the individual. He gives little or none of his time to a conception of morality which

can only be produced by the consideration of the interactions of groups within society. He is such an individualist that his attention is devoted almost exclusively to those issues produced and resolvable by the individual. His morality is totally at odds, speaks a completely different language, from the kind of morality described by Durkheim and Marx. And yet it is surely a major flaw in Schweitzer's thought that he, just as much as Jesus, was at least partially a product of his time. For Schweitzer to exclude a social conception of morality seems not only blind but illegitimate.

It is not surprising, then, that he tends to remain silent on issues more to do with the rights and wrongs of groups and societies than of the individual's search. His condemnation of colonialism is remarkable by its absence, and though many would say that this is because Schweitzer was a product of his time, yet there were others of his time who appreciated the immorality of the practice. Indeed, the fact that he was a product of his time is a good example of the influence that the social area of morality can have on the individual - even one as forceful and self-willed as Schweitzer.

Moreover, he had very little to say about the exploitation of cheap negro labour, other than to say that this was a problem which would eventually work itself out. Thirdly, he took a long time to pronounce publicly on the terrors and horrors of nuclear war. Lastly, hardly ever does his thought move to the notion or concept of what might constitute a just society. His thought worked from the individual outwards, and saw society in terms of individual interactions. He totally failed to grasp that there is another level, the social and

political, which can only be appreciated and dealt with by concepts concerning bodies of people, rather than by considering people in isolation. Such exclusions, then, are both the cause and the result of a system of thought which squeezes five areas of morality into one or two.

#### CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis has attempted to point to sufficient deficiencies in Schweitzer's system of thought to indicate that it is not really viable. But the danger here would be to throw out the baby with the bathwater. Schweitzer centred in on a very real and important strand of moral thought: that which understood and valued the uniqueness of life. There can be little doubt that, for most people, this is one of the core notions which motivates their moral lives. But there are other notions which are, for some people, equally pressing. At least Schweitzer was aware of many of the problems that any complete system has to face. Clark(18) clearly highlighted the problems which Schweitzer faced when he began his book by saying that:

"His chief philosophical problem will be to combine the compelling authority of Kant's altogether rational, altogether objective system, with the profound and ardent subjectivity of men such as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. He will be seeking an ethic which grows out of the individual's experience of his own will to live; on the other hand, he must come out with an 'ought' that makes the self-expansion of self-devotion a necessity of thought, and therefore equally binding on all

rational beings. He will not be satisfied with an ethic which excludes sub-human forms of life from the circle of compassion, for such an ethic has been condemned as disgracefully partial. Finally, he will hope to find an ethic which can revitalize the church by restoring to it a vital notion of the Christian life."

It has thus been argued that Schweitzer did not manage to reconcile the contradictions within his system. He was trying to do too much with too small a conception of the ultimate derivation of the 'Good'. His system was faced with a variety of tensions - that between subjectivity and objectivity, between a general ethic of a reverence for life, and a belief in the values of civilisation, and finally between a profoundly held belief in the ultimate unity of all life, and yet surrounded on all sides, and by his own actions, by the predatory existence of one life form upon another. Confronted by such tensions, his system simply cannot cope. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how any system, whether founded on natural, personal, interpersonal, social or mystical premisses, which failed to recognise the autonomy of the other areas of the genesis of our morality, could possibly cope with such problems. Contradictions such as those to be seen in Schweitzer's system, it is argued, are bound to arise. Only by accepting the independence of these five areas, can one make sense of the contradictions generated.

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## CHAPTER 7 THE PERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL AREAS OF MORALITY.

Schweitzer's conception of morality started from the personal and worked outwards, and in so doing found itself in conflict with the natural and the social areas of morality. Instead of seeing that each area has its contribution to make in an overall appreciation of morality, he saw meaningless conflict. He saw the individual as the supreme fund of values, if only in the sense of being the vessel for a universal will-to-live and love. The individual is seen as the source of values, and to the extent that he or she is one origin of these values, then there can be no quarrel with such an approach.

But Schweitzer's is not the only variety of personal morality possible. Perhaps more influential has been that kind of thought stemming from the individual, characterised as 'existentialist'. In this chapter, the varieties of existentialist thought possible will be examined in some detail, as well as the sorts of questions raised, and replies provided to the enquiry being conducted. As this school of thought tends to begin with the individual's experience, consideration will be given to the extent to which it is capable of dealing with moral ideas emanating from other areas. And as the personal, and interpersonal tend to be so closely linked, it will be instructive to see how well a really personalist philosophy, like

Sartre's, can cope with the interpersonal. In so doing, not only will it be shown that the personal and interpersonal areas are logically distinct, but that they ask different kinds of questions about human existence. Existence, then, is the key word.

As its name implies, existentialism is one side of a perennial philosophical debate - that of existence versus essence. The debate began as early as Plato, and has tended until the modern age to lean towards the essentialist position. Barrett(1) argues persuasively that Platonic essentialism in the guise of Plato's Ideal Forms has inclined Western thought to a belief in objective absolutes throughout the last two thousand years, a belief buttressed by belief in a supernatural order in the form of a Christian God. These notions have co-existed with increasing difficulty with the Aristotelian notion of the essentially rational nature of human beings. However, with the advent of Copernicus, of Newton, of a scientific method which reduced the universe to a mechanical model which needed no personal intervention by any omnipotent being, and which further reduced man's conception of his own importance in it as well, it increasingly called into question the possibility of a rational grounding for orthodox religious beliefs. The more man knew, or thought he knew, of his predicament, the less he was prepared to venture by way of grand philosophical systems. The Age of Reason passed, and more and more the great system builders came to be seen as:

"...like the man who builds a huge palace and himself lives  
next door to it in a barn." (2)

Buber(3) once proposed that the history of the human spirit might be thought of as an affair of alternation between 'epochs of habitation and epochs of homelessness'. The Middle Ages was a period of such habitation, but since then this feeling of homelessness, of rootlessness, has been heard more and more. Pascal was one of the first to feel this, and in his *Pensees*(4), can be seen the draining away of that confidence which man had experienced when he thought of himself as the centre of his Creator's universe, being replaced by a terror at the encroaching belief of his existence's absurdity in an unhearing, uncaring cosmos. Eliot(5) describes it well when he thinks of man like:

"..bits of paper, whirled by the cold wind."

Existentialism tends to be thought of as a movement more literary than philosophical, which had its heyday with the beatniks in the 1950s, and has now passed out of fashion. By noting instead that the origins of the philosophic conflict go back to Plato, it can be seen to be no seven day wonder. It, more than any other philosophical movement of the twentieth century, asks questions which are not only of supreme moral, but of religious importance as well. Why be moral? What am I doing here? Is there any reason for my existence? By asking questions not only about human existence, but more centrally about personal existence, it moves the shift of philosophy from a consideration of the universal and general to the particular. It is, as Grene(6) says: "a new expression of an old despair." And when comparing the questions it asks with those dwelt upon by Logical Positivists and Linguistic Philosophers, one would be hard put to

argue that the Existential approach is not as pertinent to a philosophical investigation of the roots of moral and religious education as they are.

What, then, are the central ideas of the movement which link in with present concerns? There seem to be five.

Firstly, there is the notion of subjective truth - that we must turn into ourselves and come to a 'truth' for ourselves, simply because the 'objective' can never be attained. This notion of subjective truth is, of course, fraught with difficulties and dangers.

Secondly, and because of this subjectivity, the world as such appears alien, inaccessible, and unintelligible, and man finds himself in an absurd situation - a creature of consciousness of no apparent importance whatsoever. He finds himself, like a character from Kafka, thrown into a situation without sense or meaning, knowing only that there is the sentence of death upon him, and not even knowing why. In such a situation, the question 'why be moral?' becomes even more vital.

Thirdly, because of our very consciousness, of our awareness of ourselves and our situation, we are paradoxically much freer than we might like to think. The considered exercise of this freedom, that this personal responsibility must be chosen or avoided, is a key concern of the movement in that it urges the individual to face the problem of making some personal sense of life.

Fourthly, this predicament is normally, truly, understood when the extreme or boundary situation is met. It is when suffering, sorrow,

struggle, and death are met that our finitude and vulnerability are fully realised.

Finally, the existentialist asserts the primacy of individuals and their relationships over that of society, or 'the herd'. Most existentialists are quite abusive about the social world of the present day, but their cry is fundamentally a moral and Kantian one - that human beings should be regarded as irreplaceable and never interchangeable, and that much of the present day world attempts to do this - making man an interchangeable productive unit, rather than recognising the fundamental uniqueness of each human being. This is the essential point in Berdyaev's criticism(?) of Marxism. "For Marx", he says, "class is more real than man."

The primacy of individual action is seen at its most extreme in the work of Soren Kierkegaard. Indeed, other human beings are seen by him as a barrier to a relationship with God. Now there can be little doubt that Kierkegaard's experiences in life were the prompt for part of the orientation of his thought - his sense of solitariness, his feelings of subjectivity, of the lack of true communication between people. But it would be too facile to say that his experiences explain his thinking. To reduce the penetrating insights which Kierkegaard did have to a sensationalist psychoanalytic interpretation is an unnecessary impoverishment. What can be said, however, is that Kierkegaard's cast of mind led him to explore certain avenues to the exclusion of others, and in so doing, did limit his perception of personal possibilities.

Take, for instance, his three stages of personal growth(8). Kierkegaard argues that as the human being moves through this world, if he or she truly meditates upon his or her experiences, then three stages of personal growth - the aesthetic, ethical and religious - can be discerned. But this growth cannot be attained by an understanding of any general relationship between God and man, nor by the construction of elaborate theological edifices, but only by turning inwards. It means turning from the impersonal which, because impersonal, must be superficial and trivial, to the profoundly held personal truth which may, from an impersonal point of view, seem profoundly paradoxical and contradictory. At the supreme moments of crisis in one's life, instead of following the railroad tracks of moral convention, one must take the 'leap of faith' and do what is right for oneself, asserting the unique importance of one's own existence. For Kierkegaard, then:

"Morality is the sphere of abstract principles of behaviour:

to religion alone belongs the unique historical moment, the moment that cannot be told because it tells so much."(9)

This is the meaning of Abraham's intended sacrifice of Isaac in "Fear and Trembling"(10). By all conventional moral rules, the father should have protected the son, but as the supreme declaration of what his life meant, he must make the ultimate choice and take the leap of faith into a life position, which he cannot fully 'know', but which is uniquely his.

The example of Abraham and Isaac is no doubt meant to shock, but to shock in order to awaken people from their dogmatic slumbers - to make

people realise that if Christianity was to retain its true meaning, then each individual must appropriate for himself what is true within Christianity: and this must be done again and again at each crossroads of crisis. This is the reason for his sometimes quite astonishing invective against his native Danish church, which he saw as co-conspirator with the individual and the State in keeping the painful truth of each man's personal quest from himself. Christianity proper, then, for Kierkegaard, is the individual's discovery - the leap at each crucial time in one's life.

Now the point has been made that Kierkegaard's personal temperament led him to dwell on, and over-emphasise, the purely personal category of human experience. This, indeed, is the essence of Buber's criticism of him(11): do we find God by turning away from others into ourselves, or by turning outwards towards others? Kierkegaard totally fails to give meaning or credit to the interpersonal side of man's nature and morality, and, by so doing, inevitably distorts his thesis. Similarly, his description of the second, ethical stage of personal growth, seems to be highly artificial and unconvincing, for it totally fails to locate the individual and morality within some community, some social area of morality. Particularly here, one feels that Kierkegaard's twisted introvert nature has blinded him to the richness possible in human experience, and in the diversity of moral genesis. However, in the midst of the overstressed and the biased, there are both dubious emphases and gems of insight which others picked up on and expanded. These seem to be four in number.

Firstly, from a Christian standpoint, the reaction was delayed, but profound all the same. The historical scholarship of people like Strauss and Schweitzer(12) destroyed the cosy picture of Jesus as essentially a great practical moral teacher, a picture which had shored up liberal Protestant faith in the nineteenth century, and it was because of Kierkegaard's leap out of the rational that his interpretation was untouched by such findings. It was for people like Barth to build on this blind faith, but with all the problems which attend a non-rational approach.

Secondly, Kierkegaard rejected the philosophical tradition remarked on earlier - the Platonic notion that universals are truly real, and that the particular is real only insofar as it is a poor approximation of the eternal. Kierkegaard and Nietzsche were the first major thinkers in the nineteenth century to reverse this Platonic scale of values and assert the primacy of the individual existent, the belief in the validity of the exploration of one's own selfhood as a starting point for an investigation of all else.

Thirdly, there is a belief in both the freedom of the individual to chart his own course, and his personal responsibility for doing so as well. Life is, therefore, a project - a thing to be made by oneself. And finally, there is the belief that society, or its institutions, does not hold the answer - that blindly following conventions is the inauthentic path, and, more than this, is essentially dehumanising as well.

However, Kierkegaard's work is still located within a tradition - the Christian tradition. Kierkegaard's Christianity is radical in the

extreme, but there is still something to hold onto if one dares to make the leap. The problem is really one of communication - between man and God. Kierkegaard never seems to doubt that there is something or someone with whom to communicate. Thus, though he may have sown the seeds of something infinitely disturbing, it was for other Existentialists to reap them. And it was for Nietzsche to ask the ultimate question - what is left if there is no God? Kierkegaard has made the leap and found God. Nietzsche has made the leap and found - nothing.

But there is more than this, much more. Nietzsche is convinced that this is not his solitary discovery. He is convinced that Western man is in the process of tearing up his psychological roots - of stepping out from beneath the comfort of a protective God - and standing on his own two feet in the world, alone. The only trouble is that Western man has not yet recognised this. In a famous passage, Nietzsche describes just this situation:

"Have you heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market place, and cried incessantly: 'I am looking for God! I am looking for God! ...where has God gone?' he cried 'I shall tell you. *We have killed him* - you and I. We are all his murderers...is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must not we ourselves become gods simply to seem worthy of it...Here the madman fell silent and again regarded his listeners: and they, too, were silent and stared at him in astonishment.

At last he threw his lantern to the ground and it broke and went out. 'I come too early' he said then; 'my time has not come yet. This tremendous event is still on its way, still travelling - it has not yet reached the ears of man...deeds require time after they are done before they can be seen and heard. This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars - *and yet they have done it themselves!*" (13)

Western civilisation had revolved around the figure of Christ, and was now, in Nietzsche's image, like a planet detaching itself from its sun, only of this it was not yet aware. There is no God, says Nietzsche, and the existential problems which face men today are a direct consequence of this loss of faith in God. God is dead, and we - humanity - have killed him. As Albert Camus said in 'The Rebel' (14):

"Contrary to the opinion of certain of his Christian critics Nietzsche did not form a project to kill God. He simply found him dead in the souls of his contemporaries."

Nietzsche found at bottom a radically secular outlook and determined to lay bare the situation where man is alone in a world with no meaning apart from that which he brings to it himself. Not that he can expect a hero's welcome by the general populace. This recognition involves immense courage, an ability to stand back from a culture or a religion's norms and standards, and recognise them for what they are, to look inside oneself and re-evaluate them in the light of oneself. This will need a new kind of man, a veritable superman who has the

courage to do it. But the most ordinary men will balk at it. Freud put the matter very succinctly when he said(15) that:

"A man who has for decades taken a sleeping draught is naturally unable to sleep if he is deprived of it."

Humanity, then, is deeply, profoundly, disturbingly free. The issue of where morality comes from cannot be avoided. If the responsibility cannot be placed at God's feet any longer, in what does morality lie? We are responsible for our actions, our values, and our purposes, and it is only in facing up to this recognition, that we can overcome our psychic sickness.

It is easy to see how the depiction of such a man - courageous, alone, self-willed, anti-Christian (both in opposition to the existence of God, and in the need for self-assertion as against the Christian virtues of meekness and submissiveness) could be perverted into a corrupt philosophy for the Nazi master race. But there is little doubt that this was not part of Nietzsche's thought. Nietzsche was not advocating a new absolute code of morality, but a re-evaluation of one's own in the light of the death of God and any other transcendent authority.

This is not to say that Nietzsche is not partly to blame, as indeed is Kierkegaard for what happened to his thought. Kierkegaard introduced a very dangerous idea when, in the move from the Ethical to the Religious stages, he argues for a "teleological suspension of the ethical"(16). Bartley has pointed out, in criticism of both Kierkegaard and Barth(17), that sanctioning an irrational commitment to Christ means that one loses the right to criticise other irrational

commitments, such as commitment to the Fatherland, racial superiority, or anything else. Much the same criticism can and should be directed at Nietzsche.

If man is to claim for himself the moral freedom which the existentialist urges, then there must accompany such a claim a heightened sense of responsibility, and an analysis of how his freedom will square with another's, and, indeed, an explanation of how in practical terms, it can. Nietzsche's and Kierkegaard's subjectivity are so extreme that it is difficult to see how they can explain this adequately.

A much more systematic and closely reasoned account is that given by Sartre. For many people, Sartre is seen as the culmination of Existentialist thought. Certainly, Warnock, in her survey of Existentialist ethics(18) does precisely this, and thereby, to her satisfaction, shows that there is no ethical mileage in the philosophy. Warnock, in effect, argues that Sartre dug himself into a pit of self and alienation, of nausea, out of which he could not drag himself. It is because of this, she implies, that Sartre turned from Existentialism to Marxism, thereby proving that the Existentialist tree is barren. There are, then, two different questions to answer. Firstly, is Sartre's exposition a dead end? And, secondly, if it is a dead end, is it the dead end of Existentialism? The first question will be dealt with immediately.

Certainly, Sartre's is a pretty morbid picture of the human condition, consisting as it does of a nexus of three different ideas - freedom, dread, and comforting frauds.

The first part, freedom, is a common enough theme - the realisation of the responsibility to make of my world what I alone can. The dread, the terror, comes in the realisation that I alone, with no cosmic meaning or any rational grounds, have to make a meaning out of the world, and in this awareness I come hideously face to face with the utter stupidity, absurdity, meaninglessness of the meaning I try to make. As Sartre says:

"...ontology and existential psychoanalysis...must reveal to the moral agent that he *is the being by whom values exist.*

It is then that his freedom will become conscious of itself and will reveal itself in anguish as the unique source of value and the nothingness by which the world exists." (19)

The comforting fraud comes with the attempt to hide from this responsibility, to evade the acknowledgement of the freedom, and the dread, the lifetimes spent in activities of 'seriousness' and 'bad faith', in the attempt to live out a societal role rather than constructing one's own life.

And to those who claim that this is no mirror of the human condition, that this experience of dread is such a seldom occurrence as to be unrepresentative, Sartre would only say that this shows just how difficult it is for anyone of us to bear our freedom and to confront our dread, how easily and willingly we slip into our comforting frauds to avoid them. How few would want to face this imperative:

"You are free, therefore choose - that is to say, invent. No rule of general morality can show you what you ought to do: no signs are vouchsafed in this world." (20)

Thus each person must invent his own values. The individual is moral, is 'authentic', to the extent that he strives to realise them. But then, is this any further on than Nietzsche? Dostoevsky said that if there is no God, then everything is permitted, and on the individualist basis set before us, it is hard to argue with him. In his book "Existentialism and Humanism" (21), Sartre illustrates the impossibility of judgement or prescription by the case of the young Frenchman at the time of the Nazi occupation, who is faced with the choice of either going to help the free French forces in England, or staying at home to be with his mother who lived only for him. Sartre holds that no ethical doctrine can arbitrate between such claims. The point is, of course, that the boy must create his own values in his own situation. As Grene says(22):

"...he can only do what he is and be what he does; no supernatural values appear in the heavens to guide him."

This can be accepted, but certain features of the situation need to be fleshed out.

Firstly, the conflict is between a claim from the interpersonal area of morality, and another from the social. If the claims are from these genetically different areas, then a final resolution is not possible, only a balanced judgement. This does not, however, have to be arbitrary, for, secondly, the young Frenchman is both spectator and participant - he finds himself 'thrown' into his relationship with his mother, and he must judge as a participant in an ongoing relationship. And finally, whilst the final choice will never be a perfect one, this does not entail that it must then be arbitrary, based on the toss of a

coin as well as any other procedure. There are degrees of subjectivity, and a considered, thoughtful decision can be better than a quick unthinking one.

Perhaps the choice is so difficult - and hence so arbitrary - for Sartre, because of the kind of theory of interpersonal and social relations he espouses. His theory at least goes some way to escaping the kind of solipsist positions into which Kierkegaard's and Nietzsche's theories always seem in danger of falling. But hardly much further, tied as it is to his theory of the person and his own view of humanity.

My relation to another, Sartre says, is revealed in the moment in which, sitting in a park, I find a stranger looking at me(23). This fact of another's looking at me, Sartre believes, reveals the existence of another subject to me, but also, in this very moment, I feel myself becoming a mere object in someone else's world. My awareness of another existence observing me has a two-fold effect. Firstly, the "the cogito a little expanded"(24) affirms the existence of other beings like myself, but, secondly, because it perceives me as an object by its gaze, it is actively seeking to reduce me, to annihilate me. Interpersonal relationships are therefore, necessarily, relationships of conflict. "The Other exists for consciousness only as a *refused self*"(25).

This nightmarish quality - the fact that another object intrudes on my created world - threatens all kinds of disorganisation for me. The presence of a stranger causes an 'internal hemorrhage' of my world, my world 'bleeding' in the direction of the stranger(26).

Even the sexual relationship is similarly affected - either I try to absorb, or allow to be absorbed by the other - sadism, masochism, or indifference are the only possible outcomes.

It is not surprising that the only positive social union is one where individuals submerge their conflicts in a common fight against a greater aggressor. This, then, is the nature of class conflict - the oppressed joining forces against the oppressor. What, though, happens to this union when the oppressor is overthrown? The personal conflicts, it would seem, must rise to the surface again, and resume their perpetual struggle against one another.

It is clear that, given Sartre's premises, there can be no other conclusions at the interpersonal and social level. And yet, one can ask: are these premises needed? Is not Sartre selling the human being terribly short? One could maintain that the original relation of myself to another lies in the recognition of another like myself, who enriches and completes my freedom, rather than threatens to annihilate it. If but one such relationship can occur, in which two existences did not endanger but encouraged and strengthened each other, then Sartre's depressing circle of observer and observed, the threatener and threatened, can be, is, broken. And surely such relationships do exist. There is no reason to believe that the existential I cannot join with another I, instead of being in permanent conflict.

Again, are there not activities, where to achieve their end, human beings must act of like mind and body - where the community acts almost as an organism in the interdependence of each of its members?

Could it not be claimed that these are as representative of the human condition as individual, atomistic, relationships?

Similarly, Sartre horribly misdescribes love. He is not talking about love, but rather control. His inability to see the possibilities of the relationship is really more his problem than ours. Consider the possibilities inherent in love pointed out by Grene(27):

"What the lover of Aristophanes' story wants is not just to be loved but to be made whole again, to become wholly himself in union with the other from whom an unnatural cleavage has divided him... love is not so much the desire to be loved as it is the sense of one's completion in another through shared insights and aspirations."

As noted above, one of the central ethical concerns of Existentialism - perhaps the central concern - is that man be not made a part of society's machinery, that the importance of each one as an individual should not be lost. It is this kind of appeal which inspires much Existential literature. Witness De Beauvoir's cry:

"You can excuse every misdemeanour and every crime, even, by which an individual asserts himself against society; but when a man deliberately sets about to debase man into thing, he lets loose a scandal on earth which nothing can make amends for. This is the only sin against man there is, but once it has been brought to pass, no indulgence is allowable, and it is man's business to punish it." (28)

And yet, on Sartre's account, it is the only possible relationship between human beings. He surely has gone horribly wrong. If Sartre's

existentialism suits us, it must be as much our failure as his success.

Sartre's exposition, it would seem, is a dead end. By misrepresenting the possibilities of growth from the personal to the interpersonal to the social, Sartre provides a lopsided and twisted view of the human condition which need not be accepted. More fruitful is the Camus approach, whose ethic, whilst still fairly grim, is both more congenial and more hopeful for an interpersonal and social ethic.

Like Nietzsche, like Sartre, Camus starts from the position that there is no God, that there is nothing further than man, that existence is essentially meaningless and absurd, and that there is only one certainty - that we will die. Now, as noted above, it is a position which can lead to both pessimism, and the belief that anything goes. But, for Camus, such a position would be to take sides with the Absurd against man, for there is only one value that makes sense in such a world, and that is man himself. And it is through this belief - that one must hold onto the value of man - that Camus comes through as a philosopher of dignity, strength, and even optimism. We may live in a world brutally indifferent to human life, but at least we can choose to be for man and against whatever would bring distress and humiliation to our brothers and sisters. And when this is what we commit ourselves to, then we have, in effect, chosen to resist the world's absurdity. Camus' vision of man is eloquently put in "The Myth of Sisyphus" (29), where man is likened to Sisyphus, condemned to roll a boulder up a slope for eternity, only to see it come sliding

back down to the bottom just as he nears the top. As Camus says(30):

"One must imagine Sisyphus happy."

Camus also goes somewhat further in breaking with personal subjectivity by arguing that my freedom must not destroy another's: we are in the boat together and we must sail together. On Sartre's previous accounts, one must draw the conclusion that my freedom will inevitably feed off someone else's. Camus is in no such difficulty: he can transcend Sartre's problem of freedom by asserting a human ethic, a shared human ethic. He shows that even with a committed atheistic position, it is still possible to argue for the possibility of interpersonal and social areas of morality. Camus shows that it is possible to transcend the purely subjective, but still insist on man facing the unpleasant facts of life and death, and that only by so doing can we make sense of existence.

Heidegger seems to take us further, but he certainly makes us pay for trying to stay with him. Many must have total sympathy and agreement with Warnock when she writes(31):

"One common effect of the truly Existentialist writer is to provoke in his readers the exasperated desire to rewrite what he says in plain language, and to show tht it doesn't after all amount to more than a platitude. If this is indeed a distinguishing mark of the Existentialist, then none is so unambiguously an Existentialist as Heidegger."

Like other existentialists, Heidegger is acutely aware of the fact that we simply find ourselves in this world - 'thrownness' is the graphic word he uses - and there seems to be no rhyme or reason to

this thrownness. So there is already the sense of meaninglessness and absurdity so familiar a theme in Existentialist thought. And of course there is the absurdity of death as well. However, Heidegger turns this fact of the certainty of non-existence, of finitude, into a means of appreciating what we have. He draws the notion of Death into the circle of Life, and argues that it is the very recognition of Death which can make one aware of the preciousness of life, and only in so doing can one escape the inauthenticity, the seriousness, the bad faith, which threaten to make life less than it might be. Heidegger is not, of course, the first to say this. Dostoevsky relived his own reprieve in front of the firing squad in "The Idiot", and his outpourings there could not be a more perfect appreciation of the value of life(32):

"What if I had not had to die! What if I could return to life  
- oh, what an eternity! And all that would be mine! I should  
turn every minute into an age, I should lose nothing, I should  
count every minute separately and waste none!"

The point is educationally valuable, if education is thought of as a life-long process, for who, with the thought of his death and disappearance from this world, would spend his time on trivia, on doing only what others expected of him, rather than on those things which really matter to him? Recognition of our finitude can only make us more honest in our dealings with ourselves, and our relationships, and make us value and appreciate that which we have.

This recognition of our death need not, then, turn us solitary and introspective. It may instead make us look outward to what we have,

and make more of it. Instead of retreating from the interpersonal and social, it may stimulate us to reach out further. And to add to this, Heidegger seems to be saying something quite novel for Existentialists which lifts him out of the subjective pit which Kierkegaard and Nietzsche dug, which Sartre made deeper, and out of which Camus valiantly tried to climb. Heidegger simply says that man never was in this pit in the first place. He may have been thrown into this world, but not as an isolated enclosed being: what characterises us is that we are already in the world. Leibnitz had said that the monad had no windows, but Heidegger would say that man does not look at the external world through windows, from the isolation of his ego, for he is already out of doors. Barrett(33) has described this part of Heidegger's theory as his 'Field Theory of Being' - that part which Heidegger dubbed 'Dasein' - and by this he means that the region of my care and concern is never defined by that area enclosed by my skin. Rather, it extends as far as my care and concern, my loves and relationships, extend. So, to try to describe someone without taking this into account is to miss the whole point of a person's Being - for a person is precisely a Being-in-the-world. This destroys the Cartesian conception of man at one blow, for Descartes - and most of the Existentialists - picture man as a solitary, introverted thinker locked in his dark room. Heidegger is saying that this isn't a human being at all - we are thrown into a world of relationships and cares, and our definition of ourselves must include these networks if it is to describe who we are.

The more is known about young children, the more Heidegger's assertion is borne out in real life. As will be seen in the last section of this thesis, psychological theory is pointing towards agreement with such a conception. For example, the psychologist, Hoffman(34), has investigated the very earliest period in the child's life, when the child is confused as to the difference between his and other peoples' identity, and out of this has developed a theory of the child's moral growth. Both philosopher and psychologist appear to be saying that, given minimum conditions early in life, we are naturally moral beings in the interpersonal and social meanings of the word, for our definition of ourselves normally includes the recognition of others, so our care for ourselves naturally extends to them.

There seems to be, then, the means to link the different areas of morality. The natural area can be understood, for human beings are creatures of this planet as much as anything else. Further, we are all confronted by the dilemmas of personal existence; and if minimal developmental conditions allow, the care for others at the interpersonal and social levels is naturally incorporated within our caring for ourselves. What, then, of the mystical/religious area? The full treatment of this area must wait until the next chapter, but it does seem appropriate at this point to complete this account with the work of Buber - for he seems not only to complete the philosophical circle, but go some considerable way to completing a psychological one as well.

Buber, then, appears to be saying much the same kind of thing as the 'Field Theory of Being' in his account of 'I-Thou' (35). Whilst it may

well be that Heidegger saw this as a 'given' of human existence, rather than as a thing to be desired(36), Buber is undoubtedly saying that the relationship of 'I-Thou' is, and should be, prior to both 'I' and 'Thou'. His attitude to others is, of course, in striking contrast to that of Sartre. For whereas Sartre sees human beings as locked into themselves, a world of separated divided beings, Buber sees the world as composed of two sorts of relationships - 'I-It' and 'I-Thou'. The first of these is those human relationships with things, the second are the relationships between people. 'I-It' relationships are necessarily ones of manipulation and control, but 'I-Thou' relationships should be ones of exploration and discovery - for both persons have between them that which it is to be human.

Buber is thus making the point that I-Thou relationships are essential because they are caring, love, and respect, and that a person cannot exist in this world without such things coming from others. This is a basic psychological insight, and from it springs the notion that human beings are interpersonal and social creatures, and that without environments which generate love, respect, care, and security, people will wither in their humanity. Buber is thus pointing through the interpersonal to the truly social, and arguing that the ethos of the community, the society in which one lives, is vital, for it sustains that which comes naturally as part of ourselves.

Buber is undoubtedly a mystico-philosophic writer, but his Judaism is of the Hassidic variety, which also stresses the practical and the community-involved, and whilst his thought is not psychologically systematic, it links in, in quite astonishing ways, with some current

psychological thought. Thus, in the next section of this thesis, it will be argued that a cognitive developmental theory of moral development is an inadequate description of the whole person's moral growth, and it will be suggested that other, non-cognitive factors are needed as well. Central will be:

- (a) a sense of value as a person, which depends upon being liked, loved and respected;
- (b) a rewarding experience of involvement with others, which depends upon being secure and free from threat; and
- (c) a sense of responsibility towards others, which depends upon being needed and experiencing success in the company of others.

These are all grounded in Buber's 'I-Thou' relationship, and point to a fundamental weakness in the stage-development approach exhibited by theorists like Kohlberg(37). If it can be accepted that an 'I-Thou' relationship is a fundamental unit of moral language in interpersonal relationships, then it is implicit that each person's essential uniqueness is recognised. Human beings must be seen as irreplaceable and not interchangeable. What, then, does this make of Kohlberg's stages five and six, or the universalisability criterion in general? If the irreducibility of each person is accepted, then such a criterion may prevent us from being egocentric in our dealings, but can be little better than a rule of thumb, for if taken too literally, it makes each person exchangeable - it reduces them to 'its' rather than 'thous'. It means that in moral dealings, in moral education, the particular, the individual, the ground of our being must be acknowledged, and forever referred back to. There must be a refusal

to be drawn into the geometrical precision and ease of simple universalisability. Here there is, yet again, the tension between the areas of morality, and rising up behind is the ghost of Plato, asking which is the more valuable, the individual or the universal, the particular or the Ideal, the existence or the essence. As was answered before, so it must be answered now. They need each other. It is the tension between them which produces the moral conflict, but it is only by reference to them both that a just resolution can be hoped for. As this is a chapter on the personal and the interpersonal, though, it should be stressed that once one starts to generalise about human beings, rather than recognising each one's uniqueness, then something is lost - the particularity, the feel, the commitment, the care. By universalising too glibly, justice is dehumanised.

Now this would mean that Kohlberg's higher stages are no better, in reality, than his 3rd stage, or at least to those people whom he would classify at stage 3, because they would refuse to leave the personal to move to the general. Both sides have got hold of one part of the moral equation, thinking that they have got the whole. Noddings(38) points out that such people at stage 3 have a very characteristic way of solving Kohlberg's dilemmas. Instead of saying 'let's assign weighted values to the principles involved here', and then shuffling people around in a game of moral musical chairs, the stage 3 person asks for more information. Such people are content oriented, and seek to reconcile the situation from within. They do this by seeking out what is unique to each person within the situation, by attempting to

know each person better. Rather than making people interchangeable in terms of formal principles, they try to make them irreplaceable in terms of content.

Nevertheless, whilst it may be argued that the initial ground of human morality lies in the personal and interpersonal areas - those of the existential question and the 'I-Thou' relationship - yet it is patently obvious that these, as they stand, are inadequate for solving the major problems of the world today. It is one of the strongest criticisms of Existentialist thought that it is incapable of dealing with problems concerning the relations between groups of people - international bodies, races, trade unions, and the like. And it is one of the strongest appeals of the Kohlbergian higher stages that they appear to be 'fair' to all, and therefore are much to be preferred at the social and societal level. However, taken at their bleakest, they can be no more than rules of thumb which provide little more than a starting point. A link is needed between the personal and interpersonal, and social areas of morality. Perhaps it is suggested in the example Noddings(39) gives of the Roman commander Manlius, who, in order to remain consistent in the application of a harsh law he had made, executed his own son. Now Noddings does not argue that Manlius should have excused his son because he was his son (but continued executing others). Nor does she agree with what Manlius did. What she says is that if Manlius had started out at the 'I-Thou' level, he would never have made such a rule in the first place. In other words, I-Thou relationships must inform the construction of rules at the social level, just as they must be used in the application of such

rules. Whilst there can be no universal solutions, we can do our best to understand what motivates the other, what are his or her special circumstances which make him or her unique, and which call upon us to treat him or her in a way slightly different from rule-of-thumb universal principles. People are deep and mysterious creatures, and, as argued in Section I of this thesis, the byword should be tolerance because of the acknowledgement of ignorance. Only with these thoughts to the front of our minds can there be a hope of formulating and applying rules even half-way just.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Morality is an untidy business. Western man's need to fit his experiences into neat labelled compartments is largely the inheritance he brings with him from his rational, objective-minded, scientific forbears, but it will not do for an adequate description of morality. A much more complex picture presents itself, which is initially a very uncomfortable one because it points to a host of problems. It is uncomfortable, but it is also richly suggestive.

Firstly, it means that in the final analysis, moral concepts will be unmanipulable. In other words, they will refuse to fit any one theory, and therefore will refuse to yield straight rule-of-thumb prescriptions for all situations. Each must be approached with criteria, with logic, and with principles, but essentially each situation will be new, and will have to be explored and dealt with as such.

Secondly, we will always, sometimes, fail. There can never be a moral system which gives the correct answers every time. There will always

be mistakes in perceptions, and in understanding, but the attitude of tolerance through the acknowledgement of ignorance will tend to prevent commitment before a problem is thought through fully. Though the depths of the human situation will always surpass a capacity for total comprehension, yet the realisation of its depth will mean a better chance of getting nearer to its true resolution than merely using the short circuit of objective principles.

Thirdly, though, we are not thrown on our own resources. There is a perspective to work from - the primitive relationships of care, of I-Thou meetings, which can inform our efforts in whichever direction we turn. They provide the basis for dealings with individuals: they provide the basis for the construction of principles for groups, and they provide the evaluative perspective for the application of these principles. They do not, then, leave us on our own.

Fourthly, it means that moral education should be viewed as the recommendation of the adoption of an attitude, rather than the agreement with, and application of, bald theory. It is an attitude which has to be worked at from the moment of birth until the moment of death. If Education for Life means anything, it means it most of all for Moral Education.

Fifthly, it re-emphasises the profound importance of the models which children see. What they see is what they tend to become. And children see further than school. Teachers may exhibit the attitude needed, the school may in its organisation subtly underline this caring approach to the individual, but society as a whole is infinitely more pervasive in its effect. At the personal level,

parents have the crucial role to play. At the social level, big business, trade unions, bureaucracy, government, all provide the example. If they apply general principles thoughtlessly, without considering the individual, they pass on a clear message to the child that the individual does not matter, and a little more of the child's humanity will be crushed. He will treat others as he himself has been treated, as he has seen others treated. Moral Education is for life for everyone.

Finally, all the preceding should make us aware that existential paths through life may lead to different destinations for each person. It might mean a stoic belief in the ultimate absurdity of existence, but at the same time in a human ethic which makes sense because it is chosen to make sense. Or it might mean the belief in something which lies beyond present concerns, but which is grasped through immersion in them. However, to the extent that each path is grounded in care, in the I-Thou, there need be no conflict between people arriving at different conclusions. The path is both the same and different for each one.

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## CHAPTER 8 THE MYSTICAL/RELIGIOUS AREA OF MORALITY.

As one might expect, the mystical/religious area has quite profound connections with the personal and interpersonal area, and, for people of a non-religious bent, the Existentialist approach might, again, be the easiest to understand for an initial consideration of this, the most difficult of areas to comprehend. Mohammed(1) once described the philosopher who writes about mysticism, without having had any mystical experience himself as rather like a donkey carrying a load of books. The present writer feels like that donkey.

However, mystical philosophy may be characterised in the manner Russell describes it(2), as having these four propositions as central to its belief system:

- (a) the achievement of insight through intuition or revelation, rather than through rational analysis;
- (b) a belief in the ultimate reality of all things;
- (c) the denial of the reality of time - it being a creation of man produced by the recognition of his finitude and the temporal concerns so derived;
- (d) the denial of ultimate division between good and evil, these again being manifestations of human existence. At the higher level, there is only a divine sense of peace.

The point to be noted is that Existentialism and these propositions are not necessarily in conflict. What Existentialism demands is that a start

is made from each unique person and a respect is given to his or her subjectivity. The approach does not necessarily put limits on where people's existential thought will lead them. Its quarrel with Plato is rather that he denigrates the individual, and relegates existence in this world to the peripheral, the shadow of the Real. Writers of an existentialist leaning argue that the individual is intensely real, and some go on to say that reflection by that individual may enable him, to some extent, to transcend his subjectivity to something more complete. For some existentialists, of course, there is no mystical/religious area. Nietzsche, Sartre, Camus - the atheists - would have said this, but in a curious sense, their approach was religious, or at least was inspired by religion. After all, their work is directed to an examination of what can remain of our values in a world where God is dead. Of the others, Kierkegaard's problem was more a problem of the means of communication, than a problem of God's existence. Heidegger's work in this respect is confusing. His later work suggests the need for an almost Oriental passivity in achieving an understanding of a Being which transcends the human. Whilst this notion is suggestive, it is also so elusive that no more time will be spent on it. Again Buber would seem to be the person to turn to(3), for whilst he is very down to earth in his description of the primacy of the 'I-Thou' relationship, he goes on to say that in each breath of the relationship there is interfused the feeling of an 'Eternal Thou' - that each special friendship has something transcendent within it which points beyond. Buber is asserting that not only must the 'I-Thou' relationship be seen as irreducible, but that also within this irreducibility lies the glimpse of beyond. Buber's belief is

actually a variation of one of the two principal types of mysticism described by Happold(4) - the mysticism of love and union. This is very clearly one of the major themes in existential literature, but it is, of course, not located solely within this context. It is also one of the fundamental themes running through much of the Christian theology of this century.

One of its more recent advocates is Dykstra(5), who argues that human beings are insecure on a permanent basis, and that we need the greatest love to make us feel secure. This, he is sure, no mortal can give, even though this love and security is constantly sought after in our relationships with others. Indeed, says Dykstra, we even perform mental tricks upon ourselves and upon others in order to be noticed by them. But all this does is make matters worse because the vision of the truth and depth of our relationships is obscured. This creation of veils of obscurity is, for Dykstra, 'sin', and we break out of this system by the recognition of a Being perfect, omnipotent and eternal. Were such a Being to exist and love us, were we to acknowledge him, we would have that degree of psychic security which would enable us to throw off this veil and see things as they really are, to achieve truly satisfying relationships.

Dykstra writes beautifully and says many wise and insightful things, but, crucially, this belief in a Supreme Being is, and can be, no more than wish-fulfilment, or mystical revelation for himself. Dykstra is really trying to re-live the life of the medieval Christian, whose world was guaranteed by the Eternal Father figure. As the last chapter argued,

it is precisely the breakdown in such psychic security which brought about the present Existentialist movement in the first place.

Not all Christian writers have taken this line, though. One of the most radical, Cupitt(6), traces a very existentialist line from the end of the Middle Ages to the present day. He sees Kierkegaard as standing at the crossroads for Christianity, for in personalising man's religious experience, and making this experience primary, Cupitt believes that he is subjectifying God as well. Religious truth, for Cupitt, is not fixed, but changes with its age. The tide of faith recedes as people feel the current interpretation does not match their problems and experiences, and the tide returns as it re-interprets itself to fit the current realities. For Cupitt, then (7):

"God (and this is a definition) is the sum of our values, representing to us their ideal unity, their claims upon us and their creative power. Mythologically, he has been portrayed as an objective being, because ancient thought tended to personify values in the belief that important words must stand for things....Values do not have to be independently and objectively existent beings in order to claim our allegiance. ...thinking of values as objective beings out there does not help us in any way to progress towards a clearer understanding of the special part they play in our lives. We can do without that mythological idea."

Thus Cupitt argues that realist views of an omnipotent being were really only techniques used by religious teachers to get their people to appraise their way of life from a new perspective. For Cupitt, then,

there appears to be no transcendent 'good' - the 'good' is each person's good, which each person holds up in front of him like a mirror and which shows him how to behave.

It is hard to imagine two Christians farther apart on what Christianity ultimately means. This only goes to show that existentialist sympathies can have markedly different ultimate orientations on individuals in related fields. The sorts of feelings so characteristic of Existentialism, the sorts of questions it poses, lead one into subjectivity, into introspection, but they do not necessarily leave one there. It is just as likely for the person tackling existentialist questions to move beyond the purely human to a mystical/religious viewpoint, one which transcends a solution of human dilemmas at the human level, and which believes it glimpses something further. And such an approach, precisely because it recognises the uniqueness of each individual, the necessity of his freedom to choose, would seem to be precisely the sort of ethic needed in both moral and religious education. As Morris(8) says:

"The consideration of such questions completes the ethic by bringing that which is experienced by all men into the arena of open discourse. It fulfils the real meaning of a pluralistic society."

Given the above, it is surprising to find that Downey and Kelly(9) say:

"There is no logical connection between morality and religion. Any connection that exists is merely contingent."

The fact is that only one kind of approach has been dwelt upon, one which Downey and Kelly don't take into account. Much of the force of their

assertion comes from a much-repeated and seemingly powerful argument which was quoted in Chapter 1, and which derives from Plato(10). It, in effect, argues that either one ought to do what is right because it is right (this being why God commanded it in the first place), or one ought to perform an action purely because God has commanded it. If the first alternative is accepted, then the introduction of God into the argument appears superfluous. If the second is accepted, then the most monstrous cruelties are allowed just because God has commanded them: there would be no means of distinguishing between a 'good' God and an 'evil' one, as there would be nothing left for a criterion, apart from the sheer might of this superior being.

There are at least three ways of countering this argument. The first, that God is co-existent with the good, indeed is, by definition, the Good, seems to be a nice sleight of hand, but it does not get much further on, because it does not answer where the definition of the 'Good' is to come from, nor does it prove the objective existence of this Deity.

The second counter, which has already been mentioned to some extent, seems a better one. This suggests that the original argument only works against one type of religious attitude. This, then, will be examined in more detail.

On the account given so far it would be a crude misunderstanding of the religious attitude to believe that it is comprised only of that which believes in an omnipotent being. Leuba(11) included in an appendix a list of 48 different definitions given by various writers. Certainly, a writer like Campbell(12) might have difficulties as, for him, religious experience is:

"...a state of mind comprising belief in the reality of a supernatural being or beings endowed with transcendent power and worth, together with the complex emotive attitude of worship intrinsically appropriate thereto."

As will be seen shortly, even this attitude may be defended. However, what is to be made of the kind of religious attitude described by Thouless(13) where he describes religion as:

"...a particular kind of attitude toward the world as a whole... the space and time in which our bodies live is not the only part of the environment to which we must be adjusted... there is also some kind of spiritual world which makes demands on our behaviour, our thinking and feeling."

This attitude is symptomatic of a move within Christianity over the last 100 years, which moves the religious orientation away from considerations of the external objective existence of a personable God to considerations of man's situation in this world as the starting point for exploration of what religious thought might mean. This is why Robinson(14) can say that:

"...we are reaching the point at which the whole conception of a God 'out there'... is becoming more of a hindrance than a help."

Look further at Tillich's proposals for the two formal criteria for theology(15):

"The object of theology is what concerns us ultimately. Only those propositions are theological which deal with their object in so far as it can become a matter of

ultimate concern for us."

"Our ultimate concern is that which determines our being or non-being. Only those statements are theological which deal with their object in so far as it can become a matter of being or non-being for us."

"Ultimate concern", "being or non-being": this is real existentialist territory . Why do we live and die? What is the purpose of it all? Why be moral? Obviously one does not need to be religious to ask these questions. Nietzsche, Sartre, Camus, atheists all, asked them. They got very different answers from Robinson and Tillich, but they asked them. So it might be fairer to say of religious thinkers like Robinson and Tillich that they start from ground common to all, ask questions of ultimate concern to all, but go a little way further down the path, or take a turning others don't, or any other metaphors one cares to use which doesn't suggest that, necessarily, their approach is 'further on', 'better', or any other description which labels it as 'superior'.

Certainly, having already looked at the thought of Dykstra and Cupitt, it is quite apparent that it is nearly as difficult to define 'Christian' as it is to define 'religious': Dykstra believes in an objectively existing omnipotent loving Being; Tillich believes in something transcendent but is rather more guarded in his categorisation; Cupitt has no need of anything external to man at all save his own personal creations.

Clearly, then, any argument that wants to say that there is no logical connection between religion and morality because, using the Divine Command argument, religion has no moral force, misses its point.

However, there is a third counter to the argument, since the argument fails to recognise that there is a temporal movement from the secular viewpoint to a mystical/religious one, and that morality is not a whole. Thus, it is being argued that a mystical/religious approach to life is preceded by consideration of the calls of other areas of morality. Reflections upon the workings of the natural world, on life on this planet, can lead some to a conception of something which transcends the creatures which inhabit the Earth, a conception that their life flows in and through them, but is in some sense eternal.

Again, reflection upon the mystery of the chemistry between two people meeting - the I-Thou relationship of Buber - can lead people to a belief in something intimated by, but transcendent to such a relationship. And finally, the writings of Durkheim and Hegel are replete with notions of something greater than the sum of the parts - the spirit that continues when the constituents pass on.

In each case, there is an initial conception of morality which points to something beyond. For some, of course, it does not. For Downey and Kelly it does not. For Midgley it does not. For Marx it does not - or at least, he tries it not to! But the essential point is that it can - that the secular areas of morality can all point to a religious area, which then, if taken up, re-interprets these areas in a new light.

Now this is not an argument to say that there should be movement from the natural, personal, interpersonal, or social areas to the mystical/religious - it seems that there can be no answer to this, simply because the justification for such a move can only come if the move produces a clearer, more valid conception of morality - and that can only

be eventually judged by those who make the move. It boils down to Mohammed's donkey again.

However, rather than saying that there should be this movement, what this argument does state is that this transition does, factually, occur, and that because it does occur, morality from the mystical/religious area is necessarily, temporally, second. Now because of this temporality, the religious person could argue that even if he does believe in this omnipotent God delivering his commands, that he can and does obey them because he came to a belief in this God through a secular morality. His religious morality now enhances, makes more real, that which he groped for before, but he in no way subordinates his own moral choice, he argues, because his choice is a personal choice founded on previously secular thought.

On the above account, a statement like the following of Wright(16) must be mistaken:

"The relationship (between M.E. and R.E.) is asymmetrical in the sense that moral considerations enter into our decisions regarding religious education, but religious considerations do not enter into our planning for moral education. In this sense, moral education is primary."

If the mystical/religious area of morality is a possible destination in the individual's personal growth, and this destination is reached through one or more of the other areas of morality, then a curriculum which did not acknowledge this, and incorporates such knowledge into its original planning of the content, would have to be deficient. Again, this does not mean that the aim is a 'religious outcome' for the child. Rather it

means that the possibility is recognised and provided for. At the boundaries of the personal, interpersonal, natural and social areas of morality, there is, for many, a 'pull'. The pull should not be taught, but its meanings, its possibilities should be. And these include the pull from the mystical/religious area.

Many have felt this pull. Tillich(17) describes how, for many, the secular moralities are insufficient, when he writes:

"Autonomy is able to live as long as it can draw from the religious tradition of the past, from the remnants of a lost theonomy. But more and more it loses this spiritual foundation. It becomes emptier, more formalistic, or more factual and is driven towards scepticism and cynicism, towards the loss of meaning and purpose...At the end of this process autonomy turns back to the lost theonomy with impotent longing, or it looks forward to a new theonomy."

Mitchell uses a 'pull' argument as the central argument of his book(18), when he claims that religion has a real and necessary part to play in any overall consideration of morality and its implications. He attempts to show that the various humanist theories of morality do not hold up on their own, and yet that some humanists (notably Murdoch and Hampshire) still have deeply held moral convictions that they find difficult to justify. Mitchell argues that if it is to be a straight choice between one's profoundly held moral convictions being wrong, or a humanist stance being wrong, then the latter should be rather carefully examined, to see whether, with the humanists' apparent failure to justify their approach, a

religious approach does not have rather more to say for itself as an anchor for moral convictions than some philosophers have given it.

Now this argument is very limited. For a start, there are plenty of humanists who do not feel the 'pull'. Moreover, a 'pull' does not prove that there is anything real to be pulled to. As Mitchell himself concedes(19), his argument is no substitute for a reasoned case for theism. However, even without this reasoned case, the fact is that people do make a move into viewing morality from a mystical/religious area. To ignore the existence of this area is simply to fly in the face of the evidence, to neglect what many regard as the cause for many of man's supreme achievements, and to leave a curriculum which does not consider it, an infinitely poorer place. Even if, as a humanist, one disagrees with the impulse, this disagreement should be based on knowledge of the area and not on ignorance.

Looking further at the nature of this pull, and at the possibility of assessment of value positions held within this area, Mitchell writes(20):

"...if, instead, we place morality in the context of human needs and insist that moral judgements require to be supported by reasons, and that these reasons must relate to some intelligible and defensible conception of human well-being, it becomes clear that an adequate understanding of morality is no longer attainable in total independence of our beliefs about the nature and destiny of man."

The phrase 'the nature and destiny of man', is strongly reminiscent of Tillich's 'matters of ultimate concern.' It also seems to closely parallel the thought of Toulmin(21) who, in seeking to understand the

reciprocal relationship of religion to morality, pointed out that the domain of moral reasoning is not fully self-enclosed, but that moral questions can point beyond themselves to the religious domain. In the terminology used so far, Toulmin would be saying that the secular areas of morality can point beyond themselves to the religious area. He argues that if we continually ask for reasons why a particular norm should be upheld, we will, after a time, exhaust the possible secular moral reasons supporting this norm. We will find ourselves asking 'why be moral at all?' For some, this reason appears at the limit of secular moral inquiry, raising the question of the fundamental meaningfulness of human activity, and, for some at least, points beyond to another area of justification - the religious/mystical area.

Kohlberg argues in a similar vein(22), when he says that at the highest level of ethical principles, justification by reference to the human social order is inadequate, that such a morality 'requires' an ultimate stage of religious orientation, which he proposed to call 'stage 7'(since when he has dropped the stage(23)). As he says, at this level, the answer to the question 'why be moral?' entails the answer to the question 'why live?' and 'how face death?' He concludes(24):

"...ultimate moral maturity requires a mature solution to the question of the meaning of life. This, in turn, is hardly a moral question per se, it is an ontological, or a religious one."

Thus all three - Mitchell, Toulmin, and Kohlberg, not only acknowledge the pull, but also appear to accept the justification for this pull - that matters cannot be adequately explained without reference to a mystical/religious orientation and adherence to it. As has already been

argued, this adherence is not essential for an acceptance of the simple consideration of this area, and this is all that is being argued for.

Perhaps, though, there is something more at the back of Downey and Kelly's mind, and this might be the perceived problem of the irrationality of faith, of commitment, and of an impermeability of the religious stance to reasoned analysis and discussion. Certainly, the perception of religion as the province of the fanatic can dispose one to wanting no connection between it and areas which seem to be more open to assessment by the production of relevant factual data, by the use of logic to spot internal inconsistencies, by the fact that people holding views within these other areas at least attempt a rational justification of their position. The image at hand is of a Kierkegaard who makes his leap of faith into a religious stand which is distinguishable primarily by the fact that it is non-rational. Kierkegaard's example of Abraham being prepared to sacrifice Isaac<sup>(25)</sup> shocks the humanist to his core - how can one argue with a man prepared to sacrifice his own son for an ideal he cannot or will not justify, indeed, with a man who proclaims that his beliefs are characterised and validated by their non-rational, non-justificatory nature?

Kierkegaard, Barth and others like them have a lot to answer for. A position like theirs opens the flood gates to lunacy and fanaticism, and diverts secular attention away from attempts by others within the Christian tradition to a much more considered, sensitive and careful approach which appreciates the madness that lurks around the corner for those who let go of reason.

If one dispenses with the Kierkegaardian leap - and it seems, both morally and educationally, it is much too dangerous - then one moves to a view of 'faith commitment' as more of a perspective which interprets experiences as having a transcendent dimension, but which leaves room within the individual for change both within the perspective, and out of it as well. Again, the parallels with Kuhn's scientific paradigms(26) seem clear and viable - as long as one accepts that a person committed to a paradigm does not remain imprisoned forever within its 'gestalt'. There is little reason to believe that one must. Scientists change perceptions of the 'true' meaning of their field of study, philosophers come to a different view of the same subject, the ordinary man in the street changes the perspective of his life and of other people as he moves through it. Sometimes this is done in a leap - usually in times of crisis - but normally it is a gradual widening and elucidation of the same perspective. The religious perspective seems to be no different, for it seems that the average 'religious' person is not a different kind of animal from the secular person, but one who interprets experience in a different way, a way which can differ from the secular, from slight through to very different. The point to be made, though, is that the religious-minded person of non-Kierkegaardian persuasion is not someone to be distrusted or even feared by the humanist, for the grounds of his experience are ones which are common to all, even if his perception of these grounds is different.

This seems to be the sort of approach Webster takes when he asks(27):

"...how can teachers help their pupils to understand what it is like to believe in religious faith?"

He argues that Christians come to know God, i.e., to have religious experience, in five ways. These are:

- (a) through personal relationships;
- (b) through sudden overwhelming experiences;
- (c) through the experience of suffering;
- (d) through the given Christian path;
- (e) through recognising the limits of our understanding.

He then argues that these five ways are part of adolescent experience, and that adolescents are particularly open to them. Thus,

- (a) they encounter the problems of personal relationships more than before or after in their life;
- (b) they feel things more deeply in this stage of life;
- (c) they question the present political and social order more;
- (d) they find themselves called to a personal autonomous commitment for the first time;
- (e) they begin to recognise the limits of human understanding for the first time.

Webster argues that running through each of these five problems is the belief that there is an answer - that hope exists. The problems may be translated by the individual into either a religious or a secular understanding, but they provide the teacher with the kind of questions with which he or she should confront the child. Hope, humility, and tolerance are ever present in this quest because:

"...truth always lies ahead and ever raises the question of the beyond..."(28)

Finally, and implicitly dealing with the thorny question of indoctrination and values education, Webster says of teachers that though

"..they cannot climb the ladder for their children, they can secure it, adjust it, and advise on ways of ascending."(29)

This seems to come back to forms of an I-Thou relationship, ones in which we are committed to the other person and his or her potential growth. Look how similar this is to Macquarrie's view of teaching:

"...teaching is seen as a mode of being with, a positive mode of solicitude in which one leaps ahead of the other so as to open his possibilities for him, but never leaps in for the other, for this would be really to deprive him of his possibilities."(30)

There seem to be, then, three major conclusions.

Firstly, there is a logical connection between morality and religion - the connection of identity. It has been argued from simple observation that many people in the world come to hold a religious/mystical morality through their thoughts and dealings in a secular morality, and that through this commitment, the secular areas can be reinforced with a new urgency and colour that was lacking previously.

Secondly, any moral education programme that did not include an appreciation of this area would be both deficient and impoverished.

Thirdly, there are forms of this commitment which do disengage communication from people who hold secular moralities, through an insistence on irrational leaps, but this form of commitment is neither necessary nor characteristic of the religious thought of most kinds.

These kinds are those which admit their limitations of vision, accept with humility their constricted viewpoints, and whilst holding a religious faith commitment, do so in a manner not dissimilar from secular faith commitments - ones which leave room for doubt, expansion and change.

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## CHAPTER 9 THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF MORALITY

The line taken so far in this thesis has tended to be a personalist one. The epistemological account of the first section examined the problem from the point of view of the individual attempting to come to grips with the world. Similarly, the references to psychology have so far tended to concentrate upon the influence of, or upon the individual. Yet there are glaring deficiencies in such a view, despite their many merits. On an individual level how does one account for the morality of the people who fought, killed and died in two World Wars, or any war for that matter? Particularly in the First World War, any account of its four year duration, and its millions killed, becomes implausible to the point of absurdity if it simply accounts for person A or person B's individual motives. One needs to look at the macrosociological and institutional level to account for how men could play football with each other on Christmas Day, show each other photographs of their loved ones, and then return to their trenches to kill each other the following day. Perhaps it is by understanding this social level of morality - the forces it brings to bear upon the individual - that such obscenities can be prevented from happening again.

Thus, in this chapter, this social area of morality will be examined, by examining its roots and its varieties, its role in the school, its expression in psychological practice, and its place in the balance of any scheme of moral education in the school.

## PROLOGUE

Parekh(1) has argued that it is a common fault of Western liberal thought that it tends to contract the scope of an adequate concept of morality because it takes the individual as its essential unit of study, and further that it tends to be positivistic in regard to the nature of men, and to the nature of the relations that hold between them. Man's economic nature within a capitalist society, then, tends to be seen as 'natural', as does the notion that man is essentially self-centred. Thus, Hart(2) takes it as one of the basic facts about men that they are at least partly selfish and have limited sympathies, that they should not be expected to do too many things involving sacrifices of their interests, and that a legal framework is therefore necessary to regulate their affairs. Rather more strongly, the same assumption is found when Rawls(3) enunciates his famous 'original position' - what would each person do out of self interest - as if genuine altruistic thought for others is a later, grafted-on addition to the human character. This notion clearly influenced both Piaget(4) and Kohlberg(5) in their developmental notions of morality, as altruism and selflessness come later in their hierarchies of moral development.

It is quite possible to argue with Parekh about the role of the individual in morality. There seems to be no logical reason why the notion of the individual as the essential unit of study should contract the scope of morality. The fact that it does tend to prevent people from looking at the plight of groups, nations, and other creatures on this planet suggests a lack of imagination on their part (and their teacher's part) than on any logical difficulties per se. However, to the extent that this does

tend to happen, then Parekh makes his point - if the focus on the individual restricts the moral vision, then the focus must be changed or expanded.

The second point Parekh makes - that of positivism - is again an indication of tendencies rather than a logical point, but it is still well made, for this assumed basic selfishness of human beings may well be only a product of an individualistic morality, and on the psychological account suggested earlier, is not only misleading, but simply wrong - empathy for others, as described by Hoffman(6), and altruism, as described by Johnson(7), start as early as the first year of life, and develop in tandem with other - notably egocentric - attitudes. Following on the argument made in the first section of this thesis(8), if individual instances are interpreted and evaluated within an existing conceptual scheme, and if this conceptual scheme is not one enunciated by the individuals - because they are too young to have incorporated it within their experience in a conscious, articulated manner - then such a scheme can only come from the social group or the society within which they find themselves. And if this group's value scheme is a personal, selfish one, then notions of empathy and altruism will necessarily be hindered in their development, in contrast with more egocentric notions. This is at the core of those arguments against Kohlberg's theory(9), which claim that, rather than it being universal in application, it is merely the reflection of an individualistic, competitive Western social ethic. If these arguments have force, then they have profound implications for any theory of morality and moral education. These implications would include the following.

Firstly, the influence of society in general, social groups, schools, and teachers - the values that all of them pass on in all of their overt and hidden curricula - should be carefully scrutinised by teachers and pupils alike.

Secondly, a moral education curriculum must include a sociological component, and preferably a comparative sociological component.

Thirdly, the 'objective' stages of developmental theories are likely to be, at least in part, reflections of the prevailing social norms of the society in which these stages are investigated.

Fourthly, educators should be highly aware of the psychological techniques used on pupils, and they should give careful thought to their use or non-use. If education is, from this perspective, "the manipulation of consciousness"(10), then there are necessarily grave moral issues at stake.

#### ROOTS AND VARIETIES

The roots of this area go back at least as far as the thought of the Ancient Greeks, and take as many forms as it does. However, the three central tenets of those approaching morality from a social orientation appear to be:

- (a) that the group is prior to the individual;
- (b) that the individual is to be defined as achieving his identity through participation in the group; and
- (c) that morality is a phenomenon of social life, and a product of society as a whole.

Durkheim(11) expressed it as eloquently as anyone when he said:

"...the domain of the moral begins where the domain of the

social begins...we are moral beings only to the extent that we are social beings."

Nisbet(12) sees the present state of sociology as being the development of sociology during the nineteenth century. He classifies its essential 'unit ideas' as community, authority, status, the sacred, and alienation, and that its growth was a reaction to the Age of Reason of the previous one hundred and fifty years, with its emphasis on the individual. For sociological thinkers of this time, he argues, personality was seen to derive from society, and alienation was the price to be paid for release from its constraints. The spirit of optimism and progress was replaced by one of pessimism and "a kind of craving for new forms of moral and social community"(13). Curiously, then, the mainstream of sociological thought in the nineteenth century was essentially conservative in nature. This can be more clearly seen in an examination of the causes of the movement, which can be encapsulated in two revolutions - the French and the Industrial.

With the French Revolution, the stability of aristocratic rule was rocked to its foundations, to be challenged by arguments for equalitarianism and democracy. Whilst many today would regard this as 'good thing', most sociologists of the time saw instead the impersonality of the process, and the lack of identification with the system for the individual.

Likewise, the Industrial Revolution destroyed much of the personalness of relations in essentially rural communities, and replaced it with an anonymous cog-in-the-wheel description of the individual. This alienation of labour is a recurrent theme throughout the nineteenth century, and again, and perhaps curiously, it is the conservatives rather than the

radicals who attack this revolution the most strongly. Marx(14), for instance, didn't like the change, but saw it only as a necessary step to the socialist utopia. For the more conservative thinkers, there was no such consolation, only a desire to return to pre-industrial relations at work. Carlyle(15) echoed the thoughts of many when he wrote:

"Men are grown mechanical in head and in heart, as well as in hand...Mechanism has now struck its roots deep into men's most intimate, primary sources of conviction..."

So thoughts of the influence of the community came from both the right and the left of the political spectrum, and for more than one reason. They were moved to write from different causes and for different ends, but all have this in common: the individual is lost without the community.

However, the left and right is not the only dimension of community: there are others which bear no allegiance to it whatsoever. Perhaps the two most important dimensions are those of nationalism and religion.

Nationalism's present upsurge has been traced by Kedourie(16) at least as far back as Kant, indicating the production of the philosophic seeds of a political and social theory which sees the individual reaching true fulfilment through something greater than himself, this something being the nation state.

This, again, is a totally different dimension from that of the politics of the left and the right. Thus nationalists of 1848 - Mazzini and Kossuth - were regarded as men of the left, whilst nationalists of the twentieth century - Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco - have been seen as men of the right. Again, Soviet theorists have classed nationalist movements

as left wing or right wing depending upon whether or not they further the cause of social revolution. This indicates clearly that whilst the left-right dimension is concerned with freedom and equality, to nationalists these are fairly incidental to the cause of national self-determination, and the identification of the man as part of this nation state. As Lord Acton(17) said:

"...nationality does not aim either at liberty or prosperity, both of which it sacrifices to the imperative necessity of making the nation the mould and measure of the State."

What these two dimensions have in common is this belief that the individual, and his morality, are to be defined by the social dimension. However, as Kedourie(18) argues, nationalism is a messy idea, and the definition of 'a nation' is notoriously difficult to pin down. It can cut across geography, race, religion, and language, and seems to be more a semi-irrational expression of a social need than a legitimate claim. Having said this, it must still be acknowledged that it is indicative of a need to belong, and this it seems to have in common with all social movements. Similarly, the upsurge in fundamentalist Islamic belief in the present day can be viewed in very much the same light, though now another dimension is involved - that of religion. It is very easy to see how man's existential need for a belief in something transcendent can be personified at the level of the community, and when both community and religion are fused into one ideal, the appeal is doubly enticing. It is little wonder, then, that Durkheim(19) could see religion as deriving its power from the feeling of oneness with fellow believers which the individual acquires, rather than in the belief in the existence of any

objective deity (except to the extent that the existent deity is the community).

It would be possible to expand at great length on other possible dimensions which focus men's ideas on community - factors such as geographical isolation, racial identity, or linguistic similarities, but this seems to be unnecessary. The essential point has now been made at some length. Those features which unite an individual into a sense of community with others have the same characteristics. They generate a set of values which directly influence and form other individuals born into this same group. This, then, is a radically different genesis for morality from others so far described, and its importance in any school curriculum should be both acknowledged and explicitly understood. An examination will now be made of two very different accounts of this moral genesis - those of Durkheim and Marx.

#### DURKHEIM

Durkheim was both conservative and visionary. He considered that those forces in European society which gave cohesion and stability were in the process of disintegration. This he saw as ominous for European man because he saw man as healthy and sane only through identification with a healthy community. If this community was in the process of disintegration, so then must the individual's psyche.

He saw the community as extraordinarily pervasive in its influence. Not only did it define the categories of knowledge man could use, it was also the ultimate derivation of religious faith, and of suicidal tendencies. All three traditional individualistic categories are made the province of the community. Thus for instance, religion is at bottom nothing more

than man's respect for society carried to a supreme degree of intensity.

Speaking of Totemism, Durkheim says:

"...the totem is before all a symbol, a material expression of something else. But of what?...In the first place it is the outward and visible form of what we have called the totemic principle of god. But it is also the symbol of the determined society called the clan. It is its flag...the visible mark of its personality...so if it is at once the symbol of the god and of the society, is that not because the god and the society are only one?"(20)

Further, there was his effort to show in "Suicide"(21) that the greater immunity of the religious person to suicide was the result, not of religious doctrine or belief, but of the stronger element of community, which religion still gave to the members of a church. For society as a whole, Durkheim argued, it was only when science and liberal democracy were rooted in a decentralised society, in the same way in which religion and kinship were rooted in medieval society, that man would overcome his present state of rootlessness.

How, then, can the school help? It can do for the child what a decentralised society can do for the adult: it can, through reduction in size, enable the child to feel a part of the society in which he lives.

But he goes further:

"If then, with the exception of the family, there is no collective life in which we participate, if in all the forms of human activity we are in the habit of acting like lone wolves, then our social temperament has only rare opportunities to strengthen and

develop itself...It is precisely at this point that the role of the school can be considerable.."(22).

Durkheim thus saw the school very clearly as the half-way house for the child - between the family and the larger community. The school is vital not only because it enables the child to understand that rules are not to be obeyed merely, and because, one is within the confines of the family situation. They are also to be obeyed because the school gives the child the necessary distancing from personal relationships, and the child can therefore grasp their abstract conception. But also, and conversely, the school is vital because it is small enough for the child to feel a part, and not merely an alienated, isolated individual in the crowd.

There are many valuable insights in Durkheim's work. His is a very healthy antidote to a totally individualistic conception of morality. He brings out with great clarity the individual's need for, and existence within, the group. He describes the necessary intermediate role of the school in the transition from childhood to adulthood, and he makes one aware of society's, the school's, and the individual teacher's duties and responsibilities - because the way in which they interpret and apply the rules has permanent effects upon the child. He is, then, a much needed corrective and valuable therapy, for he establishes the independent existence of a social dimension of morality, and therefore of its place in moral education. But his account is flawed, and for three main reasons.

Firstly, if morality is the creation of society, then how does one evaluate this morality? It is not clear in Durkheim's writings whether he really wants to adopt a relativist thesis for morality, but he seems at times to be very near to it. Similarly, on his account, how does one

distinguish the creative deviant - the Socrates or the Christ - from those for whom deviance is no more than a form of assault upon the social order? By loading morality into one area, Durkheim is confronted by the same tensions noted earlier in the writings of people like Schweitzer, Rawls and Kohlberg.

This leads directly into the second flaw - the lack of individual autonomy in moral judgments. Now Durkheim specifically made autonomy one of the three cardinal elements of morality(23). However, individuality is formed through the interaction between what he calls 'the two natures of man' - the biological and the social - and he generally casts this view of individuality within a context which stressed its 'negative or pathological effects'(24). Little time is spent on creativity, on rationality, on reflection, on consciousness, leaving one with the notion that individuality is, necessarily, activity totally within society's norms, rather than allowing for the possibility of transcendence. By locating the religious within the social, Durkheim leaves no room for the transcendence of social norms via religion, either. Nor, of course, does he allow for the possibility that the religious urge might be true. There seems little doubt that what Durkheim describes, does occur. The only trouble is that it is not, cannot, be the full story. By overplaying his hand, Durkheim distorts his thesis.

Finally, one can go right to the heart and question his most fundamental assumption: that there is a community with which the individual ought to identify. Is society really modelled on the basis of a community? There are those who, whilst acknowledging Durkheim's claim that morality is a social phenomenon, nevertheless deny that society as it exists at the

present time is a valid or worthy representative. Instead of seeing a reasonably harmonious, interlocking, interdependent, functionalist model, such people see society characterised by discord and struggle, and necessarily so, because of the power positions held by groups within society. Whilst one group holds the true power, economic power, the control of the means of production, there must be struggle. In such a society, then, morality, and moral education, takes on an altogether different characterisation. This is, of course, a description of the Marxist tradition.

#### MARX

For all the moral urgency with which Marx's work is imbued, for all the sense of moral indignation at the conditions of the working class people he saw, Marx says that "The communists do not preach morality at all"(25). Despite the fact that Marxists claim to be scientific, predicting the coming of socialism in the same way as another scientist might predict earthquakes, yet they have made it clear that they work for the coming of socialism and will welcome its arrival.

And again, Engels can say(26):

"We maintain...that all former moral theories are the product, in the last analysis, of the economic stage which society reached at that particular epoch. And as society has hitherto moved in class antagonism, morality has always been a class morality; it has justified the domination and the interests of the ruling class, or, as soon as the oppressed class has become powerful enough, it has represented the revolt against this domination and the future interests of the oppressed."

Yet despite this avowed belief in the determining of all moral codes and beliefs by specific historical and social situations, it is clear that Marxists are committed to the moral superiority of socialism over other systems, and thus to the belief in a non-relativistic standard by which other moralities may be judged. As Kamenka has put it(27):

"...we find an uncritical conflation of ethical relativism, evolutionary ethics, the ethic of self-determination and self-realisation, utilitarian strains, the ethic of cooperation and a kind of social subjectivism, all assumed or proclaimed rather than argued for."

Despite the fact that this ethical theory seems to be so badly worked out, there is truth in the argument, and it was Marx more than anyone else who pointed to a recognition of moral codes as social products, as functions of power groupings within society. However, if the Marxist thesis is totally correct, then not only is Durkheim's belief in community irrelevant (at least at this stage of social development), but so also is the argument put forward so far in this thesis, that morality has its genesis in five areas. If Marx is totally correct, then not only is morality the creation of one area, but little more than the reflection of the interests of the ruling class within that society. It is therefore vital to examine the Marxist argument in some detail. This examination must necessarily range much further than an examination of morality, for if, as the Marxists argue, morality and education are the products of the kind of society from which they originate, and nothing more than this, then arguments pertinent to the broader canvas must be examined.

To explain this further, it is instructive to examine the Marxist account of education. It follows a clear argument. What can schools be but a reflection of the power groupings within that society? As Bernstein(28) has put it:

"How a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public, reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control."

Education, and moral education, then, can do little but replicate the existing status quo in values and economic relations. This conflict model is curiously a functionalist one as well, in that the primary role of education is transmission. Marx argued(29):

"And your education! Is not that also social, and determined by the social conditions under which you educate, by the intervention, direct or indirect, of society, by means of schools etc.? The communists have not invented the intervention of society in education; they do but seek to alter the character of that intervention, and to rescue education from the influence of the ruling class."

For the liberal democrat, brought up on a meal of self-development and individual aspirations, this description of society and education is both discomfoting and repugnant. The average unreflective liberal accepts that part of the curriculum must be devoted to the selection of a content which equips the individual for a role in society; but this is a two-way bargain, as the individual gets what he needs to pursue a fulfilling and creative life, and the society gets suitably qualified people for the

operations it needs to keep functioning. How repugnant, then, is the sausage-machine description of the individual presented by Albury(30), who says that they:

"... are formed with the habits, the attitudes, and the conceptions which are appropriate to the places in society that they have to occupy. Moreover, this 'processing' presents the existing system of social relations as 'natural', as unquestionably 'given'. Thus the constant reproduction of ideologies contributes to the reproduction of the social formation as a whole by constantly forming individual subjects who are suitable for insertion into the existing system of social relations, while at the same time masking the reproductive aspects of this process so that these relations seem natural and self-subsisting."

Repugnance, though, is no answer to this kind of argument - it would be interpreted by the Marxist as precisely that form of 'false consciousness' which Albury and others see in the liberal democrat. This feeling that the Marxist is wrong, that he misdescribes the actual process, has to be based upon something more substantial. The argument, therefore, will be examined from three different angles:

- (a) by an historical examination of the aims and objectives of the educational systems in the U.S. and the U.K. for the urban working classes;
- (b) by an examination of the relationship between education and social mobility in liberal-democratic and socialist societies;
- (c) by an examination at the microsociological level, of the nature of

teacher-pupil interactions in school, in order to examine how they relate to macrosociological forces.

(a) History.

Whilst the official ideology for education in the U.K. and the U.S.A. has been a combination of democratic ideals, egalitarianism, meritocracy, and the provision of skills relevant to an industrialised society, little has been said of the 'control' functions of education. Yet there seems little doubt that one of the more compelling reasons for the introduction of public education in the U.K. and the U.S.A. was precisely this. Certainly, equality and democracy do not appear to have been uppermost in Jefferson's mind(31) when, in 1779, he proposed a two-track system of education with the explicit intention that:

"By this means twenty of the best geniuses will be raked from the rubbish annually..."

Similarly, Bowles and Gintis present evidence to show that:

"Educational change has historically played the role not of complement to economic reform, but as a substitute for it."(32)

In England, education appears to have taken a very similar line. Marsden(33) quotes the Editor of the School Board Chronicle, who described the working class as "the barbarian class...the uncivilised", and states that the School Board:

"... have to instil into the minds of the children Knowledge... not to undertake the Quixotic task of indoctrinating the rising generation of the working and labouring classes with the dogma of equality..." but "...knowledge of their place in society".

Further, it is extremely salutary to read Coleridge(34) describing the purpose of education:

"Its real tendency is to preserve the existing map of society while it softens its demarcations."

How similar this is to the comment made by Marx(35) that:

"...the more a ruling class is able to assimilate the foremost minds of a ruled class, the more stable and dangerous it becomes."

Macdonald(36) argues, with respect to nineteenth century textbooks that they were pervasively religious and exhortatory in character, encouraging the working class not only to work hard and behave soberly, but also attempted to inculcate an acceptance of, and resignation to, the prevailing social conditions. Look, for instance, at the third verse of one of the more popular hymns written in Victorian times, "All Things Bright and Beautiful"(37):

"The rich man in his castle,  
The poor man at his gate,  
GOD made them, high or lowly,  
and order'd their estate."

Thus control through acceptance of one's lot appears to be one reason for the setting up of the education systems. Closely allied to this is another already mentioned: the production of the 'right' kind of worker. Toffler argues that:

"Mass education was the ingenious machine constructed by industrialism to produce the kind of adults it needed...The solution was an educational system that, in its very structure, simulated this new world...The most criticized features of

education today - the regimentation, lack of individualization, the rigid systems of seating, grouping, grading and marking, the authoritarian role of the teacher - are precisely those that made mass public education so effective an instrument of adaptation for its place and time...the child did not simply learn facts that he could use later on: he lived, as well as learned, a way of life modelled after the one he would lead in the future."(38)

The above leaves little room for doubt that socialisation and control were large contributory factors in the establishment of the educational systems in question; however, whether they were the complete, or even the dominant factors, is something else. It is remarkably easy to quote selectively in the above manner, but this really does little but prove that the factors were present. There were, after all, quite genuine religious, humanitarian, and democratic motives as well. Thus, Bowles and Gintis(39), in describing Mann's proposed educational reforms in the U.S., declare that they had:

"...the intent of forestalling the development of class consciousness among the working people..."

Yet they had said previously(40) that Mann was convinced that:

"...expansion of wealth through industrialisation could provide the basis for a fuller and more abundant life for all citizens.."

Further, Mann himself wrote:

"...nothing but Universal Education can counter-work this tendency to the domination of capital and the servility of labour...Education, then, beyond all other devices of human

origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of man..."(41)

Bowles and Gintis seem to be mixing up two quite distinct theses here. One is that education's sole function was as an instrument of capitalist oppression. The other is that education, in spite of the valiant, altruistic efforts of individuals, can do no more than what it does - replicate existing economic relationships. The former is, as a complete description of the establishment of the two systems, quite clearly wrong. The second is not proved one way or the other by selective quotation. A move must therefore be made to more concrete data in order to gain a clearer understanding. One way would be to examine the comparative data as regards social mobility in the U.S. and the U.K. If education is being used as something more than just a means of control, then one should find that with the expansion of the educational systems, there has been an increase in the amount of social mobility by the working classes in their respective societies. This evidence on social mobility will now be examined.

(b) Social Mobility.

Some of the more recent evidence on social mobility in England comes in the books by Halsey(42) and Goldthorpe(43), which substantially agree in their findings - and which largely replicate the earlier work of Blau and Duncan(44) and Jencks(45) in America - that educational reforms have significantly failed to reduce the level of inequality of achievement in both educational and economic terms, and have failed to alter the rates of mobility to any significant extent over the last fifty years. This bald fact, then, is not good news for the liberal account. Halsey's(46) line of reasoning is quite similar to that of Boudon's(47) for France:

that though educational opportunities might have increased, the extra places created in the system have been disproportionately occupied by the higher status levels. Goldthorpe(48) puts it rather differently, but what he says amounts to much the same thing: that whilst in absolute terms , the number of upwardly mobile people has increased, in relative terms mobility has not changed significantly at all. Goldthorpe tries to explain the reason for this absolute increase as follows: there has been an economic and bureaucratic expansion since the 1950s, which has meant that there have been more service and intermediate level jobs created, which in turn has created greater opportunities for working class children. However, this economic and bureaucratic expansion served to hide the fact that there was no increase in the relative numbers of working class children moving into these positions. Goldthorpe, writing in 1980, foresaw a time not far off when economic growth contracted, bureaucratic expansion ceased, and further jobs were not created at higher levels, and it would then be that this lack of mobility became more apparent.

Thus far, then, the data on social mobility are not very comforting for those who would like to believe that the education system in liberal democratic societies acts as a socially mobilising force for the working classes as a whole. However, there is another way of examining the problems - to examine with what force such factors as socio-economic background, levels of education, and IQ have on future economic success, and what the correlations are between these factors. If the meritocratic theory is correct, then one would expect to find strong correlations

between IQ and economic success, and correspondingly lesser ones for the amount of schooling and socio-economic background.

Now it seems that all shades of opinion would agree that more years in education produces more income, but opinions are divided when it comes to deciding precisely why this is so. There are at least three possible explanations:

- (a) more education produces higher cognitive abilities;
- (b) more education produces certain character traits consistent with higher paid jobs;
- (c) more education has high status value, and allows one to get a job through 'snob' values.

The traditional belief is (a), the meritocratic thesis, that what matters most is IQ plus effort. However, as Bowles and Gintis(49) point out, if (a) is correct, then IQ should be the main determinant of income. And yet whilst there is a correlation between IQ and economic success, there are stronger correlations between levels of education and economic success, and levels of social class background and economic success.

Another way in which Bowles and Gintis tackle the question(50) is to assess the number of times one is more likely in the U.S. to be top of the economic ladder if one is top of the IQ, educational, or social background ladder. All seem to contribute quite markedly. However, when they control for two of the variables whilst measuring the other, the results are quite striking. They find that to attain the highest economic success, one is only 1.4 times more likely if top of the IQ ladder, whilst one is 3.3 times more likely if top of the educational ladder, and 2.7 times more likely if top of the social background ladder.

Thus it seems fair to say that IQ does not play the part normally assumed in the meritocratic conception of the U.S. educational system - non-cognitive aspects of the situation appear to be considerably more important.

The question which naturally comes next seems to be: why is IQ given the importance normally ascribed to it, if it does not deserve to be billed so highly? Bowles and Gintis take a very critical view of things. They argue(51) that advanced industrial societies, like the U.S., look for a means of legitimising their inegalitarian aspects, things such as their stratified nature and their unequal monetary rewards. To this end, they argue, an education system is produced in which, ostensibly at least, IQ and effort are the main vehicles to success within education, and hence to the attainment of economic rewards afterwards. This, they argue, is really not the case: IQ and effort have only a very limited effect; however, if the workforce can be convinced that the system of rewards is built on this, that everyone has an equal chance (provided they have a good IQ!), then, naturally, those who come to be placed low in the hierarchy will be more disposed to accept their situation if they believe that this position was fairly come by. Thus the concept of IQ is used, so they argue, in a capitalist society to legitimise an inegalitarian system.

Now a number of things must be said about the Bowles and Gintis thesis, and therefore about Marxist theory in general.

Firstly, their correlations are only correlations, not causal connections. Their work, therefore, is suggestive, rather than proof of their argument. At the same time, it is only fair to say that it is highly suggestive.

Secondly, the technique of controlling variables while testing for others is the technique used by Jencks(52) in his book "Inequality". And yet, as Karabel and Halsey(53) point out in reference to this research, the procedure may be statistically proper, but it remains highly dubious whether in real life, variables could be held constant, and would not affect variables being tested, if only indirectly, through variables not considered at all, like race, sex, and personality.

Thirdly, the issue can be clarified, or at least placed in wider context, when comparisons are made between the mobility rates in the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., and European capitalist countries. Feldmesser(54), for instance, showed that mobility rates do not fall into simple capitalist/socialist categories - rather, that whilst the Russian student from a non-manual background has only a two-to-one advantage over his manual counterpart, and the American student has a four-to-one advantage, they are nearer to each other, than the U.S. is to its European capitalist relations.

Now this must surely shift the focus of explanation of social mobility from a simple classification of economic systems, if only because the U.S., being the primary exponent of capitalism, should have been the least similar nation to the socialist ones. Perhaps what could be looked at instead is the way in which a country's overall ideology is delivered in its practice - the extent to which the people believe what the official message is. However, one must be very careful in assigning blanket causes. Douglas' findings in the U.K., for instance(55), suggest that children's achievements at school are a complex interplay between the opportunities available, parental experiences and aspirations, and teacher

expectations. These could all be mediated by belief in the official message, but this is not necessarily so.

Fourthly, Parkin(56) and Djilas(57) have argued that, in Communist countries, the official party membership is in many respects similar to the property owning class in the West, in the sense that it can, and does, manipulate its privileges in order to take the best advantage of the educational system. Moreover, Parkin argues that non-party intelligentsia also derive more benefit from the educational system for their children than the manual classes. What he says is highly significant: appropriation takes place, not simply because of the nature of capitalist society, but also because of what would appear to be 'human nature' with regard to family - the use by parents of all legitimate, and sometimes illegitimate, means to secure the best part for their children in life. Unless one wishes to abolish the family, it is difficult to see how such an effect could be eradicated. However, and quite rightly, Parkin argues that the matter be kept in perspective - it is still relatively much easier to rise from the working class in a socialist society to the elite, than it is to do so in any capitalist country which he researched.

Fifthly, even looking at the historical thesis, it could be argued that things have now changed. After all, the third verse of "All Things Bright and Beautiful" now reads(58):

"The purple-headed mountain  
The river running by,  
The sunset, and the morning,  
That brightens up the sky."

No doubt the Marxist would argue that this indicates little more than a subtle shifting of ground to cope with a more vocal underclass; but this then becomes little more than a difference of interpretation. More telling would be a criticism which said that the content may have changed, but the form has stayed much the same. But this is where Bowles and Gintis' approach, the macrosociological one, falls down. It tends to adopt a 'black box' approach to education. Schools are thus viewed in terms of inputs and outputs, but what actually goes on in the school is neglected. This, then, is the move which must now be taken. The actual running of the school, and in particular teacher-student interaction, must now be examined.

(c) Teacher-student interactions.

"The difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves, but how she's treated."(59)

A useful way to approach this topic is to examine working class children's scholastic underachievement as a function of their supposed 'deprivation'. This approach had been common both here and in the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s, and tended to take the form of explanation in terms of a genetic deprivation in intelligence, alluded to by Jensen(60), or a socio-cultural deprivation due to the child's home background or language code, described by Bernstein(61), or a combination of these. The approach is well illustrated by the assumptions underlying the Headstart programme in America, and the E.P.A. scheme here in England. As Grace(62) points out, such an approach tends to locate the problem of underachievement with the recipient of education, and hence to blame it on them, whilst taking for granted the efficacy and blamelessness of the

educational institutions and its practitioners. Thus, both Keddie(63) in England, and Cicourel and Kitsuse(64) in the U.S., show that the judgement of individual pupils by teachers and educational bureaucrats, can be as much a function of the pupils' dress, behaviour, attitude, and educational stream, as it is of the child's actual performance. For instance, Keddie(65) showed that a reply by a child in a higher grade at school tended to be judged as relevant and meaningful by the teacher, whilst precisely the same reply would be judged as displaying of poor comprehension if given by a child from a lower form. Similarly, Rist(66), utilising both a labelling theory approach, and the phenomenon of the self-fulfilling prophecy developed by Rosenthal and Jacobson(67), showed that a teacher's judgement would be internalised by the child, who would himself come to accept the teacher's assessment.

The question to ask, surely, is: is this a function of the replication of power relationships within a capitalist society, or simply a description of patterns of interaction between individuals? The latter description simply will not do as it stands, as it fails to explain why the teacher labels and assesses in this manner in the first place. If, in Keddie's example(68), the teacher treats children's replies differentially on the basis of their differing social class, the problem is answered by simply warning teachers to be aware of this possibility in their interactions. The question to be asked is: why did it happen in the first place? If the answer is because capitalist society produces these class divisions, then it would seem that the teacher is, unconsciously, replicating these class differentials, and that the Marxist account is substantially correct.

However, some points must be made against this interpretation.

Firstly, it may be that the teacher did behave in this way, but the very fact that other teachers within the system can be made aware of this effect, and that they can and are encouraged to avoid it, shows that there is considerable room for movement and change within the educational system as a whole. In other words, as Hurn argues(69), there is not the close 'fit' between society and school that Marxists assume. Within the system, teachers can question and change prevailing orthodoxies. So where do these orthodoxies originate?

Hurn argues(70) that schools are confronted by the problem of having to transform an institution bearing the heavy marks of its original aims in a past historical epoch. On this account, talk should not be so much about conspiratorial capitalist machinations, nor even the inexorable transmission of power status values, but more of educational inertia. This is much like the analysis Silberman(71) gives when he argues that educators must realise that:

"...how they teach and how they act may be more important than what they teach."

He argues that when considering teachers:

"...it simply never occurs to more than a handful to ask why they are doing what they are doing - to think seriously or deeply about the purposes or consequences of education.(72)

In a word, Silberman calls it "mindlessness."(73)

This "mindlessness" lies at the heart of the concern over the Hidden Curriculum in schools. If teachers see their function only as the transmission of knowledge, and this curriculum existed before they

arrived, and the manner of its transmission was already 'laid in' in the school, then if these said teachers proceed unthinkingly, three major problems arise.

Firstly, the manner of transmission may well be precisely that of another historical epoch - when there was a genuine desire to 'gentle' and control the working class to a much greater extent than there is today - and the teacher will then be continuing this process.

Secondly, as Harris(74) argues, the curriculum of any school in any society is, necessarily, a selection of all available knowledge. Further, he suggests:

"Education should be looked at not in terms of knowledge ideals that are tied to truth or objectivity, but rather as a deliberate attempt to get people to see the world in a particular way, through particular glasses..."

Now this goes too far. Knowledge ideals seem to be a tension between truths and objectivity and the transmission of particular viewpoints. But the point remains that an uncritical teacher will possibly transmit a selection which does not belong to the side of truth and objectivity, in the tension mentioned above.

Finally, the unreflective teacher will be more than likely to adopt a concept of education like the 'banking concept' described by Freire(75); knowledge as having a given, absolute, and objective status, which teachers dispense, and which pupils humbly and compliantly receive; rather than, as argued in this thesis, as of a finitist, impermanent, changeable status, in which the teacher may have the greater experience

and background to his understanding, but in which he, as well as the pupil, is engaged in a never ending process of exploration and discovery. What are the conclusions to be drawn from this section on Marx, morality, and education? Three major ones would seem to follow.

Firstly, and historically speaking, there is good evidence to believe that control and socialisation of the working classes were major reasons for the setting up of education systems in the U.K. and the U.S.A. The evidence, however, does not indicate that this was the only reason; nor does it indicate that this aim has the same force as it did then.

Secondly, social mobility studies indicate that socialist countries do exhibit greater social mobility than capitalist ones, but that there are probably further factors to take into account, in:

(i) the match between expressed egalitarian ideology and its match in practice; and

(ii) parental involvement in their children's educational chances .

Thirdly to the extent that the school unwittingly replicates old, control-oriented techniques and curricula, and to the extent that teachers may unwittingly aid in this, then teachers may ensure that a 'fit' between microsociological and macrosociological aims does occur. To the extent that they are conscious of these aims, they can go some considerable way to allowing the educational system a large amount of freedom in its dealings with children - always assuming that the macrosociological pressures are not too repressive.

It would seem then that a simple Marxist thesis has been shown to be deficient. But neither has it been shown to be wrong. At least to the extent where there are power interests, it is only realistic to assume

that they will attempt to maintain their status, and education would then be one of the primary means for this maintenance. As Harris says(76) in writing about the ideal, where there were no vested interests:

"The absence of power in a learning situation might not guarantee that the resultant learning will be free of illusions, errors, distortions, or misrepresentations; but it must surely guarantee that the knowledge gained in such situations will not embody misrepresentations and distortions that are particularly favourable to a ruling interest group."

All that can be added is that this seems to apply to any society, not just the capitalist. It seems to be an aim to which all educational systems should aspire.

#### PSYCHOLOGY AND THE SOCIAL DIMENSION

Before this section is left, it is important to indicate some of the effects and influences which the social area can have upon the individual. These have already been dealt with from the perspective of the sociological, in the shape of community, class, religious and historical factors. They must also be described from the psychological.

Now in the next section of this thesis, the kinds of psychological factors important for moral growth will be described. These factors will be dealt with in the main by three major psychological schools:

- (a) the behaviourists;
- (b) the social learning theorists;
- (c) the cognitive-developmentalists.

It will be argued that each in its own way is deficient, but with regard to the social dimension, it would seem that the cognitive

developmentalists have the most explanatory gaps to fill, simply because they tend to argue from the position of the active, engaged individual. In this respect, the behaviourists and social learning theorists, despite their imperfections, appear to have much to say worthy of note, for theirs is a perspective which views the individual as essentially a passive being; and when describing the genesis of morality as a social phenomenon, this is perhaps the most profitable way of beginning to understand the individual - to understand the effects upon him. Certainly the human being is active, questing, and searching, but one must understand the constraints upon him as well. As Harris says(??):

"...the child does arrive into a material world of already formed ideas and means of human interaction; he arrives into a specific social and historical context within which he shall do his living and learning. Thus the child is not born with all his options open: his options are largely determined for him, and their parameters are set, by social and historical factors."

This, then, is the crucial caveat which must be placed on the account of morality given so far. Whilst the teacher must be sensitive to the questing of the individual, to the impermanence of knowledge, he or she must also be aware, firstly, that the individual is a social being who needs to be a healthy part of a healthy society, and secondly, that there are techniques of psychological persuasion which by-pass those faculties which the cognitive-developmentalists are so keen to stress - the cognitive and rational faculties. In the teacher's hands are available techniques for good and bad - such as the use of modelling, the different kinds of nurturance techniques, positive and negative conditioning, and

the use of group pressures. Of course, they are not only in the hands of the teacher. They are present in the temper, rules, and actions of society at large, and in the overall running of the school as well. These techniques are the life blood of the hidden curriculum of the school and society. Now many of the unspoken assumptions of the hidden curriculum are for good, but to the extent that they are hidden, they can be judged neither one way nor the other, and may instead be doing positive harm. It therefore becomes vital that the hidden curricula of the school, and of society, become the overt curricula.

The teacher thus has the truly awesome task of being sensitive to these influences from society and school, of judging them, and of exposing the child to them, or protecting the child from them, and of gradually sensitising the child to their influence. As the child grows, he or she can then become less and less the pawn and the passive recipient, and more and more the aware, active and responsible participant. With such development, the individual is needed by the society as much as the society is needed by the individual.

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## PART 3 PSYCHOLOGY

### INTRODUCTION

Throughout the last two sections of this thesis there have been a number of references to a psychology of moral education. The first section, for example, which described the nature of moral enquiry from an active, personal, constructionist and teleological point of view, suggested that the cognitive-developmental approach was more appropriate. The second section, examining not only the activity of the individual, but also the effects of the environment, both physical and social, upon the individual, argued that the behaviourists and social learning approaches, which stressed more the passive, non-cognitive and affective side, also had a considerable amount to contribute to an account of moral and personal growth. It is now time to attempt to put these approaches into perspective, to assess their relative contributions to a curriculum of moral education.

To the extent that the second section located morality within different areas of human experience, it is to be expected that the forthcoming analysis will see a psychology of moral development along much the same lines - that is, as a disparate, multifaceted affair which contributes in diverse ways to the child's moral growth. The assessment, then, will begin with a reflection of this fact: that each school of thought has a part to contribute. No one school will be assumed to have a monopoly on the truth. This does not mean, of course, that each approach is equally

valuable. It will be the task of this last section, firstly, to assess their relative contributions, and, secondly, to continue to recommend an approach which blends and utilises these contributions.

Thus, it will be apparent that such an assessment is not only a psychological one: it must be a philosophical one as well. Psychological theories are inevitably based to some extent upon a prior conception of what human beings are perceived to be, and this perception determines to a large extent how they will be treated and taught. So the choice of a psychological theory is not value free.

Moreover, what one believes children are capable of at a certain age, and what will influence them at this 'stage' of their development, will partly determine what they are taught, and what materials are selected.

It would be as well, then, to re-state the philosophic position of this thesis so far. It asserts the following propositions.

Firstly, that man is a multifaceted creature, and the adoption of any one approach on its own will be inadequate.

Secondly, that all levels of psychological theory have something to contribute.

Thirdly, that all levels of society - individual, group and particularly institutional, have a responsibility for creating a moral climate in which children may develop.

Fourthly, that within such an environment, individual moral action should be rational and consciously understood.

Lastly, that this previous prescriptive statement does not conflict with the descriptive statement that moral action is not based on purely

rational processes, but is deeply affective, apparently of an empathic kind.

This section will begin with an assessment of the behaviourist school of thought, most notably with the work of Skinner. It will then move to the other end of the scale, and review the contributions of the cognitive-developmental school, particularly the work of Piaget and Kohlberg. It will attempt to show that, psychologically and philosophically, both schools misrepresent the true state of affairs. In the final chapter, an attempt will be made to combine the insights of social learning theorists (whose account on its own, again, is seen as inadequate) with the work already discussed. This should produce a viable perspective on the psychology of moral development, and thereby suggest implementation strategies for moral education curricula.

## CHAPTER 10 BEHAVIOURAL PSYCHOLOGY AND MORAL EDUCATION.

This chapter will be an exposition of both the behaviourist approach in general, and also of the thought of Skinner, perhaps the most influential thinker in this school of thought. Whilst there are many who do not wholeheartedly endorse the more extreme Skinnerian propositions, there is little doubt that Skinner's thought is very representative of the motive force behind much thinking of this school. Thus in evaluating the general Skinnerian approach, and extrapolating from it to other possible stands, the aim will be to adequately place the role of behaviourist thinking, and its contribution to the education of children, in context. The term 'education' rather than 'moral education' is used because it should become apparent that due to the behavioural psychologist's general approach, the two concepts are inseparable.

This chapter will therefore begin with an outline in general, then point out the implications of the wholesale adoption of such a theory, move on to criticise the theory, and conclude with a final evaluation.

Behavioural psychology was one of the reactions to a nineteenth century psychological perspective which stressed the individual's introspection. Whilst it has been argued elsewhere(1) that this approach has at least philosophical validity when it comes to a consideration of what morality comprises, for a scientist it is necessarily limited. One reaction was the Freudian/psychoanalytic tradition - to concentrate on those hidden, subconscious urges and thoughts which introspection could not possibly

reach. The other was to concentrate upon that area which was totally observable - the behaviour of the organism.

Probably the best date to start with is 1913, when Watson published a paper in the "Psychological Review" in which he declared that:

"Psychology as the behaviorist views it is a purely objective experimental branch of natural science. Its theoretical goal is the prediction and control of behavior. Introspection forms no essential part of its methods..."

Other behaviourists expanded on Watson's original ideas until Hull, another giant of the movement, could claim that all human behaviour should soon be capable of being reduced to automatic, mechanical processes, identical for men and for animals. The point of all this, as Hull(3) said was:

"...the satisfaction of creating a new and better world, one in which, among other things, there will be a really effective and universal moral education."

It was an approach which, as Skinner put it, meant a movement from the inaccessible to the manipulable, and this indeed was seen as its great merit. The story of how this choice of subject matter, for reasons of precision and objectivity, became one almost of holy writ, with the abolition of mental events to the realms of the fictional and sacreligious, is too well known to be worth recounting in detail. Koestler(4) described it as "a demonstrative act of semantic self-castration", whilst Ornstein(5) characterised its mistake as confusing "behaviourism as a useful tool" with "behaviourism as the total extent of knowledge."

The reaction to extreme behaviourism set in during and after the Second World War. It was during the war that psychologists came into contact with machines such as servo-mechanisms, with which words like 'purpose' and 'intent' could be genuinely applied, and it was because of such experiences of connecting machines with mentalistic words(6), that psychology gradually began to break away from extreme Watsonian behaviourism, and the 'black box' mentality of viewing the workings of the brain, and has once again become, to some extent, the science of the mind.

However, for a considerable part of this century, it held sway as the psychological paradigm. It meshed perfectly with the logical positivism of the same period of time - for both in effect stipulated that any question which was not amenable to immediate empirical testing should not even be asked. Moreover, Shotter(7) maintains that many psychologists of this time, in their eagerness to sever the baby psychology's umbilical cord from its mother, philosophy, tried to do so by becoming a fully fledged experimental science, and attempted to do this by adopting the aims and methods of the nineteenth century physical sciences. The consequences of this were slow to emerge, but extremely damaging for psychology.

Firstly, in attempting to adopt a scientific paradigm (which many claimed, due to Heisenberg's work in theoretical physics(8), was already out of date), they constricted the field of interest to such an extent that anything interesting was excluded. As Westland(9) puts it:

"What is worrying the critics is the fear that...the light  
under which psychology has been working has revealed mere

trivia, of interest only to the initiated."

And secondly, in adopting this scientific paradigm, they hoped to exclude philosophy and philosophical thinking from psychological work altogether. And yet there is no escape from assumptions in psychology. The psychologist of every school always makes a judgement about the nature of man, and about the way in which man can be understood. Such assumptions are the point of departure for the kind of research he will perform, and his evaluation of the results of that research.

Why then dwell on behaviourism? Are not Skinner and his followers now old hat? To some he may well be, but there are good reasons for dwelling at some length on such a viewpoint. One is that under certain conditions, the techniques of the behaviourists undoubtedly work. Its central technique - operant conditioning - has a proven track record on animals, and in human areas such as behaviourally disturbed children, mental and autistic patients, and in the treatment of borstal offenders. Secondly, with its emphasis on praise and reward, and its dismissal of punitive techniques, it can be very appealing at first meeting. And lastly, its use has not really died out at all, but appears to be on the increase in 'normal' institutions in this country, most notably for the purposes of discipline and socialisation in the classroom. So for a variety of reasons, it is well worth examining.

The paradigm case, as mentioned, of the behavioural approach is operant conditioning - the shaping of behaviour towards some specified, desired end. The technique is remarkably simple: one decides on the behaviour one wishes to create or emphasise within the individual. For a rat, this might be pressing a lever; for a pigeon, pecking a button; for a dog,

jumping through a hoop; for a child, completing a piece of work; for an adult, eating more nutritious food. In each case, whenever the desired behaviour is produced, it is 'reinforced' by means of some reward - a pellet of food for the rat or pigeon, a lump of sugar for the dog, praise, encouragement or monetary reward for the child or adult. Of course, some behaviours are too complex to expect the subject to complete in one performance - the dog is hardly likely to jump through the hoop for no reason at first go. So the behaviours leading up to that specific behaviour are themselves reinforced - the movement towards the hoop, the lifting of the front paws, any jumping, are all rewarded until the dog performs the entire set of behaviours in sequence, and eventually the animal jumps through the hoop.

This is, of course, nothing surprising or new - it is how circus animals have been trained for generations. But this seemingly simple technique has quite enormous ramifications. For one simply defines the behaviour one wants to see, then one breaks down the behaviour into a sequence of sub-behaviours, and rewards the occurrence of these. There is no punishment, no noxious side-effects, and its range is very extensive. It would seem that it could be used to produce pro-social behaviours in humans in most situations. It could surely lead to greater care being shown for old people, to animals, to neighbours, to the environment in general. Even undesirable behaviours such as alcoholism, drug addiction, and aggressive behaviour can be eliminated, not by punishing these behaviours, but by rewarding alternative behaviours which are incompatible with the behaviour one wishes to eliminate.

Skinner(10), for one, believes that the adoption of such techniques can revolutionise society, and do so in a highly beneficent way. He points out that society as it stands is essentially a punitive one; there are rules, laws, and regulations, with which everyone is expected to comply. Non-compliance results in anxiety, tension, aggression, in evasive behaviours which, if they work, result in the reinforcement of these anti-social avoidance behaviours. Punishment, he points out, can work, and the experimental evidence for its success is considerable. But so also is the experimental evidence for its deleterious side effects(11). With such weighty evidence behind him, Skinner argues that what is needed is a shift from a punitive society to a rewarding one. Such a transition would eliminate the noxious side-effects of punitive measures, and ultimately make for well-balanced, co-operative social beings.

It is easy to forget that the title of one of Skinner's books is "Beyond Freedom and Dignity"(12), but Skinner is aware of the philosophical implications of what he is advocating - or at least some of them. As he says(13):

"The hypothesis that man is not free is essential to the application of scientific method to the study of human behaviour. The free inner man who is held responsible for the behaviour of the external biological organism is only a prescientific substitute for the kinds of cause which are discovered in the course of scientific analysis. All these alternative causes lie *outside* the individual...These are the things that make the individual behave as he does. For them he is not responsible, and for them it is useless to praise

or blame him."

Thus, on Skinner's scenario, concepts like 'freedom' and 'dignity' become not so much incorrect as out of date: they are words from a vocabulary of a different psychic age, an age when people talked about freedom of the will, of people being responsible for their actions and therefore deserving of punishment for misdeeds. In this age, argues Skinner, when we know that the individual is the product of heredity and environment, and nothing more, it is not only superfluous but positively misleading to talk in these terms. Freedom, for Skinner, is really nothing more than leaving events to chance, of leaving what causes people to behave in certain ways to uncontrolled variables. We can do this, he argues, but we must not fool ourselves into believing that this is freedom. Now, however, the behavioural technology is available to shape the environment, and to shape ourselves. With human existence on this planet threatened as Pirages puts it(14) by:

"...the four new Horsemen of the Apocalypse - Progress,  
Production, Population and Pollution"

it becomes an imperative that the behavioural technology possessed is utilised.

Skinner thus envisages a shaping of human behaviour at the individual and at the institutional level. Indeed, one is given the impression at times that whilst operant conditioning sprang from very humble beginnings with a rat pressing a lever to receive a pellet of food, its true inheritance is at the institutional, the global level - the fashioning of institutions and policies which reward those who respond in

the correct way, the 'correct' way being one which shapes behaviour towards socially desirable goals.

How does this affect Moral Education? That of course depends upon one's model of Moral Education. The preferred model of the present writer is one similar to the layers of an onion, but layers which overlap and interact. These layers are:

- (a) 'taught' lessons in moral education;
- (b) lessons from other disciplines which take a 'moral' slant;
- (c) the manner in which lessons are taught;
- (d) the manner of person-to-person contact in the school;
- (e) the hidden curriculum of the school;
- (f) the institutional policies of the school;
- (g) the policies of society which the school implements;
- (h) the more general values of society which are passed on in school.

To the extent that all these layers have specific values which could be defined and shaped, and to the extent that a system of rewards could be devised to enhance this shaping, then these overlapping and interacting layers are all grist to the behaviourist mill.

Now it must be said that much of this goes on already, sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously. Behavioural psychology is very highly conscious of its aims in a way that some schools, at the present time, are not, at least in any clearly verbalised sense. In those schools where behaviour modification takes place at the present time - and it is usually applied to disturbed pupils under the guidance of educational psychologists - the pattern is a microcosm of what it would be if

adopted schoolwide. The pattern is usually applied in the following manner.

First, define what specific behaviours are causing trouble in the school. Phrases like 'he is very troublesome', 'she bothers other children when they are working', 'she finds it very difficult to concentrate on her work' are less than helpful because they are too general in their descriptions. So the teacher is asked to define the behaviour much more specifically, as, perhaps, 'after five minutes of a lesson she will get up and walk round the class', 'she pokes other children in the chest with her pencil', or 'he draws pictures on the cover of his book instead of completing written exercises.'

Second, draw up specific policies which will reinforce behaviours incompatible with the undesired ones. These 'reinforcements' may be such things as simple verbal praise (though this is unlikely to be the whole strategy), stars on a star chart, extra privileges, a token system, the chance to complete some favoured activity once the specified task is completed. By the application of these reinforcements, the desired behaviour is made to occur for a longer period of time, or to be performed more frequently. In the case of the child walking round the class, the child may be informed that she normally lasts for only five minutes of the work; she is told that if she lasts for ten, then reinforcements agreed upon beforehand will come into operation. When she has made ten minutes work consistently, this is increased to fifteen, and so on. Other incidental reinforcements may also strengthen the desired behaviour, such as the satisfaction of completing work, the improved relationship with

the teacher, and possibly relationships with other pupils as well, along with the increased self-esteem the child may feel.

Coulby and Harper(15) believe that the process can be split into a five-stage model of working, which they describe as:

- (1) referral;
- (2) assessment;
- (3) formulation;
- (4) intervention;
- (5) evaluation.

Their model is based on their work with a Schools Support group in the ILEA, and is a clear derivation from behavioural psychology. Having said that, their work avoids many of the criticisms which can be levelled at 'pure' believers, because in their practice they remain sufficiently flexible to take on board other non-behavioural strategies when appropriate - including, crucially, the child's conscious participation in the intervention.

It is easy to see that drawing up the correct policy is vital. If, for example, the child gets up and walks round the class because the work given her is too difficult, then it is most unlikely that reinforcing the child for simply remaining in her seat and at her work will produce lasting results. In this case, the problem behaviour has to be split into sub-behaviours - that of reading and writing behaviours, the correct materials supplied, and then these sub-behaviours reinforced. This, so the argument goes, is not a deficiency in the technique but a deficiency in the application of the technique.

At this stage, though, it seems valid to ask to what extent 'behaviour' is being discussed any more. As Broadbent(16) points out, it is not always possible to connect complex behaviour with any particular stimuli which might have elicited the behaviour - such as complex linguistic utterances or other novel behaviours. To postulate that controlling stimuli exist but are not noticeable, means that Skinner's empiricism is lost. To take the case just quoted, rather more than reinforcing behaviours is happening, because there is a need to know what is causing the unwanted behaviour, before reinforcement of the desired ones can begin. There is an intervening variable - the mind of the individual pupil - which crucially affects the analysis. To put the matter at its simplest, the strict behaviourist should be able to work simply by watching a film of the behaviour exhibited. In the example being discussed, though, if the child simply gets up and walks around after five minutes, does this give him enough information to work on? The answer must be no. Whether he likes it or not, the behaviourist seems to be using other techniques besides those of observation - he appears to be using knowledge of motives, inferences, and background factors which are not directly available from simple behavioural observation.

Now the behaviourist may come back at us by arguing that the level of reading material is part of the stimulus situation, part of the environment, and that there is no need to go further than observation, simply because the reading level of the child can be tested by various objective measures, and the child's reading age can then be used to select the correct reading material.

However, it might again be objected that the child's poor reading level is due to home background factors - such as lack of parental interest and encouragement, poor housing - one main room with the television going full blast all evening etc. Surely the behaviourist needs to know these causes?

Coulby and Harper(17) are unhappy at teachers phrasing the problems in this manner. They believe that the ascription of such causes to the problem produces little but a feeling of helplessness in the teacher, for if the root causes of the problem are at home, what can the teacher do in the classroom? It is a 'get-out' which could be used by the teacher as an excuse for not doing more. They recommend - and have practised - a direct action in the classroom which relegates home considerations to a back seat. They recommend that if the behaviour is exhibited in the classroom, then that is where it must be dealt with.

Now this is not necessarily a behaviourist assumption - more of an optimistic attempt to solve the problem within the teacher's domain. What would be a behaviourist assumption is if one were to treat the behaviour presented in the classroom and nothing else, on the basis that this is all one can be interested in, simply because this is all that one can objectively ascertain and remediate. A common response to this is that the behaviourist is not treating the cause but only the symptom, and that even if the behaviourist manages to eliminate unwanted behaviours by operant conditioning, the underlying tensions which produced them in the first place will produce others. To which the behaviourist might well say that firstly, he is curing the child's reading problem - which is no small 'symptom' to cure - and so doing is rooting out the problem

behaviour in class; and secondly, he would probably argue that this hydraulic model of human behaviour and energies is no more than an unjustified Freudian inference. His own model, with its systematic application of proven psychological principles, works - its track record proves this. Can the critic do as well?

This comparison of track records as being the only thing at issue is tantalising and dangerous. Before being drawn into it, however, the critic can come back at the behaviourist in two major ways, the first psychological, the second philosophical.

He may begin by accusing the strict behaviourist of making the mistake of thinking that operant conditioning is the only form of learning available. The behaviourist describes a world controlled by operant techniques, and yet this would seem to be very far from the truth. It would be useful, then, to list some of the other forces at work, in order to gain a proper perspective of the real role of operant conditioning.

Firstly, in some animals, particularly birds, the phenomena of imprinting is well documented by ethologists like Lorenz(18). The actual mechanics of imprinting would appear to be totally non-operant in its functioning - it would appear to be simply the release within the chick of an imprinting mechanism upon the sighting of the first thing that it sees upon breaking out of the egg. This is normally, of course, the mother, but can be such things as toy trains, wooden figures, and even ethologists!

Secondly, Bandura and McDonald(19) showed that modelling was a more effective means of inducing behavioural changes in children than either reasoning, or the use of reward and punishment. Modelling itself appears

to involve no occurrence of reinforcement whatsoever. It is perhaps more interesting than imprinting in this argument, as its effects seem to relate more directly to human functioning.

Thirdly, operant conditioning normally takes no account of developmental complexities in its operation; and yet if one accepts anything at all of developmental psychology, it is that certain behaviours are not available to an individual until the required brain structure has reached a certain level of maturation. If the behaviourist accepts anything from developmental psychology he would have to accept the fact of having to wait until a child is 'ready'. It is not hard to see why he would be unhappy with such a concept - it suggests and infers maturation of undefined brain structures - and this goes counter to a philosophy of observables only. This issue is, however, not settled - as will be seen at the beginning of the next chapter.

Fourthly, the evidence from identical twin studies on the heritability of intelligence by researchers like Mittler(20) strongly suggests that in this area at least, genetic determinants can radically affect the way information from the environment is processed. If this is the case, then again the simpler operant conditioning models are too simple, because the reinforcements used will not necessarily mean the same thing to different individuals. The technique has to be adjusted to each person.

Fifthly, certainly when it comes to avoidance learning, results do not always go as Behaviourists would predict. The experiment by Garcia and Koelling(21), for example, does not sit well at all. Using four sets of rats, Set A was punished for drinking water by an initial noise-light

stimulus, followed by an electric shock, whilst Set B was punished by a distinctive flavour in the water followed by artificially induced nausea (caused by X-rays, and having nothing to do with the flavour of the water). Very soon, Sets A and B had learnt their intended lesson - at the sound of the noise-light, or the flavour of the water, they stopped drinking.

However, a very curious thing happened with Sets C and D. Set C was given the noise-light stimulus followed by the artificially induced nausea if they continued drinking, whilst Set D was given the flavoured water followed by the electric shock. However, neither group learned the avoidance response. As Garcia and Koelling suggest, the rat seems to have a "genetically coded hypothesis" when it feels sick to its stomach, which may be characterised as 'it must have been something that I ate'. It seems that the hypothesis is encoded so strongly that it ignores signals of a visual or auditory nature when these precede the nausea. Similarly, it is not 'designed' to 'think' in terms of flavours as an explanation of external physical pain.

Such a finding may be surprising to the behaviourist, but is not so to the biologist, for whom it makes excellent adaptive sense. In other words, creatures, whether they be rats, dogs, or humans, are genetically biased to learn some lessons better than others. The behaviourist ignores this at his peril.

Sixthly, the work by Chomsky(22) in linguistics, and Gregory(23) in perception, both suggest that the brain is much more active and interpretative of incoming stimuli than a behaviourist would normally grant. Modern linguists have come to the conclusion that the ability to

learn and use a language presupposes the existence of some mental structures, and that these structures can further be inferred from the efficiency with which the meanings of sentences not previously heard are recognised. Similarly, psychologists of perception explain the phenomenon of such illusions as the Muller-Lyer in terms of the brain being 'set' by previous information and genetic predispositions which then interprets stimuli according to factors other than just those received at any one moment. Such interpretations are much more subtle and sophisticated than a simple stimulus-response model suggests, and explains why the more complex models of human behaviour seem better able to cope with the complexities of the human nervous system.

Finally, the straight behaviourist account leaves out the role of reason and consciousness in the subject being conditioned. The pigeon cannot be aware (one assumes!) of the shaping of its behaviour. The human being can. Does this not make a very large difference to the end result? Is not one major reason for a falling-out between two people when A realises that B is attempting to shape their behaviour into a manner that B desires, and when A realises that this shaping has been going on - that they have been shaped - then they react furiously?

This last example moves into the philosophical level of problems with the behaviourist approach, but before such an examination is fully entered into, it is necessary to take stock of the psychological objections. It would seem from the above account that the practitioners of operant conditioning might not take into account:

- (a) imprinting;
- (b) modelling;

- (c) developmental contingencies;
- (d) the influence of personal differences/genetics;
- (e) the genetic bias of organisms to learn some lessons better than others;
- (f) the set of the brain through its inherent structuring and its interpretative capacity;
- (g) the role of reason and consciousness.

An adequate account of the total possible psychological functioning of the human being would have to consider these other factors as well. So let it be assumed that the operant conditioner grants all these conditions: that there may be other forms of learning, that there are mediating factors which will affect the operant technique, and that the ability to reason and to be conscious of a technique can radically affect its effect. Nevertheless, the behaviourist says, the technique still works. It has the best track record for proven effect, it is the most reliable, it allows for the control of the environment, instead of leaving things to happy chance, so let it be used. The question is, should the use of the technique be granted? It can be used, but should it? This is a philosophical and ethical question, as opposed to a psychological one. and this is the area to be turned to next.

Therefore, following on from point (g) of the psychological factors, the reason person A was furious with person B was because person A was capable of being conscious of operant conditioning. Now this is not to say that operant conditioning is incompatible with consciousness. When I tell myself that if I continue working for the next hour I can make myself some lunch, I am using operant conditioning upon myself: the

performance of a certain kind of desired behaviour for a specified duration will be followed by positive reinforcement. But the crucial point is that I am using it. This means at least two things. One is that I cannot be it - there is an existential 'I' there, separable from any conditioning. Toynbee(24) hit the nail on the head when he said that we cannot be totally conditioned - otherwise we could not go on to plan to use conditioning. The force of this line of argument seems to be that it points to the susceptibility of different parts of the brain (and whether by part is meant location or function, or both, is still unclear) to behavioural techniques. Operant conditioning seems to be particularly effective at the level where reason and consciousness are not at work, and this lulling to sleep, this by-passing of the critical factors, is one of its most worrying properties.

The second thing, then, is that the gut reaction against operant conditioning in human beings seems to come from when it is used on those who are unaware of its effect. Now educationally at least, operant techniques have been used in deliberate application on special categories of people:

- (a) those who are behaviourally very disturbed;
- (b) those who are mentally ill;
- (c) those who are severely educationally subnormal;
- (d) those who are very young.

In all of these categories, the people who receive treatment are those who, for one reason or another, are incapable of self control and may hurt themselves or others. The operant technique then, it may be felt, is not only effective but necessary.

But what about when the talk is of prisoners or growing children? There would probably be much less confidence in using operant conditioning then. Most people in this society instinctively feel that external control is not what human behaviour should be about, nor need be about. This is then the assertion of a value, the value of autonomy, about the value of helping others to a realisation of selfhood, and not to the imposition of an external shaping upon them. Those who feel they have the right to impose their wants, desires and values on others act as God if they subscribe to such a philosophy. Skinner describes human behaviour as "control and countercontrol"(25), a phrase highly reminiscent of Buber's 'I-It' relationships(26), or a Sartrean nightmare. Such a view of human relationships reduces human beings to objects. Skinner moves straight from an 'is' to an 'ought', but he doesn't even get past first base, simply because he doesn't establish his 'is' properly.

Where does the argument stand then? It has been accepted that operant conditioning is one of a range of possible learning techniques, which is probably both effective and necessary for those categories of people who are not capable of looking after themselves. But having advanced arguments to suggest that reason and consciousness radically affect its performance, it is still viable to talk of each individual's autonomy and thereby call into question the ethicality of its use on those capable of conscious reflection.

However, there is another level of application of the technique, and it may well be that Skinner has got his sights set on this level even more than that of the individual: this is the societal level. As indicated above, Skinner is advocating the adoption of an orientation towards

positive reinforcement at the institutional and social level to a much greater extent than exists at present.

The benefits, he believes, are considerable.

Firstly, it has none of the undesirable side effects which punishment can have - such as tension, anxiety, mental breakdown, reinforcement of anti-social avoidance behaviour, poor extinction rate through inefficient applications of negative reinforcements, and the reinforcement of the punisher's behaviour.

Secondly, human beings will be anticipating problems rather than merely reacting to them. In a paradoxically very existentialist sense, humanity will have to assume real responsibility for its, and this planet's, destiny. As Skinner says(27), "to refuse to control is to leave control not to the person himself, but to other parts of the social and non-social environment."

Thirdly, and following directly on from this, it becomes possible to come to grips with world problems like pollution and overpopulation, and deal with them before they become too big to handle - always the danger with reliance on simple reaction.

Now it seems somewhat ironic that a convinced determinist like Skinner can urge people to try to save the human race. Does this make any sense within the determinist framework? What value does his exhortation have for a world of nothing more than physical cause and effect?

However, granting for a moment that this can make some sort of sense, on an operant analysis, it must be asked what the structure of social rewards at the present time is; then it must be asked which should be kept, and which suppressed. These will be determined by, firstly, their

consequences, and secondly, by the desired conception of humanity. Then it must be asked what are to be instated as social rewards, as reinforcements, in their place.

At first glance, Skinner's reasons seem good enough. Who, after all, would want to punish when they could achieve the same end by reward? However, there are genuine problems lurking just below the philosophical surface.

Firstly, punishment is, by definition, unpleasant. If punished, one tends to question the justification for the punishment. In this way legislators are always kept on their toes. It is a very effective means of making people think about what the rules are there for. If I am fined £1000 for breaking a rule, I am going to give very careful thought to the justice of that fine. On the other hand, if I am awarded £1000, I am not as likely to inquire into the justice of the said award. Reward is a very effective manner of lulling people's critical faculties to sleep.

Secondly, but deeper than this, is the question of punishment, reward and reinforcers in general. For many people, punishment and reward are only seen as intermediate 'helpers' on the road to autonomy. Their ideal state is one composed of rational, autonomous individuals who are not motivated by external sanctions or incentives alone, but by considerations of a morality ultimately derivable from other principles such as reason, justice, and caring. A total focus on punishment and reward would be seen as a selling oneself short.

Thirdly, a criticism of operant techniques which could be levelled at both the interpersonal and societal levels is something of a biological classic: the extrapolation from knowledge of things in vitro to

conclusions about things in vivo. In the typical instance, the biologist studies an organ or bit of tissue from a living body, isolated in an experimental situation dictated by the chosen problem, and observes and reports on just this occurrence. The unspoken premise is that the organ functions in this way when existing and functioning in conjunction with the other bodily organs. Now much of Skinner's work, and behavioural experimentation in general, resembles the biologist's problem very closely. To what extent is Skinner justified in making extrapolations to the societal level when there can be, by definition, little experimental evidence which could exclude uncontrolled variables, and where it is a very reasonable assumption that people could behave very differently in large groups than they do when alone or in simple interpersonal encounters?

A fourth question is very simple but very much to the point - who will control the controllers? If reward techniques are implemented, if behaviour is planned and controlled in the manner Skinner envisages, who will decide which operant techniques are to be used, and what they are to achieve? It sounds rather like Plato's philosopher-kings are going to be in control, but whereas Plato had a transcendent Good for his rulers to aim at - thereby avoiding the question by asserting that the ultimate justification for their rule was beyond them - Skinner has no such fall-back position. Indeed, there is little, it seems, but a vicious relativism. Evans(28) quotes Skinner as saying that:

"...the Nazis made good use of the social sciences, even though they had driven out most of the good people. It was 'good' from their point of view, of course; dangerous from ours."

Again, Skinner says (29):

"...if despotic rule is bad, immoral, or unethical, then it is the sign of a bad culture, and another kind of culture will be more likely to survive."

If to this relativism is added Skinner's claim that responsibility for actions becomes an outmoded term, on what basis do they select? Skinner's ultimate value - and answer - appears to be the survival of the culture. But this does not dispose of the relativism problem; it simply restates it, and it does not give a clear idea of what criteria the controllers should select.

Look again at Skinner's description (30) of what telling the truth amounts to:

"...you ought to tell the truth is a value judgement to the extent that it refers to reinforcing contingencies...the value is to be found in the social contingencies maintained for the purposes of control. It is an ethical or moral judgment in the sense that ethos and mores refer to the customary practices of a group."

One might well ask what one is to make of the behaviour of Zarathustra, Buddha, Socrates, Jesus, Muhammad, who all in some degree broke with the society in which they had been born and brought up, and proclaimed that a society's established beliefs and practices do not have an absolute claim on the behaviour of the individual, and, in some cases, were prepared to die for their beliefs. Are they, and the countless millions who have followed their message, all wrong?

However, there is another level at which Skinner attempts to answer this question of who controls the controllers. He argues that it is the

'environment' which will determine the controllers' choice just like everyone else's. By this, it seems that Skinner means that in his utopia the ethos will be such that the mechanisms of reward reinforcement will be so inbuilt that the controllers will simply 'keep the ball rolling'. But this is fundamentally unconvincing, and for three reasons.

Firstly, because there are real linguistic difficulties as to just what 'environment' means in this context - it seems to act like an escape clause which communicates very little. Secondly, the mechanics of this control by the environment are never spelt out in any detail, and so one is left with the suspicion that Skinner has little idea of how it would work in practice. And thirdly, it is very unclear just how one would make the transition from the present sort of society, the sort of members it has, to his utopia. Would not the transition from the one to the other face exactly the same problems as Marxism did in Russia, with the old guard preventing and perverting the introduction of the new?

Operant techniques have many things in common with the hidden curriculum of the school. Both are seen at their most ethical when they are consciously adopted at the personal and social levels, because in this way, in both their cases, human beings can personally control their effects upon themselves, rather than the techniques controlling them. At the conscious level, the hidden curriculum ceases to be a hidden curriculum, and becomes part of the overt planning of the school, whilst operant conditioning radically changes its form and effect. Platt(31) could not, then, be more wrong when he argues that Skinner's emphasis on positive reinforcement could be seen as a modern formulation of the principle of Jesus:

"...love your enemies, and do good to those who despitefully use you. It is the safest and surest way of changing or converting the behaviour of enemies or masters, far more effectively than hostility, which only reinforces their old behaviour."

Platt, like Skinner, is still stuck to the concept of control as the primary means of interaction between human beings. This is the fundamental weakness and danger of the approach at the moral level, and why, unless it is used in the restricted manner noted above, for those people who are incapable of controlling their own behaviour so that they are not a danger to others or to themselves, or limited in the 'normal' case to conscious self-application, it would be ethically harmful. It must be only a small part of the answer to the question of how moral education should be conducted.

This is the fundamental weakness at the moral level, but there is also a fundamental weakness at the epistemological level as well, which has been hinted at throughout this chapter, but which may now be drawn out more clearly. This criticism of behaviourist theories goes back as far as the criticisms of the empiricism of Hume, and in effect argues that the thoroughgoing empiricist can only accept as relevant to his explanation of human behaviour, observable stimuli and observable behaviour. Yet, as has been noted above in the work of Chomsky and Gregory, the human being selects the stimuli he regards as relevant to himself. And further, this is not necessarily a static, biological phenomenon. It can be a transient personal and cultural phenomenon as well. One of the defining characteristics of human beings is that they are capable of creating

their own conceptual schemes, of determining for themselves what count as important or unimportant aspects of the environment. Thus, if those self-defining, self-creating, and self-selecting abilities, which come prior to any observable phenomena, are not included within a psychological account of the human, then not even a half-adequate account of the human being is provided.

This links directly in with another ethical criticism which applies not only to behaviourism, but to other all-inclusive explanatory dogmas like Freudianism and Marxism as well. This is that whether true or not, ideas which gain widespread currency tend to create the conditions in which they become fact. Thus, they filter down through society, their terms become part of the everyday language, and the everyday consciousness of the society, and people begin to use the theoretical framework both to interpret and organise their ideas and experiences(32). They come to live out the theories. Whether true or not, people become examples of the theory. Thus the Marxist framework is used to interpret relations within the society, and people come to believe and act in ways consonant with the conflict view. Similarly, the psychiatric patient accepts the notion of analysis, and the location of causality of aberrant behaviour in early repressed childhood experiences, and genuinely feels better when the ritual of psychoanalysis is gone through. In much the same way, the individual comes to believe in the systematised efficacy of operant conditioning - and the pointlessness of any attempt to break out into a truly individual pattern of behaviour. Whether these theories are true, partially true, or simply exotic red herrings is beside the point. Human beings have an enormous capacity for creating themselves - this is the

essence of culture. The danger of behaviourism is that man will create himself in this image through belief in its truth, and will thus terribly impoverish his possibilities. This, it would seem, is another very important reason for limiting its widespread application in education. As Kelly (33) says:

"Behaviour is man's way of changing his circumstances, not proof that he has submitted to them. What on earth, then, can present day psychology be thinking about when it says that it intends only to predict and control behaviour scientifically? Does it intend to halt the human enterprise in its tracks?"

The conclusion must be that human choices depend upon desired ultimate goals, and that these cannot be derived from within behaviourist assumptions. This, of course, does not totally invalidate the operant approach. As with individuals, so with schools and society: one must start from a description of ultimate aims and then see to what extent the technology of operant conditioning can be incorporated without abusing or perverting these aims. Any description, then, of ethical human relations is going to need more than a simple dependence on factors present in human functioning. It is going to need choice, and the explanation of that choice cannot be accomplished at the psychological level, though the psychological level can help to inform it. It is a philosophical and moral problem, bounded and informed by other disciplines, but a philosophical and moral one nevertheless.

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## CHAPTER 11 THE COGNITIVE-DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

The cognitive-developmental approach is something of an affront to the behaviourist. After all, if a behaviourist can teach pigeons to play ping-pong, surely he can shape young children to conserve number? Isn't it merely a matter of devising the correct situations, focussing on the relevant factors, eliciting and reinforcing the correct responses, and then the job is done? The behaviourist isn't bothered that most children entering school can't conserve number: this doesn't need a cognitive-developmental explanation. For him, it is simply a matter of pre-school children not being put in situations where the correct notions can develop. With the right training, all is possible.

It is most instructive to look at the opposed view from these two schools of thought when precisely this has been attempted. Engelman(1), for example, attempted to teach the notion of specific gravity for the floating and sinking of objects to preschoolers, using behaviourist techniques, and achieved only equivocal results. His conclusion, however, was that with more time the job could be better done: the rules could be better designed to cover a wider variety of situations and could be taught to elicit a higher criterion of performance. Kamii and Derman(2), two developmental psychologists, on the other hand, argued that the children had learned nothing more than a verbal overlay, but that deep seated notions had not evolved. They supported this view with observations that purported to show that when children were confronted

with a result they did not expect, rule-bound children hesitated briefly, searched their memory for a learned rule that might apply, and vocalised it, whether it really made sense to them or not.

Now the problem seems to lie as much in the approaches as in the results obtained. Kamii and Derman use concepts like 'hesitate', 'search memory', and 'making sense' - inferential notions used in conversation all the time, but ones not admitted, or attended to, by Engleman, who instead concentrates on isolable factors and their reinforcement. Again, different paradigms are in use, and the notion of incommensurability raises its head once more.

Even the results of Greco(3) would not, one assumes, be sufficient. Greco studied the effects of helping children work out which of three glass beads in a revolving tube would be at a particular end of the tube after a specified number of revolutions. He came to the conclusion that in no case did outside help, characteristic of behaviourist approaches, speed up the learning process. Greco says(4):

"...the failure of these methods...shows that the discovery of the rule could not be the product of perceptual learning...it is the discovery of the law which makes possible the correct use of visual tracking."

The problem is, of course, that the behaviourist can always turn around and suggest that modifications to Greco's approach could produce the required improvements, or that more time spent on helping the children would have done the same. At this interface, then, total disapproval of one theory by another seems most unlikely. Perhaps, as was argued earlier(5), Lakatos' notion of progressive or degenerative research

programmes(6) is the most viable approach, and to this extent, in this context, the behaviourist appears to be the degenerative one.

This is not to say that the cognitive-developmental approach sweeps the board. It has its fair share of problems, and these are perhaps best illustrated by an examination of the work of its two major practitioners, Piaget and Kohlberg.

#### JEAN PIAGET

It is a curious fact that of all psychologists, Piaget is probably the one that teachers know best and use most, and yet his theory would seem to suggest that they, the teachers, play a relatively minor role in the child's cognitive, and hence moral, development. After all, a teacher's work is to quite a large extent based upon the assumption that he or she, having the knowledge and skills that the child lacks, can transmit these to them. Yet, from a Piagetian point of view, these kinds of activities have little to do with the child's intellectual development.

Piaget's view was that development took time and could not be hastened. His ideas on children's moral development centred around two core ideas:

- (a) that children are, for a considerable part of their early life, 'egocentric', not only in perceptual outlook, but in moral outlook as well;

- (b) that moral development is predicated upon cognitive development.

There are, of course, many other themes which Piaget discussed - all well reviewed by Lickona(7), who, in fact, divides research into Piaget's theory of moral development into nine dimensions - but these two core

notions will serve the present purpose of assessing the adequacy of the cognitive-developmental model.

In the purely cognitive domain, Piaget came to his conclusions about egocentrism after experiments like the 'three mountains experiment'(8). In this, a model of three mountains was utilised, each mountain being distinguished by such things as snow on the top of one, a house on another, a flag on the top of the third. The child was then seated in some position next to the mountains, and a doll at some other, and the child asked: what does the doll see? Rather than ask the child to verbally describe what the doll sees, the child was asked to choose from one of ten pictures which the doll sees, or they were given three smaller mountains, and asked to arrange them as the doll would see them. Piaget found that children as old as 8 or 9 could not do this, and that they tended to pick out or build the view that they themselves saw. Piaget takes this as evidence for egocentricity - that they are unable to place themselves in another position because they think that everyone has their view of things.

However, there are now a number of studies which seriously call these conclusions into question. For example, Hughes(9) set up a similar experiment, but with some crucial differences. Hughes used two walls intersecting to form a cross, and two small dolls, a police doll and a boy doll. Hughes started his experiment by introducing the child to the dolls, placing the boy doll in different areas between the intersecting walls, and asking if the police doll could see the boy doll in each of these areas, so as to familiarise the child with the set up. After this, the experiment began, and the task was made more complicated by

introducing another policeman doll. The child was asked to hide the boy doll from both policemen, which in effect meant taking into account two different points of view. The task was repeated three times, and the results were quite dramatic: when 30 children of between 3½ and 5 years were given the task, 90% of their responses were correct, a finding totally at variance with Piaget's findings and predictions.

Foorman, Leiber and Fernie(10), in a review of perceptual role-taking studies, suggest that the 'three mountains' task has three major difficulties within it, which mask younger children's competencies. These are:

- (a) that children may not fully understand what is expected of them in a rather contrived situation;
- (b) that children have difficulty with responses which require the transposition of a three dimensional model to a two dimensional picture; and
- (c) that the mountains may have been too similar to allow children to discriminate cues for visualising another perspective.

In a similar vein, Hughes and Donaldson(11) came to the conclusion that the crucial difference lay in the fact that the child could make sense of what they were asked to do in the 'hiding from the policeman' task, whilst they couldn't do this with the 'three mountains' task. This, they believed, was because the child knew what it was to hide from somebody - it was part of their experience, and they could become involved in it. The mountain problem, on the other hand, was artificial, abstract, and totally outside of the child's experience. It provoked no enthusiasm, and could not be understood.

Something further than this should be noted, however, and this is that the 'policeman' task is a naturally interactive game-like context, in a way in which the 'three mountain' task is not. This may go some way to answering Linaza's(12) question regarding Piaget's conception of children's abilities at games:

"If Piaget's account is correct, how could children play together a game where each player has a different interpretation of its rules?"

On the above account, this egocentric play need not occur: non-egocentrism seems a natural cognitive and social process. It also raises the very interesting possibility that competition - so long a 'bogey' word in morally-inclined sport education circles - may, through the need to outguess an opponent, be part and parcel of coming to understand another's perspective. It raises the intriguing possibility that competition, properly handled, may be an extremely important positive factor in the child's moral growth.

This ability to take on another's perspective is seen in social as well as play contexts. Thus Mueller(13) found that 3, 4, and 5 year olds were more verbally explicit when communicating to a person who could not see, compared to one who could. Similarly, Shatz and Gelman(14) found a difference in the way in which 4 year olds speak to 2 year olds, and to adults, that was appropriate to the differential characteristics of the listeners. Foorman et al.(15) hit the nail on the head when they say:

"...if researchers lighten task demands, children appear less egocentric."

Now this is precisely what Borke(16) did when she identified one of the main problems for children of 3-3½ years as verbal responding. She hypothesised that an experiment where children were asked to do no more than make a behavioural response would be much easier to them, and would facilitate responses which might be impeded by, for such children, complex cognitive processes. Thus Borke asked children from 3-8 years to select faces of children exhibiting happy, sad, afraid, or angry expressions, and to match them with the sorts of feelings which the main characters in short stories she read might feel, thus requiring an empathic move on their part, but requiring only a behavioural response. Her results showed that there was a developmental progression, but not as normally conceived. Children of 3-3½ years easily identified the 'happy' faces correctly, but needed to be slightly older to correctly identify 'sad' and 'angry', and a little bit older still, for the 'afraid' faces. Borke argues that the child must initially discriminate between pleasant and unpleasant experiences, and that this is why 'happy' is the first face to be empathically understood - it stands for all the 'pleasant' experiences. However, 'sad', 'afraid' and 'angry' are all sub-categories of the initial experience of 'unpleasant', she argues, with 'afraid' normally being the last a child experiences. Her reasoning for the differential time recognition of the sub-categories by the children could be tested by, for example, performing the experiment on children from very secure homes, and those classed as 'at risk'. However, the main result stands, and Borke's comment(17) is most apposite:

"The task used to measure interpersonal perception, especially with very young children, significantly influences the child's

ability to communicate this awareness of other people's feelings."

What Borke's experiment also shows, crucially, is that the young child can recognise other people's emotional states - that is, he or she can empathise to them, and therefore is not totally egocentric. This is shown by the fact that the child has to listen to and understand what the main character is going through, and then correctly identify this feeling with a behavioural response (pointing to the happy or sad face). Of course, it is one thing to empathise: it is another to do something about it. Johnson(18) has taken this process even further back in the child's life to 18-24 months, and has shown that reactivity to another person's distress, and doing something about it, is positively correlated with the development in the very young child of recognition of the self. In his experiment, Johnson used the taking away of a doll from either the mother or the stranger in the laboratory, and consequent feigned distress by them, and also naturalistic observations in the child's home, to determine the child's reactivity to distress in others. His results showed that:

- (a) children of this age respond to others in a positive manner, either by helping directly (giving them their doll), or getting someone to help (pulling someone's clothes and indicating);
- (b) this helping behaviour is positively correlated with development of the recognition of the self.

Perhaps the most important point to be noted in the analysis so far is the manner in which empathic understanding has been contrasted with egocentrically dominated thought. In the next chapter, it will be suggested that empathy is perhaps the most fundamental motive force in

the child's earliest moral ventures, indicating a more affective side to moral growth, enriching and supplementing the cognitively biased models of Piaget and Kohlberg.

Eisenberg(19), further, argues that affect, in general, influences the performance of behaviour in three ways:

- (a) it will influence what and how an individual processes incoming information;
- (b) it will influence whether the individual uses role-taking skills and other types of social cognition with another;
- (c) it will influence whether the individual responds to another's needs in a particular situation.

Affect is a relatively neglected topic when considered in relation to the development of moral behaviour, specifically altruistic or prosocial. And yet it will be argued that it is affect which can provide the explanation for the gap between moral reasoning and moral behaviour.

Part of the neglect is explained by the second of the two core ideas mentioned above - that moral development is predicated upon cognitive development. It will be shown shortly that there can be little doubt that cognitive development is a necessary condition for more complex, sophisticated moral thought. That it has a vital part to play in the earliest stages of the child's moral growth will also be shown to be true. What is, however, extremely problematical is the sometimes implicit belief in cognitive developmental writings (if only from the fact that they do not dwell on other factors too often) that cognitive development is a sufficient condition. The findings by researchers like Mischel and Mischel(20) give the lie to this. In a review of the literature on

consistency between moral reasoning and actual behaviour, they come to the conclusion that the predictive validity from moral reasoning does not appear to be more than modest at best. Overall, they conclude, knowledge of an individual's moral reasoning would not allow one to predict more than about 10% of the variance in their moral behaviour.

If there is a poor relationship between reasoning and behaviour, then that between reasoning and judgement is not much better. Schlaefli, Rest, and Thoma(21) analysed 55 studies which used the 'Defining Issues Test' as a measure of moral judgement. These studies were of varying quality, age groups, methods, and time, but Schlaefli et al. concluded:

- (a) that moral education using dilemma situations produced increased moral judgements at a small though significant order;
- (b) that moral education using personality enhancement did the same to a slightly lesser degree;
- (c) that moral education using academic studies had very little effect.

The problem remained: why was there so little effect? Schlaefli et al. concluded that reasoning may affect judgements which may affect behaviour, but particularly between judgement and behaviour there are other processes which cognitive-developmentalists have not taken into account. These would include factors like personality characteristics and motivation. The writers therefore suggest that a more complex view of what is involved in moral behaviour is required, and this is indeed what this section is arguing for.

But how, one may ask, could cognitive-developmental stage theories fail to integrate the role of affect in their models? How could they fail to

recognise its impossibilities and importance at an early age? It has already been suggested, by looking at the work of people like Donaldson and Hughes(22), and Borke(23), that part of the problem may have lain in the sheer quality of the experimental situation - that the task demand in Piaget's case was simply too heavy for the child, and that lightening task loads unmask children's early competencies.

Another factor may be the very methodology used. Look, for example, at the approach that Zahn-Waxler and Radke-Yarrow(24) used. They trained mothers to observe the reactions of their children (aged 10-29 months) to others' emotions of distress, people such as the mother or an investigator, in naturalistic settings, rather than their devising situations in a laboratory which would be strange and possibly confusing to the child. Bias from mothers' observations was not present - on the occasions when the mother, along with two independent investigators, made observations of children's responses to the same simulated events, reliability figures were just as high between mothers and investigators as they were between the two investigators.

Now the really interesting thing from the present point of view is that the relationship between mother and child did make a difference to the child's behaviour. As they said(25):

"...prosocial interventions toward mother were significantly more frequent than those directed towards the investigator."

And they continue:

"If the study had used a relative stranger as the victim, the conclusion would have been that children between the ages of 1 and 2 are not capable of prosocial behaviour."

In other words, the methodology used significantly affected the results obtained. There are obvious parallels here with the point made by Mischel and Mischel(26), with regard to Kohlberg's theory, that his results do not allow one to separate the type of reasoning the individual prefers from the one he is capable of. In this case, the behaviour preferred by the child is determined by the situation and the participants - part of the experimental design. It is more than likely that the previous lack of naturalistic observations has given a false impression of very young children's non-egocentric motivations.

#### PIAGET AND KOHLBERG

The theories of Piaget and Kohlberg are usually linked quite closely in peoples' minds, especially as Kohlberg admits his inspiration and gratitude to Piaget(27). For example, both believe in the cognitive involvement in moral development through structural underpinning, and both believe in the notions of internal cognitive conflict and active participation as providing the motivation for change. There are, similarly, philosophical as well as psychological links - both belong to the Kantian formalist tradition, both acknowledge the need to be able to take the role of the other, which implies the notion of universalisability. They do, indeed, have a lot in common.

But there are differences as well, and they are significant differences. For example, according to Piaget, almost all people reach moral maturity by about 12 years of age. According to Kohlberg, however, only a very few ever reach it, and then certainly not until their very late teens at the earliest. A second difference is that Kohlberg's stages 3 and 4 could

be said to reverse the sequence of development outlined by Piaget, that is, from an authority to a peer orientation. A third difference is that an essential part of Piaget's account of heteronomy is the notion of sacred, unanalysable and unquestionable rightness; and yet this hardly seems to figure at all in Kohlberg's account.

The simple point is that while there are similarities, there are quite profound differences, and it would be very wide of the mark to say that Kohlberg's theory was a mere continuation of Piaget's.

#### KOHLBERG

Kohlberg's name has appeared at fairly regular intervals throughout this thesis, and for good reason. His has been, for the last twenty years, the most comprehensive attempt to marry philosophical and psychological thought in a manner which stresses the reasonableness and individuality of morality. His theory of invariant, progressively more integrative stages of moral development, which are culturally universalisable in form if not in content, along with his belief in the possible connections between moral psychological findings and normative philosophical beliefs, is now so famous that any account which excludes it from consideration must be deficient. It has, indeed, come under increasingly heavy critical fire over the last few years, and these criticisms will be reviewed shortly. However, it may be as well at this moment to stress some of the probable sufficiencies of the theory, as there can be a tendency to throw the baby out with bathwater.

Thus there seems little doubt that, in the broadest sense, cognitive abilities do have a vital role to play in moral development. One of

these cognitive abilities which Kohlberg cites is that of role-taking, and Perry and Krebs(28) have found that mentally retarded adolescents scored lower on role-taking ability and moral development than adolescents matched for chronological age, clearly indicating that intelligence is implicated in moral development. However, they also found that such mentally retarded adolescents did not differ from younger children of their same mental age on role-taking abilities, but tended to score lower in moral development, suggesting that role-taking ability is a necessary but not sufficient condition for moral development. This finding clearly agrees with that of Selman(29) who found that for 8-10 year olds, improvements in a child's moral judgements do not occur until there is an improvement in role taking. This improvement in role taking, however, can occur without a corresponding improvement in moral judgement, thus indicating again that role-taking is a necessary but not sufficient condition for an improvement in moral reasoning.

A recent review by Israely(30) reports a finding much like that of Perry and Krebs(31), that normal and retarded children of the same chronological age, but with different mental ages, have significantly different moral judgement scores, clearly indicating again that IQ has a vital part to play in the process of moral development.

Significantly, Israely also goes on to report that moral judgement scores in retarded children increase with chronological age, even when mental age is held constant - clearly implying that intelligence and rationality cannot be the whole story.

In this respect, the findings of Severy and Davis(32) are also highly apposite. They investigated the helping behaviour of normal and retarded children from 3 to 10 years, testing along two dimensions:

- (a) attempted help v. successful help;
- (b) physical 'task' help v. psychological help.

They found that, with retarded children, both dimensions increased with age, but that successful and psychological helping remained relatively low, indicating to them that there are again, cognitive factors in the process. However, and perhaps surprisingly, normals did not improve on either dimension, indicating to Severy and Davis that these 'normal' children had entered a different social milieu from the older retarded children - one where competition, independence and achievement was the norm, whilst the retarded children had tended to remain within a more co-operative, dependent situation.

What these findings suggest is that, negatively from a Kohlbergian point of view, there are other factors besides intelligence and cognitive maturation implicated in moral development, but, positively, that there is a need at higher, more sophisticated levels of moral judgement and action, for a certain base-level mental age, which retarded children do not normally acquire. What Kohlberg and other cognitive-developmentalists seem to miss or exclude is the interactional effect of higher and lower processes, concentrating their efforts on the higher, and thereby distorting the true picture. Of course, the effect works the other way round as well - higher cognitive processes can affect the non-cognitive ones, and this has been a deficiency in other schools of thought.

On this interactional effect, take, for example, the process of modelling. The effects of modelling are well documented and fairly startling for the unacquainted. In the classic experiment, mentioned in the last chapter, by Bandura and Macdonald(33), they found that adult modelling was as influential in inducing change in children's behaviour as was modelling and reward together, with reward conditioning on its own trailing well behind. Further, modelling on its own could reverse children's moral orientations to earlier, supposedly cognitively less satisfactory levels. In a later experiment, Bandura and Jeffery(34) investigated the effect of symbolic coding and rehearsal on the retention of complex modelling, and found that coding through language is a critical determinant of the retention of these more complex modelling cues. Before language acquisition, it seems, modelling cannot be encoded, and its more complex instances will be rapidly forgotten. Thus, in this instance, complex cognitive functioning seems a prerequisite.

This dependence on verbal complexity is further seen in the work of Breznitz and Kugelmass(35) who found that the child's increasing capacity for verbal complexity is a crucial determinant of age-related changes in the ability to utilise the principle of intentionality in the appraisal of other people's conduct.

As a final example of the implication of the higher cognitive processes in the development of morality within the individual, the work of Salzstein(36) is highly interesting. In a review of the literature on nurturance techniques, he comes to the conclusion that different types of disciplinary techniques used by parents produce different types of moral

behaviour by their children. He believes that three forms can be perceived:

Firstly, the use of power-assertive techniques is normally associated with a morality typified by attention to the fear of punishment.

Secondly, the use of love-withdrawal techniques is associated with 'conformist morality' - a morality which is internalised, but is rigid and unthinking.

Lastly, the use of inductive techniques, like reasoning and explaining the consequences of actions upon other people, leads to a 'humanist morality', which is characterised again by an internalisation of norms, but this time with flexibility and the application of reason to specific situations.

What Salzstein is in effect saying, then, is that nurturance techniques which rely upon the use of higher cognitive functions are likely to produce a morality characterised by factors normally seen as 'better' - flexibility, rationality, and autonomy. What also seems to be implied is that perhaps the focus of attention in the moral education of very young children should be changed from the children themselves, to their mothers. If the mothers were educated to understand the consequences of the different types of nurturance techniques available to them, the process could be begun long before the children reached school.

It would seem, then, that cognition, in one form or another, does undoubtedly play an important, and sometimes vital, role in moral development. However, it has already been suggested that this importance may be limited in the case of the early development of altruism, and that the role of non-cognitive factors in this process may be much more

important than normally realised. It is instructive, in this context, to look at the differing results of Bar-Tal, Raviv, and Leiser(37), and Eisenberg(38), to see how, once again, methodological procedures may have an important role to play in this investigation. Thus, Bar-Tal et al. argued that whilst children of all ages will indulge in helping behaviours, the reasons behind this will differ with age - that the 'quality' of their reasoning increases with age. They theorised that there are six developmental stages through which the child passes towards true altruism:

- (1) altruism through promise of reward and punishment;
- (2) altruism through obedience to authority;
- (3) altruism through recognising the needs of others;
- (4) altruism through wanting to gain social approval;
- (5) altruism through belief that one day they will be helped;
- (6) 'true' altruism - help given voluntarily with no expectation of personal reward.

Bar-Tal et al. set up a situation where a child was provided with the opportunity to give to other children at level (6), then, if no giving resulted, given the opportunity at level (5), then at level (4), and so on, until the child eventually gave. The results showed that quality increased with age, but that the greatest number of children in all ages gave at levels (1) and (2). On the face of it, then, they seem to contradict the picture of early occurring empathy and altruism so far described, and to support the notion that altruism is essentially the possession of the cognitive domain.

However, Eisenberg pointed out that the experiments of Bar-Tal et al. consist primarily of situations where children did not share until explicitly requested to do so, and argued that it was the nature of the experimental situation which inhibited the younger children, rather than through any altruistic deficiency on their part. In support of her hypothesis, Eisenberg quotes the experiment by Eisenberg-Berg and Neal(39), which explored children's reasoning about their naturally occurring positive behaviours, rather than behaviours in contrived situations. According to this data, the children most frequently explained their own prosocial behaviour with reference to the needs of others and pragmatic concerns. Authority and punishment reasons analagous to Kohlberg's and Bar-Tal's procedures were not used by any of the children, and stereotyped justifications (it's nice to help) and hedonistic and approval-oriented reasonings were also verbalised infrequently.

These findings point, once more, to the importance of methodological procedures, and the probability of altruistic and empathic abilities at much earlier ages than the strict cognitive-developmental would suggest. They suggest that cognition does have a vital part to play, but not on the more simplistic developmental model. The connections between cognition and other, notably affective, processes are more interactive and complex than have normally been allowed for, and must, when taken into account, radically affect the Kohlbergian hypothesis.

However, the criticism of Kohlberg cannot rest there. Indeed, there already has been reason to criticise the theory in previous chapters of this thesis. Thus, in Chapter I, it was seen that he has retreated from

what he calls an 'isomorphism' thesis to a 'complementarity' thesis(40), and in so doing, has made his theory less challenging and less interesting. Further, he was criticised for basing his treatment of morality as being the product of, at best, three areas of morality. These criticisms were followed up in Chapter 5 with the criticism(41) that any moral theory based upon Rawls' conception of justice must be flawed, for much the same reasons.

In Chapter 7(42), it was asked whether a stage 3 person who focussed on content was any 'worse' than, or 'inferior' to, a stage 4, 5, or 6 person who tended to abstraction and lost sight of the individual. And in Chapter 9(43), it was asked whether Kohlberg's theory was really as culturally universalisable as he claims, or more the reflection of an individualistic, competitive, western social ethic. These criticisms must now be expanded and some more included.

To begin with, then, the findings of Bergling(44) may be noted. He extracted two fundamental postulates from Kohlberg's theory and submitted them to empirical testing. These two postulates he described as:

- (a) The 'Sequentiality Postulate' - that Kohlberg's six stages of moral development form an invariant sequence, or succession, in individual development.
- (b) The 'Universality Postulate' - that the invariant sequence of six stages of moral development is universal i.e. true in all countries and for both sexes.

Bergling found that the 'Sequentiality Postulate' was only partially supported, with generally more progressive than regressive changes in childhood and adolescence, but with differences due to gender, and a

tendency to jump stages, and with more regression than progression in adulthood and old age. However, for Bergling:

"The most fundamental implication of the present study was the refutation of the Universality Postulate..."

due to the emphasis on societal values and cultural influences

"...stemming from religiously or philosophically grounded values of the society..."

which were taken as evidence

"...opposing a purely cognitive-developmental interpretation of the development of moral reasoning."(45)

This notion of the importance of the influence of societal values is only to be expected. Any theory such as Kohlberg's which fails to take non-cognitive interactive influences into account can hardly be adequate, granted the importance of influences described in Chapter 9 impinging on the individual.

Furthermore, whilst the first section of this thesis stressed the constructionist, active and teleological nature of the individual, it also described his or her necessarily subjective grasp of reality. Now if it is granted that concepts are impermanent, finitist, and changeable, what does this make of Kohlberg's 6th and highest stage, his principle of Justice? Munsey(46) sets Kohlberg a neat little problem which highlights his difficulties. She says:

"If moral rules are taken as constitutive rules, they would

be a set of a priori rules which could not admit of exception.

If, on the other hand, moral rules were summary rules, empirical generalizations, they could admit of exception."

Now Kohlberg must be unhappy with both formulations. He cannot wish to accept the notion of constitutive rules, as this a priori philosophic conception runs counter to the Piagetian psychological assumptions that moral mental structures are not a priori biological innates, and would leave him with the philosophical problem of explaining, if they were a priori, of where they came from. (It is of interest to note here that a psychological assumption is directly affecting the perceived tenability of a philosophical standpoint. One might well wonder if Kohlberg has given up his isomorphism claim after all).

However, Kohlberg cannot wish to accept the notion of summary rules either, as they take us down the road to ethical relativity, as well as suggesting, again counter to Piagetian assumptions, that moral mental structures are based on inductive habits passively learned from sense experience.

Kohlberg wishes instead to suggest that our moral values and principles are 'constructions':

"...a process of bootstrapping or spiralling to attaining  
reflective equilibrium.."(47)

Thus moral principles are developmental, active constructions which, using Piagetian terminology, assimilate experiences whilst accommodating them. Kohlberg goes on to say that even stage 6 principles are of a "socially constructive nature", rather than an individual's discovery of them through some "infallible faculty of conscience"(48). They are necessarily social constructions, Kohlberg goes on, because stage 6 consists of his 'moral musical chairs' and 'ideal role-taking' which involves a moral dialogue from which such construction arises.

Now this is a new interpretation of stage 6 by Kohlberg; most commentators would say that Kohlberg was committed to a stage 6 discovery of moral principles through his 'moral musical chairs', that one arrived at an objective principle of justice. To talk of 'constructions' is surely to walk down the road to subjectivism; but if Kohlberg does this, then, what happens to the validity of his six stages? It is difficult to see how he can hold the two together at the same time.

This objectivism/subjectivism difference is clearly of vital importance for the discussion of aims in moral education, for if there are moral laws which exist, and can be discovered, and obeyed by man, but not created and changed by him, as in some Platonic idyll, then the essential aim is laid down and moral education becomes merely the designing of means to a given end. It is most interesting, in this respect, to read Trainer, for he likens such moral laws to ones "like the facts of science"(49). The argument throughout this thesis has been that even the facts of science do not give us this assurance. Subjectivism is part of the definition of being human, and Trainer cannot look for objectivism in science, any more than Kohlberg can in ethics.

A final criticism of Kohlbergian theory comes in a variety of forms, but amounts to much the same thing - the inadequacy of justice as a description of morality, and the inadequacy of Kohlberg's description of justice.

Taking the latter first, Sullivan(50) traces Kohlberg's conception of justice back to that of Rawls'(51), and asks whether such a conception can really do the job for Kohlberg: after all, the individual in Rawls' 'original position' is autonomous, but he is also isolated, impersonal and

egocentric. He has no conception of community, apart from that which resolves conflicts of interests, and he has no commitment and care because his is an impersonal, universal ethic. Sullivan argues that a truly human ethic needs the recognition of community as something more than:

"...made up of independent autonomous units who co-operate only when the terms of co-operation are such as to make it further the ends of each of the parties..."(52)

Yet by subscribing to the Rawlsian conception of justice, Kohlberg finds himself committed to it as well. The question, asks Sullivan, is what happens to autonomy when it becomes separated from commitment and care:

"It is a universal ethic without a soul because it is based on a premise of impersonality...universal moral principles do not buy friendship and care."(53)

It is quite possible that this impersonality in the Rawlsian and Kohlbergian conceptions of justice reasoning explains why very young children do not appear to display Kohlberg's advanced stages. Eisenberg-Berg(54) points out that Kohlberg's dilemmas only deal with the prohibition-oriented domain. In his dilemmas, laws, authorities, rules, and punishment at the impersonal institutional level are the salient concerns. Eisenberg-Berg argues that Kohlberg's dilemmas do not tap prosocial motives of a personal nature, and so she has constructed dilemmas to deal with this domain, where rules and authorities are irrelevant or minimal. Thus, instead of the classic 'Heinz' dilemma, she has produced a dilemma like the following:

"One day a girl named Mary was going to a friend's birthday party.

On her way she saw a girl who had fallen down and hurt her leg. The girl asked Mary to go to her house and tell her parents so the parents could come and take her to the doctor. But if Mary did run and get the child's parents, she would be late for the birthday party and miss the ice cream, cake, and all the games.

What should Mary do? Why?"

Eisenberg-Berg did find age-related developmental trends in reasoning, but also found no invariant sequence, and the expression of empathic prosocial reasoning occurred much earlier than on a Kohlbergian model.

It may well be that in prosocial moral reasoning, the child is able at a very early age to help as well as to be helped, and thus gets the necessary practice to understand and perform such behaviours. This does not normally happen in prohibition oriented situations, where the young child is almost invariably on the 'receiving end'. The findings by Grusec(55) support this notion - she found that 4 year olds who make frequent offers of help are those whose help is proportionately more often accepted, and who are allowed to gain practice in helping others, whilst children whose help is refused make few offers.

The situation bears some comparison with that of Piaget and Donaldson's 'mountain' and 'policemen' situations(56). The Kohlbergian situation may be less approachable than the Eisenberg-Berg one for the young child, simply because notions of laws, rules, and authority do involve a degree of cognitive complexity which is not required for simple prosocial behaviour. In this respect, then, Kohlberg's strength - his implication of higher cognitive processes - is his weakness when it comes to the understanding of simple prosocial behaviour.

However, the problem goes further than this. If one were to ask the average student in this area what Kohlberg's theory was concerned with, he or she would probably reply 'stages of moral development' or some such phrase, in effect asserting that it is to do with stage theory, morality, and people's development in this area. It seems highly significant in this respect that Kohlberg now describes his theory as one concerned with stages of "moral development as justice reasoning"(57), rather than as one concerned with stages of moral development per se. (It is also very interesting that in 1971 Edell proposed precisely this re-definition to Kohlberg(58)). Such a change in terminology appears to be no accident, and could be explained in the following way. Kohlberg began his research along strong Piagetian lines with the conviction that thinking about moral matters was virtually identical with reasoning about justice as fairness. As time has gone on, and as more critics have pointed out that this is a very limited conception of morality, Kohlberg has come to recognise the inadequacy of his earlier formulation, and has attempted to shift his ground from purporting to talk about morality per se, to talking about his area, justice reasoning. In so doing, he has attempted to keep justice at the centre of the stage, but finds difficulty in formulating an exact conception. Look, for example, at the variety of formulations in one of his most recent works:

(i) "...special obligations of care presuppose but go beyond the general duties of justice..."(59)

(ii) "...to imply that justice is the first virtue of a person or of a society...is not required for establishing the validity of our measure and theory of justice development..."(60)

- (iii) "...the acknowledgement of an orientation of care and response usefully enlarges the moral domain..."(61)
- (iv) "...at the hypothetical sixth stage there occurs an integration of justice and care which forms a single moral principle..."(62)
- (v) "...we believe moral stage development is the development of one morality, not of two, because moral situations and choice always involve both issues of justice and compassion..."(63)

It might well be argued that the reason given in the last quotation for a single principle of morality might well be a reason for precisely the opposite conclusion. Kohlberg rejects Gilligan's suggestion(64) that morality really includes two moral orientations: the first, the morality of justice as stressed by Piaget and Kohlberg; and, the second, an ethic of care and response which is more central to understanding female moral judgements and actions than it is to an understanding of judgement and actions in males. He further rejects Frankena's claims(65) that two distinct principles, one of care, and the other of justice, must both be accounted for by a moral theory. His attempt at a fusion of these two at the highest level does not appear to be a final analysis, and it would seem that further thought and change on this subject can be expected from Kohlberg in the future.

The fusion looks to be unsatisfactory as Kohlberg begins from within a school of thought and appears to be attempting to assimilate other findings to this school, without radically affecting its own internal structure.

From the account given so far, a comprehensive theory of moral development would, instead, have to include the following.

Firstly, a theory of cognitive development which showed that increased cognitive capacity facilitated the resolution of complex moral dilemmas. Secondly, an account of non-cognitive factors which interacted in an impeding or facilitating way with the cognitive factors. Finally, a theory of affective development which integrated with the first two approaches, and which accounted for the motivation to perform altruistic acts, thus providing the vital links between reasoning, judgement, and action.

This will be the purpose of the last chapter of this thesis.

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## CHAPTER 12 AFFECT, MORAL PSYCHOLOGY, AND THE INDIVIDUAL.

### 1. Problems and Definitions.

It seems that there has been a subtle change in emphasis in the research on the psychology of moral development over the last ten years or so. A cluster of concepts which previously received little attention have gained greater and greater prominence. These concepts include role-taking, prosocial behaviour, altruism and empathy. Of course, most or all of these appeared on their own before this time; but the fact that they have come together more and more as seemingly interdependent (and, regrettably, sometimes seemingly interchangeable) concepts, has been a change of focus.

This upsurge of interest in this area has brought with it its own problems. The matter of seeming interchangeability between some concepts is symptomatic of researchers in a relatively new area, who have not yet got down to defining concepts, or have defined only after the experiments have been performed. Take, for example, the concept of role-taking. In the manner in which it has been utilised so far in this thesis, it is envisaged as an essentially cognitive construct. And yet it could also be taken in a perceptual as well as an affective sense. Indeed, in the affective sense, it probably would be better called empathy - as has been done so far - particularly as Krebs and Russell(1) report that where the relationship between types of role-taking has been investigated, the results from tests of 'affective' role-taking do not appear to relate to tests of 'perceptual' and 'cognitive' role-taking, suggesting that empathy

may indeed be an independent factor. Krebs and Russell's complaint is that in most studies, this relationship between different types of role-taking has not been investigated, and that this may have no little connection with the fact that the findings from the 16 existing studies on the relationship between role-taking and altruism were "woefully inconclusive"(2) - approximately half found a positive relationship, the other half found nothing significant, and three actually found evidence for a negative correlation between the two measures. If distinctions and definitions in the area are as slipshod in many cases as they argue it is, then the inconclusiveness of results should cause little surprise.

However, the problem goes deeper than this. If the distinction between role-taking as a cognitive phenomenon, and role-taking as an affective quality is accepted, the implications are quite profound, for in the former case, there is no necessary connection between it and altruism, whilst the connection in the latter case is quite intimate.

Thus, the motivation intrinsic to role-taking as a cognitive phenomenon is that of aiming to obtain knowledge, to gather understanding to enable action, but the uses to which this knowledge may be put are not necessarily altruistic. For example, the con-artist may take the role of one of his potential victims in order to anticipate the victim's reaction to one of his ploys: there is no altruistic content here.

Of course, role-taking may produce a cognitive state that is conducive to altruism. Knowledge obtained through role-taking may provide the individual with an entirely new perspective from which to view a situation. Or it can produce a state of cognitive disequilibrium, which can only be resolved by an altruistic act. It is possible that

concentration upon this aspect of cognitive role-taking has led to the confusion between it and the affective kind, but it is a dangerously misleading confusion. As will be shown shortly, the empathic quality of affective role-taking is much more closely bound up with the birth of the altruistic motive than is its cognitive role-taking counterpart.

Of course, the concept of altruism itself is one which needs a fair amount of scrutiny. It is no accident that much work in this area adopts another term, "prosocial behaviour". In so doing, it attempts to avoid the thorny problem of whether there is such a thing as true altruistic behaviour in the first place - by which is meant the kind of behaviour which helps another, without in any way helping or rewarding oneself. The trouble is, of course, that this reward does not need to be of a physical kind - it can simply be an emotional relief at having rid oneself of an unpleasant state of arousal at the recognition of someone else's unpleasant situation. There appear to be at least three possible stands to take on this issue:

- (a) assert that there is a genuine difference between altruistic and egoistic behaviour;
- (b) assert that all altruistic behaviour is really egoistic behaviour in disguise;
- (c) call the whole area "prosocial behaviour" and ignore the problem.

The last option seems the least satisfying and the most dangerous. If there is a genuine difference, then any research produced under the blanket term "prosocial behaviour" will have failed to distinguish between two radically different areas, and must lead to incorrect conclusions.

The second option seems the most unpleasant, but one which many have accepted in the past, partly because of the difficulties inherent in the first option, and partly because of the sophisticated egoistic explanations possible by psychoanalysis and behaviourism.

The first option is, perhaps, the most intuitively satisfying, but the most difficult to prove. The problem lies in finding a procedure which predicts a certain kind of behaviour for altruism which is not predicted for egoism. A compounding problem is that the motivation for helping someone might be a mixture of altruism and egoism, that is, an act need not be solely or even primarily altruistic to have an altruistic component.

How then can such a procedure be found? Batson and Coke<sup>(3)</sup> believe that they have found one. The rationale for it stems from the fact that the egoistically motivated person helps because of the wish to reduce personal distress at seeing another in trouble, and would escape from the situation if given the opportunity. Batson and Coke argue that the altruistically motivated person, on the other hand, is not trying to reduce personal distress, but is trying to help the other, and so the possibility of escape from the situation should make no difference to his or her actions. They reason that if people are put in situations where the opportunity to escape is made progressively more easy for an individual, then this factor will only affect the egoistically motivated person, and have no effect on the altruistically motivated person. They quote four experiments in support of the hypothesis that there is a difference, but for a variety of reasons the evidence is not totally

satisfactory or conclusive. Indeed, they themselves will go no further than saying that:

"...the research to date convinces us of the legitimacy of suggesting that the motivation to help evoked by empathic emotion may be truly altruistic."<sup>(4)</sup>

It would seem, then, that further evidence must be awaited in order to decide one way or the other.

However, even if the last option does turn out to be correct - that the blanket term 'prosocial behaviour' will do - it would still appear that measures used by researchers at the moment on a seemingly interchangeable basis, purporting to assess the same kind of material, may instead contain subtle but significant differences. Consider, for example, a frequent measure of altruism or prosocial behaviour used in the field at the present time - that of donating to charity. Does it not seem probable that the following factors may well affect the results:

- (a) what kind of thing the child is asked to donate;
- (b) who the donor is, and what relationship he or she is to the recipient;
- (c) who the recipient is, and what relationship he or she is to the donor;
- (d) the time period between the donor being given donations by the experimenter, and he or she having to donate it;
- (e) the degree to which the experimental situation matches the child's own experience.

To the extent that these, and other, intervening variables are not taken into account, so much the worse for the results and conclusions. And to

the extent that there is a degree of idiosyncratic definition, indicative of excursions into a new branch of the field, so the results must be viewed with considerable caution. It hardly needs saying, then, that the awareness of the kinds of problems which have bedevilled cognitive developmentalists - those of assessing the correct degree of task difficulty, of assessing the developmental level of the subject, and of producing results in as naturalistic a setting as possible, must also be considered as well.

The situation is a simple reflection of the fact that the area is a most extraordinarily complex one, where issues and concepts are still much in the formative stage. Not only must the whole person be described along a variety of psychological dimensions, when the theories that exist at present are simply too narrow to adequately perform the task of description on their own. But even within one area the factors involved are not isolable in some simple sense; they cannot be documented in any way suggestive of their being uncontaminated by other factors.

But just as these factors should not be seen in isolation from one another, so also should they not be seen in isolation from the person on whom they act, and within whom they interact. These factors come to bear upon an individual who already has certain predispositions, certain personality traits, and a conception of him or herself which will affect and be affected by these factors. Consider, for example, how the child's self-concept can be affected by other peoples' attribution of characteristics. Toner, Moore, and Emmons(5) reported that girls who had been told that they were patient were able to delay gratification longer than those who had not been given the label. Interestingly, the

mechanism by which children adopt such behaviours appears to be of a radically different nature from that of reward/punishment mechanisms. Grusec(6), for example, reports that children who had had their sharing attributed to their own personality characteristics, shared significantly more than children who had had sharing attributed to external pressure from an adult.

This finding has been supported by Smith, Gelfand, Hartmann and Partlow(7), who followed the sharing of 7 and 8 years olds with either praise or material reward. The children were then asked to give a reason for why they had shared. Those children socially reinforced tended to attribute their sharing to prosocial motives, whilst those who had been materially rewarded said they shared in order to get a reward. These findings seem especially significant since they appear to imply that external reinforcements may actually hinder the internalization of moral behaviour, and restrict such behaviour to those occasions when the child believes reward or punishment will follow.

The effect upon the individual is seen in much broader contexts as well. Rosenhan, Moore and Underwood(8) found that in children there is a developmental progression in helping others, which at first sight seems counter-intuitive: they found that as children get older, so they are less likely to intervene in a situation. This, however, suggested to them that children's fears of disapproval increase as they get older, and that they become more sensitive to the opinions of others around them - in other words, that there is a greater awareness of their social milieu.

These findings accord well with those of Severy and Davis(9), who found that normal children's helping behaviour did not increase with age, in

contrast to that of retarded children's, indicating to the researchers that the normal children had entered a more competitive, achievement-oriented social milieu, in contrast to the retarded children, who remained in a more nurturant, less demanding atmosphere.

The influence of the social milieu is strikingly brought out in the experiment of Haney, Zimbardo and Banks(10) who simulated a prison situation, and placed within it, as guards, college student volunteers specifically selected to have exemplary backgrounds and no anti-social tendencies. Within one week, all volunteer guards were exhibiting extreme antisocial behaviour, indicating to the experimenters that the 'situation' produces unreasoned behaviour changes in people. Indeed, on this basis, the findings of Kohlberg and Kramer(11), that college students give moral reasons scorable at a lower stage than those they gave in high school, can be seen, not as Kohlberg and Kramer believe, as reflecting a regression from an invariant sequence, but as a response to a changing social milieu.

As a final, and powerful, indication of the pervasiveness of the social milieu, the findings of Heinila(12) will be quoted. He investigated the different attitudes of sports participants of differing ages to moral situations in sport. The samples were drawn from three different countries - Finland, Sweden and England. There were differences between the national samples, the English being the least 'moral'. In all samples, however, professional sportsmen were less moral than their amateur counterparts, clearly indicating that where sport is seen as being of crucial financial importance, it tends to be taken less morally than when seen as a mere pastime. From the present point of view, however,

perhaps the most interesting finding was the developmental one - that children tended to support the belief in the priority of team interest as they got older, in contrast to their younger belief that general fair play was the most important priority. Heinila drew the important conclusions that :

- (a) social pressures may actually work against the development of moral behaviour in children; and
- (b) that how P.E. is organised in school will crucially affect the moral development of the child in this area.

These findings, then, again point to the complex manner in which the child's moral character is facilitated or hindered, and of the involvement of social and institutional factors in this development.

These social and institutional factors provide the background against which the child's development is set, and are the larger canvas on which nurturant techniques are drawn. For just as the parents of the child have the primary nurturant task, so, as the child's world expands, do these larger factors come into play. These larger factors, as was argued earlier, have a crucial role in the child's general development, but particularly with regard to the development of general helping behaviour. Take, in illustration of this, the experiment by Staub(13), who investigated the effects of nurturance upon the child's response to a person in distress. The basic situation was one in which the experimenter played with the child in the room. The experimenter adopted one of two guises:

- (a) nurturant - warm and responding;
- (b) neutral - distant but not overtly threatening.

When the experimenter left the room on a pretext, the sounds of distress came from an adjoining room. The results showed that guise (a) was followed by many more helpful acts by the children than was guise (b). Now Staub hypothesized that probably the major reason that the child was more willing to help in situation (a), was because it 'felt good', its affective state was such that it felt more capable of helping another. Nurturance, then, would seem to be closely linked to the child's concept of itself, of its feeling of well-being, and of its self-confidence. If this is the case, it has significant implications for the kind of environment which the child will need if moral growth is to be sustained. This environment must then, necessarily, be one which allows the child to develop self-esteem and confidence through its trust in the care and love of those around it.

There is further evidence to support this claim. Both Mischel and Mischel(14) and Rosenham, Moore and Underwood(15), in reviews of the literature on short-term affective states, relate that after positive experiences, such as individuals' perceptions of their being liked, or of their achieving something which they felt to be important, these same individuals became much more benign towards themselves and others. There was greater selective attention to positive information about the self, greater noncontingent self-gratification, and greater generosity to others.

In short-term situations, therefore, the literature suggests that people's present affective states can greatly influence their behaviour towards themselves and others. Is there such evidence for the long term?

Hoffman(16) quotes the findings of Murphy(17) that the children most concerned about other children in their group were those most popular, emotionally secure and self-confident. On an egoistic assumption of young children's behaviour, one might well assume that it would be those children who most need the rewards of social approval who would indulge in such behaviour; in fact, it is just the opposite. Those less secure and less popular, Hoffman argues, are so pre-occupied with their own self that they have difficulty extending their empathy and interest to others. As Hoffman says(18)

"...that people will help others when their own needs are not salient, indeed when they are in a state of well-being rather than want, lends credence to the view that an altruistic motive system separate from the egoistic may exist within the individual."

Further support for such a belief comes from a variety of sources. Staub and Sherk(19), for example, found that sharing behaviour in children was negatively correlated with their need for approval i.e. children who ranked high on need for approval were the least likely to share their sweets with peers in a situation where no instructions had been given as to what to do. They interpreted the findings as suggesting that children were inhibited in any situation where 'what to do' was not immediately obvious. This could be through their fear of disapproval, rejection or even punishment. Whilst they do not show causal connections, but only correlations, their findings do tend to support the hypothesis that personal security and well-being are necessary prerequisites before sharing or altruistic behaviour is possible.

Again, Rosenhan, Moore and Underwood(20), in reviewing the literature on the variables affecting people's actions in situations, came to the conclusion that one of the major factors determining whether people would act, was their fear of looking foolish - of acting inappropriately and incurring other people's disparaging looks or remarks. This is probably linked to another factor they cite, that of ambiguity. The more puzzling a situation, the less direction given, the less the likelihood is of there being any action. And this is probably linked with factors of self-confidence and well-being - suggesting, once more, that this is an area of linked concepts, which all affect one another.

Central to this area of concepts, it seems, is that of empathy. So far in this chapter, contributory factors like role-taking, nurturance, and social and attributional influences have been examined, and throughout, the implication of empathic involvement has been fairly strong. But as yet little explanation has been provided as to exactly why people should act altruistically in the first place. Further, it has been pointed out that cognitive-developmental theories have difficulty in explaining a number of behaviours in this area: what prompts people to subordinate their interests in the service of helping others; what makes them feel bad when they harm someone; and how the principles of justice and fairness become activated in situations where egoistic interests are also present, when acting in accord with such principles would seemingly be against their own interests.

It follows, therefore, that a comprehensive theory of moral development requires both a principle and a motive component, a cognitive and an affective force. Having already described in some detail the kind of

cognitive-developmental theory required, and having outlined some of the contributory factors impinging upon the individual's moral growth, an affective developmental theory will now be presented to complement the foregoing, and complete the picture.

Whilst there is still much research and confirmatory evidence to be acquired, it seems that the theory of empathy development described by Hoffman(21) may well provide the necessary extra perspective, for he argues that altruistic motives develop out of a synthesis of empathic distress and the child's increasingly sophisticated sense of the other. He believes there are six distinct modes of empathic arousal which he describes as:

- (a) Reactive New Born Cry;
- (b) Classical Conditioning;
- (c) Direct Association;
- (d) Mimicry;
- (e) Symbolic Association;
- (f) Role-Taking.

It is important to note that he does not claim that they form a stage sequence in the sense of each one encompassing and replacing the preceding mode, and he thereby avoids the kinds of problem which Kohlberg's stage development sequence tends to get itself into. Instead, he argues that which arousal mode operates in a given situation will depend upon which cues are salient, and that empathy as a universal response from a very early age should not be surprising, given the diversity of arousal modes.

The earliest - developmentally - of the arousal modes, the Reactive New Born Cry, was found by Simner(22) in 2 to 3 day olds, and has been replicated by Sagi and Hogffman(23), who reported that infants responded to a distress cry in others by experiencing distress themselves. This is obviously not a full empathic response, as it lacks any awareness of what is happening, and, further, the concept of person permanence does not occur until 1-1½ years(24). However, this lack of differentiation between self and other may actually facilitate the empathic process, because as this differentiation occurs in a gradual way, the child will be unclear as to just who is experiencing the distress. Thus, via the second mode of arousal, classical conditioning, the child will connect his experience of the distress with the other child's experience, and the gradual nature of the differentiation will allow the vital link to be forged.

Once this initial stage of differentiation of self from another is achieved, there is still a long way to go. The child will not know what caused the other child's distress, nor that different people need different things to alleviate distress - hence the oft-repeated example of the child at this stage either putting his thumb in his mouth and sucking it, as this has comforted him in the past, or of him offering his teddy bear to another because this, too, has made him feel better in the past(25).

The process of self-other differentiation appears to be an invariant one, but the degree to which the child understands what causes another's distress, or the need for different remedies for different people's distress, is not so invariant. Hoffman(26) argues that there are five

ways in which socialization may affect empathy - most of them already mentioned in this thesis.

- (a) Empathic experience may be fostered by an environment which permits children to experience many emotions, though Hoffman does point out that there may be an 'optimal level' of experience, and above this, emotions may be so upsetting as to be avoided or repressed.
- (b) Directing attention to the internal states of others will aid children's understanding. This has been supported by the Salzstein(27) work on inductive methods in discipline and nurturance. Both call attention to the pain or injury caused by a child's action, and encourage the child to imagine how it would feel to be in the victim's place.
- (c) Role-taking will sharpen the child's cognitive sense of others' internal states.
- (d) Providing children with an environment which is warm, trusting and affectionate, which heightens the child's self confidence and self-esteem, should help them to be more open to the needs of others, and less preoccupied with themselves.
- (e) The use of models, acting in a prosocial way, and their verbalization of empathic feelings, should also facilitate the process.

To this list of Hoffman's, using the findings discussed earlier, may be added another four methods.

- (f) One can ensure that the child is given the opportunity to help when he or she asks to. Whilst the empathic response is already there, Grusec's research quoted above(28) shows that children given the opportunity to help, continue to do so, whilst those not given the

opportunity, reduce the number of their offers. On the assumption that practice makes perfect, increasing the times that the child acts will increase his or her empathic capacity.

- (g) The provision of external help to the child, to show what needs to be done in a situation, will ensure that he or she does not refrain from helping through feeling confused or embarrassed.
- (h) Feedback on the correctness or incorrectness of these attempts to solve the problem situation will boost their feelings of success, and hence their confidence to help again.
- (i) Finally, the facilitation as early as possible of the acquisition of coding devices like language to extend memory capacity, and to facilitate complex thought, and the facilitation of general increased cognitive complexity should all be utilised.

Indeed, by late childhood or early adolescence, through this last factor, children become aware of others as having personal identities and life experiences beyond the immediate situation. This will lead them into the complex areas of judgement over helping people in a specific situation versus long-term effects, and the possibilities of imaginative understanding of the distress of not only individuals but groups and races as well. It is at this level, Hoffman concludes(29), that empathy's limitations are most apparent, and when developed cognitive capacities come most into play. After all, whilst empathy may sensitise and make one aware of another's plight, it cannot, on its own, decide between competing moral claims; and even the most mature empathisers will be biased in favour of those people with whom they share interests and experiences. This, it seems, is a strength rather than a weakness of

empathy theory, because it recognises its limitations, and draws on the strengths of other areas in order to complement and strengthen its contribution.

However, Hoffman believes that its contribution does not finish quite there. So far empathy has been examined from the position of the innocent bystander. When it is examined, Hoffman argues(30), from the point of view of one who may have caused the other's distress, a convincing theory of the genesis and development of guilt is discovered. As Hoffman says(31):

"...it seems reasonable to assume, when one feels empathic distress, that if the cues indicate that one has caused the victim's distress, one's empathic feelings will be transformed by the self-blame attribution into a feeling of guilt."

Now just as with the earlier empathic theory, where the child's cognitive development blended with the modes of empathy arousal to produce the more sophisticated empathic forms, so the same thing can be found with guilt. Thus, for a person to feel guilty, it requires an awareness of the harmful effects which one's behaviour might have on others. A child who does not yet know that others have independent inner states may not feel guilty over hurting their feelings. Very young children who have not yet reached the stage of self-other differentiation, may even be uncertain as to who committed the harmful act, or on whom it was committed.

Hoffman is therefore suggesting - though this awaits confirmatory research - that there are temporal differences between types of guilt. Thus, the simplest case would be one where the child commits a physically

harmful act. This is the least demanding cognitively, because the consequences of the act are immediately observable.

Next would come guilt over inaction or omission, and this is cognitively more demanding because it requires the ability to imagine something which might have happened but did not, and be aware of the consequences of that omission.

Contemplation over a harmful act may be yet more cognitively demanding because it requires, on top of the preceding requirements, an ability to fuse thoughts, intentions, non-occurring actions, and consequences together.

The list could go on - cognitive understanding of others' internal feelings, comprehension of ongoing personality and long-term needs, relationships of one's own position in life to that of other people's, and comprehension of societies' moral norms. All of these will go to complicate the guilt process, again implicating the increasing need for higher cognitive functions for the proper resolution of these problems.

But the point has been made. Hoffman's theory seems to be the needed addition to a comprehensive theory of moral development because it recognises its limitations and others' strengths. It also recognises the interactive, complex nature of the entire process - of the way in which cognitive development drastically affects the way in which affective and non-cognitive factors work within the individual, determining the manner in which they can be utilised. At the same time it recognises that affective and non-cognitive factors influence the child's overall development from the very earliest age. Together, the various processes explain not only how an individual can form a judgement about a

situation, but also how it can be that he or she may come to act out that judgement, even where it apparently would entail some kind of loss.

#### Conclusions.

In Section 1, a process of moral enquiry was described which was essentially rational and cognitive in nature, and which suggested a tolerance on our part towards the actions of others through the perception of our own ignorance. It was suggested, however, that such an approach could not expect to do the job on its own, for, firstly, it had difficulty explaining how action could be taken; and, secondly, it could not provide an adequate account of why altruistic action would be taken. Moral education, then, was seen as much more than the perfection of a cognitive faculty: it involves a complex interrelationship of the affective with the cognitive capacities of the individual, in which care and respect have as large a place to play in the curriculum as purely cognitive facilitation.

In Section 2, five different areas of morality were described which suggested that the genesis for moral thought and experience was extremely diverse, and that any curriculum content, as well as any psychological theory, which attempted to reflect the nature of morality, would have to be as diverse as well. It suggested that whilst the genesis of moral thought, for most people, begins with a reflection upon their own situation and experiences, this thought spreads outward to others in this world, as well as implicating the profound and pervasive importance of social and institutional factors upon each individual. It suggested that the responsibility for moral education of young people should not be laid

just at the door of parents and teachers, but was as deeply the responsibility of those people who create and affect the policies, ethos, and climate of this society at its institutional levels.

In Section 3, a review of major psychological theories in this field was attempted, and it was suggested, following on from the earlier sections, that any account which did not reflect the diversity of moral experience, which did not implicate both cognitive and affective dimensions, would be inadequate: for the affective without the cognitive cannot explain how understanding and judgement can be arrived at, whilst the cognitive without the affective cannot explain why these judgements should be acted upon.

The foregoing analysis has, then, suggested that a curriculum in moral education has a wide variety of approaches and techniques to draw from.

It can, firstly, facilitate cognitive development and provide for conditions of optimum cognitive conflict.

Secondly, it can create and enhance children's opportunities for role-taking.

Thirdly, it can utilise techniques of nurturance of the inductive variety.

Fourthly, it can provide an environment where children's self-confidence and well-being is promoted and enhanced.

Fifthly, it can aid in the development of the children's empathic capacities by all the means described above.

And lastly, it can carefully and selectively use techniques like modelling, attribution, and conditioning.

It will be very apparent by now that these techniques are not all of equal worth, and the interpretation in this thesis has been one which

stresses the factors of rationality and care. Rationality avoids the criticism of indoctrination, and fights the problem of prejudice; care avoids the criticism of impersonality and fights the problem of alienation. It is only by the intelligent application of these twin ideals that a moral education curriculum can be properly developed.

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