THE CONCEPT OF MORALITY.
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Moral judgments may be judgments that are purely descriptive accounts of facts. They are characterized by a certain perspective in point of view. To look at facts from this point of view is ultimately to reason them in the light of certain standards which embody conceptions of what are intrinsically valuable in human character, conduct, and relations. The concepts that are used in moral discourse have to be understood in relation to this point of view. The business of moral philosophy is then to analyze the meaning of such concepts when they are used consistently within this point of view. To say this is to imply that moral discourse cannot be considered objective in some sense—in the sense that is implied in saying that moral concepts are relative to a characteristic point of view which any rational being may try to be worthy of acceptance. It is in this sense that moral concepts may be considered to be sanctioned with facts as opposed to what are not facts either in the sense that they are not acceptable or in the sense that they are mere figments of the imagination. To say this, however, is not to say that particular moral judgments can be correct in that or that in the same way in which judgments that are intrinsically Aristotle's can be. For questionable moral judgments are joined to others that are correct and a lesser alternative standard on the agent's side of the nature of value-relevance in
Moral judgments, unlike judgments that are purely descriptive accounts of facts, are characterised by a certain approach to the objects concerned. This approach is from a value point of view, and to look at facts from this point of view is ultimately to assess them in the light of certain standards which embody conceptions of what are intrinsically valuable in human character, conduct and relations. The concepts that are used in moral discourse have to be understood in relation to this point of view. The business of moral philosophy is then to analyse the meaning of such concepts when they are used consistently within this point of view. To say this is to imply that moral discourse ought to be considered objective in some sense - in the sense that is implied in saying that moral concepts are related to a characteristic point of view which any rational being may find to be worthy of acceptance. It is in this sense that moral concepts may be considered to be concerned with facts as opposed to what are not facts either in the sense that they are not acceptable or in the sense that they are pure figments of the imagination. To say this however is not to say that particular moral judgments can be proved to be true or false in the same way in which judgments that are technically scientific can be. For questionable moral judgments are passed on issues that are complex, and a complex situation confers on the agent the responsibility of assessing its value-relevance - an
activity which cannot be bound by rules, but moral judgments, some at any rate, can be considered to be more or less tenable in the light of standards that one may reasonably accept as relevant under the circumstances.
I.

PREFACE.

That there are experiences of a moral nature is something that I shall not endeavour to prove in the course of this enquiry into the nature of morality. Rather, this constitutes my starting point and what I am concerned to discuss are the implications of our experiences that are specifically moral. I do not know if anyone ever seriously denies that when we use concepts like 'good' and 'right' in a distinctively ethical context we imply something more than the occurrence of a purely personal feeling (this is different from saying that judgments of a moral nature involve feelings as well) or that we do something more than just tell somebody to do something (this is different from saying that judgments of a moral nature are invariably linked up with questions of human actions and imply that certain actions or types of actions are preferable to others from the point of view of morality). This 'something more' we try to express by the concept 'objective' as opposed to 'subjective' (in the sense of purely personal or even social). The difficulties of saying that moral judgments (in a distinctive sense of the term 'moral' which I shall elaborate in the course of this enquiry) are objective are, of course, by now quite apparent, for it sometimes happens that two individuals both highly sensitive to moral values cannot agree as to what course of action is morally most suitable to a certain situation or as to
II.

what state of affairs achievable by a community of individuals, under certain circumstances, is morally preferable to any other. The latter issue is particularly difficult, for although it may be fairly easy to see that the state of affairs 'x' is in itself preferable to any possible alternative 'y','z' etc., achieving 'x' under a certain circumstance may involve the adoption of certain courses of actions which present features objectionable from the point of view of morality. It than happens that even people of mature judgment differ as to the question whether to achieve 'x' which by itself is highly desirable by adopting courses 'p','q','r' which by themselves appear rather objectionable or whether to achieve or continue in the state 'y' which by itself is less desirable than 'x' but does not involve courses of actions which are as undesirable as 'p','q','r', considered by themselves. Further, moral codes differ between different societies and a certain practice which is considered morally satisfactory in a particular society may be considered unsatisfactory in another;and in certain cases, at any rate, it does not appear possible to assess the moral value of the practice concerned irrespective of the circumstances under which it is observed. When therefore we say that moral judgments are objective it cannot be that we mean that there are certain facts of a moral nature which are waiting to
be recognised by all of us and when we recognise them we would come to agreed decisions on all moral matters just as we all agree that grass is green or that water freezes below 0° Farenheit. What then do we mean when we say that morality is objective?

To understand the sense in which morality may be considered to be objective we shall have to understand what is involved in an experience that we call 'moral'. Now moral judgments represent a level in our response to certain situations of experience which is higher than the level of response that is evoked in us purely by sensible objects or properties. This level is called higher in so far as here the objects of experience are understood by us in terms of certain conceptions which have no sensible counterparts and which come to exist only through abstractions from experiences of a direct and immediate kind. When we say that somebody or other is a (morally) good man we do not mean by the term 'good' any sensible qualities which we can point to like his being fair-haired or having blue eyes, but it is an abstract conception in terms of which we explain certain things about him that we have experienced, like his having tendencies to act in certain ways in situations of a certain sort which fit in with the conceptions of certain attitudes or dispositions that we find recommend themselves to us as desirable. Also we refer to certain states of affairs as morally satisfactory (good) or otherwise and when we do
so we mean that they show features which fit in with certain conceptions of characteristic human relations that we find are preferable to relations of an opposite nature. The concept of 'right' is similarly an abstract conception in terms of which we explain the occurrences of certain actions as indicative of certain principles which we find are preferable to principles of an opposed nature for human beings to act on - if the question is approached from the point of view of what is worthwhile for beings who are rational. The conceptions of these attitudes, dispositions, and principles are then conceptions of some standards in terms of which we judge actual human behaviour, tendencies of behaviour and states of affairs from a characteristic value point of view. It is these conceptions representing standards of moral evaluation that are objective in the sense that people of considered opinion would reject the idea of the moral suitability of the standards that oppose these, as contrary to their experiences of a moral nature. Moral judgments involving the use of these concepts may then in a certain sense be considered to be concerned with facts, although the facts here involved belong to a level higher than the level to which belong facts of a purely descriptive character that are verifiable by observation and experiment.

There are objective standards of moral evaluation, and moral/
can be a rational process, but nevertheless not every moral judgment is universally acceptable nor is it always possible to pass judgment which will satisfy every moral approach to a question. This is because the issues that are judged morally are complex in varying degrees. That is to say, they do not have a clear-cut definite character easily available for a neat and straightforward logical process. And it is only if they had this character that we could rely on coming to definite conclusions on actual moral issues merely through a clarification of moral concepts to be used and an understanding of the process of moral reasoning.

A situation which calls for a moral judgment may be one in which there are different factors which influence the character of the issue in different ways and degrees. It is not easy to evaluate such a situation from the point of view of morality, for there may not only be more than one standard that is relevant to the situation, it may be difficult to tell what precisely are the standards that are relevant. A situation of human action or relation may be so highly complex that it is impossible to arrive at any definite conclusion at any one stage of judgment, for the factors in the situation may be so highly involved that one does not know exactly how to approach them in a way that will be fully satisfactory from a moral point of view. But not all human situations are of this nature,
VI.

and in relatively less complex cases a substantial agreement amongst people who are clear as the standards of evaluation that are being applied, may be achieved. But an understanding of the nature of moral concepts in their capacity as standards of moral evaluation and of the process of moral reflection on these concepts as a rational activity is important, however little may be the results that we shall achieve merely by such understanding. For if we stop with the recognition of the fact that different individuals tend to pass different moral judgements, and different societies tend to assess the value of a certain practice in different ways we fail to give due weight to the persistent belief held by both philosophers and ordinary people that somehow something more is involved in morality than personal preferences and social conditioning with a view to preservation and harmony. It is my aim in this enquiry to study the logic of moral concepts understood as standards of evaluation and to suggest that there is a sense in which moral judgments may be thought of as concerned with knowledge of objective facts. To do this I shall first deal with certain questions that are being raised with a view to show that a philosophical treatment of moral questions is metaphysical, then discuss some current theories in so far as they claim to show that somehow the use of moral concepts does not call for any
recognition of 'moral facts'; and then go on to the analysis of the logic of moral concepts, and to a consideration of the process of moral reasoning.
CONTENTS.

Introduction. ................................................................. P. 9.

CHAPTER I. Is an enquiry into the principles and "the law" of morals possible? P. 43.

CHAPTER II. Are ethical questions questions of language? P. 82.

CHAPTER III. (1) Is morality rational? P. 115.
(2) The place of reason in ethics. P. 138.
(3) In what sense do we intuit moral characteristics? P. 164.

CHAPTER IV. The Command theory of morals. P. 175.

CHAPTER V. The Attitude theory of morals. P. 222.

CHAPTER VI. The Decision theory of morals. P. 267.

CHAPTER VII. Some standards in European and Indian ethical thinking. P. 293.

CHAPTER VIII. The concept of 'good'. P. 345.

CHAPTER IX. The concepts of 'ought', 'right' and 'duty'. P. 415.

9.

INTRODUCTION.

This work is in the main an analytic one, its purpose being to enquire into the considerations of value that regulate actual moral experience. The actual moral experiences of people differ in certain ways. We believe that people are more or less sensitive to moral considerations, we also believe that even amongst the people who are morally sensitive to a high degree there are some whose moral behaviour is better-grounded or more considered than that of others. It is to these people (morally wise people or people of reflective opinion) that we turn for an understanding of moral issues.

Our approach is analytical, but it is not necessarily useless for that matter. The terms that are used for expressing moral considerations may also be used in a way that is almost purely descriptive. The primary purpose of the statement 'she is a good girl' may be to describe the fact that she goes to church on Sundays. But moral facts are more than mere facts, they involve judgments of value on facts. It is, however, not unusual to confuse the descriptive and evaluative use of a term in actual discourse. Further there are
not only moral values but also intellectual, aesthetic and economic ones. But all these are expressed by the same term 'good' which tends to create confusions between its different uses. It is therefore worth our while to try to understand how moral values are different from non-value facts as well from non-moral value facts.

There is another difficulty that often produces a misunderstanding regarding the nature of moral values. A value-fact comes to exist through evaluation and evaluation represents human judgment. Actual human judgments in respect of the same object may differ quite considerably. This sometimes leads us to the opinion that the nature of value is purely subjective. This opinion is corroborated in the field of morals by the existence of real differences of opinion, personal and social, on many moral issues. Nevertheless many of us are convinced that morality is in some sense objective, that something more than how an individual or a group of individuals thinks or feels is involved in moral conceptions. This conviction is induced by two considerations; (i) In every society a genuine moral distinction is made between right and wrong, good and bad. For nobody in any society ever fails to distinguish what he seriously believes to be right from what he believes to be wrong, (ii) Also agreement exists between different societies on
this point, viz, that moral behaviour is behaviour in accordance with principles. (i.e., it is believed to be desirable that certain general considerations should regulate our particular actions). If we go into some of these principles we find that they are not as different as they appear to be at first sight. Let us see how this is so.

In some societies it is believed that lies should not be told to anyone, in others that they can be told to one outside the community. But even in societies of the first type morally enlightened persons do not believe that the truth must be told to everyone every time any information of whatever character is asked for. What considerations should there be to justify any particular act of not telling the truth? Some societies are so developed and organised that the mere fact of one being an outsider is not a morally adequate reason for not telling him the truth. In other societies it is considered to be adequate. The actual behaviour of the people as regulated by these two principles thus differs from one to the other. Yet the one principle is only a qualified and restricted version of the other. In the qualified version a very definite kind of particular actions, that of verbal communication with outsiders, is excluded from the regulative authority of the general principle that the truth should be told. If we find that circumstances justify this qualification we do not hesitate to accept it. Some societies are so organised that the qualification of a principle is left to the considered
judgment of morally sensitive persons rather than expressly made. For instance, if a modern civilised state is at war with another it is understood by its citizens that the individuals belonging to the enemy state do not deserve to learn every truth from them. Yet it does not become necessary to formulate a new principle "tell the truth to everyone but your enemies", and the qualification of the principle "tell the truth" is left to individual judgment.

The questions that we shall be considering here are (a) in what sense is morality objective, (b) what are the distinguishing characteristics of moral values. These questions, I believe, have to be answered by reference to what is implied in the point of view of morality. Moral points of view appear to involve three conceptions of morality that are somewhat different from one another in their reference and emphasis, although their implications are the same. These are (1) morality of custom and convention, (2) morality of social welfare, (3) morality of virtues and principles.

I. Morality of custom and convention.

To this conception of morality belong institutions like polygamy and practices like belching. One of the functions of morality from this particular point of view is to enjoin on us the duty of doing certain things like letting the ladies pass first or of not doing certain things like belching. The other is that of sanctioning a particular kind of human human relation as is involved in polygamy or slavery, although this does not
mean that everyone must have a few wives or slaves.

The rules which relate to this conception of morals are rules regarding particular actions like belching or particular groups of actions which go with a definite institution like polygamous marriage or slavery. Social customs and conventions, as their very names suggest, are peculiar to particular organisations of life in which different communities of human beings live. It is not therefore strange that they differ between different societies. How an individual should actually behave depends to a large extent on how the community in which he lives is organised. One is ashamed of belching if one lives in England for here it is something that one should not indulge in. In India, at least in parts of it, it is looked upon as a neutral activity from the point of view of morality. One is ashamed in England because it hurts the sensibility of the people as qualified by the established outlook on this matter. Observance of a rule like this is moral in so far as wilful disregard of it implies disrespect of the feelings of others. This again implies that a degree of harmony in social relations is one of the conditions of individual happiness, is more desirable than its absence or opposite.


From this particular point of view existing socio-economic institutions are judged to be desirable or otherwise according as they fulfil or frustrate certain felt human desires accepted as genuine needs of the personalities affected. An established
practice or institution is questioned, for the mere fact of conflict with the felt needs of those concerned is an evidence that the observance of it has become a matter of thoughtless habit instead of being a mark of genuine respect for the feelings and happiness of others.

Those who take up this point of view consider it a duty to change the institution or practice to something which better fulfils existing needs that are being frustrated. But felt desires are of many kinds, some of which do not deserve our attention and respect. What are the criteria used for determining a need which stands for a desire judged to be worthy of attention and respect? These criteria can only be understood by reference to the concept of 'happiness'.

The question of respect for human desires can only arise if we consider human happiness as opposed to unhappiness to be of value. Happiness is a value concept and is distinguishable from the psychological state we call pleasure although it includes pleasure. Pleasure attends the gratification of any desire whatsoever; happiness is a relatively enduring state of the mind and indicates a disposition and ability to find pleasure. It presupposes a certain trained habit of mind, that of applying some standard or standards, in choosing between desires that are felt. A man with a trained habit is happy in the pursuit of his desires if he knows that circumstances are not such as to make their satisfaction impossible and that his prominent desires are not in conflict with his standards. Happiness then implies
a personality which is relatively integrated.

Desires thus constitute an element in human potentiality for happiness. But if happiness signifies an ability to find pleasure, a felt desire as well as an ability to satisfy it constitute its full potentiality. We therefore respect a desire in an individual if it is one for the satisfaction of which he exhibits corresponding abilities, and if this satisfaction does not conflict with his standards. Now certain desires and abilities, like intellectual and aesthetic abilities and impulses of a high degree, we consider to be of greater value in themselves than others, and their presence indicates a greater potentiality for happiness (potentiality for happiness may be more or less in intensity or wider or narrower in scope.) But desires such as any individual is not incapable of fulfilling also signify potentialities for happiness, although of a limited kind. Such desires therefore deserve our attention equally, although they may not draw an equal amount of respect.

There is another standard, of course, which we apply jointly with the two mentioned above. This standard implies the presence of other individuals besides the one in whom a desire is felt. And the characteristic of desires which is

what desires human beings have, what abilities they exhibit, how they may be judged to be adequate for the fulfilment of desires felt, belong to factual (non-value) inquiry. Here we are concerned only with general considerations by which our approach to such facts is qualified from a value point of view.
considered to be undesirable according to this standard is known as selfishness. A desire is selfish if it assumes that the individual in whom it is felt is of greater consequence than others who are affected by his desires. This again may be manifested in two different ways; in the way of wishing to do some positive harm to people who are not personally responsible for inducing this wish, and in the way of claiming some exclusive opportunities for the happiness of a certain kind even though others may be equally possessed of a potentiality for it.

The questions that we ask in order to determine the value of a desire are therefore somewhat as follows:

(i) Does the fulfilment of this desire prevent integration of personality in this case on which alone happiness can be founded? The characteristics of desires which conflict in this way are generally known as impulsiveness and excess, both indicating the lack of any trained habit of mind in applying a standard.

(ii) Does the individual have the power of fulfilling it?

(iii) Does it assume a claim to privilege? (greater opportunities in respect of greater abilities are not considered undesirable)

(iv) Is it consistent with the possibility of happiness for all?

The morality of social welfare questions established practices if the following conditions are present: -
(i) If the practice in question frustrates some felt desires in some individuals which cannot be described as excessive and purely impulsive. This, of course, is presumed to be based on factual evidence that the fulfilment of the same desires in other individuals with similar abilities and standards have not made integration and happiness impossible.

(ii) If the practice in question frustrates some desires in individuals in respect of which they possess the power or ability to fulfil it.

(iii) If the desires in question do not assume any unmerited privilege.

(iv) If they are not inconsistent with the happiness of all.

The concept from which the morality of social welfare derives its content is 'social justice'. If we find that the opportunity for a fuller kind of happiness for some exists through the lack of opportunity for others to achieve whatever happiness they are capable of achieving we, speaking in general, consider it undesirable. We consider it equally undesirable, again speaking generally, if the opportunity for the realisation of the limited happiness of some exists through a restriction on the fuller happiness of others. As we believe that human beings are capable of progress and development (whether they do so or not is a different question) no concrete and existing facts are accepted as final justifications for the continuation of either state of affairs. This conception thus implies that it is a better state of affairs that there should
no interference (social, economic, or any other kind) in the
way of maximum happiness that every single individual is capable
of achieving than that there should be such interference.

(3) Morality of virtues and principles.

From this point of view certain dispositions like friendliness
or fairness and certain ways of behaving in general, like
keeping a promise or telling the truth are considered to be of
intrinsic value. This means that their presence is more desirable
than their absence or the presence of what contradicts them.
A principle which considers a certain general way of behaving
to be desirable is different from a conventional rule. The
latter relates to particular actions of the same description
or particular group of actions, the former to many different
kinds of particular actions. In connection with a rule like
'it is disgraceful to belch' we cannot say very much more than
'do not belch'. But we can say 'you should return the book
today', 'you should go and see him', 'you should write to her',
'you should give him the money' and various other things because
we know that one has promised.

From this point of view social changes and measures
adopted with a view to the better realisation of social justice
are questioned if they are found to involve dispositions and
principles that are not desirable. Our attitudes and ways of
behaving are of different degrees of generality, depending on
the range and variety of particular mental states and behaviour
they can embrace. One may be said to have a friendly attitude

even when that is exhibited towards a limited number of people. But a friendly disposition has no exclusive reference to individuals or groups. Changes effected or means adopted towards such changes may exhibit a considerate attitude towards some but not towards others. What exactly are to be called considerateness and inconsiderateness in the circumstances that are prevailing, of course, belong to factual enquiry. Considerateness is based on the recognition of legitimate needs; it has therefore to be interpreted differently in respect of different people and different circumstances. Here we are only concerned with the highest generalities that regulate human behaviour, leaving aside the question of how we justify including any actual and particular conduct or group of conduct under the terms that stand for such generalities.

The desirability of certain virtues and principles is believed to be self-evident. Supposing that we agree that an individual has a choice to do either, it is believed to be better that a promise should be kept than that it should be broken. A principle like this will not be questioned by morally mature persons anywhere, whereas the importance that is attached to a conventional rule by the people concerned may appear to be grossly exaggerated to others. This is because they do not see the whole tradition and ideals of life which go into the making of it.

What then is the implication of the self-evident character of the principle of promise-keeping? When a man keeps a promise
he shows respect for the personality of the individual to whom the promise is made. This involves respect, for however trivial a promise may be it arouses expectation. He who keeps a promise sees the responsibility of not frustrating this, as he recognises the claim to non-interference with whatever possibility of happiness that an individual may have. (Desire for the respect of others along with the capability of the individual to receive it constitutes one of the potentialities of human happiness)

The implication of all these different moral points of view is this. It is more desirable that an individual person should neither interfere with the possible fulfilment of various capacities for happiness of other individuals nor be himself be thus interfered with, than that these things should happen. This conception of the happiness of one in conformity with the happiness of other—which is only possible if all the individuals in a community exercise all their abilities to the greatest possible degree and fulfil their desires consistently with the requirements of virtue—stands for the highest conceivable and attainable value for human beings, and is usually referred to as 'greatest good'. Greatest good—a state of happiness of one in conformity with the happiness of all others—thus includes the realisation not only of moral values but also of intellectual, aesthetic and economic ones. But the term 'happiness' is ambiguous, and let us first find out in what sense happiness is implied in the realisation of all human values. I shall here
discern three possible senses in which this term may be used.

(1) By 'happiness' may be meant pleasure or the feeling of gratification that is derived from the fulfilment of a particular desire without any implication as to the importance or the strength of the desire in the totality of purposes in any individual's life. Happiness in the sense of pleasure may represent a value but it may not. Human beings, being constituted as they are, sometimes find reasons why a particular desire felt by an individual under a certain set of circumstances should not be satisfied. And insofar as there are justifiable reasons why a particular desire should not be satisfied, the pleasure that can be derived from its fulfilment cannot be considered to be one that is worthy of being valued. Further, even if the sense of gratification that attends the fulfilment of a particular desire is worthy of being valued the value in question is a natural value, like sunshine, and it is not one that specifically represents a human achievement. For, although pleasure comes to exist as a result of human activities, it is, in some sense, a natural or automatic outcome of such activities.

(2) By 'happiness' may be meant relatively permanent satisfaction in some respect or respects. Pleasure that comes out of the satisfaction of a particular desire as a particular desire is short-lived and there is no guarantee that it will recur, for the desire itself may be merely a passing one. Again, when desires are looked upon merely as particular urges felt by an individual there is no guarantee that these particular
urges will not be inconsistent with one another. One's desire for a particular sort of food may be inconsistent with one's desire to enjoy health, and the one cannot be fulfilled without the frustration of the other. Pleasure then may be no more than momentary, moreover, it may be characterised by internal inconsistency as far as the total purposes of an individual is concerned. Now the fulfilment of a desire can lead to a satisfaction which is relatively permanent if a measure of consistency is achieved between the prominently felt desires of an individual so that the fulfilment of one may not lead to the frustration of another. Also, if the desire, the fulfilment of which gives gratification, is fragmentary (i.e. unrelated to the other desires of the individual) the pleasure derived is not only momentary, it leaves no effect beyond itself; whereas if it is related to other desires, the pleasure spreads from itself, so to say, and reinforces other pleasures to be derived from the fulfilment of related desires. To have relatively permanent satisfaction out of fulfilment of desires it is necessary for an individual not only to have desires that are mostly consistent but also to develop a system of desires that grow around purposes that show some sort of unity or affinity. Of course, an individual has many such systems of desires, and these, when considered altogether, may be conceived to form what we may call the 'total life plan' of an individual. I have no wish to suggest that any such plan is consciously made by anyone or that it
has a thoroughly unitary character. Some such plan may be read out of an individual's life by others instead of its being present in the mind of the person concerned, and it may include more than one dominant group of purposes which, although not inconsistent with one another, may not be very closely related. But in order that satisfaction one has out of fulfillment of desires may be relatively permanent and more far-reaching, it is necessary that the individual's life should show some sort of a broad unity of a very general type, which at the same time allows of differences and variations at various lower levels of classification of purposes. For instance, a man may be not insensitive to the pleasures of the palate, rather fond of gardening, devoted to books and a few selected friends etc. and on the whole desirous of living a quiet and unobtrusive life. Another life may show an altogether different sort of general design, if I may say so.

Satisfaction which, we have said, is derived out of the fulfilment of a desire that belongs to a system is more permanent and far-reaching than the gratification that results from the fulfilment of an isolated and fragmentary desire. We might therefore say that a man who has developed some sort of a broad unity of purpose around which various desires revolve has the possibility of a deeper and of a more lasting sort of satisfaction than one whose purposes and desires show relatively less integration. This is why it appears that a man, if he is to realise happiness in the sense we are discussing, should
pursue a definite aim (to which a system of desires is related) or definite aims - even if this is no more than maximum possible material ease and comfort. The value of relatively permanent and far-reaching satisfaction is not a natural value but one that comes to exist through human endeavour.

(3) The third meaning of happiness is contentment that accompanies a sense of fulfilment. It is better to enjoy relatively permanent satisfaction in some respect than to enjoy fleeting and unrelated pleasures, it is better still to possess an attitude which is characterised by more or less satisfaction at what may be called the 'business of life' itself and not merely at particular aspects of it. Contentment or fulfilment, of course, is only an ideal goal which one may come to realize more or less.

Now relatively permanent satisfaction becomes possible when people engage themselves in some definite pursuits (or pursuit) instead of living an aimless life or a life which shows only fragmentary aims. It is, however, possible to have satisfaction through the fulfilment of a system of desires related to some specifiable goal which is what Stevenson has called a 'focal aim', and yet lack an overall feeling that one's life has been or is continuing to be as satisfactory and worth-while on the whole as it could have been. Contentment or fulfilment in the sense in which it is
being used here, does not mean complete or absolute satisfaction, which perhaps no human being can feel. It means more than anything else absence of strong feelings which make a person uneasy or dissatisfied that what he has achieved or is achieving is not as worth-while as what he could achieve or that the way in which he has lived or is living is not as satisfactory or commendable as the way or ways in which he could live. And this uneasiness or dissatisfaction is of such a nature that it detracts from much of the value that the satisfaction which desires that are being fulfilled produce. To be contented, speaking negatively, is not to be tormented by general feelings or thoughts of incompleteness or lack of fulfilment, and although it is impossible to give these terms a precise meaning, these are the only terms by which I could attempt to clarify what contentment means. Contentment signifies such a general state of the mind that it is impossible to describe it by means of terms that have very specific meanings. Positively, contentment (which is rooted in a sense of fulfilment) means an overall feeling of satisfaction or gratefulness on the part of an individual in being alive, as well as the thought that on the whole the needs and purposes that he has fulfilled or is fulfilling are the most worthy, as far as his person is concerned, of being
valued; although it does not imply that the individual concerned considers that it is impossible to do any better than what he has done or is doing. In any individual life there always remains a scope for improvement, only a being conceived as god can be perfect, not one who is human - however great on e individual may appear in comparison with others.

Now when we say that a particular life is worthy of being valued we must have some conceptions of standards by which such worth is to be assessed. It is here that the use of the notion of 'intrinsic value' lies. The standards which are our ultimate courts of appeal in the assessment of the value of a life are embodied in the conceptions which are usually referred to as 'intrinsic values or ends'. By calling a value intrinsic we mean that its worthwhileness, if it appears worthwhile, is of such a nature that our cherishing it in preference to whatever may be in opposition, appears rational by itself and does not need the support of arguments as some other things do. A scientist's devotion to the cause of finding a cure for a disease which inflicts a great deal of suffering on people is such that nobody can in justice question its worthwhileness. Even if he does not find a cure his search for it will be commended as valuable. A business magnet's devotion to his particular company which leads him to act in such a way
as to cause smaller companies in the same industry to go out of existence is such that reasonable people will be prepared to accept his action and attitude as reasonable only if justifiable reasons in favour of these are forthcoming. That is to say, reasonable people will value his action and attitude not so much because of what they are as because of their instrumentality in producing a state of affairs that is more acceptable as worthwhile on its own grounds.

Now the conception of values, the general acceptability of which does not need to be supported by arguments from other facts more immediately acceptable, are conceptions of the highest generality and these (or shall we say some of these) have traditionally been considered to be truth, beauty, and goodness (moral virtue). Instances of human devotion to truth or knowledge, to beauty, to moral virtue, are acceptable from a rational point of view as worthwhile states of affairs for their being what they are and not merely because of some other things which are more immediately acceptable.

But 'devotion to truth' is a highly general expression. It does not stand for any particular action or attitude

1 This is compatible with any such value being questioned or needing support in a specific case- it is debatable whether a scientist whose wife is seriously ill and needs his attention for the time being should prefer to spend his days in a laboratory looking for a cure for some sickness.
but a characteristic type of activity or attitude which may be present in a multitude of diverse human actions and mental states. Similarly with the expression 'devotion to beauty' or 'devotion to morality'. It is thus possible for lives which are quite different from one another in many ways to show any such devotion. But the conceptions of values which are embodied in the notions of truth, beauty, and morality and which may be present in many different kinds of actions and mental states are conceptions of ultimate standards by which we judge the value of a life as lived by anyone. When I say ultimate standards I mean that these conceptions represent a distinct level of evaluation beyond which we cannot go, whereas there are other levels of evaluation which still leave some questions to be asked regarding what is worthwhile. For instance, we might know that a particular life represents a life of great success in money-making and this success we value. Nevertheless it still remains possible for someone to adopt a point of view which goes with a higher level of evaluation and ask whether his actions involved in money-making have been consistent with the requirements of moral values, and come to disvalue his success to a certain extent if they have not been. Similarly if we know that a person who has, on the whole, lived his life in accordance with the requirements of morality and who has not been a great success could be such a success if he disregarded moral considerations, we do not deplore
very much the fact that he has not been a success.

But here it is necessary to go back to the notion of fulfilment—which is to lead to contentment—to clear up a few points. It is true that no human being could desire anything more valuable than an overall sense of fulfilment, but fulfilment still remains a highly individual goal. That is to say, it is something that every individual has to achieve (it is only possible to achieve it in degrees) in his own way depending on his initial nature and circumstances of life which make him feel certain needs rather than others. No two individuals are made the same way and their fulfilment may not lie in the same things or in the same pattern of life. Individual needs and interests, which are to some extent relative to one's natural capabilities, or the degree to which such needs and interests are felt by individuals differ; so do their circumstances of life in which individual attitudes grow and actions take place. An overall sense of fulfilment can only be developed by an individual through the satisfaction—in circumstances of a certain sort—of some his prominently felt needs and interests, which, it is presupposed, have been to some extent systematised and made consistent with one another. As the natural capabilities

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I. A man with a high degree of aesthetic sensibility and imaginative power will perhaps feel a strong need for creative activities while another individual, whose natural abilities lie in a different direction, will feel no such need, or, at any rate, will not feel it so strongly.
of people, their needs and interests, and circumstances of life differ, everyone has to work out his own manner of living which gives him, as a particular individual, the most out of a human existence. But it is necessary - in order that one's life may be considered worthwhile from an ultimate point of view - that whatever someone may do with his own life or whichever way he may adopt in life as the best way for his purposes and person, it must be as consistent with the conception of intrinsic value as is possible under the circumstances. Now among the intrinsic values that we have mentioned the value of morality has a certain priority because of two considerations. The realisation of the values embodied in the notions 'knowledge' and 'beauty' to any considerable degree presupposes in the individuals concerned certain abilities of a high degree, namely, intellectual ability and imaginative sensitivity, and such abilities may not be present in most people in a very high degree. The value that is called 'morality' presupposes in a person a degree of intelligence and emotional sensitivity that are thought to be present in ordinary people (people who are not abnormal or subnormal). It is thus thought that even if an ordinary man is not capable of showing regard for any other value to any considerable extent, he is capable, by nature, of showing regard for morality. The other reason for the priority of the value of morality is this. The pursuit of intellectual and aesthetic values is a pursuit that is not so much social as individual in character.
That is to say, a man cares for knowledge or beauty not so much for the sake of other people as for himself—because of his own nature which urges him on towards their direction. But a man's devotion to moral value is induced primarily by his consideration for other people. And as individuals can live as individuals only in a society, the realisation of values that are primarily individual in character is dependent in some ways on the realisation of values that are in some sense primarily social. Moral values have a more direct effect on social existence and harmony than have intellectual and aesthetic values, although neither are moral values purely social nor are intellectual and aesthetic values devoid of all social implications. Because of this greater social significance of moral values it is required from an ultimate point of view that a man's pursuit of beauty or knowledge should not be inconsistent with regard for moral values. For if it is, a man's pursuit of satisfaction for himself clashes with his harmonious existence with other individuals, and this clash is of such a nature that it is bound to produce in a sensitive mind a feeling of incompleteness which detracts from the satisfaction he otherwise would have enjoyed. Further, as it is possible for ordinary people to try to achieve moral values it is possible for people who are not exceptionally gifted to achieve a sense of fulfilment by realising whatever purposes suit their abilities and interests in a way that
is not inconsistent with regard for moral values. A man who has more than average gift in a certain direction has a rather strong need to develop and exercise it, it is therefore important for him to satisfy this need one way or another if he is to achieve a sense of fulfilment. Another man whose abilities are no more than average in this respect does not feel a strong need of the above kind and he is therefore not disturbed by a strong feeling of incompleteness when he is not doing whatever fulfils this need, in a way the other man would be. A man with average abilities can however still achieve a sense of fulfilment (which in any case, is achievable only in degrees) for he can still receive the satisfaction that results from the fulfilment of whatever focal aims or systems of desires he might develop on the basis of the needs that he himself feels strongly - when the fulfilment of such aims is not inconsistent with regard for moral values. Only, the greater and the more varied are the natural abilities of a person the greater is the positive content of relatively permanent satisfaction that he can have. (i.e. the more are the respects in which a man can be satisfied) but a more gifted man may not be necessarily more contented. For contentment depends upon achieving a balance between the values that an individual can achieve and has a desire to achieve, and this a less gifted man may realise quite as much as a more gifted one. A sense of fulfilment like relatively permanent
satisfaction is a value that is man-made and is not a natural value like pleasure.

Now the three different meanings of 'happiness' represent three different levels in our thinking about the sense of gratification that a man may have. A man may have pleasures but not relatively permanent satisfaction in many respects or a sense of fulfilment. Or a man may have relatively permanent satisfaction in some ways but not a sense of fulfilment, but a man can not have a sense of fulfilment of any degree without having enjoyed pleasures, or without having known relatively permanent satisfaction in some ways, although his pleasures and satisfactions tend to be of a qualified kind.

In this enquiry the term 'happiness', whenever it has been used as the implicate of all value points of view, has been used in the sense of contentment or fulfilment.

The implication of morality however is not morality itself. Moral terms, as we see from an examination of usage, do not explicitly refer to it. They refer to customary rules, social justice, attitudes and ways of behaving in general, all of which are consistent with the requirements of greatest good. We shall now enquire how this implication accounts for the objectivity of morality.

When a principle is recognised as right it is logically impossible to question why it is more desirable to obey it than to disobey. A principle requires that a certain
general consideration should regulate our particular actions; this general consideration is either seen to be desirable or not, it can not be proved to be so. A proof can only be in terms of something definite and determinable. A general principle like, 'if we voluntarily undertake any responsibility it is required of us that we should discharge it' has no uniform or definite and determinable consequence in practice. It is therefore accepted on its own merit or not at all. This is what is expressed in the opinion that there is no further reason to be sought in morality than the principles which obviously command our obedience. But the term 'reason' is ambiguous. It is only the the kind of 'reason' that proves a contention that we can not ask for in respect of a principle. But the issue is not therefore beyond the scope of all rational considerations.

It is agreed that so far as a principle is moral it commands our unquestioning obedience. But sometimes we find that it is necessary to disobey a principle not for non-moral but moral purposes. The general consideration which regulates our behaviour in such cases is the recognition of some other claim of a superior nature. We might find another moral principle to formulate such a claim. For instance, when we tell a lie to save a life we respect the superior claim of the principle that life should be respected. But there are real life situations in which we recognise a claim which is not clearly formulated as a principle, as when we tell a
harmless lie to somebody in order to save him from a very unpleasant shock which we know will not improve his character. The claim that we more or less instinctively recognise and respect is that of non-interference with maximum happiness that an individual can have without interfering with the happiness of anyone else. But if the lie is of such a nature, as more often than not is the case, that it involves some unprovoked harm to somebody our action would be considered wrong even if it saves some one individual from preventable misery. This is because such a lie involves unwarranted interference with the possibility of happiness of the individual it affects.

What is objective about a principle is its implications. Speaking generally (i.e. without having in mind any definite and particular case) when a man tells the truth to somebody he respects his personality and recognises it to be desirable that he should have access to any true information that he may desire to have. This implies the value of individual happiness, desire to know (and ability to understand) being a capacity for it. If it is at all morally desirable that the truth should not be told in a particular case, that is because telling the truth in that case would be inconsistent with the implication that the principle of truth-telling bears on general considerations. The principle that the truth should be told is objective, although we may not tell the truth under certain circumstances on considerations that are equally
objective considerations that render the principle itself inoperative. (which is to say that it is not desirable in that particular case that this principle should regulate our conduct)

We shall now consider the question of the characteristics of moral values. Moral values are relative to the particular conception of morality that we have in mind. We shall here treat virtues and principles as fundamental. What we have to say about these will also hold good of 'observance of custom' and 'social justice'. The terms like 'good' and 'right' which convey moral values also express values of many different kinds. When we say 'he is a good man' and 'this is a good motorcar' one of our purposes in using the term 'good' in both the cases is to show our commendation of the man as well as of the motorcar. Yet this by no means exhausts the meaning that the term 'good' conveys in these statements. We understand something quite different about the man than what we understand of the motorcar when both are called good. A part of the meaning of the term 'good' therefore comes from the context, and one context is understood to be different from others by virtue of certain characteristics, however vaguely and imperfectly understood. If it is said about somebody that he is good and I know absolutely nothing else about him I shall no doubt understood that he is being commended, yet I cannot say that I get the full meaning of the term 'good' as used here, for the question remains good
in what way or good at what, and unless this is satisfied I really do not understand very much about his being good. If I am told that he is honest or that he came out first in a chess competition I at once get a fuller meaning of the term 'good' as used here. To have a good disposition is quite a different sort of thing than to be an efficient player. The term 'good' thus not only expresses commendation but also signifies some distinctive characteristics which we get from the context in which it is used.

Now it may be said that there are no distinctive characteristics involved here. What has made the difference in my understanding is the factual reference to a disposition or to chess-playing. Surely I understand honesty to be different from efficient chess-playing. Is it then strange that I understand the term 'good' differently when applies to one or the other? If this objection means that I understand the distinctive meaning of the term 'good' by knowing what it is referred to without having to go into any characteristics, it is quite true. But the term 'characteristic' is ambiguous. Some properties of things like the yellow colour of a lemon are said to be their characteristics because people can actually come know the things from a knowledge of such properties. There are no such characteristics in morals. We moral values first and then reflect on their characteristics because we find that there is a difference between
value facts and non-value facts as well as between moral values and non-moral values.

Let us again take the example that Hare has used. If someone says 'she is a good girl' meaning that she goes to church on Sundays we may understand the statement to be a case of commendation. But is this moral commendation? What is being commended here is a certain habit and moral virtues are also cases of habits. If we do not call this particular habit moral it is pertinent to ask why not. The answer lies in something like this. If we know nothing else about a girl except that she goes to church on Sundays we would not think that we are possessed of any positive ground on which to feel moral approval or admiration for the character or habit mentioned. This is because we know that some people go to church merely to avoid criticism by their neighbours. Yielding to social pressure, as such, is not an attitude that is morally praiseworthy. But if we are told that she is friendly or fair we would feel approval for her disposition described even if we knew nothing else about her. How are habits of mind like friendliness or fairness different from others? I think it is those habits of mind which imply the possibility of greatest good as against those which do not in themselves bear any such implication that we commonly accept as moral values. Consistency with the conception of 'greatest good' is therefore a part of the characteristics of moral values.
The other characteristic difference of moral values lies in their reference. Moral values refer to such dispositions and principles on which such dispositions are based as are not dependent on any distinct type of human impulse and ability like the intellectual or aesthetic ability, or on the exercise of any ability in any special manner as is involved in the value known as efficiency. Further these dispositions are characterised by implying conduct towards persons rather than towards things.

But after all this has been said it may be questioned if there is really any such thing as a self-evident principle in actual moral experience. Is it not, as Hare says, that we form our own principles in life in the course of dealing with certain situations rather than begin with some self-evident ones from which we deduce our duties? What is true in Hare's contention, I believe, is this. The moral problem in actual life is in the first instance the problem of acting in a particular way or other. We decide on the way which appears to us to be more appropriate to the logic of the situation as approached in a certain way. The question of principle, if it does arise, arises only in the course of our deliberations on concrete courses of actions rather than before such deliberation. Let us take an instance. X has promised to see somebody this evening to discuss an affair of some importance with him. Just as X is ready to leave a very dear friend of X whom X has neither seen nor is likely to see unexpectedly
turns up. What should \(X\) do? Suppose that \(X\) is greatly inclined to stay but decides it will be better to go; in this he pays respect to the principle 'a promise ought not to be broken'. He does not proceed deductively like this, 'a promise ought not to be broken, if I do not go I shall break my promise, therefore I should go.' But it may also be that \(X\) feels inclined to go since he said that he would, but his friend particularly wants him to stay. He decides to stay considering the claim that an intimate friend has on him; after all the discussion can be postponed until tomorrow. Here \(X\) forms a principle for himself, namely, a claim of an intimate friend ought not to be overlooked if it is not morally impossible to do so. But does this prove, as Hare evidently wants it to, that there is no self-justifying general principle in morals? I think not.

A principle like telling the truth is not a command on us to say some definite thing in particular, but to be actuated by a certain consideration, that of not telling the untruth, in respect of particular verbal communications. The principle thus refers to the desirability of a way of behaving in general in respect of what we say, rather than to any definite statement that we may make. It regulates our particular actions when we act from a moral point of view, but such regulation is not mechanical determination. If for some reason a particular statement which is not true is found justified from a moral point of view, it would not thereby prove the non-existence or illusoriness of the principle of truth-telling.
But how is it self-justifying if it is not necessarily the case that we must follow it? Self-justifying as applied to a principle may mean either that it can never be questioned or that it proves itself. It is quite obvious that we do question the regulative authority of a general principle in some situations. But in so far as we do recognise this authority - even though we have a free choice not to do so - we do not need any justification for it. A principle authorises itself.

But what exactly is meant by 'recognising the regulative authority of a principle' if, as Hare seems to imply, the principles that we recognise are formed by ourselves? Let us try to see how far we form the principles that we recognise.

Suppose that \( x \) is expected at the office at 9 o’clock and for the first time in his term of service he wakes up so late that he has either to miss his breakfast or be a quarter of an hour late at the office. If he decides to miss his breakfast (let us suppose that no action on the part of the authorities need be feared in this particular case) he forms for himself a principle, that of preferring regularity at the office to food. This he may very well consider to be his individual principle, since he was never commanded by anyone to prefer regularity to food. But surely his action here also implies a principle of higher generality than is involved in acts of singular kind like missing one’s breakfast; this is the principle of punctuality. This principle
has already influenced his action but he has not formed it explicitly like he has formed a principle that regularity at the office is to be preferred to the partaking of breakfast. If he had decided on punctuality as a principle, a greater range of his particular actions than missing his breakfast to be at the office in time would have been affected.

Punctuality again implies a still more general principle, that of being considerate to the interest of everyone concerned in one's actions, and this principle can affect almost every human action. This as well as the principle of punctuality has in a certain sense, regulated X in his principle of missing his breakfast, but he has taken no individual decision on these. As principles like these regulate a great range of particular actions we cannot but recognise them to be operative in actual human behaviour if we reflect on this question, although very often they are not explicitly formed. What is individual in decisions that involve general principles is the understanding of concrete experience as important from a value point of view of a certain character. A general principle is read out of such experience by anyone who reflects on it rather than its being an individual contribution.
IS AN ENQUIRY INTO PRINCIPLES AND THE LAW OF MORALS POSSIBLE?

A philosophical enquiry into the principles and law of morals might at the outset be discredited as metaphysical in the derogative sense of the word (i.e., as discussion of a problem that does not actually exist). 'Can such an enquiry find out any more facts about human conduct and character than we already possess, the knowledge of which will produce moral judgments and behaviour of a more satisfactory nature, and if not, what is the point of it?' is the question that is sometimes asked. This question itself is, however, vague for the objections it expresses may be of different kinds.

(a) This enquiry is discredited by some because they feel that moral questions that arise in our actual practice are solved at the level of commonsense through wisdom of a practical kind; and a theoretical discussion of their nature abstracted from the context in which they occur is apt to proceed by creating problems that do not actually exist. We all grow up with an acquaintance with the moral code of the community we live in consisting of certain prohibitions and commandments and these are all that we need to know for solving the practical problems of moral behaviour. Principles and what may be called 'the law' of morals
either stand for these prohibitions and commandments in which case they do not add to our knowledge of moral affairs or they do not in which case they distort the nature of such practice.

Now the point in this objection is this. A theoretical enquiry into morals can hardly aspire to dictate laws to practice. To discover principles and laws which have never been recognised in some way or other by human beings either in unreflective behaviour or even in relatively reflective behaviour is not its purpose; rather it is from actual practice (which in the case of human beings includes actions as well as thoughts and feelings concerning such actions) that such an enquiry derives its material. But that does not mean that it adds nothing to our knowledge of moral affairs if such knowledge consists entirely of the prohibitions and commandments of some moral code governing the behaviour of the members of some community or other. For moral codes differ between different communities but what are called principles and the law of morals are considered by reflective opinion to be the same for all human beings; for they do not directly dictate to us any actions in particular but stand for value-ideals which human actions ought to realise. The commandments and prohibitions of moral codes tell us to do or not to do particular actions or types of action of a specified kind which realise these value-ideals in particular circumstances of life that may differ between different communities. It is, therefore, speaking generally, sufficient for the members of a community to know them for
solving the questions that arise in moral practice. Also, there is a certain sense in which it is true to say that the moral principles and law are nothing apart from these prohibitions and commandments, i.e., they are not creations of pure thought absolutely divorced from all social practice but are ideals which explain why we should perform certain actions and refrain from others as actually required of us by the moral codes. Yet, to understand their implications is something more than to understand the requirements of the established rules of a moral code. For circumstances of life do change without all the prohibitions and commandments changing with them. In situations like this it is not very uncommon for certain individuals who are keenly sensitive to moral values to act contrary to the prohibitions and commandments. Moral conflict then arises not because people overlook or disregard questions of value but because they are highly sensitive to them. Such a conflict is not created by abstract thought for it first manifests itself through people doing things that are 'not done', or not doing things that are 'done' but it leads to reflection on the nature of moral values. The mere fact that people may at times come into conflict with established rules through moral sensitiveness makes it possible and indeed necessary to reflect on the implications of the value-ideals for human behaviour embodied in moral principles as distinguished from the prohibitions and commandments that are actually prevalent in a society.
To oppose a prohibition or commandment on the strength of a principle that we find does not actually form a part of the established body of rules is not necessarily to distort the nature of our moral practice or to attempt to dictate to it. Human affairs are highly complex and what we call moral practice represents not blind activities of a uniform pattern but voluntary actions of various descriptions which sometimes involve deliberations, choice between alternative states of affairs some of which are considered desirable and others not, and consequent decisions. There is more in human practice that is morally relevant than the particular actions that the majority of us do actually perform. It includes the regard for value which some people show in their deliberation, choice and decision and also in their judgments on and emotional reactions to actions that actually are performed. All these show, I believe, that a theoretical enquiry into moral principles and the moral law may be merely a reflective consideration on human practice and yet convey to us something more of moral significance than is gained through an acquaintance with the moral code of the community we live in. No doubt a discussion of moral principles by virtue of the fact that it is divorced from the situations in which actions take place, does not give us an understanding of the distinctive nature of particular moral situations independently of actual experience. To believe that it does is to dictate to experience, not so to believe that the moral approach to such situations may be guided by the
understanding of principles. It is therefore true in a certain sense that an enquiry of this nature may add to our understanding of morals, and in conflicting situations where the guidance of the moral code is not sufficient, such understanding may actually lead to better conduct.

(b) What has so far been said will no doubt bring forth an objection of a somewhat different kind. It is like this. Human beings behave as they do. The pronouncement of a principle that they should behave in this way or that gives us no more information about any behaviour with which we have concern than we already possess. If someone tells a lie, he does so; and we know no more about his doings by being told that 'one should not tell a lie'. This principle is therefore an expression of some feeling or attitude, or it is just an established behaviour norm of a society and not a statement of some fact which is somehow out there for all of us and which we may come to know if we probe into the matter. If by the term 'enquiry' we mean a process of investigation into facts which are there for us to know then there can be no such thing as an enquiry into moral principles, for principles are neither facts themselves nor do they give us any knowledge concerning facts.

Now it is true to say that a principle is not a fact when by the term 'fact' we mean something that has a definite and particular nature identifiable as a distinct object, quality or event. But it is another matter to say that it cannot convey to us any knowledge concerning such facts. And if a
principle does so it may itself be considered to be a fact in a certain sense of the term. This point may be made clear by drawing on an example in Physics for the word 'Principle' is used not only in morals but also in Physics, and Physics is acknowledged to give us knowledge of facts.

Principles in Physics are discovered. But to discover a principle in Physics, like the Principle of Rectilinear Propagation of Light, is not, as Toulmin points out in his 'Philosophy of Science', to find out new facts as ordinarily understood, but to adopt a new approach to facts with which we are already familiar. When we say a physicist had discovered that light travels in straight lines something quite different is means from when we say 'Crusoe discovered there was a man on the island' or when we talk about the natural science discovery 'migrating swallows travel along great circles'. There is nothing in our ordinary experience which corresponds exactly to the physicist's notion of light; for by it he does not mean such things as lamps -- the light of "Put out the light"; and illuminated areas -- the light of "The sunlight on the garden". So also the word 'travel' here does not correspond to our ordinary notion of travel and the same idea may just as well be conveyed through the expression 'is propagated'. As Toulmin says the introduction of the notion of 'light' as something travelling is not the simple literal discovery of something moving like the detection of frogs in flower beds or boys in apple trees. The physicist's discovery is not a
discovery to the effect that where previously nothing had been thought to be, in any ordinary sense, there turned out on closer inspection to be something travelling — namely, light. Nor is it the discovery that light travels in one way rather than in another. "Rather, the optical discovery is, in part at any rate, the discovery that one can speak at all profitably of something as travelling in these circumstances, and find a use for inferences and questions suggested by this way of talking about optical phenomena — the very idea that one should talk about something as travelling in such circumstances being the real novelty". 1 We have known the data for this discovery for a long time — these are our ordinary experiences of light and shadow, the practical skill and techniques which have been developed as a result of these experiences and the regularities of optical phenomena like, the higher the sun rises in the sky the shorter are the shadows. "The novelty of the conclusion comes, not from the data, but from the inference; by it we are led to look at familiar phenomena in a new way, not at new phenomena in a familiar way". 2 The function of this new way of looking at optical phenomena is to provide explanations for certain of the things that happen. "Until the discovery, changes in light and shade, as we ordinarily use the words (i.e. illuminated regions which move as the sun moves) remain things primitive, unexplained, to be accepted for what they are. After the discovery, we see them all as the effects of something,

which we also speak of in a new sense as 'light', travelling from the sun or lamp to the illuminated objects. A crucial part of the step we are examining is, then, simply this: coming to think about shadows and light-patches in a new way, and in consequence coming to ask new questions about them, questions like 'Where from?', 'Where to?', and 'How fast?', which are intelligible only if one thinks of the phenomena in this new way."

The general statement 'light travels in straight lines' is then not -- as we are apt to think all general statements are -- a generalised observation report on physical regularities, like the statement in Natural Science 'migrating swallows travel along great circles'. The regularities with which this statement is connected are already recognised, it only provides a form for the explanation of their nature. The Physicist does not ask 'Are the length of the shadows and the position of the sun in the sky connected?' for he already knows that they are connected and it is this knowledge which leads him to ask "What can make it intelligible that they depend on one another?" or 'How can we explain the fact that they are connected in the way they are?" Since it is not the job of a physicist to discover particular regularities of physical phenomena his method of procedure is not to start collecting instances of particular happenings wherever he likes. Rather he selects a few cases of a recognisable regularity, reads the law out of these phenomena and applies it as a principle in

more involved cases. "To put the point briefly, the physicist seeks the form and the scope of regularities which are found to happen, not universally, but at most on the whole."¹

A principle is then a formal statement and not a statement (in the sense of being a report of such occurrence or state of affairs) about any particular occurrence or state of affairs with which we are directly in contact. To say that it is a formal statement is to mean that the sort of things it directly tells us about are ideals or possibilities we can conceive of which explain why certain of the things happen as they do in our experience. The notion of 'light-ray' for instance is a theoretical ideal and not any actual beam of light that we encounter in ordinary experience and "Means are needed for producing beams of light, in the every day sense of the phrase, which will approximate as nearly as need be to the Euclidean ideal of breadthlessness, and which will therefore be of a kind that we can accurately represent by geometrically straight lines. Until this is done, we shall have nothing that we can confidently treat as light-rays, ..."²

This does not mean, of course, that the notion of 'light-ray' is a pure fiction of the imagination, as it is by its help that we begin to understand optical phenomena more fully than we did before, and its function is to explain why optical phenomena that we actually encounter are connected in the way they are. This notion then which is ideal in a certain sense

1. Ibid P.48-59
2. Ibid P.65.
is also factual in another as it provides us with a form or framework, as it were, within which to organise our understanding of optical phenomena on a higher level than what is contained in a statement which reports the occurrence of a particular phenomenon or particular phenomena that we actually come across.

In a similar way a principle of morals does not give us any more facts, understood in a certain sense, about the actual conduct we are concerned with but embodies a characteristic way of looking at it which enables us to pass judgments of a certain sort concerning the conduct in question. A principle of morals is formulated in recognition of the fact that some people do actually act in some characteristic way in situations of a certain sort and also of the fact that they feel and think about such actions in a characteristic way. But the function of a principle is not so much to describe such thoughts, feelings and actions as to attempt to explain them in terms of some characteristic conception of value-ideals to be attained through human conduct. In so far as this is the case a moral principle or law may be said to tell us about a form or framework within which to approach human behaviour in a certain way rather than about human behaviour itself as a series of particular occurrences. Let us take for instance the principle 'one ought to keep one's promises'. The function of the conception 'keeping a promise' is to set up a value-ideal of human behaviour which explains, in a certain sense of the term 'explain', the actions
of those who fulfil a responsibility expressly undertaken by them in spite of the considerable discomfort and at times suffering caused to themselves as a result, and also the feeling and judgments of approval that we come across for such actions and disapproval for the contrary. One may try to realise this ideal through acting in many different ways as required by the specific situations in which actions take place and there is no sum of actions which exhausts it. One may visit a relative, return a book to a friend, pay some money to an acquaintance or do a thousand other things, all of which may be referred to as 'keeping a promise' by virtue of the fact that in all these cases, the fulfilment of a responsibility expressly undertaken by an agent is involved. Yet when one is told to keep one's promises one is not asked to perform any of these actions in particular, nor all of them all together. The judgment 'you should have visited your sister-in-law yesterday as you said you would' and the statement 'you should keep your promises' belong to two different levels in our thinking about human conduct. One is a judgment which concerns the desirability of performing a particular act, the other concerns an ideal which many particular actions are required to realise when looked at from a characteristic point of view. The judgment concerning the ideal is a formal statement and it is not a report of or on any action or actions in particular. Yet, it provides a form or framework, as it were, within which to approach many particular actions in a characteristic way.
No doubt, it is quite possible for one to refuse to approach human conduct in this characteristic way and we cannot say that one must do so meaning that one can in any way be compelled to do so. But this holds true also in Physics. No one is compelled to look at shadow-casting in the physicist's way. We may choose, if we like, not to ask any scientific questions about it. But there is a certain sense in which something would be lost if we did not accept the physicist's way of looking at optical phenomena, as our understanding of these phenomena would be so much the less for that reason. Similarly, if we refuse to approach human conduct in the characteristic way which is embodied in the moral principles our understanding of it will be so much the poorer. For we shall lack that insight into some aspects of actual human behaviour, and feelings and judgments that exist to the effect that it would be better if we acted in some way rather than in another even if that would not have led us to achieve some desired object. If A seeks to know something about X of B in the situation Y and B wilfully misrepresents the case a number of people will feel disapproval towards his conduct and judge that B had acted wrongly. Are these feelings and judgments to be accepted just for what they are or is it possible to explain why people think and feel like this? It is in the service of this explanation that the moral principle 'the truth ought to be told' is to be understood. For the principle says, the truth ought to be told, as not to do so would be to
violate the value which an individual's desire to know has for its own sake. It is then true, in a certain sense, to say that a moral principle gives us knowledge concerning human conduct although, of course, within the context of the characteristic moral approach to experience and this approach has its backing in some of our actual thoughts, feelings and actions. This knowledge, however, is formal, for a principle does not state actual occurrences that we are in contact with, but provides us with an ideal conception which explains certain discernible features of what happens. Nevertheless, it does add to our understanding of human conduct; and an enquiry into its nature is, in a certain sense, an enquiry into facts that we are all capable of conceiving.

(c) But another objection still remains. One might wonder, 'How can the general statement of a moral principle really tell us anything about human conduct? A principle appears to have neither inductive nor deductive connection with it! It is said that the functioning of a principle in moral life is not a logical process and there can be no philosophical discussions about it. A general statement like 'truth ought to be told' is neither an inductive generalisation from observed human behaviour for some human beings sometimes do tell lies; nor does it enable us to proceed deductively to condemn every instance of human speech that involves a lie for sometimes it is morally better that/truth should not be told. What can we mean by saying that a principle gives us knowledge of facts when there is no logical
relation between them?

The point in this objection is this. The kind of knowledge a moral principle conveys about human conduct is not the kind of knowledge which a statement bearing inductive or deductive connection between facts gives us. If we have collected various instances to the effect that rabbits eat cheese and have never come across one instance to the contrary, it is logically permissible to say 'rabbits eat cheese'. This means that we are justified in considering it highly improbable that a rabbit would consistently refuse to eat cheese unless some special circumstances not to be found with rabbits in general are present to account for this refusal. Since there are various instances of human speech which are not cases of telling the truth the statement 'the truth ought to be told' is not of this nature. Again, we are so certain of the general statement 'men are mortal', (i.e., of the connection between humanity and mortality) that we need have no hesitation at all in inferring about a particular man that he is mortal. Since we do believe in some instances of human speech that truth ought not to be told the general statement 'the truth ought to be told' has not this deductive certainty either. How can then there be a logical passage between actual human behaviour and a moral principle?

Now it is true to say that the general statement of a moral principle is not an inductive generalisation, nor does it reveal a deductive connection between observed facts. Yet, it does not follow from these that a principle has no logical status in
our thinking which enables us to draw conclusions of a certain kind which we may consider to be either valid or not concerning facts of experience. For this lack of inductive or deductive connection between relevant facts is a feature not of moral principles only but also of principles in Physics. The Principle of Rectilinear Propagation of Light in Physics, as Toulmin observes, is not a generalisation from observed regularities. A Physicist can never arrive at this principle merely by collecting various instances of shadow-casting, eclipses and the like, for the principle stands for a new insight into their workings rather than for a generalised observation report. Nor does it reveal any deductive connection between facts of experience. It does not enable us to infer deductively that light is travelling in straight lines from a particular source for there are optical phenomena like refraction and defraction which limit the operation of this law. But there is no doubt as to the logical status of this principle in our thinking in Physics, in spite of this status not being connected with inductive and deductive relations and inferences. "...logically speaking, the Rectilinear Propagation Principle belonged in quite a different box from the data which are taken as establishing it; so that there can be no question of its being deductively related to these data, nor any point in looking for or bewailing the absence of such a connexion. The transition from the every day to the physicist's view of light involves not so much the deduction of new corollaries or the discovery of new facts as
the adoption of a new approach.\textsuperscript{1}

What then is precisely the logical function of this principle in our thinking in Physics? As this is an issue of great importance I shall try to clarify it by rather long quotations from Toulmin. Says Toulmin, "Consider, then, a specific situation of the kind in which the physicist will be interested: notice how he sets about explaining an optical phenomenon, and in particular where the principle comes into his account. Suppose therefore that the sun, from an angle of elevation of $30^\circ$, is shining directly on to a six-foot-high wall, casting a shadow ten and a half feet deep on the level ground behind the wall. Why, we may ask, do we find that the shadow is just ten and a half feet deep: why not fifty feet or two? How are we to explain this fact?

"Well, that's easy enough," the physicist will say. "Light travels in straight lines, so the depth of the shadow cast by a wall on which the sun is directly shining depends solely on the height of the wall and the angle of elevation of the sun. If the wall is six feet high and the angle of elevation of the sun is $30^\circ$ the shadow must be ten and a half feet deep. In the case described, it just follows from the Principle of the Rectilinear Propagation of Light that the depth of the shadow must be what it is."\textsuperscript{2}

Now what sort of inference is this? Quite obviously it involves neither an inductive nor a deductive process of the

\textsuperscript{1} - Ibid. P.64.
\textsuperscript{2} - Ibid. P.24.
traditional type. To quote Toulmin, "The fact of the matter is that we are faced here with a novel method of drawing physical inferences -- one which the writers of books on logic have not recognised for what it is. The new way of regarding optical phenomena brings with it a fresh way of drawing inferences about optical phenomena."

This fresh method of drawing inferences involves the diagram-drawing technique of Geometrical Optics. The physicist will draw a diagram in which the ground will be represented by a horizontal line, the wall by a vertical line and a third line will be added at 30° to the horizontal touching the top of the line representing the wall and intersecting that representing the ground. The third line represents the bottom ray of light which can get past the wall without being cut off. All the lower ones are intersected which explains why the ground behind the wall is in shadow. The depth of the shadow in this diagram is one and three quarter times the height of the wall and if the wall is six feet high, the shadow must be ten feet six deep. This diagrammatic technique of drawing inferences can be used only if we regard light as travelling. Of course, the physicist need not necessarily draw diagrams, he may resort to trigonometry or some other mathematical symbolism. But the characteristic way of looking at optical phenomena embodied in the principle 'light travels in straight lines' also brings with it characteristic methods of representation and techniques of drawing.

1. P.25.
inferences. The principle itself, to use terms suggested by Ryle and Toulmin, is like a licence or ticket on the strength of which we pass from certain facts to others although this passage involves neither inductive nor deductive processes.

Now that we have the authority of science to the effect that a valid inference need not necessarily be either inductive or deductive it is perhaps easier to see how we can pass judgments of a certain kind on people's conduct and character on the strength of a principle or law that is recognisable as morally satisfactory and consider such judgments to be tenable or not in spite of the steps involved in this process of moral inference being neither inductive nor deductive. The moral approach to experience is a characteristic approach like the approach of Geometrical Optics -- although unlike the latter it is as old as human thought -- and it has its own methods of drawing inferences.

It would perhaps be asked here what these methods are to which the only answer that we can give is that these are precisely the methods we use in drawing moral inferences. That we draw moral inferences will be denied only by those who refuse to take up the point of view of morality and there is no convincing them. If what is asked for is a formula by which we can test the validity of every moral inference we make, then the answer is that there simply is no such formula. The facts with which we are concerned in moral judgments are far too complex and varying to admit of a standardised method of drawing satisfactory conclusions. Neither human character nor conduct, which we
judge morally, are of the nature of a comparatively simple substance identifiable as such in different instances of its occurrence. An action which we call human conduct is a complex happening produced by the interplay of various factors in a situation of a specific kind and two actions which may in a certain way be described by the same name need not have identical natures in all respects. An instance of telling the truth in its distinct nature as a case of human conduct in a certain situation may not be quite the same as another from the point of view of morality even though both come under the same description in some way. And it requires some finding out about the various factors present in these two situations of human speech before we can say the same thing about them on the strength of the principle 'the truth ought to be told.' But the lack of a formula for drawing moral inferences cannot prove that we are unable to make such inferences when we do actually make them. To be able to draw satisfactory inferences in respect of affairs which are complex and varying, like human character and conduct, what is needed is not so much a rigid rule as a flexible method which allows us to put such affairs in their proper moral perspective.

The following questions will now perhaps be asked.

(a) If two instances of not telling the truth are to be treated differently in spite of the principle 'truth ought to be told,' wherein lies the validity of the principle itself? (b) And if there are no formulae for judging the validity of a moral
inference, how do we tell a valid inference from an invalid one in this sphere.

It will be useful to appeal to Physics again for an answer to question (a). Let us take for instance 'Snell's Law' — the ratio of the sines of the angle of incidence and refraction is constant. There are, however, certain substances which do not behave in the way the law suggests, but these are not specifically mentioned in the body of the law itself. "...it's the practice in the Physical Sciences to leave the application of a law to be shown or stated separately: indeed, this itself is rather a misleading thing to say, for that this should be done is not so much a question of practice as the distinguishing mark of a law. The statement, "Most transparent substances of uniform density, excluding only certain crystalline materials such as Iceland Spar, have been found to refract light in such-and-such a manner" is not what we call 'Snell's Law'. This statement is a simple report of past fact, and its job is to tell us about the circumstances in which Snell's Law has been found to hold. To every law there corresponds a set of statements of the form "X's law has been found to hold or not to hold, for such-and-such system under such-and-such circumstances." 1

But the fact that a law is inapplicable under certain circumstances does not render it untrue. Rather, the words 'true', 'untrue', 'probable' and the like seem to have no application to the laws of nature. To quote Toulmin: "To...

1. Ibid. P.78.
begin with, perhaps, we may suppose that light-rays are always bent by transparent media in the way they are by the glass specimen in our apparatus. We may, therefore, adopt Snell's formula tentatively, hypothetically, as a guide to further experiments, to see whether the phenomena always happen so. On this level, we might ask "Is Snell's hypothesis true or false?" meaning, "Have any limitations been found to the application of the formula?" But very soon, indeed as soon as its fruitfulness has been established, the formula in our hypothesis comes to be treated as a law, i.e. as something of which we ask not "Is it true?" but "When does it hold?" When this happens, it becomes part of the framework of optical theory, and is treated as a standard. Departures from the law and limitations on its scope, such as double refraction and anisotropic refraction, come to be spoken of as anomalies and thought of as things in need of explanation in a way in which ordinary refraction is not; and at the same time statement of the law comes to be separated from statements about the scope and application of the law, ¹ "Again, "Saying a law holds universally is not the same as saying that it is true always and not only on certain conditions. The logical opposition 'holds'/does not hold' is as fundamental as the opposition 'true'/'untrue', and cannot be resolved into it.² All these should help us to see that from the fact that we recognise the tenability of such statements in morals as

¹ - Ibid P.78 - 79.
² - Ibid P.80.
'X should not have told B the truth in the situation A', it
does not follow that there can be no such principle in morals as
'the truth ought to be told'. The statement of the principle
is not a statement about any action in particular and if an
action of a certain description does not come under the
authority of a principle it is still possible that others do.
And if we find that such is the case we can regard the general
statement as a principle, i.e., as a standard in moral contexts
the significance of which cannot be questioned any more, although
we can question its application in a certain case or in certain
cases. What Toulmin says about laws of Physics applies here
too. Moral principles like laws in Physics stand for truth,
but they can not in any ordinary sense be described as 'true',
'false', or 'probable'. This is because a principle is a
formal statement and not a report of any particular and specified
fact which can be checked or verified in any ordinary sense.
In this connection it will be useful to consider on what
basis statements are distinguished as law, principles and rules
in morals and once again an appeal may profitably be made to
Physics.

The statements in theoretical Physics, says Toulmin are
stratified. On one level we find statements as to how far and
in what circumstances a law holds in respect of actual phenomena.
These are merely records of past facts found through experiments
and they take for granted the tenability of the law itself.
Then on another level we find such highly general and abstract
statements as 'light travels in straight lines' which are called principles; it is the middle level propositions, in the hierarchy of Physics, more or less general and abstract in nature, which are called laws. The reason why the 'Rectilinear Propagation of Light' is called a 'principle' whereas 'Snell's Law' a 'law' is that the principle serves as the keystone of Geometrical Optics in a way the law does not. It is not impossible to imagine a Geometrical Optics in which the law of refraction was different even though this would involve considerable changes in our conceptions and practice. But the Principle 'light etc' is almost indefeasible. To question it is to question the whole subject of Geometrical Optics as we know it, for, as though, it embodies in itself the geometrical mode of approach to experience. This approach is of the nature of something basic and fundamental and it is primarily through insight rather than through arguments that one comes to recognise it. It has therefore to be accepted or rejected on its own evidence. But a proposition like Snell's Law begins as an element in a hypothesis within Geometrical Optics -- something which cannot be explained without talking about light-rays. But as soon as its nature as a law is established it becomes a part of the theoretical background and can no longer be questioned in any ordinary sense. But since its place is within Geometrical Optics to change the form of the law is not to abandon the whole approach altogether. But the propositions which are called laws in Physics are not all of the same nature,
some are more abstract and general than the others. At one extreme we find statements like Boyle's Law (pressure and volume of a gas vary inversely at a given temperature), which are not very abstract and are called phenomenological laws. At the others there are such laws as Newton's Three Laws of Motion or Maxwell's Laws or Principles of Electromagnetism. Such laws do not directly account for any observed phenomena but provide a framework for phenomenological laws which do so.

A similar stratification is to be found in morals. Apart from the statements which directly concern the desirability of an action in particular (such as, you should have visited your sister-in-law yesterday as you told her you would) there are statements of a moral nature which belong to different levels of abstraction and generality.

But perhaps it is necessary to indicate in what sense I am using the words 'abstract' and 'general' before I go into the question of different levels of moral statements.

A statement is general if it is meant to apply not to any one object in particular but different objects of a particular kind, that is to say, objects which are describable in some way by one name, although they may be different from one another as particulars. For instance, the statement 'Red is a pleasant colour' is a general statement for it applies to various shades of red somewhat different from one another. But statements have different levels of generality. A statement belongs to a higher level of generality if the particular to which it
applies can also be classified into different kinds under one conception that the statement involves. That is to say, the objects referred to by the statement are describable by different names within the scope of a definite conception involved in the statement, and these names stand not so much for objects as distinct particulars as for features which some of them may be considered to have in common with one another. For instance, the statement 'colours add to the gaiety of an occasion' belongs to a higher level of generality than the statement, 'Red is a pleasant colour.' The term 'colour' refers to qualities grouped under the names 'red', 'green', etc., which signify not so much any one quality in particular as features common between a variety of particular qualities.

To say that a statement belongs to a high level of generality means that it involves classification and reclassification of particular objects encountered in experience on the basis of features found to be common between some of them. The objects with which we have direct contact in experience are distinct from one another as particular things. But in a highly general statement we are not concerned with objects as distinct particulars but as members of various groups and subgroups as we find them to be on the basis of a related series of conceptions. It is therefore not about particular objects in the same sense as a distinctively particular statement or even a statement of a low level of generality is. And the validity or tenability of a highly general statement cannot
be checked or determined in the same way as we check or determine the validity of a particular statement or of a statement of a low level of generality, for such a statement, even though removed from particulars of experience in a way in which a purely particular statement is not, still has more direct connection with them than a higher level statement. For instance, the statement 'People who live in 2 Wickam Street are very noisy' has more direct connection with one's particular experiences involving people in 2 Wickam Street than has the statement 'human beings are social animals' with any of one's direct and particular experiences. People we know are individual persons whom we classify as our relations, friends, acquaintances, neighbours, etc. These groups again come under other groups of a progressively higher order like Englishmen, British, Europeans. The conception of human beings is a grouping of still higher order for it includes peoples of different continents, civilisations and cultures. Again the social nature which human beings show includes various kinds of tendencies like, desire for the company of others, pleasure in such company, pain when devoid of such company for long and so on. A desire for the company of others again includes different sorts of things which an individual does or feels at different times and these are what we directly know of. We cannot therefore have particular and direct experiences which tell us about the social nature of human beings in the same way as some of our relatively direct experiences tell us about the noisy
nature of some individual human beings. Nevertheless, the statement 'human beings are social animals' is a significant statement if it provides an explanation for various actions of many different individual persons in different parts of the world. A highly general statement which has established its significance by providing us with an explanation of certain things that happen on the whole cannot therefore be falsified or made untenable by the contrary evidence of a particular or of particulars. It only restricts the application of the statement to instances that we find cannot be grouped with others with which we might have grouped them had we not come to know of specific reasons for not doing so. And this is not surprising considering that a highly general statement is removed from the individual nature of particulars by several levels of abstraction.

As to the term 'abstract'. A situation of experience as we find in actual life is more or less complex, i.e., we can discern various aspects or features in the totality of a situation of experience or say various things about it. Let us take for instance a situation in which one comes in contact with a flower. One may make distinctions between the various things that can be said about it, like its name, colour, scent, the climate and period of the year in which it blooms, its origin, beauty and so on. Our statements deal only with aspects of all that may be considered to be involved in any situation of experience and in that respect they are all
abstract. However, statements belong to different levels of abstraction in so far as aspects or features with which they deal are more or less connected with any definite and specific situation of experience or type of situation. The statement 'this flower blooms in early spring' is less abstract than the statements 'flowers are beautiful things' which in its turn is less abstract than the statement 'enjoyment of beauty enriches life'. The more abstract a statement is the less is the feature it deals with discernible as something definite and specific in the way an object, quality, event or action is discernible as such in any particular situation of experience. This is because statements of a higher level of abstraction deal not with things which may be perceived as particulars but with features which may be discerned or conceived to be there in many different situations of experience involving particular objects when we work at them in a certain way. Because of this an understanding of their meaning presupposes a greater range and variety of experiences to be undergone by an individual than does the understanding of a less abstract statement. These experiences can be embodied in statements belonging to lower levels of abstraction and it is through their mediation that a statement of a higher level of abstraction becomes significant for experience. For instance, the statement 'enjoyment of beauty enriches life' becomes meaningful only through the mediation of such experiences as are expressed in a statement like 'flowers are beautiful'. The expression 'enjoyment of beauty' and the
notion of enrichment of life signify nothing for an individual of which he can have an experience unless he knows what is involved in the appreciation of specific objects as beautiful. This does not mean, of course, that the statements of a higher level of abstraction are any less true, tenable or significant whichever of the terms we may choose as applicable in their cases. Only, what is implied in their being significant is not the same sort of things which are implied in the significance or truth of a statement of a low level of abstraction; and we cannot judge the tenability of statements belonging to different levels of abstraction by the same standards. For the sort of experience which backs up a statement like 'this flower blooms in early spring' is not the sort of experience which can back up a statement like 'enjoyment of beauty enriches life'. This difference we express by calling the latter sort of experience as fuller or richer or by some such term.

Now to come back to moral statements. Moral statements which belong to a low level of abstraction and generality are of the nature of conventional rules of a particular society. In England it is customary to express appreciation of a service done or a compliment paid by saying 'Thank you', and politeness requires that one should say it. In some parts of the world such appreciation is conveyed through means other than verbal utterances. The statement 'one should respond with 'thank you' to services rendered or compliments paid' is then a rule which then applies to some people and not others, at least not
unconditionally. Further, this rule concerns situations and actions which are rather specifically defined. Then we have statements which belong to a higher level of generality and abstraction that are usually called principles like the statement 'one ought to tell the truth' or 'one ought to keep one's promises'. These statements are concerned with ideals of human behaviour not only for particular groups of human beings but human beings in general. Further, what one is required to do by these principles are not quite so specific and definite as is the case with a conventional rule. To tell the truth is not to utter any expression or sentence in particular in every situation in which the principle is relevant. Nor does keeping a promise mean doing any one thing in particular. These conceptions stand not for any particular speech or action, but for features which may characterise many different instances of speech and action. But moral principles themselves belong to different levels of generality and abstraction. For instance, the law 'one ought to be trustworthy'. One can be trustworthy in a wide variety of situations in which the principles about truth-telling and keeping a promise are not relevant. The conception of 'being trustworthy' involves even less specific and definite activities than do the conceptions of 'telling the truth' and 'keeping a promise'. Rather it provides a kind of framework within which the other two principles operate. That is to say, we may look upon the actions involved in telling the truth and keeping a promise as different ways of being trust-
worthy. Finally, we come to moral principles of a very high degree of generality and abstraction like 'Be respectful to the needs and interests of other people in the same way as you want them to be respectful to yours'. The situations in which we can do what this principle asks of us is far wider than the situation in which we can speak the truth, keep a promise, or even be trustworthy. Moreover this principle tells us even less definitely than the others as to what exactly we are to do which we have to find out by ourselves guided by the ideal stated in the principle. And there is no end to the ways in which we can do what this ideal wants us to do. It is, of course, true that every principle is a formal statement and it does not deliver to us the particular actions to be performed, it only guides us in terms of an ideal standard to choose the action that will be fitting to the situation as viewed morally. The Principle asks us to tell the truth, but it does not say what exactly I should tell the man who is asking me where I had kept the key of the safe. Even so, the guidance is specific enough for me to know without hesitation what to say if I am to tell the truth. But a principle which is highly abstract like 'Be considerate etc' puts before us an ideal the significance of which we can grasp only through our respecting the lower level ideals. We cannot be considerate to people's needs and interests without doing lots of things which lower level ideals ask of us like, -- telling the truth to respect one's desire to know, keeping a promise so as not to frustrate someone's reasonable
expectations, respecting someone's confidence in us so not to upset the background of security in which he arrives at decisions and so on. This principle then is of the nature of an ideal for lower level principles rather than one which directly concerns our actions.

Finally, we come to the most abstract and general of all moral judgments 'Treat every man as an end in himself'. This judgment is more than a principle and Kant calls it 'the moral law' as it defines the very moral approach to experience. (Thus the level of statements which are called laws in Physics are called principles in morals and a statement which is comparable to a principle in Physics is here called the moral law). The question of respecting moral principles cannot arise for an individual unless he somehow acknowledges that every man is an end in himself. One can question a conventional rule or even a fairly general principle in a particular situation but one cannot question the moral law itself without repudiating the moral point of view altogether. What the law tells us is an ideal standard in terms of which to approach individual human beings -- the ideal that every man by virtue of the fact that he is capable of undergoing certain experiences which no other kind of being or thing that we know of is capable of undergoing or that he is capable of approaching all that he does or all that happens to him with a certain degree of intelligence (presupposed in his ability to use language in respect of objects not present before his senses) and intensity of emotion is possessed of a
certain basic worth or fundamental value; and this is irrespec-
tive of any special value that he may possess or lack. An
individual has this value whether he is very intelligent or
relatively stupid, very skilled at his job or unskilled, very
artistic or insensitive to questions of beauty and so on. In
so far as this is the case he is deserving of a certain minimum
of considerate treatment by his fellow-individuals in the fur-
therance of his particular ends and purposes, unless of course
such ends and purposes conflict with those of others. In cases
where such conflict is involved the law by itself is no longer
sufficient for resolving it and appeal has also to be made to
some other special factor or factors present in the situations.
Real circumstances of life are so highly complex that a situation
in which the needs and purposes of individuals do not at all
conflict is rather rare. Moreover, what we have here called
a minimum of considerate treatment is no fixed quantity which
every one can get hold of irrespective of the nature of the need,
its strength, occasion and so on. It is of the nature of an
ideal and not an actual measuring rod, like an yardstick. The
principle therefore does not tell us how exactly we should behave
when human beings are affected, it only sets before us an ideal
in terms of which our treatment of human beings is to be guided.
The conception of 'treating people' is highly abstract and not
anything definite and specific and we understand what it means
through our understanding of relatively specified ways of
behaving like -- being friendly, unfriendly or indifferent;
telling the truth, telling a lie or giving an evasive answer; rendering help towards what one is engaged in, trying to hinder it, or taking no notice whatsoever and so on. These more specified ways of behaving come under the scope of moral principles but the principles themselves can only be called moral if there is a fundamental and characteristic kind of approach to human experience to which they all testify.

Now I have said that moral rules, principles and the law belong to different levels of generality and abstraction. It might therefore be felt that what we call 'morals' is a hierarchical system in which a statement about the desirability of a particular action is deduced from a conventional rule which in its turn is deduced from a principle relatively more general and abstract and so on until we come to the law itself which is the universal major premise of all moral inferences. This will, however, be a misunderstanding about the nature of moral thinking and inference. A process of moral inference, we have already noticed, is neither an inductive nor a deductive process. We may decide that a man is blameworthy because he did not say 'thank you' to a fellow passenger who restored to him the purse he was going to leave behind. But this decision is not arrived at as a result of deduction from the rule 'one ought to respond by 'thank you', etc,' inspite of the fact that the rule is a general statement which is respected by the particular decision. Rather the decision arrived at is in accordance with the rule which gives us a licence, as it were, to think and infer in a certain way in
relation to characteristic approach to the facts concerned. That conventional rules are not deductively connected with moral principles is quite obvious. Two opposed conventional practices in the institution of marriage like polygamy and monogamy may both mean the working out (this need not necessarily be the case) of the principle 'Be considerate to the needs and purposes of every human being' in widely different circumstances of social life. But neither follows deductively from it.

Again, the principle 'tell the truth' is not arrived at by a process of deduction from the law 'treat every man as an end in himself', even though the principle may in a certain sense be considered to be included in it. For it is possible that in a particular case we cannot tell a man the truth precisely because we treat him as an end in himself. Rather we find that, speaking generally, telling the truth is more in accordance with the law than not doing so. It is precisely because there is no deductive connection between different levels of moral statements that it is quite possible for someone to believe in the authority of the moral principle 'one should keep one's promises' and yet judge that he should not keep a particular promise in circumstances of a very specific kind. Or again, he may believe that every man is an end in himself and yet decide to hinder some of the purposes of an individual person.

Finally, we come to the other question we have left unanswered, the question, 'how do we tell a valid inference from
an invalid one in the absence of a standard test?" In this connection a further question will perhaps arise, the question, 'How do we come to choose an abstract and general statement to be a satisfactory standard of moral judgments?' Or to put it in other words, 'why is the conception of keeping a promise and not breaking it to be accepted as a value-ideal for human behaviour?' These questions are ultimately unanswerable and they are expressions not so much of doubt as of wonder or puzzle. It is not doubted that we do find a difference between moral inferences which are tenable and which are not, for to do so will be to doubt the significance of the whole moral approach. Only one finds it puzzling that we should be able to tell the difference without having a formula for judging the correctness of this kind of inference. Again, it is not doubted that keeping a promise and not breaking it is a satisfactory moral standard; only one wonders how we know this to be the case for we cannot offer satisfactory arguments which will compel anyone to believe that this is the case. No doubt, such wonder and puzzle when thought of in abstraction from the context in which they occur may easily look like cases of genuine doubt. But those who really doubt such matters doubt the possibility of the moral approach itself. And a person either makes such an approach or he does not; he cannot be made to do so through arguments. There is logic in moral reasoning but the very possibility of this reasoning cannot be logically induced.

Although no answer in the ordinary sense of the term can
be given to such questions, it is still possible to say something which might help towards the lessening of the puzzle or wonder. We know that people differ in their sensitivity to moral values — whether this is original or a result of environmental influences is here beside the point — just as they differ in intellectual or artistic abilities. Some are very keenly aware of the difference that there is, say, between acting dishonestly and acting with honesty; others are more or less blind to it. But those who perceive or recognise the difference between moral value and disvalue cannot but know that there is a difference. Further there exist a great deal of agreement between people on recognising certain ways of behaving as value-ideals of human conduct and that is why we are able to talk about them in general terms. Such recognition is not primarily produced by conscious deliberations, rather the appreciation of the difference between what stands for a value-ideal of human behaviour and what does not constitutes a kind of primitive or non-argumental wisdom on the part of a human personality in his response to circumstances of life involving human relations and conduct. I have used the word 'primitive' to indicate that this difference must first be recognised before it is reflected on or consciously thought about. It is a kind of basic recognition of certain features or characteristics of aspects of one's experience beyond which we cannot go. By saying that this wisdom is primitive I do not mean that a man is born with a ready made understanding of such
distinctions nor do I wish to suggest that a considerable degree of mental maturity coupled with a widening field of experience is not presupposed in one's coming to make such distinctions. What I wish to say is that it indicates a level of understanding which cannot be resolved into all that has gone before or all that has contributed towards it. And when it appears it can stand on its own right and does not need a support to indicate its significance or tenability.

This means that those who recognise it do not want to be convinced about it through arguments and those do not cannot be convinced, just as people who are not colour blind would not want to be convinced about the difference between red and green and those who are colour blind are not in a position to be so convinced. This is perhaps the reason why Hutcheson used the conception of a moral sense, analogous to the physical senses, for the perception of moral differences. And since it is quite obvious that there is nothing in a human personality which corresponds literally to the idea of a special kind of 'sense' for perceiving moral differences, other thinkers have used the word 'intuition' to indicate that these differences are perceived to be so without the help of any inference from other acknowledged facts. But then intuition is nothing special to morals for in this particular sense all the basic and primitive differences in human experience -- and these are of many kinds -- are intuited.

What is called moral intuition is not a distinct kind of

For a fuller consideration of this question see the chapter 'In what sense do we intuit moral characteristics?'
recognition but a recognition of distinctive differences. Whether we use the word 'intuition' or not we cannot go beyond the fact that the difference between the presence of moral values and the lack of them is perceived or recognised, and it exists or is of indisputable relevance and importance in human affairs for those who recognise it.

To be able to draw a satisfactory moral inference is to be able to judge whether a particular instance of human behaviour is in accordance with a value-ideal or not although it may well be that such judgment is more often than not unreflective. This accordance is something that we find or do not (this finding is helped by our understanding of the various factors involved in the situation but not delivered out of it); just as we find that if the sun is shining directly on to a six foot wall from an angle of elevation of 30° the shadow behind the level ground is ten and a half feet deep in accordance with the principle 'light travels in straight lines'. However much we wonder that this should be the case, we cannot deny that it is so.
ARE ETHICAL QUESTIONS QUESTIONS OF LANGUAGE?

To say that a question is a question of language might mean several things. Here I shall concern myself with the following interpretations of it. What is common between these interpretations is the view that a question is a question of language because it is not concerned with facts or cannot be so concerned.

A question is a question of language because:

1. The problems it is concerned with are logical in nature. The procedure proper to the answering of this question is an analysis of the logical peculiarities of the terms used in their connection.

2. An answer to the question does not require any inquiry into the nature of facts but follows from the definitions we choose to adopt of the terms involved.

3. The kind of things the question deals with are not facts. It is not therefore important to ask such questions, and if asked, can only be settled in terms of some linguistic conventions.

4. The question is such that whatever answer we may give to it does not make any appreciable difference to our understanding of facts that are really important in this connection. It does not therefore matter what we say.
(5) It is concerned with the problem of thinking or talking about things and has no bearing on our conduct.

(6) It is paradoxical and is asked because of some muddle caused by the language we have used and does not involve any real doubt concerning matters of fact. It can be answered both by 'yes' and 'no' if all the facts involved—which we know and do not doubt—are brought before our minds.

"Ethics", says Hare in the preface to his book "The Language of Morals", "as I conceive it, is the logical study of the language of morals." This, of course, does not necessarily mean that moral problems are not factual. It might mean that the best approach to the understanding of facts ethics deal with is through a logical analysis of terms used in morals. For language is logical in so far as the terms employed successfully convey the distinctive differences and similarities between relevant aspects of our experience; so it is possible to understand the characteristics of a specific kind of facts through an understanding of the logic of the terms used to convey their nature. Yet the logical analysis Hare carries out of such ethical terms as 'right', 'ought', 'good', does not bring us any nearer to what are morally right and good. Nor—if what is right or good has such a specifically individual character that a general formulation of it independently of the context to which it belongs is impossible—does it offer us a suitable criterion by which what is of moral value can be distinguished
from what is not. The only criterion Hare suggests is that moral value concerns conduct about which we get easily stirred up or which concerns man as man. "We get stirred up about moral goodness in a way that few people get stirred up about technical or other sorts of goodness."1 Again, "We get stirred up about the goodness of men because we are men. This means that the acceptance of a judgment that such and such a man's act is good in circumstances of a certain sort, involves the acceptance of the judgment that it would be good, were we ourselves placed in similar circumstances, to do likewise. And since we might be placed in similar circumstances, we feel deeply about the question.2 We get stirred up, says Hare, if Mrs. Smith does not pay her fare on the Railways because we might ourselves be travelling. But it is quite possible that a person who uses the Railways almost every day gets stirred up only because Mrs. Smith is caught, and that he would not be in the least disturbed if Mrs. Smith's action, which he knows of, passed unnoticed by Railway authorities. He might even contemplate following her example.

This criterion therefore is much too vague to make us see the distinctive nature of morality. The major part of Hare's analysis is logical in the sense that it concerns the language of morals and not in the sense that it concerns the facts such language deals with. Here I shall attempt to state very briefly what Hare has to say about ethical terms. If a sentence uses the term 'right' it really is an imperative

1. The Language of Morals. P.140 - 141.
2. Ibid P.141.
sentence and not an indicative one. A moral command to do something cannot be derived from facts but presupposes an imperative sentence whose function is prescriptive (i.e. it tells us to do something) rather than descriptive (which tells us that something is the case). The inference involved in a moral decision is as rigorous as any other inference, only with this difference that it contains an irreducible prescriptive element as its premise. The meaning of the term 'good' is both evaluative and descriptive, but in morals it is the evaluative sense that is primary. However, evaluation is nothing peculiar to morals as it is present in all value judgments, instrumental or intrinsic. Its evaluative meaning lies in this that it commends something to our choice. 'X is good' means X is the sort of man we should choose to become, just as 'this is a good chronometer' means this is the chronometer or sort of chronometer we should choose if we were going to buy one. And we understand the meaning of these sentences independently of any criteria of goodness that there may be. Similarly the term 'ought' has a descriptive force but its primary function 'is to prescribe or advise or instruct; and this function can be fulfilled when no information is being conveyed. It is an answer to the question 'what shall I do'.

There is much more in this book, of course, that is instructive and important. What is relevant for my purpose here is to note that Hare's analysis is, in the main, concerned not to much with the facts of morals as with the language of morals. Now,
it is not my intention to suggest that an inquiry into the language of morals is not profitable, nor am I concerned with the details of the analysis itself. All I wish to say is that there are problems of morals over and above the problems that are peculiar to the language of morals, and if one has tackled the latter one has not necessarily tackled the former as well. But it does not appear that Hare has made a distinction between these two different sorts of problems; rather he may be taken to suggest that a discussion of the questions connected with the language of morals means a discussion of the problems of morals itself. This is what he says at the beginning of his preface.

"I have set out in this book to write a clear, brief, and readable introduction to ethics which will bring the beginner as directly as possible to grips with the fundamental problems of the subject." It does not seem to me that the fundamentals of morals have sufficiently been touched upon in this book. Whether Hare admits the distinction mentioned above I do not know. But I am afraid his treatment of the subject may be taken to support the view that ethical questions are not questions of fact.

Some philosophers believe that questions like 'What is justice?' traditionally asked by the body of enquiry called 'ethics' are verbal questions. "What do we really mean when we speak of 'justice'?" Asks Popper. "I do not think that verbal questions of this kind are particularly important, or that it is possible to give a definite reply to them, since such terms are always used in various senses."  

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Now, there is a sense in which some questions in ethics are verbal. Suppose the question is, 'Is it just that a person born into a low caste should not be allowed to enter a temple where the higher castes worship God?' (Until Gandhi took up their cause, there was a time when people belonging to the untouchable caste were not allowed to enter some temples in India.) The answer may be 'yes' or 'no'. Those who would say 'yes' would perhaps define justice as a state of affair where people keep to the rights and duties belonging to their station in life so that the harmony of the social structure is not disturbed. If a social structure in its entirety is such that it needs an untouchable caste, then it is just, according to this conception, that untouchables should not demand the same rights as others. If, on the other hand, by a just state of affair we mean one where every individual is treated as potentially equal to every other in respect of fulfilment of needs - provided that such needs do not necessarily interfere with the needs of others which we may consider to be legitimate under the circumstances - and any actual difference made is based on the merits and capabilities of the individuals concerned, then the answer is 'no'. We all need the respect and recognition of our fellow individuals. This need is frustrated if some people are treated as inferior to others for no other reason than the fact that they are born in a family the status of which in the structure of the society is already fixed as

1. This conception does not describe any actually existing state of affairs but we consider existing state of affairs as more or less just according as they satisfy its requirements.
low independently of any considerations of the merits and capabilities of its members. The question we have asked can be considered to be verbal in so far as the answer follows naturally from the definition of justice involved. But is there any reason why we should accept both these definitions as equally satisfactory? To say that because the term 'justice' is used in various senses, all we are entitled to do is to make it clear what amongst the various possible senses we are adopting for the purposes of discussion and not judge in what sense it ought to be used, is to be guilty of a sort of naturalism.

The question, 'What is justice?' is verbal says Popper. Nevertheless he offers us what he considers to be the essential requirements of it. "... (a) an equal distribution of the burden of citizenship, i.e. of those limitations of freedom which are necessary in social life; (b) equal treatment of the citizens before the law, provided, of course, that (c) the laws themselves neither favour nor disfavour individual citizens or groups or classes; (d) impartiality of the courts of justice; and (e) an equal share in the advantages (and not only in the burden) which their membership of the state may offer to the citizen."¹ These, of course, are not provided for in the definition that Plato gives of 'justice' in the Republic and as a result he comes under severe criticism in "the open Society" and is even blamed for his unjust intentions. If this is a verbal question it is difficult to see how Popper is justified in being so hard on Plato, since presumably, people are entitled to differ on

¹. Ibid. F.77.
questions that are verbal (the reason why they are called verbal), so long as they make it clear how they are using a term. It may, of course, be said that Popper considers the verbal question to be unimportant, not the moral one. But if Plato is engaged in the 'Republic' with the question of defining 'justice' and if the question of defining 'justice' is purely a verbal question then it is possible theoretically at any rate, that Plato's moral views are not unacceptable no matter how he defines 'justice'. If this does not sound plausible then perhaps the confusion is caused by the theory that the question of definition is purely a verbal question, (no doubt there is a verbal question involved as well in the question of definition) and not a question of adequate characterisation of certain facts as well.

There is another possible sense in which this question may be said to be verbal. Individual human personalities are very complex psychophysical organisms and their needs and capabilities are of various kinds and degrees; so is a society with its peculiar configuration manifested in its diverse but inter-related institutions. It is possible that even if we agree on a definition of justice, which is necessarily very general and formal, we may be unable to deduce from it any definite conclusion regarding a particular society. An inference concerning the just character of a society may run as follows:

The state of affairs P.Q.R. is just.

(and this is agreed)

The society X exhibits P.Q.R.
The society X is just.

The minor premise in a syllogism stands for some observed fact. But it is the minor premise in this particular case, that society X exhibits P.Q.R. that will be the occasion of most serious disagreement. One of the requirements of justice mentioned by Popper is that laws should show neither favour nor disfavour towards individual citizens or groups or classes. Now the very conception of a law (in the legal sense) implies that its transgressors should be punished according to some definite standard no matter who they are. In most societies there is a law against stealing. Suppose that a man in a highly industrialised society is unemployed for sometime and some of his essential needs are frustrated over a period of time due to lack of money. This man steals, is brought before the court and is punished. Another man, who holds a highly paid job, would, of course, receive the same punishment if he commits the same offence. Do the laws in this society show neither favour nor disfavour towards individual citizens, groups or classes? Some may say 'yes' and others 'no'. Those who would say 'no' may do so because the particular laws that exist are necessary for the harmonious working of any society and these laws are administered with strict impartiality. Those who would say 'yes' may do so because they believe that the laws of an economically developed society should guarantee employment, and a wage adequate for maintaining a standard of life compatible with the economic potentialities of the society in question, to every able and willing individual. If such laws are non-existent
then it can-not be said that laws show neither favour nor disfavour. Nor does the disagreement end here. The questions 'What are the economic potentialities of this society?' and 'What sort of standard of life is decent in this society considering that its economic potentialities are of such and such character?' are not easy to solve and require specialised knowledge for their discussion. Moreover, they give rise to further questions in the process of our trying to solve them.

It is thus evident that the just character or otherwise of a particular society cannot be arrived at by a process of simple deduction from the definition of justice. And substantially the same disagreement may remain about some vital factual questions like 'do the laws favour or disfavour any individual group or class in this society?' or 'do people in this society enjoy a standard of life compatible with its economic potentialities?' no matter how we define justice. It may therefore be felt that the question of definition of justice is a verbal question and not one that concerns matters of fact. But those who feel this way are really demanding the impossible. How can a definition of justice tell us what the economic possibilities of a particular society are? If we want an answer to this question, supposing this question can be answered, we shall have to find out a lot of things about those specific kinds of facts which are technically known as economic.

But it is necessary to ask exactly how the question of defining justice is a factual question; and in this connection the
distinction between form and matter of thought is important. Broadly speaking this is a distinction between something we think about and some characteristic manner in which we think about it, which gives whatever we are thinking about a distinctive appearance. This distinction is comparable to the distinction that exists between the form and matter, say, of poetry.

Let us take for example the poem 'Composed upon Westminster Bridge' by Wordsworth. Its subject matter is the city of London and its touching majesty which stimulated Wordsworth's imagination. But we do not know all about the poem by knowing this. Nor would the poem be the same poem if it was written in blank verse. The fact that it is a sonnet concerns this poem as much as the fact that it deals with the beauty of London. The same thing may of course be written in blank verse and one may say that Wordsworth's choice was arbitrary. Yet, it was not. For the very fact that Wordsworth chose a sonnet form while others were available, shows that his concern was not only with saying that London is a beautiful city, but also with doing that in some definite specific way, and in this sense his choice was not arbitrary but fitting to the emotions and ideas which lie behind this poem. (To say that the sonnet form ill-fitted his subject would be to say something different from the point at issue) The sonnet form is an aspect of the fact or groups of facts which we may refer to as the creative poetic impulse and imagination which took shape in this poem. It thus

1. I have already discussed the formal character of moral principles in greater detail in the previous chapter.
conveys information about the poem itself although not about what it deals with, for many different subject-matters may be fitted into the sonnet form.

Let us now take an example of a moral judgment, 'Slavery is just'. Slavery is the concrete and particular state of affair that is being judged and so it may be called the content of this judgment. But we must have some conception of justice to be able to say 'Slavery is just', as this is not a judgment of identity. Not only slavery but different other social institutions and human relations may also be said to be just if they satisfy this conception. This conception may therefore be said to be the form of these judgments from the point of view of morality. There are, of course, important differences in the way in which 'sonnet' constitutes the form of a poem and the way the concept of 'justice' constitutes the form of many moral judgments. Sonnet is a characteristic arrangement in which a poem is cast, whereas justice is a standard by which something or other is valued. In a poem the form and content are two entirely different things and are easily recognisable to be so. The form here cannot be predicated of the content, we cannot say, London from Westminster Bridge is a sonnet. But we do say, slavery is just. This is because justice is not the form of slavery itself. It is the form of a value judgment of which slavery forms the content. Our form of speech 'Slavery is just' creates a feeling that slavery and justice are not two different things and this makes it difficult to see the two
different elements in this judgment which are distinct—that which is being judged and the standard according to which it is being judged. The fact that there is a standard here involved is implicit and its presence can be felt only by a process of reflective analysis. To say that the concept of 'justice' is formal is to say that it does not signify any concrete and particular state of affairs like the arrangement of social relations which is signified by the relatively concrete term 'slavery', rather it stands for some characteristics of human relations that may be discerned in many concrete and particular state of affairs; just as the term 'sonnet' does not signify any particular subject-matter that may form the content of a poem, but stands for a characteristic arrangement in which different subject-matters may find poetic expression.

The term 'sonnet' stands for a form but it is still factual. That is to say it is not merely the way in which we talk about a certain kind of poetry, it is also the way in which some poems are arranged. (What is purely verbal is the fact that we give this particular arrangement this particular name) Similarly the concept of justice is formal and yet factual and not purely verbal. To say that some social institutions or human relations are just is not just a way of talking about them.

It is also a way of pointing to some of their characteristics

1. The term 'slavery' itself when used as a value term may become the form rather than the content of a judgment, as in the judgment 'But this is slavery!' I passed by one who has come to know of the caste system for the first time. Here it constitutes the form of judgment in as much as here the term 'slavery' embodies a conception in terms of which a certain actually existing state of affairs is being judged.
which we may consider to be of value in human relations as revealing their character and conduct when we look at them in a distinctive way.

Here no doubt is involved a difficulty. If we examine people's conduct and character, we find that they do not express a uniform conception of value. In fact they are often inconsistent with one another. Nevertheless we also find that there are certain conceptions of value which a rational being cannot but accept. If people are asked 'which of the two possibilities do you prefer in judging a concrete case of conduct - supposing that one is free to choose either - (a) that people should be treated as ends in themselves or (b) that they should be treated as other peoples' means?' there would hardly be any disagreement amongst thoughtful people, although they may not quote agree as to what sorts of treatment in concrete detail are to be considered as instances of the former possibility under a certain complex circumstance. It is on these conceptions - which we may refer to as self-justifying principles of morals - that our ideas of what are of value in concrete human character and conduct are to be based. That is say we find those aspects of human character and conduct to be valuable which are not inconsistent with these principles of morals.

Here therefore the suggestion is that we are not at liberty to define justice just as we like if we are talking about some moral value and expecting others to accept it. We are free to do that of course, if we make no other claim than this that we
are proposing to use the term in a certain way in our discussions. A definition of justice which is formal may be factual or fail to be so.

Another difficulty in establishing the factual nature of a formal moral principle, is still not overcome. We have said that there are certain moral principles which a rational being finds self-justifying i.e. he accepts them because he finds he can-not but do so. It may be objected that such principles are therefore not factual but subjective. They tell us not about things but about ourselves - that we think (this includes evaluative thinking) of certain things in a certain way. Here of course, the term 'subjective' does not signify that such principles owe their character to purely personal choice of an individual. It means that such principles convey information about the value-attitudes of human beings and are therefore mental. But have we not come to know something about the 'nature of things' (in the sense of totality of creation) if we have found that some value-attitudes of human beings are substantially the same, even if such knowledge concerns our minds? But it is highly misleading to say that such knowledge is mental. In the world of values the ordinary distinction between mental and physical (or material) does not exist. That which is valued will not be valued unless we had a sense of value. That is to say, unless human beings possessed minds capable of considering certain things as more worthy of being valued than others even for their own sakes. There is a certain sense,
then, in which a value-fact is mental. But this sense is not such as to justify us in rejecting it in favour of something which exists independently of us, in the same way as we would be justified in rejecting a dream in favour of our experiences when we are awake. There is a certain sense in which a value-fact exists irreducibly, but it does not exist waiting to be perceived, it exists through our conceptions.1 Nevertheless, it does exist in the sense that it is not created by an individual fancy or in the sense that it stands for something which a great many individuals can think and talk of in common and which they can agree in accepting as desirable. Our value conceptions in morals, those that we accept because we cannot reject them, tell us about ourselves as well as about some characteristics of things that we value. There is nothing mysterious in this for what is valued by human beings looking at conduct rationally, will not be valued unless they had the value-attitudes they do have, or can have. These value-attitudes, which we have, or can have, therefore also tell us how the world of value is organised for rational beings. This is what Kant says in his doctrine of 'synthetic apriori' of practical reason.

One may accept Kant's synthetic apriori in the sense explained above and yet object that definitions of moral

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1. A similar observation holds true even in respect of certain so-called material things, e.g. a bridge that has been built over a river. Nobody would say that a bridge, as distinct from the materials used in building it, is mental, yet, it would not have existed unless human beings interfered in accordance with some definite ideas, with the nature that is purely out there.
principles make such difference to our practical moral behaviour. We may find that a rationally acceptable definition of justice shows the institution of slavery to be unjust. But the actual moral problem is 'what shall I do to remove this injustice?' and there a definition of justice is unable to render any help. This perhaps leads some people to believe that a definition is a way of thinking about things, but has no practical significance since it does not say what we should do to deal with an existing problem. Our task therefore is to get on with the job in our hands leaving the problem of definition to those who want to talk. But is it really so? Those who opposed slavery must have done so because they thought of justice differently from those who supported it. And what is a definition of 'justice' but thoughts - one's own and of other people - about certain states of affairs, thoughts that are gathered up and clearly formulated? I do not mean that the people who opposed slavery put their ideas down in paper or told it to themselves or others in clear and precise terms. But in order to find slavery unjust or to start doing something about it, one must have some conception of justice, however unconscious of it one might be. This is where the philosopher comes in. He makes explicit what is implicit in the conduct of those who oppose an institution because they think that it is unjust, or campaign for a particular reform because they consider that the state of affairs sought for removes some of the existing moral evils. A philosophical definition is not a proposal for some eccentric
use of a term; it is an attempt to formulate more clearly and precisely than is done in unreflective behaviour that use of a notion which satisfies (this at any rate is what the thinker who proposes a definition for the consideration of others believes) the value-attitudes of rational beings. To demand that a definition should not only guide our understanding of the nature of an institution when we wish to see if it is just or not, but must also tell us what concrete steps we should take if we wish to take action, is to refuse to carry the responsibilities of an intelligent agent. For this demand is virtually a demand that one should be able to go through life merely by following ready-made injunctions without ever having to think or act for oneself. He who demands this demands to be dictated and not merely to be guided. From the fact that a definition is concerned with facts it does not follow that all the wrongs of the world will right themselves once we have got hold of a satisfactory definition of 'justice'. Social problems are highly complex; they do not admit of a simple solution but need a patient and laborious approach to all the different aspects of it that are often involved in a question that is simply put.

It must, here be made clear that a definition however satisfactory, will not of itself cause people to see the value of whatever is defined if they do not already do so. If people do not prefer justice in social affairs they will not necessarily come to do so simply by being told how justice is to be defined.
If they do, it will not happen by a process of logical inference but through what is ordinarily called a 'change of heart'. However, most people do prefer justice to injustice considered merely as alternative moral standards. What in concrete details of social life constitute its manifestations, is primarily the question that leads to disagreement.

It might here be useful to see how a definition may guide us in dealing with a concrete social problem. Here we shall deal with a problem that concerns an aspect of the caste system. The traditional caste structure does not allow intermarriage between people who belong to different castes. There are still some people in India who oppose such intermarriage not because they believe they are thereby serving the cause of injustice, but because they think that justice can only be preserved by such opposition. Intermarriage is a blow to the whole caste structure. The question of marriage between people belonging to different castes is much more than a question of happiness of the people concerned, it involves a potential danger to the harmony and preservation of the society itself, for it unsettles existing arrangements. Justice requires that those who want their happiness at the cost of the stability of the society they live in, are not to be encouraged. Thus runs the argument. Here 'stability', 'harmony' and 'preservation' are treated as concepts of intrinsic worth, and so they are. An unstable society characterised by internal discord and lack of cohesion, would certainly not be a just society. Is justice
then the same as preservation and harmony? The critic of inter-caste marriage who believes himself to be defending justice has to say 'yes'; for if justice is something different from these concepts then one's defence of a system in terms of them is not necessarily a defence of justice. Let us assume that the critic is a religious man and in this assumption we shall not be far wrong. For as a matter of fact, it is extremely unlikely that someone in India who believes in the justice of a traditional system like caste, would also not believe in God. Now, let us ask the defender of this sense of justice a question. Suppose that a dictator comes to power and passes a law that no man is to worship God, for religious faith enslaves men's minds and makes them incapable of rational thinking and material progress. And suppose that he has the support of a powerful section of the population and the most important people in the police and military forces are also fairly under his control. Individual opposition would certainly result in self-destruction, and any attempt at organised opposition will divide the country into opposing groups and may ultimately result in civil war causing serious unsettlement of the social structure. Must we yield to this law if we want to serve the cause of justice? The critical will hardly agree to this. He may of course, say that this law is itself unjust for it is directed at changing the society as hitherto existing. But then every law passed causes some change or other in the hitherto existing arrangements of society, and we cannot say
that no law should ever be passed in any society. If the critic says this, his conception of justice is not just stability and harmony, it represents a state of absolute standstill. If it is said that a law should bring about only small changes, we have moved away from the notion of preservation in toto, and are simply saying that we should be discriminative when we want to change existing arrangements. Justice then means discriminative change so that there is no great disruption in society. Discrimination in terms of what? To say that only small changes are to be allowed sounds like a quantitative solution. But it is not. No quantitative difference between a big and small social change may be made in the same way in which we make a distinction between ten pounds of potatoes and two. A law can only be judged by reference to the kind of change it intends to bring about not the amount of it. If so, justice is neither total preservation of existing structure nor quantitatively small changes of it, for we do not know what that means.

'Justice' of course implies that no individual shall seek his own happiness at the cost of happiness of others. Those who desire inter-caste marriage cause unhappiness to people who want to preserve the tradition of caste. Equally, those who oppose this marriage cause unhappiness to those who desire it. Between the happiness of two people who want to live a common life without interfering in the daily run of life of other individuals (the issue becomes complicated if such interference
is involved and needs a different approach) and that of those who are unhappy because rather big changes are happening to the traditionally existing structure of society, which shall we choose? If justice requires that every individual should have equal opportunity for the fulfilment of his needs - provided that such needs do not interfere with the fulfilment of other people's legitimate needs, then we must choose the former. It may be said that the attitude of the critic has become so deeply ingrained in him that he cannot be happy when things go against it; the opposition he shows thus represent a need of his nature. Why is it not required by justice that his need should be fulfilled?

Here we shall have to make a distinction between needs and needs and in this the notion of 'legitimacy' guides us. Any urge, desire, or sentiment felt by any human being may be said to be a need. But when different needs oppose one another, we consider those needs to be more legitimate which we find to be most intimately connected with the fundamental tendencies - ordinarily known as instincts - of human nature. That these tendencies exist we cannot deny even though they may take many different shapes in adult life as modified by the environmental influences. But it is not impossible for us to see their presence in human activities. But some psychologists tell us

1. Although in a society which is just in every way, needs which are legitimate will not oppose one another, it is possible that in a state of affair as actually existing it will be impossible to decide in a particular case which of the two opposing needs is more legitimate. Here the issue, if it can be settled, has to be settled by some other criterion than justice.
that human beings have some fundamental tendencies which are destructive and aggressive in nature. But such tendencies, even if natural, are not consistent with the conception of a society of individuals. It cannot, therefore, be considered legitimate that an individual living in a society should wish the fulfilment of such tendencies. Those natural tendencies are therefore legitimate which are compatible with the conception of social life. And those amongst human needs which are intimately connected with legitimate tendencies, are themselves legitimate which can be fulfilled in different individuals of a certain society consistently with one another under conditions of a particular nature. Justice requires that such fulfilment can legitimately be withheld from some and not from others only on comparative considerations of merit and demerit. I am afraid here a specification of these legitimate needs may be demanded. But to demand a specification of legitimate needs (not legitimate natural tendencies) which will hold true of every human being under every possible circumstance, is to confuse a standard of judgment with what is to be judged. The concept of 'legitimacy' is a standard by which human needs as they show themselves under certain characteristic conditions are judged to be worthy of fulfilment or not from the point of view of morality.

Now, if we compare the need of the critic with that of those who desire union with individuals of their choice even if they belong to a different caste, we shall have no difficulty in choosing which is more legitimate. For the need of those
whom the critic is opposing are intimately connected with certain legitimate natural tendencies, whereas the connection of the critic's need with any naturally felt tendency of a legitimate nature, is not obvious. We may therefore say that this 'need' need not exist and if it did not exist, the action of those whom he is opposing will not be inconsistent with the possibility of the happiness of others. The critic's need - not to experience opposition to his conception of justice which is not rationally defensible - is such that its very presence is inconsistent with the possibility of fulfilment of many human needs connected with legitimate natural tendencies. It is a part of the conception of justice that people can be treated differently in so far as their merits and capabilities differ. The theory that people who are born in a socially inferior caste are necessarily inferior in abilities, is now exploded. Let us suppose that the acquired merits of these two people are sufficiently similar to ensure a happy union. It is still possible that the social environment, which contributes to the shaping of attitudes and outlooks on life, being different for people of different castes, the marriage will be difficult to work out. But it is not then a question of justice. In any case, this has to be left to the individuals themselves and cannot be ruled by a general law. I have entered into this lengthy discussion of this question only to show that a definition of 'justice' (provided that we are interested in it as a concept of intrinsic worth) may help us to understand a concrete
social problem from the moral point of view and guide our choice between two possible alternatives in a particular case - defending or opposing a marriage between two people who belong to opposite castes.

I shall now consider another treatment of the question 'Are ethical questions questions of language?' as we find it in Wisdom's book "Other Minds". Wisdom considers that certain questions are not really questions although they look like them. They are not asked because of any doubt concerning matters of fact, for the answer does not and cannot make any difference to our beliefs regarding existing facts. "Whether we say of someone who asks of a text-book case of a leprechaun-driven watch "Is there an invisible leprechaun here?" that he is asking a joking question or making a joke, is a matter of choice, though the peculiarities of what he is doing are better brought out by saying that he is not asking a question. To say this removes confusion as to what he is doing, prevents abortive efforts to meet his demands, in the same way that to say of someone who asks, "Can one keep a promise unintentionally?" that he is not asking a question, prevents abortive efforts to satisfy him." 1 Again, the promise question dissolves into, "Is it in a case exhibiting features Sn-m . . . Sn proper to speak of promise-keeping, where the usage of 'promise-keeping' is not definite for such a case." 2

Here the suggestion is whether we call this promise-

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1. Other Minds P.32-33.
2. Ibid P.32.
keeping or not is a matter of deciding to use language in some way rather than another both allowed by usage. (i.e. some would speak like this, "If a promise is kept it certainly is a case of promise-keeping whether one intends to do so or not", others will say, "Although the promise is kept we cannot call it promise-keeping if the intention to do is lacking."). But whichever way we may decide to talk, the action which is being viewed morally remains what it is and the answer does not make us any wiser about it. This seems to me to be obviously true. But I do not think that the leprechaun question and the promise-keeping question are of quite the same kind. If a watch behaves funny and we say 'there is an invisible leprechaun in it' we are only expressing its behaviour in a more imaginative language and are not expecting anything more concerning the watch than we already know of. If we said 'there is an invisible brownie in it' our purpose will be served just the same. Now, let us examine the promise-keeping instance that Wisdom has given us. A has promised to B that he will leave his property to him. But he leaves it to his next of kin meaning his wife. Unknown to A his wife has died and as B happens to be A's next of kin, under the circumstances he comes into the property. Shall we say, 'A has kept his promise unintentionally?' This question is certainly a question of language in the way Wisdom suggests. But there may be a factual problem in this question - which is complex in spite of its apparent simplicity - apart from a verbal one. There are two distinct points involved in
the keeping of a promise, (1) one's character as is revealed in one's taking or not taking steps so as to ensure that what has been promised comes to pass, (2) some definite state of affairs which may be expected to come into existence when one has made a promise. When A deliberately takes steps against the promised state of affairs, he cannot be said to have acted as is required by the promise he has made and therefore he is not the man he should have been. We can only say that the state of affairs which can normally be expected to come into existence as a result of his having made a promise has come into existence although A did not intend it to be so. All this is expressed in a summary way by saying that A has kept his promise unintentionally. If we think from this form of speech that we can think of A as a man, since the letter of his promise has come to pass in the same way as we would if he acted in accordance with the requirements of the promise he has made, we shall be making a mistake, and a factual one, from the moral point of view. When we say that a man has kept a promise we do not merely talk about some results, we imply something about his character as well. In the case under consideration this implication is absent. It is possible that this question is asked because one feels a genuine perplexity whether everything is as it should be in this case although we are saying that A has kept his promise. It reveals that moral situations are complex, that our form of speech does not always adequately express all the relevant facts, and that further thinking may
be necessary for someone to avoid confusing some facts with others. The question 'Can a promise be kept unintentionally?' is therefore not necessarily a fake one or one whose answer lies merely in deciding on a point of language. Wisdom, of course, does not believe that metaphysical questions - and I have an impression that he considers ethical questions to be metaphysical - are meaningless, only they are paradoxical. They cannot be answered by 'yes' or 'no' as is the case with factual questions, but need a different kind of approach. For metaphysical questions involve no factual problem, and arise out of some perplexity in using language in respect of facts that we are familiar with. "The questions 'Does the word 'here' have different meanings when used at different places?' 'Does the word 'now' have different meanings at different times?' 'Does the word 'I' have different meanings in the mouths of different speakers?' haven't answers. But when we have explained what in each case there is to be said for the answer 'Yes' and what for the answer 'No' we have a new grasp of the familiar use of the familiar expressions 'here' 'now' and 'I', just as we may gain a new grasp of a familiar relationship as we struggle with the question "Is he afraid of her or isn't he?" As we answer such questions we at once gain in awareness of the particular pattern of events with which we are concerned and also recognise how fear, hate and love have a hundred heads and as many disguises. We don't learn this for we knew it but we gain a new awareness of it.¹

¹. Other Minds. P.255.
It is not exactly clear how we gain a new awareness of a pattern of events without learning something new about it. If we are just reminded of things that we know but which are not consciously in our minds at the moment, the process should perhaps be referred to as 'remembering' and not 'gaining a new awareness'. However, if the character of a metaphysical question is what is expounded above in the quotation from Wisdom, I doubt very much if we should say that all ethical questions are metaphysical (some no doubt are). For in a metaphysical question familiarity with relevant facts in respect of which no doubt exists either on the part of one who questions or one who answers is presumed. For if such doubt exists, the question becomes at least partly factual. Can we say that in all ethical questions it is perfectly understood by all concerned what amongst relevant facts are morally desirable and all that is necessary is to throw a new light on them (whatever that may mean) through clearing up linguistic muddles. Our experience of moral questions hardly bears this out. But perhaps Wisdom would say that when we speak of something or other as being morally desirable, only that which we are speaking of from a moral point of view is a fact but its aspect of desirability is not. But then his interpretation of a metaphysical question becomes somewhat different. It can no longer be defined as a case of linguistic paradox, but something else. For a fact then becomes something which can either be perceived by our senses or verified under some controlled condition.
Anything in human affairs which is not an instance of either of these two possibilities is not a fact. Judged by this standard ethical questions are surely metaphysical but not necessarily paradoxical. If a question is such that its answer cannot be checked by sense perception or verified under some controlled condition, it is not necessarily the case that it is asked because of some linguistic perplexity. Besides, Wisdom concludes about the metaphysical character of questions, so it seems to me, from their paradoxical nature, so as not to pre-judge what amongst our experience are facts and what not, but decide on the character of the question itself - factual or metaphysical - by examining if it makes any difference to facts or not. It will not be logical according to this procedure, to say that ethical questions are metaphysical because the sort of things they deal with cannot be verified, as what can-not be verified is not a fact. For then we have already made up our minds as to what questions are metaphysical and are not deciding on the metaphysical character of questions by finding out if they make any difference to facts or not. On Wisdom's procedure one has to show that no ethical question asked involve any factual doubt before one can say that they are metaphysical. This I do not think has been done. On the contrary, it appears that Wisdom himself at times believes that some ethical questions, at any rate if not all, may sometimes lead us to knowledge of facts. Yet he still refers to them as metaphysical. "Metaphysical questions are paradoxical questions with the
peculiarity that they are concerned with the character of question of discussions, of reasons, of knowledge. But this peculiarity does not make it impossible to carry through the reflection they call for so as to reveal the character of that with which they are concerned and thus, indirectly, the character of that with which they are concerned is concerned - time and space, good and evil, things and persons.¹ I take it that when Wisdom talks about the character of time and space, good and evil, things and persons being revealed in this revelation is contained more than all of us already know of so well that no scope for asking any genuine question about them exists. Metaphysical questions then may also be factual. If this is not what Wisdom means he should have said that in answering metaphysical questions we are reminded of the knowledge that we have regarding matters of fact. Even so it is still an admission that good and evil are matters of fact. If so, all ethical questions are not metaphysical, for it may happen that someone would be genuinely perplexed as to what is good under a certain circumstance. The upshot of all these is that all ethical questions do not have to be metaphysical, nor is it necessarily the case that every question asked is either metaphysical or factual. It may be metaphysical in some respects (in the sense of involving linguistic paradox) and factual in others.

¹ Other Minds P.259.
that ethical questions are metaphysical. What we value in concrete human conduct and character are judged to be so ultimately by applying the standard of some principles which a rational being finds to be self-justifying. When we find that some actual conduct or character is in accordance with these standards - if we disagree on this that is strictly not disagreement on value and the question is not in that respect ethical - there is no scope for any difference of opinion; our ethical questions therefore do not arise out of any real doubt regarding value and it must be that they are asked because of perplexities caused in our endeavour to express these values in language. Now it seems to me true that people in general have some understanding of ethical principles but this understanding is not of such character that a question on their nature cannot profitably be asked. To say that a principle is self-justifying is not to say that all that concerns its nature is so perfectly evident to all that no thinking is necessary. To ask a question is not necessarily to doubt that something or other is the case. Nor does it imply that what is asked about is completely new to the questioner. Few questions concern facts which have the simplicity of an identity proposition like 'A' is 'A'; so that we either know it or do not know it, and there is no middle way. Actual facts including those of moral nature we ask about or think about, are often very complex (the reason why we ask at all). And an attempt to answer a question which concerns a complex fact which the
questioner knows something about, may bring forward some aspects of it which he does not already know of, but finds acceptable in the light of what he does know, or knows so vaguely that he finds he has gained in knowledge when the question has been answered.

In light of what has been said so far, I would like to conclude that ethical questions are not necessarily questions of language.

The term 'rational' is used in respect of human beings or of issues human beings are concerned with. Here we are concerned with an issue and not primarily with human beings. I shall, therefore, simply indicate in what sense I intend to use it here in respect of human beings if I do refer to their rationality and appeal to usage in support of the sense I am making use of.

Human beings are considered to be rational:

1. If they are willing and able to support their attitudes and actions with reason (or reasons) which it is not impossible for people to whom it is offered to acknowledge as sufficiently compelling,

2. If they are willing and able to accept the reasons
In order to be able to discuss this question at all, we shall have to begin with an assumption that the term 'rational' is not meaningless. The question we are concerned with here would not exist if the term were meaningless. One may, of course, question in what particular sense a term is being used if usage allows several senses somewhat different from one another. We shall, therefore, consider some uses of the term before we proceed to answer this question.

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Human beings are considered to be rational

(1) if they are willing and able to support their attitudes and actions with reason (or reasons) which it is not impossible for people to whom it is offered to acknowledge as sufficiently compelling,

(2) if they are willing and able to accept the reasons
offered for or against any point at issue when no further objection can be taken.

It should perhaps be made clear here that in these contentions I have assumed that it is possible for people to be rational. I do not think there is any reason to doubt that people are more or less rational. I do not hope to prove that there is any such ability as rationality. I am only analysing what is involved in the conception of this ability, when we do believe that this ability is actually in operation. In general, it may be described as an ability to make distinctions where differences exist. It is only because we have this ability that it is possible for us to offer or accept reasons in favour of things that are not immediately acceptable. If other people do not find our attitudes or actions acceptable we offer reasons, that is to say we bring forward certain of their aspects which differentiates them from similar attitudes and actions that remain objectionable. We are rational when we understand how our attitudes and actions are distinct from certain others that may be objected to even though they appear to be the same when certain things are not considered, as also when we are able to see - when the differences involved are put forward by other people - how the aspects or points brought to our notice does make a difference to the question at issue in so far as these make it distinct from certain other issues with which we have so far been identifying it.

Now, the term reason is ambiguous. It may be used
psychologically or logically. "What reason have you to hit the man?" Psychologically, it is quite relevant to say, "because I hate him." Logically, a reason is something more than what induces one to hold an opinion or undertake an action; it is something that justifies the holding of this opinion or the undertaking of this action in the eyes of those who have not made up their minds one way or the other before consideration of the reasons given.

We shall now consider the question of issues. An issue means a problem regarding which some questions can be asked and answers can be given. What sort of questions and answers then are considered rational? Let us examine a few possible questions to see how they are judged to be rational or not.

1. Consider a possible question "why is England to the South of Scotland and not to the North?" The only answer that can be given to this question is in terms of geological changes. But one who is asking this question might be asking why geological changes took place in the way they did and not in another and when he is furnished with all relevant reasons he might be asking why reasons of this particular kind and not of another came to be operative in this case and so on until it happens that the question becomes either unanswerable or answerable only in terms of God's will. But is the answer 'God willed it so' really an answer for how do we know whether God willed it so or not? Nothing that we know can show the answer to be true.
or false, as ordinarily understood; and if it accepted as an answer it is accepted on faith. This means that the question itself is not answerable in any ordinary way, and the facts with which it deals have to be accepted for being what they are and not in terms of something else. It is, therefore, not rational to press the question beyond the limit where an answer can be found.

(2) Now, consider another question, "Why is the colour of clear sky blue?" Some people may be inclined to think that this is not a genuine question either. "The colour is blue, and that's that, why worry about it. Can you say why the colour of daffodil is yellow or of grass green?" But here is a problem which exists for those who ask the question, and which can be shown to be a problem to others of a certain degree of distinguishing ability, although it may not yet exist for them. "Sky is empty space, and space has no colour, why does the sky then appear to be blue?" This, therefore, is a rational question and it admits of a rational answer. (To say that a question admits of a rational answer does not mean that an answer completely satisfactory to all has already been found.)

(3) Our third question is "How many hours does it take a B.O.A.C. plane, on an average, to fly from London to Calcutta?" This will readily be agreed by all who understand the meaning of the sentence, to be a rational question. Both the question and the answer are concerned
with facts that can be verified by observation and experiment. One and only one answer can be given to this question.

(4) Our fourth question is "Is this man efficient at work?" This question can only be answered by reference to some standard regarding the work he does in the light of which we judge his actual productive ability. If the recognised standard is 10 units of production and the man produces 12 units, we can say "Yes" with no hesitation. This, therefore, is a rational question. But such a question can be answered only because there is some standard in operation, recognised or recognisable, specified or unspecified. By a specified standard I mean one whose limits are so exactly fixed that it does not leave much choice to individual decision in its application. If 10 units of production is the standard of efficiency and someone produces 9 units, we have no alternative but to say that he is inefficient. What I mean by an unspecified standard I shall try to make clear through the next question I examine.

(5) "Is your seat comfortable?" If by 'rational' we mean that one and only one answer can be given to a question, the rationality of this question is ruled out by definition. For obviously people may answer this question differently in respect of the same seat and we do believe that it is perfectly legitimate if they do so. But if
this is not a rational question in the above mentioned sense, it does not thereby follow that we leave the answer to nothing but purely personal feelings. Let us examine four possible answers that can be given to this question. "It is very comfortable", "It is quite comfortable", "It is not very comfortable", "It is very uncomfortable". One may find a seat to be quite comfortable, which another finds to be not very comfortable, and we do not quarrel with either. But if the seat is a narrow, hard, wooden bench and the reply is, "it is very comfortable", we find it difficult to take it seriously. Similar is the case if the seat consists of a Dunlopillo cushion on a sprung base, and is neither too high nor too low, neither too wide nor too narrow for the individual concerned, and the reply is, "it is very uncomfortable". These limiting cases show that there is a standard here involved, although the standard is not of the same type as in question four. It is because of this standard that the answer is expected to be in terms of something more than the purely personal feelings of the individual. But on the other hand, the fact that we accept both "not very comfortable" and "quite comfortable" as satisfactory answers, shows that personal choice enters into it. The standard here is such that it guides or regulates individual feelings, but does not determine them absolutely. That is to say, the limits of pleasure and relaxation that are involved in the idea of
comfort are not rigidly fixed in terms of a definite degree (or definite degrees). Yet we have seen this question is not absolutely independent of a standard. For if a man says about a narrow, hard, wooden bench too high for him to rest his feet on the ground, that it is very comfortable, we shall be inclined to doubt if he understands what 'comfort' means. To say that a standard is here involved is to mean that an understanding of the distinction between comfortable and uncomfortable is here implied. Comfort means 'ministering to enjoyment and relaxation'. Quite obviously this leaves scope for personal differences, but this scope is not limitless. Since we cannot put this down to fixed degrees, we shall call this standard an unspecified standard instead of specified.

(6) Does this mean then/because of this standard involved here the question and some possible answers to it are rational? It depends on how one uses the term 'rational'. Generally people are inclined to feel that if a question is so trivial that almost every one can answer it without entering into any degree of deliberation like the question, "What is the colour of grass?" and the answer, "it is green", it hardly deserves the name 'rational'. Such questions if asked of grown-ups by grown-ups, are considered to be silly. Since people in general understand the difference between comfort and lack of it with no effort at understanding, this is not
a typical example of a rational question, (it is not irrational either).

This shows that rationality is usually understood to involve a certain degree of distinguishing ability, as well as a certain degree of complexity in the issue which requires such distinguishing ability. For instance, in order to discover quinine as a cure for malaria, one has to understand how malaria as a fever is distinct from other known types; how and why the curative effects of other known medicines are inoperative in this case; what properties must be present in any cure that may be proposed to deal with the case at all effectively and so on. Rationality itself, however, is an unspecified concept and there is no exact and fixed degree of distinguishing ability involved here. To say that it is an unspecified concept means that there is a recognisable difference between a distinguishing ability and the lack of it. An unspecified standard or concept, we have seen, leaves scope for individual differences.

(7) In connection with rationality a distinction may be made between thinking that is called 'reasoning' and thinking that may be called 'reflection'. A process of thinking is called 'reasoning' when it is entered into with a view to find out what a certain case is when we do not already know what it is, or to establish that the case is of a certain character when it is not already accepted that it
is so. A process of thinking may be called 'reflection' when it is entered into with a view to further clarification of our ideas about something or other that we already know in some ways. But in either case a process of thinking is initiated because there is a question or there are questions which need to be answered. But the nature of the questions asked are different. For instance, questions like 'What does the Government do with the criminals?' and 'Why does the Government imprison criminals and not employ them on building roads?' are questions that call for a process of reasoning. The answer to the first question, 'The Government imprisons criminals', is verifiable and is not any further arguable after such verification. The second question is asked because one accepts that criminals should be punished, but is wondering what is the most expedient means of it. Provided that the standard of judgment is understood to be expediency, a certain amount of argumentation tending to establish one or the other is possible. Expediency being an unspecified concept, an absolute uniformity of opinion as in the first case may not here be attainable (except when this concept is definitely specified in which case no room for differences of opinion is left).

But the sort of question which leads to reflection is somewhat different. Suppose that someone finds the proposition, 'poverty stimulates criminal tendencies' acceptable,
but has only vague ideas in the matter. He may then put himself a question, 'but, why and how does poverty do this?' not because he questions that poverty does this but because he is not quite clear how a thing that happens does happen. The process of thinking that will be initiated by this question is a process of reflection or thoughtful consideration of the matter by drawing out one's own experiences in this respect and by enlarging it by other people's experiences with a view to arrive at a more comprehensive grasp of the issue. The answer which one finds to this question put to one's own self is not verifiable in any narrow sense of the term since it does not bring forward facts hitherto completely unknown to the questioner, nor is it arrived at by way of establishing or refuting anything. Its object is clarification of ideas already accepted in some sense by one who is putting the question.

The term 'reasoning' when it is distinguishable from 'reflection' signifies a possible process of argumentation between disputants and involve proving a contention by processes connected with verification or establishing it by processes which tend to show that it is logically more compelling in the light of facts and standards present in the case. In so far as a process of thought may be termed 'reflection', it does not involve argumentation of this character. It proceeds on an understanding of the
logic (distinctive differences), of the conceptions - like 'poverty' and 'criminality' - involved in what is being thought about. There is nothing here to prove or establish but only to analyse in order to broaden one's conceptions which usually operate vaguely and unconsciously. 'Reasoning' and 'reflection' are distinct processes of thought. But there is no opposition. A concrete process of thought involving reflection may also involve reasoning and vice versa. A process of thought in so far as it is a process of reflection is not a process of justifying anything in the same way as a process of reasoning is. On the contrary, it proceeds on the assumption and understanding that the issue needs no justification as ordinarily understood.

We shall now enquire in what sense (or senses) morality is rational, if at all. Let us take an instance of a concrete moral action. I have promised an acquaintance of mine ten pounds at the end of the month. By the end of the month I find that due to unforeseeable circumstances, my financial position has deteriorated so much that I need those ten pounds myself very badly to pay an outstanding bill. I feel greatly inclined not to give him the money for I know that he does not require it for purposes as urgent as mine, but do so when he asks for it inspite of knowing that I am not really in a position to pay.
Will it be agreed upon by all who are morally sensitive that this was the only course open to me to have escaped moral blame? I believe not. Some people would say that the promise was made on the implicit understanding that my need for the money will not be as urgent as his or more. If circumstances beyond my control have altered the conditions on which I made the promise, I should not be expected to suffer personally. So long as I fully intended to give him the money, if circumstances had not changed so drastically, I should not be blamed.

Now, which is the correct opinion? I believe there will be no universal agreement on this question, even if we consider the opinions only of people who are morally responsible. And if by rationality we mean that one and only one satisfactory answer can be given to a question, the issue clearly is not rational. But there are other senses of the term 'rational' and let us see if the issue is rational in any other sense.

What is being judged here morally is the actual action of giving the money or not, and let us call this 'the content of morality.' But in what terms is it being judged? A judgment cannot proceed (except in cases of facts which are verifiable), without there being some standard or consideration to bear upon it. The considerations on which moral judgments proceed - and moral judgments must proceed on some consideration or other - constitute the form of morality.

Now, there are two possible actions here, and two possible standards. If I give him the money it must be because I
consider that I have voluntarily undertaken the responsibility of giving him the money, and have thereby lost absolute freedom of action. It must be because I think that although my need is greater, I have created expectations to frustrate which, for reasons beyond the control of the individual concerned, will be an act of unwarranted interference with the possibility of his happiness. This I do not consider I am entitled to do, just as I do not think that any one else is entitled to do this to me. In short, I give him the money because I think that "it is better that a promise should be kept than that it should be broken". Will people agree that "it is better... etc.?" I believe they will, for this being a standard or consideration on which judgments in particular cases are based, can be understood independently of any one particular case where a promise has to be broken. The form of morality is constituted by general considerations on desirable ways of behaving rather than of concrete particular actions.

But moral standards are unspecified standards rather than specified. It leaves scope for individual differences, of course, within certain limits (not definitely specifiable, for considerations are considerations in respect of situations, and concrete situations are diverse and numerous.) For we have seen, some people would not think that I would be morally blameworthy if I did not give him the promised money, and these people are not necessarily morally irresponsible. This we can see if we enter into the considerations which have guided their judgment.
Those who will consider my action of not giving him the money justified may look at it this way. I am personally responsible in respect of circumstances that are within my control, not beyond. When I promised, I did so out of respect for his needs, but there was no implication that my own needs are any less deserving of attention and respect. The situation did not demand any weighing of our respective needs as I had no 'need' to weigh then. If circumstances beyond my control have created needs for me where none were existing whilst I promised, and if by weighing I find them (let us take it for granted for the sake of argument that people in general will agree with this finding) to be of greater urgency than his, then my action of not giving him the money does not show any disrespect for his needs, but only a concern with my own pressing needs. Moreover, if I respect other people's needs, I expect them to respect mine if the situation demands it of them. The man showed no concern when I apprised him of the situation and explained that I needed to pay a bill very badly. Since I am not personally responsible for the alterations in the situation, I consider myself justified in looking after myself.

The standards that have regulated this particular course are:

(a) People are responsible for what is within their control, not beyond.

(b) The needs of all the individuals concerned in a situation are equally deserving of attention and
(c) Mutuality of respect, if the need to show it exists, is better than one-sided consideration.

It is possible for people to agree with all these as general considerations on desirable ways of behaving even if they would not recommend the particular action here under question. As general considerations, these standards do not clash with the standard of promise-keeping.

But let us imagine the case to be somewhat different. If I did not give him the money for no other reason than that by the end of the month I felt I would like to have a new coat, then I believe it will generally be agreed by morally sensitive persons that I am to be morally blamed for irresponsibility and lack of principle.

Individual differences do exist, but within certain limits allowed by the standard in operation. This point may be made clearer by an example that Stevenson¹ has used. Some of the trustees of a fund to be used for public welfare may desire that a university be established in the district, while others that a hospital be opened for the poor. One may find on impartial investigation, that the need of a hospital for the poor in the district is as pressing as the academic need for a university. (There being no exact standard to determine the extent of these needs, even people who are absolutely impartial may not find one to be more urgent than the other.) Here the issue has to be left to individual choice between intellectual

virtues and health. Yet a decision in favour of the one or the other will equally be an adequate discharge of the responsibility the individual members of the trustee have undertaken, and so equally moral. But Stevenson does not go so far as to say so. But suppose that the founder of the fund had enjoined that it should be utilised for purposes for which the need is the greatest at the moment of decision. There is already a university in the district, but no hospital for the poor, but prevalence of disease amongst them is considerable. Then it is no longer a matter of individual choice between a hospital and a university. For circumstances in this particular case enable us to decide one way or the other by means of the standard that is involved.

We thus see that although absolute agreement as regards "the content" of morality is not achievable in all cases, agreement on standards that operate in these cases is possible. In some concrete cases, some people may decide to act on some standards rather than others which other people may choose to act on, and it is quite possible that we have no means of choosing between the two absolutely. Thus there will be disagreement on standards. But not as to the desirability of standards as such, but as to choosing one or the other in any particular case. Then it becomes a matter of personal preference between standards, and the situation maybe that we cannot judge them to be more or less justified, or of more or less value by reference to a standard of a still higher generality.
But is this agreement on standard or form of morality, rational agreement? The first objection that can be taken to the use of the term 'rational' in respect of the form of morality, is that a formal moral principle is trivial. It is quite obvious to people who are morally sensitive, that keeping a promise is a more desirable way of behaving than breaking it. In what sense is this rational, if a particular action which is morally suitable to a situation cannot be deduced from it?

Now, although this standard appears obviously compelling to people who are accustomed to keep their promises, it is not to one whose standard of judgment is selfishness. He acts on this standard has decided against selfishness. And in this decision an understanding of the differences between promise-keeping and wanton promise-breaking is involved. He who keeps a promise acts up to his responsibilities to others and pays respect to the personality and needs of the individual concerned. He who breaks it wantonly, has nothing but personal advantage in mind and has no sense of responsibility towards others. It is more desirable that one should have respect for others and a sense of responsibility towards them than that one should not. Made explicit like this the principle of promise-keeping is not quite as simple and trivial as the statement that grass is green, for here is involved a recognition of the value of a human personality for his own sake.

But does it admit of reasoning? Quite obviously it does not. It is neither possible to prove or establish that
promise-keeping is better, nor does it need to be proved or established. For people who are morally sensitive it is a self-justifying regulative standard. But as I have tried to show in the previous paragraph it admits of reflection.

Some philosophers have denied that morality is rational because, I believe, they have used the term as synonymous with 'admitting of reasoning'. Hume is very often quoted in support of the theory that morality is not rational. What Hume has denied is that the foundations of morals admit of reasoning and inductive argumentation, but he has not denied that they admit of reflection. Let us see what he himself has to say-

"There has been a controversy stated of late, . . . , concerning the general foundations of Morals; whether they be derived from Reason, or from Sentiment; whether we attain the knowledge of them by a chain of argument and induction, or by an immediate feeling and finer internal sense; whether, like all sound judgment of truth and falsehood, they should be the same to every rational intelligent being; or whether, like the perception of beauty and deformity, they be founded entirely on the particular fabric and constitution of the human species." 1

Hume's language is here guilty of overlapping between different issues, but that is not at the moment relevant. Hume believed that moral distinctions are based on internal sense and feeling like aesthetic distinctions and can not be arrived at by a process of reasoning. But this internal sense or feeling is

not concerned with inscrutable emotions but with logical distinctions. "...and the more we habituate ourselves to an accurate scrutiny of morals, the more delicate feeling do we acquire of the most minute distinctions between vice and virtue." It is quite obvious that according to Hume the foundations of morals do admit of what I have called 'reflection'.

Another writer who is generally believed to have denied that morality is rational, is Stevenson. He, however, does not altogether deny the role of reason in morals. On the contrary, he believes that a certain amount of reasoning regarding the content of morality is possible. But reasoning affects only the facts in the situation but not attitudes (in old-fashioned terminology habits of will) which are of primary importance in actual moral behaviour. These attitudes are either there or not, they can not be logically compelled to exist by any amount of argumentation on facts. "The supporting reasons here mentioned have no sort of logical compulsion. Persons who make opposed ethical judgments may (so far as theoretical possibility is concerned) continue to do so in the face of all manner of reasons that their argument includes even though neither makes any logical or empirical error. Supporting reasons have only to do with beliefs, ..."2 "...a reasoned agreement in ethics is theoretically possible only to the extent that agreement in belief will cause people to agree in attitude".3

1. Ibid. P.217.
Unfortunately Stevenson does not go into the question of reflection on attitudes that are moral, and leaves the impression that one attitude is morally as desirable as any other simply because no attitude can be 'proved' to be desirable to one who chooses not to accept it.

Barnes, I believe, makes this distinction between ethical reflection and ethical reasoning in his "Ethics without propositions,"¹ He does not, however, stress the importance of reflection to show that there is a certain sense in which ethical principles can be called propositions and in this sense they deserve to be called rational. As ethical propositions are or involve affirmations of principles, and these principles can-not be arrived at by a process of reasoning, Barnes says they are not rational. But they are not irrational either. A principle, he says, is not an assertion of fact. But this is a question of terminology. To use the word 'fact' exclusively in the sense of 'what can be dealt with in empirical sciences' is to give it a technical meaning. Usage allows the application of the term not only to scientific issues but also to any object of discourse that can be defended with logically tenable reasons. Consider the following conversation.

A - But is it not a fact that you were at Newcastle at mid-day on Wednesday last and not in London?
B - No, I don't think so.
A - But I have just received a letter from Newcastle. Mr.

Smith says you had lunch with him on that day.

B - I am sorry, I thought that was Tuesday. In fact, now I remember, I was there on Wednesday.

If we use the word 'fact' so as to include those issues which express consideration of value - for those, of course, who concern themselves with questions of value, (like, brilliant sunshine at 50° temperature for people who normally live below freezing point is wonderful), then ethical principles do express facts. If so there is a certain sense in which it is rational to hold such a proposition. It remains true, of course, that such propositions are not logically compelling for people if they choose not to take up a value point of view. We can-not, as Barnes says, produce these principles in others in whom they are lacking by a rational process; but this is not the only function of thinking. We might wish to enlarge our own insight and to understand the behaviour of people more fully when they act on principles. And we are rational when we do so.

If we accept 'rational' as 'admitting of reasoning and proof' morality is not wholly rational even in its formal elements. But this is a question of terminology. Since the standards involved in morality admit of reflection, their understanding are cases of logical understanding, i.e. involve understanding of how they are different from standards that are not regulative from the moral point of view. Those who have insisted on the rationality of morality have used it as
equivalent to 'logical'. (i.e. pertaining to the understanding of distinctions where differences exist)

To summarise.

(1) Morality is not devoid of rationality in the sense that our first issue is. For here it is possible to entertain propositions that can be thought of in common; and people may agree or disagree on these on the basis of certain standards. People may also agree on the standards themselves.

(2) Morality offers a rational problem in the same way as our second question does. Some people consider the moral standards of primitive people to be lacking in morality as these are different from the standards accepted by civilised people. It may, therefore, be asked exactly what is involved in a standard that is morally desirable. The problem of understanding the distinctive difference of moral values from non-value facts and non-moral value facts, exists for those who think about it and it can be shown to be a problem to others if they are morally sensitive.

(3) Morality is not rational in the sense that our third problem is, for moral questions do not necessarily lead to one and only one answer.

(4) Morality is not rational in the sense that our fourth question is, for moral standards are unspecified standards, not specified. But it is rational in the sense
in which any judgment involving an adequate understanding of a standard is rational.

(5) Moral problems may be considered to be typical examples of rational problems by those to whom moral distinctions do not appear as simple as the distinction between 'comfortable' and 'uncomfortable'.

Morality is rational in the sense that a certain degree of distinguishing ability is involved in the understanding of moral distinctions which are somewhat complex in nature.

(6) Morality is not rational in the sense that moral values can not be proved or established to be of value by any process of reasoning.

Morality is rational in the sense in which reflection and understanding of logical distinctions are rational.
CHAPTER III.
Part II.

THE PLACE OF REASON IN ETHICS.

Toulmin in his book 'The Place of Reason in Ethics' argues that the question which is really important to ask in ethics is not 'what is good?' or 'what is right?', nor again is the question 'are moral issues subjective or objective or of the nature of commands?'. The really important question is 'what sort of reason is a good reason in ethical arguments'. In order to answer this question what is necessary is to examine the function of ethics and the part ethical judgments play in our lives. "Ethics is concerned with the harmonious satisfaction of desires and interest. On most occasions it is a good reason for choosing or approving of an action that it is in accordance with an established maxim of conduct, for the existing moral code, and the current institutions and laws, provide the most reliable guide as to which decisions will be happy - in the same kind of way as the codes of standard practice in Engineering.

At the same time it is not right to accept the present institutions uncritically - they must evolve, along with the situations to which they apply. There is, therefore, always a place in society for the 'moralist', the man who criticises the current morality and institutions, and advocates practices nearer to an ideal. And the ideal he must keep before him is
Toulmin here as elsewhere makes a distinction between two kinds of moral reasoning. (1) Reasoning which is concerned with justifying a particular action, and this is done by showing that it is an instance of established practice or principle. (2) Reasoning which is concerned with the justification of a practice by reference to the ideal that suffering that is avoidable should not be tolerated. The sort of reason that is called for in the justification of a particular action is not the sort of reason that is called for in the justification of an established practice. "To question the rightness of a particular action is one thing; to question the justice of a practice as a practice is another". Again, "The two kinds of moral reasoning which we have encountered are, therefore, distinct. Each provides its logical criteria - criteria which are appropriate to the criticism of individual actions, or social practices, but not both."

That there is a distinction between reasoning about particular actions and reasoning about a practice is not to be doubted. But it does not appear to me to be as radical as Toulmin holds it to be. Toulmin is saying that once we have brought an action under an established practice we have given all the reason, and good reason at that, that can be given for that of a society in which no misery or frustration is tolerated within the existing resources and state of knowledge.\(^1\)

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1. Reason in Ethics. P.283.
2. Ibid P.149.
3. Ibid P.151.
it in order to justify it. Yet, an established practice is itself not beyond criticism. It can be criticised in terms of an ideal. If so how can we accept that there is no more place for reason in arguing about the moral suitability of a particular action once we have brought it under an established practice? One would be inclined to conclude that Toulmin is suggesting that only a few, the moralists, should challenge a practice while others should demand no more reason in favour of an action than that it is required by an established practice. And the fact that a practice is established is a good reason except for a moralist why an action which falls under it should be performed. This seems to me to be very unsatisfactory. How can a moralist challenge a practice while the rest of the people in the society follow it without question? The moralists, those who criticise an established practice with reference to an ideal, may be exceptional people; yet they must think, feel, and act in a social context. Their understanding of social affairs may be more comprehensive and their criticisms better-grounded and more satisfactorily formulated in so far as they are clear about the standards they are judging by. But they take shape in an atmosphere where there is already in evidence a considerable amount of questioning on the part of the common people, however vague their understanding and ineffective and ill-expressed their objections. The reactions of a moralist do not mark the beginning of an entirely new understanding, rather it represents a culmination of a process
of social awareness. Moreover, there is no specific criterion by which we can judge conclusively that an established practice causes a degree of individual suffering that is undesirable at a certain stage of progress (for living in society as we have hitherto had knowledge of, inevitably demands a certain amount of compromise on the part of the individual members) or that it is of a kind that is avoidable. Any social decision that is taken on these matters is usually preceded by many sporadic actions and objections on the part of different individuals. We cannot therefore make a hard and fast distinction between the questioning of a social practice by a moralist and the often vague and inadequate questioning by common people of particular actions even when they are known to be instances of an established practice. And what is important for us to understand are the standards that are implicitly contained in such acts of questioning.

Indeed, Toulmin himself suggests that there is no hard and fast distinction between a 'moralist' and an ordinary person. It cannot be anybody's job, says Toulmin, to be a moralist. "In fact, of course, social institutions develop to a great extent without the need for people for special vision: it is not the ideas of Great Men, but the refusal of ordinary people in their day-to-day behaviour to conform to an out-of-date code which produces the changes required. But this is not to discredit my notion of a 'moralist': it is to say rather that we are all moralists in a limited way, and that this
refusal to conform is often based on protest against the rule, whether or not one can see how a better rule could be introduced. If we are all moralists it is necessary for all of us to understand what the standards are by which the moral value of established practices are to be assessed; it is not enough to know that certain practices are established.

Certain of the difficulties mentioned above could be avoided if Toulmin made a distinction between the conception of a social practice or institution which is relatively specific and particular in nature and that of a general moral principle like, 'a promise ought to be kept'. The case which he chooses to establish his point that we cannot reason any more when we have brought an action under an established practice is really a case of a principle. If A says to B that he must take back a book to C on a certain date B might question why he must do so considering that it is rather inconvenient for him. When A explains that he had promised to C that he would and a promise ought to be kept there is no more scope for a further questioning of A's proposed action for anyone who respects morality.

We are satisfied that this is the case, for a principle is a standard by which we judge the moral value of particular actions performed, and this standard is self-evidently valid. What a moralist criticises, however, is not a principle but a practice which is not so valid, and its moral justification can be assessed in terms of ideals or standards which we find are

1. Ibid. P.179.
2. one of which, that 'avoidable suffering should not be tolerated', has been mentioned by Toulmin.
acceptable for what they are, and this is to say that they do not need any further justification. We can-not, so it seems to me, satisfactorily understand the nature of moral judgments without the recognition of the self-evident character of certain standards that we apply in moral contexts.

To judge a particular action to be valid because it is an instance of a self-evident moral principle and to judge a social practice to be undesirable because it tolerates avoidable suffering are not two entirely different kinds of rational activities. For in both the cases that which is 'given' is judged in terms of an ideal, the only difference being that the principle 'a promise ought to be kept' embodies a relatively specific ideal while the ideal involved in the conception 'avoidable suffering should not be tolerated' is more general. But both are ideals which can be further explained by the highly general conception of moral 'ought' which is a conception in terms of which all that is of value for human beings from a characteristic point of view may be understood.

It is because Toulmin pays little attention to the conception of moral 'ought' that he seems to advocate that the question of justification of a particular cannot proceed beyond that of an established principle. "...the question, 'Which is it really right to do - to have only one wife like a Christian or to have anything up to four like the Mohammedans?', is odd in the same way as the question 'Is the light ray going past the sun really straight as a non-Euclidean theorist declares,
or deflected, as a Euclidean theorist says?". If corresponding standards in two moral codes are found to be different the question, 'Which of these is really right'? can not arise.\(^1\) An individual in the English society where monogamy is the established practice can-not, says Toulmin, sensibly ask 'Is it right for me to marry one wife or four'? By implication an individual in a Muslim society can-not ask 'Is it right for me to have more than one wife'?\(^2\) the question 'Is this the right to do'? when persisted in beyond a certain point, has to be interpreted as an enquiry about the justice of the social practice of which 'this' is an instance - but an enquiry couched in an inappropriate form: so now the question, 'Is it right for me to marry one wife or four'?, has to be transformed first into 'Is Christian marriage or Muslim marriage the better practice?', and then again into, 'Is the Christian or the Muslim way of life the better?'\(^2\).

Now the expression 'way of life' is so very general involving as it does every aspect of social life in a community of individuals that it becomes impossible, as Toulmin observes, to answer this question. \(^1\)When someone asks of two superficially institutions, from different ways of life, 'Which is the better?', one may have to say, by themselves, they are not comparable: all that can be compared are the ways of life as wholes. And this comparison, if anything, is a private one: which is to say, not that it cannot be reasoned about, but that, reason as you

1. Ibid. P.149.
2. Ibid. P.153.
may, the final decision is personal. There is no magic wand which will turn the English social system into a Muslim one overnight: the only practical use for the question, 'Which way of life is the better?', is in the service of a personal decision - for example, whether to remain here on our society, such as it is, or to go and live as an Arab tribesman in the desert.¹

The argument is so involved that it is difficult to do justice to it. But suppose that an Arab tribesman is being persuaded to marry again when he already has a wife. Is there anything against his questioning whether it is right for him to do so even though his social system sanctions it? Again, is he necessarily questioning the propriety of the social system itself if he is questioning the propriety of several marriages in his particular case? Further, why must he necessarily question the whole way of life of the Arabs if he is questioning the institution of polygamy? The expression 'way of life', includes every aspect of social life and not merely the marriage customs. And inspite of different institutions of a society being interrelated a change of the whole of life is not usually called for whenever a need for changing any particular institution is felt. Otherwise every reform would involve a radical transformation of the society in question. Says Toulmin, "In general then if one is to reason about practices, the only occasion on which one can discuss the question which of the

¹. Ibid. P.153.
two practices is the better are those on which they are genuine alternatives: when it would be practicable to change from one to the other within one society. Given this the question, 'which is the better?', has the force of, 'If we change from one to the other, would the change have happy or unhappy consequences on the whole? But, if this condition is not satisfied, there is, morally speaking, no reasoning about the question, and pretended arguments about the merits of rival systems - personal preferences apart - are of value only as rhetoric. 1

It is not easy to see what Toulmin has in mind when he talks about change within one society. Society is not an entity that has a definite structure in any literal sense of the term. It is a conception in terms of which we explain the characteristic connection that there is between different institutions, practices, laws, etc. of a group of people. To change any of these is to change the character of the society to some degree or other. Yet it need not involve a complete break with the society as hitherto existing, so that we may still refer to it as the same society. When we talk of one society we cannot mean anything which has an unalterably fixed structure, for few societies, if any, has this. We mean a body of institutions which although changing are changing in a manner so as not to lose completely, at any stage of change, the connection that different institutions have with

1. Ibid. P.153.
one another, and so as not to have the continuity that the present of an institution has with its past completely destroyed. There is no reason why the institution of monogamy can-not be introduced into a Muslim society without changing a Muslim society into a Christian one. And there seems to me to be good reasons why the institution of polygamy should give way to monogamy.

Given the conditions that women in a society far outnumber men and that the women concerned would rather share a husband with few others than remain unmarried polygamy has its social justification. But such conditions may not exist or they may change in either of which case the practice of polygamy becomes morally objectionable. There is a conception of marriage according to which it is considered to be an exclusive relationship based on recognition, consideration, and affection for each other freely and equally bestowed. Under polygamy the co-wives never realise the exclusive character of the relationship, nor do they ever attain the status of supreme personal importance shared equally with a partner in a joint life as a married woman under the system of monogamy has the possibility of attaining, while having no other alternative but to center their attention on a man who is incapable, from the very nature of the case, to return it equally. Judged by the standard of what is desirable and attainable in the relationship of marriage monogamy has certainly to be preferred to polygamy. And unless there are specific circumstances in a particular Muslim society which not
only make polygamy necessary but desirable under the circum-
stances, we are justified in saying that polygamy should not
be practised, now that the society practising it knows of a
better type of marriage relationship namely, monogamy. We
can-not therefore agree with Toulmin when he says, "The question,
'which of the institutions is "right"?', is therefore an un-
real one, and there is no conceivable way of answering it - as
it stands."¹

When Toulmin says that there is no more place for reasons
in ethics after an established principle 'a promise ought to
be kept' has been cited in favour of a particular action, he
is using the term 'reason' in a limited sense i.e. in the sense
of reasoning. But the term 'reason' is a more general term
than 'reasoning'. Reasoning or argument is resorted to by
people in order to justify or establish any opinion they hold
or statement they make the tenability of which is not immediately
apparent. If the statement is such that it does not arouse any
objection no reasoning in its favour is called for. The
general statement 'a promise ought to be kept' is a statement
of this nature, at least within the context of morals. But
there may still be a place for reason here; for although one
does not doubt the tenability of the general statement, 'a
promise ought to be kept', one may still wonder why is it that
we consider that a promise should be kept considering that it
is often inconvenient to keep a promise. And a rational

¹. Ibid. P.153.
process, though not a process of reasoning in the limited sense of arguments, is called for so that one understands better than one already does why a promise should be kept. And this rational process, in order to distinguish it from a process of reasoning — we shall call 'reflection'. Now a need for using reason arises either for the purposes of producing conviction where none exists, as is the case with reasoning, or for strengthening a belief already possessed which may in some ways be vague or confused, as is the case with reflection. The person for whose benefit a process of reason is entered into can accept the considerations put forward only if they appeal in a logical manner to things that have already been experienced by him. That is to say, only if what is being said can be shown by the speaker to be implied or entailed in certain things that are within the experience of the hearer and therefore acceptable to him. In a process of reasoning this is done by passing to certain things not immediately apparent on the strength of certain others that are accepted as given in the context of an argument. In a process of reflection, which is called for where one's understanding of issues is not as clear as one wishes it to be, this is done by drawing out in greater detail what is implied in some experiences of the hearer as looked at from some characteristic point of view, which he might confuse with some other point of view that is distinct from it (for instance, the point of view of moral ought and the point of view of convenience for the doer).
Now when we say that somebody or other has an experience we mean that he has come into contact with something or other which has produced a more or less recognisable effect in him. But our experiences are not all of the same kind or of the same level. Some of the things of which we have experience produce an effect on us directly through the agency of our senses, as is the case with sensible objects or properties. Such experiences are called perceptual experiences and are classified into visual, tactual, etc. That is to say, we recognise the characteristic differences that there are between the effects that objects of different perceptual experiences produce in us and we express these by saying, I hear, I feel hard, smooth etc. But some of our experiences are of a different level. Here the changes or reactions that are produced by what is being experienced are far more complex than the changes produced by an experience in so far as that may be called perceptual. Let us then examine an instance of a higher level experience. We have certain experiences in connection with say, Miss A's typing which lead us to say, Miss A is an efficient typist. To say this is to do much more than to record the changes that are produced in us by seeing or hearing Miss A type or by looking at the papers typed by Miss A. It is to synthesise different such direct experiences in a characteristic way which way fits in with the conception that is involved in the standard called 'efficiency'. (This synthesis is a more or less unconscious process). Our direct perceptual experiences
are thus received by us, so to say, on a higher level or plane, as it were, which we express in terms of an abstract conception. This means that certain changes, however different they are from the changes involved in an experience in so far as that is perceptual and however difficult to describe, are produced in us according as we look at perceptual experience in terms of an abstract conception and thus transform it into a higher plane. When I say that certain changes are produced in us I mean: looking at relatively direct experience from a higher level affects us in such a manner that we are led to think, feel or act in certain ways in respect of what is being experienced at a higher level. And a conception which fittingly express any such higher level experience is an abstract conception. By this I mean that a conception of this nature has no sensible counterpart but its usefulness lies in explaining the connection that we find between some of our relatively direct and perceptual experiences. (to say, for example, that Miss A is an efficient typist is to explain a related group of facts, that she makes no or few mistakes, that she has a high speed, that she observes proper forms etc.)

A conception therefore has a logic of its own as distinct from the logic of arguments and inferences. What I mean is this. An abstract conception (i.e. a term which has no sensible counterpart) takes shape through our attempt to express some of our higher level experiences, a level of experience at which we find ourselves whenever we are affected in some
particular manner through the recognition of certain characteristic relations between features already experienced at a lower level. To understand how certain things are related in a characteristic way is to understand how they differ from everything else to which they are not being considered to be related. The logic of an abstract conception then consists in the recognition of characteristic differences between certain features already experienced at a lower level. (to be able to say, for instance, that Miss A is an efficient typist one must have experiences of the sort involved in the recognition of differences that there are between the work of typists who make many mistakes, have relatively less speed, etc. and those who do not make many mistakes, have high speed, etc.) An abstract conception then can be defined by explaining how the objects to which it applies differ in a characteristic way from objects to which it does not apply. And the process by which one arrives at such a definition is a rational process that has been referred to as reflection. I shall like to make it clear in this connection that the higher level differences that are recognised by us between features of our experience are relative to the purposes that we have in our approach to them. We may refer to two different persons as efficient typists, even though one has less speed than the other, may be because we want to contrast them with other typists who have considerably less speed than either of them. But if we are comparing one of them with the other we may refer to only the person who has
higher speed as efficient. Or again, if we are talking of efficient mechanics and not typists we conceive of the difference between efficiency and inefficiency in a different way. That is because we recognise that the difference between an efficient mechanic and an inefficient mechanic is not the same as the difference between an efficient typist and an inefficient typist. But it will not follow from these that the conception 'efficiency' has no logic. The above considerations will only show that the logic of an abstract conception is flexible, depending on the context in which it is used. And it is possible for us to take note of this logic within a certain context of discourse.

Let us now discuss the case of moral conceptions. These are expressions of even higher levels of experience than is the case with a conception like 'efficiency'. We have experience of these levels when certain features of human actions, attitudes and states of affairs that we actually come in contact with affect us in ways that we find can fittingly be expressed through certain abstract conceptions to be classified under the highly general ideas of 'ought to be for its own sake' (good) and 'ought to be done for its own sake' (right). These ways in question are certain characteristic ways of thinking, feeling and acting that are consistent with the conception of intrinsic value. It has sometimes been denied that the conception of intrinsic value has any significance. It is, of course, possible that this term has been used to signify things that do not fit
in with it, but that only justifies our questioning a particular significance that may be given to it. To question that this term has any significance whatsoever is a different matter. Any one who seriously denies this is really saying that he is lacking in the kind of experience which can fitfully be expressed through this conception. There cannot therefore be any quarrel between him and another person who finds it meaningful, for they are not talking about the same thing.

Now the conceptions that may be classified under the general ideas of what ought to be or ought to be done for its own sake are of many different kinds. To take an instance. When A asks B to tell him a specific thing about C and B deliberately misrepresents the case even though there is nothing to justify his doing so, we might find that we are affected in such a way by this treatment of A by B that our reactions may fitfully be expressed by saying 'B should have told A the truth' or it may fitfully be represented in the feeling of disapproval that we may have towards A's action or again in the tendency that we may have of not treating B with as much respect as we have done before. Of course, it is quite possible for someone to be affected by the same action in quite a different manner or for the same person to be affected differently on different occasions. But in so far as the reactions mentioned above do take place they may be summed up by using the conception of truth-telling as a case of moral ought and expressed in the form of a judgment 'the truth ought to be told'. This judgment is
then an expression of a higher level experience, an experience that is involved in the recognition that some statements made by human beings - statements which carry a valid and accurate representation of something or other on which information is being sought - differ from statements of an opposite nature in this, that they respect the value an individual's desire to know has for its own sake, which the opposite kind of statements do not do. This, of course, is not to say that one must be consciously aware of these differences. Human beings can show an awareness of differences between things by treating them differently even though they are not conscious at the moment of the differences involved. In such a behaviour the recognition of differences is logically presupposed rather than being a psychological fact. For instance, when we refer to the colour of a certain thing as red we imply that it is not to be confused with any other colour which is different from red like green, yellow, blue etc., but we are not necessarily consciously aware of the differences involved. It is only when we first learn to use a conception that we are consciously aware how the objects to which it applies differ from objects to which it does not within a certain context of thought. Once we have learnt to use it successfully the differences concerned become a part of our unconscious store of knowledge and are then logically presupposed rather than being psychologically experienced. In the same way certain differences are logically presupposed in the use of the judgment 'the truth ought to be
told'. And it is these differences we are concerned with when we explain what we mean by saying 'the truth ought to be told'.

Now to define an abstract conception is to explicate what is involved in a higher level experience concerning some characteristic differences between things that are also experienced at a lower level. It is thus an analytical process. Such a definition is sometimes attacked as a circular definition and the proposition that expresses it as a tautologous statement.

To tell the truth, one may object, is, you say, to give a valid and accurate representation so that a particular desire to know that has been expressed is respected as possessed of value. What then is it to give a valid and accurate etc.? Naturally, it is to tell the truth. You are then defining these two conceptions in terms of each other and if I do not know either I am no further forward by your definition. Again, if to tell the truth is to give a valid and accurate representation and to give a valid and accurate representation is to tell the truth then the proposition 'to tell the truth is to give a valid and accurate representation' is a tautologous statement which tells me no more than what I already know.

The objections no doubt have a certain point. It is impossible to make one understand the meaning of an abstract term by verbal means unless one already has the appropriate higher level experience of which it constitutes an explanation of some sort. One must already have some understanding of
what is involved in telling the truth from the moral point of view before one can either attempt a definition or follow one given by some one else. One is thus not entirely unacquainted with what is being talked about in the definition. But something more is suggested in the objections mentioned. They suggest that unless a definition or proposition reveal something to us of which we have hitherto had no idea whatsoever, it is completely useless. Those who raise these objections seem to be saying, 'if we already have experience of the things you are talking about what is the point of your saying it? we already know it.' But only a part of what they say is true. Experience is a more general term than knowledge and to know something is something more than to have an experience of it. It is to understand explicitly and somewhat distinctly what is implicitly contained in an experience which is often unconsciously taken in and vaguely felt and one's attempt at a definition is an attempt at this clearer understanding.

The mental process that is involved in this attempt at understanding the logic of an abstract conception is reflection. And it is a rational process in as much as to reflect on one's experience calls for a conscious recognition of characteristic differences between certain of the features experienced. It is distinguishable from reasoning which is also a rational process concerned with the logic of arguments and inferences which aim at showing that certain things which may not be immediately acceptable are implied in certain other things which
to be kept, is not a useless discussion for it shows that an established practice, institution or even a principle of some generality is not an ultimate fact in the sense that all we can do is to accept it. For a practice, principle or institution may more fully be understood in terms of the highly general and fundamental conception of moral ought which expresses a level of experience at which we are affected in such a way by certain human actions, attitudes, and states of affairs that we feel an emotion of approval towards them which accompanies the thought that they are worthwhile for human beings for their own sakes.

Toulmin, of course, recognises this level of experience when he talks about the function of ethical concepts or about what constitutes a good reason in the context of evaluating an existing practice. The function of ethical concepts, says Toulmin, is to harmonise people's needs and interests which implies, although Toulmin avoids saying so, that a state of harmony is desirable for its own sake which the existing state that is being judged is not. Again a good reason in favour of changing a practice is that avoidable suffering should not be tolerated which implies that a state of affairs in human societies where there is no suffering is intrinsically preferable to a state which shows evidence of suffering. But these observations are not adequate to express all that is involved in the higher level experiences that we call moral. The conception of harmony between people's needs and interests is no
doubt involved in the use of ethical concepts, that is because the fulfilment of the needs and interest of a legitimate nature of individual human beings is morally possessed of value. When we recognise this we find that the conception of moral 'ought' includes more than the conception of harmony between people's needs and interests, it includes the conceptions of certain attitudes and principles which are intrinsically preferable to their absence or opposite in human affairs. A particular action might then be judged morally not in terms of how much harmony it produces, which in any case may not be measurable, but in terms of the sort of attitude or principle of which it is an instance in a given case. Again, there are other good reasons why an established practice should be altered or modified than that the suffering it involves can be avoided. These reasons are connected with the moral requirement that the arrangement of social affairs should be as consistent as is possible under a specific set of circumstances with the conception that the individuals of a society should achieve as much happiness or relatively permanent satisfaction and sense of fulfilment as they are potentially capable of. Now it is not my intention to suggest that social affairs can be arranged in such a way that happiness would automatically be produced in the members of a society. For happiness, as we have conceived it here, can only be achieved by an individual, it cannot be given to him ready-made. Nevertheless, the arrangement of social affairs may more or less help or hinder
individual attempts at achieving happiness, apart from more or less preventing avoidable suffering. And Toulmin himself recognises this. For although he mentions only the negative conception of avoidance of suffering as a good reason he says that the moralist is also concerned with positively achieving a good life, which is involved in the conception of happiness as here adopted. "It is not enough for the moralist to be familiar with those inevitable features of the social metabolism to which the calculas of economics can be applied - those commodities, like food, shelter, work and leisure, which meet fixed interests and unalterable aspects of our dispositions. He must also understand the greater goods which - unlike Christmas -cake or the sugar ration - we can both 'eat' and 'have'. He must know how people feel and what they want, certainly; but even more he must know how they could feel and what they are capable of enjoying. And he must learn to show them the things which could most deeply satisfy them, in such a way that they will take to them."^1 The idea that the arrangement of social affairs may positively help people to live a good life, which is a necessary condition for achieving happiness has also been advocated by T.S. Eliot in his book 'The idea of a Christian Society'. Conceiving of a good life as a Christian life Eliot says, "The mass of the population, in a Christian society, should not be exposed to a way of life in which there is too sharp and frequent a conflict between what is easy for them or what their circumstances dictate and what is Christian.

^1. Ibid. P.179.
The compulsion to live in such a way that Christian behaviour is only possible in a restricted number of situations, is a very powerful force against Christianity; for behaviour is as potent to affect belief, as belief to affect behaviour.¹ Similar ideas have been put forward by Russell in his 'New Hopes for a Changing World', and although it is by no means easy to come to any agreement as to what sort of life is good, as attainable under a specific set of circumstances, or how to achieve it, the conceptions of a good and happy life are certainly involved in some of our judgments on social affairs, and individual conduct.

In discussing the place of reason in ethics Toulmin has considered only the question of moral reasoning and not that of reflection. Moral reasoning is reasoning in accordance with a principle, namely, 'avoidable suffering should not be tolerated' or an established social practice. I agree that this is so, although I would say that there are other principles than the one mentioned by him and that a particular action may not be morally justified even when it has been shown to be in accordance with an established social practice. But there is also a place of reason in ethics in the form of reflection on the principles or standards in accordance with which moral reasoning does actually proceed, with a view to a clearer understanding of the values that we may uphold for their own sakes from the

point of view of morality. And this function of reason in ethics is particularly important as the standards which can be our ultimate courts of appeal in moral reasoning can only be self-justifying standards which established social practices may not be.

I have so long been trying to uphold the rational character of moral conceptions. To say that moral conceptions are rational is to say that moral characteristics can in some ways become objects of our knowledge. How exactly is it then that we know them? Quite obviously, we do not know them merely through using our senses, and some people would say that what we can-not know through our senses we do not know at all. As Strawson puts it in his paper 'Ethical Intuitionism' (presented in the form of a dialogue between North, an intuitionist, and West, an anti-intuitionist.) they are, "...a matter of what is felt in the heart, not of what is seen with the eyes or heard with the ears".¹ 'Promise-keeping is right' resembles 'going abroad is exciting' neither of which is a matter of knowing anything, "... the only access to the moral world is through remorse and approval, and so on; just as the only access to the world of comedy is through laughter..."²

The argument appears to be that to say that we have some other access is to claim that we somehow know the facts that belong to this world. This is actually what is said by the intuitionists. We know the facts of the moral world, says the intuitionist, not through our senses but through intuition.

¹ Philosophy. 1949 P.83.
² Phil. A. 193
CHAPTER III. Part III.

IN WHAT SENSE DO WE INTUIT MORAL CHARACTERISTICS?

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As Strawson puts it in his paper 'Ethical Intuitionism' (presented in the form of a dialogue between North, an intuitionist, and West, an anti-intuitionist.) they are, ".....a matter of what is felt in the heart, not of what is seen with the eyes or heard with the ears". ¹ 'Promise-keeping is right' resembles 'going abroad is exciting' neither of which is a matter of knowing anything. "..... the only access to the moral world is through remorse and approval, and so on; just as the only access to the world of comedy is through laughter....."²

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¹. Philosophy. 1949 P.23.
². Ibid. P.23.
But Strawson does not believe that there can be any such thing as an intuition of rightness or goodness.

The term 'intuition' is vague as well as ambiguous, but I am of opinion that it is not entirely meaningless. I shall therefore expound the meaning that this term may be supposed to have before I proceed to deal with the objections raised by Strawson. Whatever meaning the term 'intuition' may have, intuitive knowledge has certainly to be distinguished from inferential knowledge. Inferential knowledge is mediate knowledge i.e. in inference we accept certain facts on the authority of certain others. Intuitive knowledge is immediate knowledge i.e. in intuition we accept facts, if we do so, for being what they are and not because they are in some ways entailed in other facts that we already accept. Not only intuition but sense-perception as well can be contrasted with inferential knowledge, for in sense-perception too we accept facts for being what they are and not because they are entailed in other facts. Both perceptual and intuitive knowledge then are, in a certain sense, immediate knowledge. It is, of course, understood that we use our senses in perception whilst we do not do so in intuition. Even so, the fact that both perceptual and intuitive knowledge are knowledge that is in a certain sense immediate, makes us expect that intuitive knowledge would be rather like perceptual knowledge. That is to say, we expect that the object of intuitive knowledge would present itself as a simple quality of a non-natural kind before our mind's eye,
as it were, in the same way as a quality presents itself to
eyour visual or any other sense in sense-perception. We are
disappointed when we find that we have no experience of any
such mode of awareness and this naturally leads us to deny that
intuitive knowledge is at all possible.

But there is no reason why we should expect intuitive
knowledge to be like perceptual knowledge in this way. The
mere fact that we have two different terms 'intuition' and
'sense-perception' shows that the sort of things we know by
the one are not quite the same as the sorts of things we know
by the other. This does not mean, of course, that intuition
is a mysterious faculty, except in the sense that anything that
is fundamental (can not be entirely understood in the light of
something else) is a mystery. I must make it clear here that
I am not saying that any piece of human understanding is either
perceptual, intuitive, or inferential. In our understanding
of actual issues or things all the three modes of awareness
are often not only present but indissolubly mixed up. In
making the distinctions that I am making I am not suggesting
that they are actually encountered in purity or isolation, so
that if a piece of knowledge may be called perceptual it may
not be called intuitive as well, and so on. The distinction
is a distinction between recognisable aspects of things rather
between entirely different things. What then we have in mind
when we talk of intuitive awareness?

Let us first see in a little detail some of the differences
involved in our awareness of things. Suppose there is someone who knows nothing about electricity. He is shown an electric plug-point and told that he should not put his finger on it. He may agree not to do so but he does not see why he should not and the whole thing remains incomprehensible. But then somebody explains to him what electricity is and that he will get a shock if he comes into contact with it through the point. Now the man not only agrees but accepts in an understanding manner that he should not put his finger on the point. This he understands on the basis of another understanding about the functioning of what is called 'electricity'. It is therefore an inferential understanding, for unless one knows something about electricity one does not understand why one should not put one's finger on a certain thing which is an electric plug-point. But one cannot have this inferential understanding unless one also understands that a shock is not a thing to ask for. This latter understanding cannot be explained merely in terms of physiology, for although a shock is a nervous twitch, the understanding that this nervous twitch is to be avoided is itself not a nervous twitch. Neither can we call it an inferential understanding for one does not accept that a shock is to be avoided because this is entailed in something else one understands better. Since animals as well as human beings avoid whatever produces shock it would be said that this is an evidence of instinctive understanding, and so it is. But it is important to ask what we mean when we talk about
instinctive understanding. The term 'instinct' does not denote anything within us which can become an instrument of knowledge in the same way as our eyes or ears can. It is a term by means of which we explain the occurrence of certain types of behaviour which are related to one another in a characteristic manner and which are in some ways unlearnt. When it is said that we understand certain things through instinct what is meant is that we react towards the things concerned in our thoughts, feelings and actions in ways that may be considered appropriate to them from some point of view or other even though we have not exactly been taught to react in those ways, and even though we have not consciously figured out this appropriateness in our minds prior to our actual behaviour. Instinctive understanding is then in some ways an unlearnt recognition of certain features of our experience as being of a certain kind; and this recognition occurs not primarily through the instrumentality of the specialised function of any particular sense organ (although this may be involved) but through a total reaction of the organism to certain aspects of our experience.

What is called intuitive understanding is akin in some ways to instinctive understanding, although the issues that we understand intuitively are more complex than the issues that we understand instinctively. It is unfortunate that people are inclined to believe that to have an intuition is to be the favoured recipient of some esoteric knowledge in a mysterious way (thoroughly incomprehensible to people who are not specially
favoured). I am of opinion that intuitive awareness is quite a common occurrence in human understanding, only the feeling that an intuition is not worth its name unless there is some mystery attached to it keeps us from recognising this. I would say that any recognition of a difference between aspects of our experience which cannot arise merely through the function of a sense-organ and yet which is acceptable as valid on its own evidence (i.e. it is acceptable for being what it is and not because of something else from which it may be deduced by a process of inference) is an instance of intuitive understanding. Let us first take a very simple example. Suppose I say, 'there is a book on the table and a stool underneath'. How do I know those aspects of my total understanding which are expressed by the words 'on' and 'underneath'? No doubt we say, 'I see a book on the table and I see a stool underneath'. But I certainly do not see the relative positions of the book and the stool that are expressed by the words 'on' and 'underneath' if by 'seeing' is meant a visual sensation that is occasioned by our eyes being stimulated by a light wave. Our eyes are stimulated by the book, the table and the stool, but not by the fact that the book is on the table and that the stool is underneath it. Neither do we infer that such is the case, rather we directly grasp the case to be what it is without needing any mediating influence to be convinced about it. It perhaps appears strange and somewhat mysterious that we could do so, for we are used to the thought that we either perceive
things, in which case we are in direct contact with the object through our senses, or we infer about them through exercising our mental abilities, in which case we are not in direct touch with whatever is being inferred. It strains our imagination a little to think what it means to say that we know of certain differences between aspects of our experience directly (i.e. without the mediation of an inferential process from which it follows naturally) and yet such knowledge cannot altogether be classified under knowledge derived from sense organs. I do not say there is no mystery here; but it is a mystery in the sense in which any fundamental human ability, which somehow remains a marvel however much our understanding of it grows, is a mystery, not in the sense that it is thoroughly incomprehensible in the light of our ordinary experience. If we dwell on the human abilities to receive sensations and to infer we shall be no less mystified that such powers can exist, even when we know that they do exist, although our sense of mystery about these abilities is dimmed a little through our long acceptance of them as human modes of knowledge.

I have not suggested in what I have said above that it is in any way wrong to say that we perceive spatial relations as parts of the total field of our perception. We surely do perceive spatial relations in this way. What I am saying is that perception, as is involved in perceiving a book on the table and a stool underneath it, is a much more complex affair than sense stimulation. In fact, it is doubtful whether we
ever recognise anything in our sense-perception merely through the stimulation of a sense-organ. In any case, an act of perception which is as complex as to include the recognition of spatial relations involves an 'immediate' grasp of a total field through a somewhat 'total' reaction of an organism (i.e. intuition) as well as a reaction specific to the stimulation of a sense-organ.

The example of intuition that I have given is of the simplest kind. There are certain differences of a complex kind which are also grasped directly. To say that we grasp something directly may suggest that what we know forces itself on our attention in such a way that we cannot but know it to be there. This is because of the association of the word 'directly' with sense-perception. If our senses are in order and we are not otherwise occupied, an object of perception forces itself on us so that we cannot but know it to be there. When I say that we know an object directly in intuition I do not mean we cannot but know it. 'Directly' here only means that we know the differences when we do know them neither merely as a result of perceiving anything nor of inferring it; it does not mean that we must know them whenever they are discernible in some sense. The word 'directly' or 'immediately' may also suggest that a process of intuition happens in a flash or that all of a sudden we become aware of things we did not know before. I am not using the words in this way, although it is not impossible for some knowledge to occur in a flash. There are certain
complex differences to be found within our experience which we intuit (i.e. know directly) but a recognition of which dawns on us slowly and gradually. But however slow and gradual the process, in so far as it is a process of intuition it is not a process of inference. That we may intuit something slowly and gradually means that we, through a gradually widening field of experience and a slow seasoning of our personality to it, may ultimately get ready to notice certain discernible differences within our experience to which we were previously impervious. But when we do grasp the differences we grasp them as such and not as the derivatives of something else which we find are more directly acceptable.

Now to come back to the more complex differences that we intuit, amongst which are moral differences. Suppose that we know two people A and B, who are engaged on the same sort of job, say selling a particular brand of toothpaste. A is not easily put off, has a lively interest in the product, is always ready to take any pains necessary to convince others of the superiority of his brand and so on, while B if not quite the contrary of A shows little of the traits mentioned. We will then say that A is an industrious salesman while B is not. How do we know this to be the case? It is tempting to say that we infer this from their observed behaviour, but this will not do. For when we say, 'A is industrious', we are not imputing to him some quality which is additional to what we have observed about him, rather we are expressing the fact that
we have grasped the unity or the characteristic relation that exists between the various ways in which A behaves in connection with his business, and that we understand this to be in contrast with the sort of behaviour that is exhibited by B. This I would say is an intuitive understanding, although it no doubt involves perception and inference in some ways as well. That is to say, the difference between industry and lack of industry is a characteristic kind of difference that we recognise directly and it is not revealed to us merely through our senses or through a process of inference, however much we may be helped to it through our perceptual and inferential abilities. In the same way, a moral difference, say, between considerate and inconsiderate behaviour is a characteristic kind of difference that we intuit or discern directly in some features present within our experience; and we discern this when we have noticed how certain types of behaviour differ from others in being respectful towards the individuals concerned as individuals and in recognising the importance that whatever makes their happiness possible has to them. I have already remarked that to say that this characteristic difference between two contrasted types of behaviour is discerned directly is not to say any of the things; that it is revealed to each and all whenever the contrasted types of behaviour are present; that this difference presents itself in a flash and all of a sudden we come to know of a difference that we did not know before; that one is aware of exercising a faculty whenever one has an intuition
other than the general human ability of discerning recognisable differences and so on.

But it may still be felt that I have not really explained the incidence of a moral intuition and it is still a mystery how it can happen. In a moral intuition, I have said, we recognise certain distinct characteristics of a type of behaviour in contrast to the behaviour of an opposite kind. What is the relation between these characteristics and the behaviour itself? Are these the properties of the behaviour concerned in the way sweetness is a property of sugar, and if so, why are we not aware of recognising that an instance of behaviour, say \( X \), is respectful to \( Y \) as an individual and mindful of the possibility of his happiness when we recognise that behaviour \( X \) is an instance of considerate behaviour? I do not know how far I am able to give a satisfactory answer to anyone who feels this particular perplexity. But the perplexity is surely occasioned by a category mistake. If by 'property' is meant a quality of an object like the sweetness of sugar that we perceive by our senses then whatever is called a 'moral characteristic' is not a property, for by saying that we intuit it we have already said (in my sense of the word 'intuit'), that we do not perceive it by our senses. What is called a 'characteristic' is something far more complex than a sensible quality, and is not out there in the same way as a sensible quality (which we are, theoretically speaking, in a position to receive whenever we are in the presence of the object and are not thoroughly absorbed in something
else. It is what some philosophers have called a 'consequential quality'. This term may be interpreted in this way. An ordinary quality like the sweetness of sugar is something that we come to know directly through the instrumentality of our senses. We know it whenever we are in contact with it, provided, of course, we are not suffering from some physical or mental disability, and we have no difficulty in understanding other people when they refer to these qualities even when we are not in contact with them. This is because these qualities are there independently of any specific approach that we may make to them. These may, then, be referred to as first-order qualities for the sake of making a distinction between them and others. But there are other qualities, preferably to be called 'characteristics' which we may discern in the first-order facts (i.e. facts which are there independently of any specific approach to them) when we take up a certain attitude towards them or when we look at them from some point of view or other. These points of view (or attitudes) are value points of view - whether instrumental or intrinsic. For instance, we may look at a man working at a particular machine from a point of view from which we wish to find out whether the man is discharging his function efficiently or not, and this is because we prefer efficiency to inefficiency or value it. If we decide to call the man 'efficient' we are attributing to him a quality or characteristic which is revealed to us not directly, in the same way as sweetness of sugar is, but when
we approach the facts revealed relatively directly in a certain way, take up a certain attitude towards them, or look at them from a particular point of view; this then is a higher-order quality or characteristic, it being noticed to be what it is because of certain other things or qualities observed more directly. A moral quality or characteristic is likewise a higher-order quality which is discerned to be what it is because of - or as a consequence of - our noticing certain other things about a person's character or conduct, or about a state of affair towards which we take up a certain characteristic attitude.

This quality or characteristic is not then out there in the same way as the sweetness of sugar is. But it is out there in the sense that it is not a product of individual fancy. It is out there when we have developed or matured in such a way that we are ready to observe certain higher order distinctions which are not apparent at first sight. We can do so because we are - to press a traditional philosophical point - possessed of an ability to reason and a capacity to feel complex emotions.

Let me now give an example of what I mean. Suppose that shopkeeper Y charges price P and shopkeeper Z price Q for the same article X (let us suppose that the commodity is controlled and the price fixed). The difference between price P and price Q is such that I could say that shopkeeper Y has charged me more than shopkeeper Z. Then I also find out that price Q is the controlled price for X. Now when I have found the state of
affairs to be of this kind, I would also, supposing that I am ready or mature for it, recognise another order of distinctions, the awareness of which comes in the wake of awareness of distinctions that I have already found, and it is this. The behaviour of shopkeeper Y as distinct from that of other shopkeepers I know is dishonest and whether I am conscious of this to begin with or not, I shall find, if I reflect on this question, that I consider it dishonest in so far as it is characterised by being the extraction from me of more than I can legitimately expect to pay for the article involved. And I would not think that this sort of behaviour is respectful to customers. I would reflect in this way because I am somewhat indignant or disgusted at shopkeeper Y's behaviour. I come upon these characteristics through reflection and not through my senses, nevertheless these characteristics (of not being respectful to customers' rights etc) somehow qualify the behaviour in question; and these I implicitly recognise when I call it dishonest. If it would still be asked what sort of characteristic this is I can say no more than it is what it is and that in the last analysis we can know what it is not by abstract thought but by a reference to our actual experiences of moral distinctions. Again, if it be asked what sort of readiness is this readiness to find moral distinctions, my answer would have to be the same - it is the sort of readiness that it is and we can only understand what it is by reference to the ability of adult human beings, who may be considered
to be normal, to make moral distinctions in contrast to the lack of such ability in people who are in some ways below normal or abnormal as also in children and animals. As to the relation between the characteristic and the behaviour in question, this is that the characteristic can be discerned whenever a behaviour like this is present, if, of course, we take up a certain value point of view towards the behaviour in question.

The next important question is, can we be mistaken in our intuitions? I believe that just as it is possible for us to have an illusory perception or to draw an unwarranted conclusion it is also possible for us to be mistaken in our intuitions. What then is the criterion for distinguishing a valid intuition from an invalid one? The answer again has to be disappointing. There is no formula by applying which one would automatically know a valid intuition from an invalid one, just as there is no rule by applying which one could automatically distinguish an illusory perception from a valid one.

The question of criterion or rule is relevant only in mediate awareness i.e. in inferential thinking where our contact with the object is indirect. In intuition, as in perception, we have to be content with accepting facts for what they appear to be unless there is a definite reason to think that the facts are not what they appear to be. An occasion for thinking that we may be mistaken is provided by our subsequently having a different perception or intuition of the same object or by our
perception or intuition being contrary to the perception or intuition of other people. If our different perceptions and intuitions of the same object agree with one another and with those of other people then to continue to doubt their authenticity is to misunderstand the nature of these processes as processes of human understanding. It might be said that even when no manifest cause to doubt the validity of an intuition exists, we cannot, in the absence of a test, be absolutely sure that there is no cause for doubt. Perhaps not. But as long as no cause for doubt is in evidence or can even be thought of on the basis of what we already know, we are justified in treating our intuitions as valid and this is all the justification we can have. It is sometimes thought that it is the feeling of certainty that attaches to an act of intuition which confers upon it the validity it has. But a feeling of certainty may be present in case of an invalid intuition no less than in the case of a valid one, although it is true to say that we are certain of whatever we intuit, when we have a valid intuition, even if we cannot offer a proof to the effect that it is valid.

No doubt it may appear mysterious that we have a feeling of certainty in respect of all our intuitions, and yet we are right in some cases and wrong in others, particularly when we have no criterion by which to distinguish the cases in which we are wrong from the cases in which we are right. But this use of the word 'mysterious' is different from the one in which
we are justified in doubting that which appears mysterious, as in, 'it is mysterious indeed that you should be able to spend all these pounds on luxury goods when you say that you have no other source of income than your weekly £5 wage.'

That we do have valid intuitions is not mysterious in quite the same way, for when some one says, 'I know it is wrong, in general to break a promise, I cannot prove what I am saying, nevertheless I know by intuition that this is so', we do not think that there is any incongruity in what the man is saying although we may not think that we have any such intuition ourselves.

In the light of what has been said so far I shall now take note of the objections against ethical intuition as is raised by Strawson. North, who is an intuitionist in Strawson's dialogue, expounds the intuitionist position thus. "The fundamental cognitive situation in morals is that in which we intuit the rightness of a particular action or the goodness of a particular state of affairs. We see this moral characteristic as present in virtue of some other characteristics, themselves capable of being described in empirical terms which the action or state of affairs possesses."\(^1\)

To this West, who is an anti-intuitionist replies. A quality, say redness, is such that we can understand what this quality means by actually perceiving it in some object of our experience. It is therefore self-contradictory to say, 'I understand what the quality redness means but I do not remember

\(^1\) Philosophy. 1949 F.24.
ever having seen red, nor do I understand what it is to see red'. "Similarly, if the word "right" or the word "good", expresses an indefinable intuitive concept, then it is self-contradictory to say: "I know what the word 'right' or the word 'good' means, but I can't remember ever intuiting rightness or goodness, and I don't know what it would be like to intuit rightness or goodness. If your theory is true, then this statement is a contradiction. But it is not at all obvious to me that it is a contradiction".  

To this I would say: the reason why Strawson does not remember ever intuiting rightness or goodness is that perhaps he means by intuition a non-natural encounter, and possibly a sudden one, with a non-natural property the recognition of which will be forced upon him and this did not happen to him. But neither has it happened to anyone who professes to have an intuition of rightness or goodness. To have an intuition of rightness is to come to recognise certain distinctions between contrasted types of human behaviour and this recognition involves an awareness which is in some ways non-sensible as well as non-inferential, and it is a recognition not through the instrumentality of any particular sense organ or part of our personality, but through our whole being, as it were. Anyone who talks about rightness and goodness meaningfully must have had a recognition of this nature. One may not remember the experience of having had a recognition of this nature, for it might have happened.

1. Ibid. P.25.
without one's having consciously taken any notice of it. But it surely is possible for one to know what it means to have a recognition of this kind.

To continue. The intuitionist, North, says, "You intuit that an action is (or would be) right, a state of affairs good, because it has (or would have) certain other empirically ascertainable qualities.... The total content of your intuition includes the "because" clause...."1 and it brings evidence in support of a verdict.

To this West replies, "When the jury brings in a verdict of guilty on a charge of murder, they do so because the facts adduced in evidence are of the kind covered by the definition of "murder".... But the fundamental moral word or words, you say, cannot be defined; their concepts are unanalysable. So it cannot be in this way that the "because" clause of your ethical sentence functions as evidence. "X is a right action because it is a case of promise-keeping" does not work like, "X is a salt because it is a compound of basic and acid radicals...."

Again, "Generally, we may say that whenever Q is evidence for P, either Q, is the sort of thing we mean by "P" ("P" being definable in terms of "Q") or we can have knowledge of the state of affairs described by "P" independently of knowledge of the state of affairs described by "Q". But neither of the conditions is satisfied by the Q, the "because" clause of your sentence.2 The because clause then does not constitute evidence

1. Ibid. P.26.
3. Ibid. P.27.
for the ethical judgment. West then goes on to say that as ethical judgments are not infallible we must have some evidence in their favour, if we are to say that these judgments are of the nature of knowledge. "For to call such a judgment "non-infallible" would be meaningless unless there were some way of checking it; or confirming or confuting it, by producing evidence for or against it."

Now to take up the remark of the intuitionist first. We intuit an action to be right or wrong because it has certain empirically ascertainable qualities which act as evidence in its favour. For instance, we intuit that shopkeeper Y's action is dishonest and, which is the same thing, morally wrong, because it is an instance of deceptively over-charging. Does this "because" clause which is empirically ascertainable or does it not provide evidence for the moral intuition and the judgment that the action is wrong? It seems to me quite evident that it does, if we understand the word 'evidence' in a moral context. The "because" clause in a moral judgment, says West, does not function in the same way as in a legal judgment, where the jury brings in a verdict of guilty because the facts adduced in evidence are of the kind covered by the definition of murder. But the fact that a "because" clause in a moral judgment functions differently from a "because" clause in a legal judgment does nothing to show that the because clause in a moral judgment could not provide the sort of evidence

1. Ibid. P.27.
that is required in a moral context. Admittedly, 'X is a right act because it is a case of promise-keeping' does not work like 'X is a salt because it is a compound of basic and acid radicals'. But what does this prove? It is a recognised fact that moral contentions, however tenable, cannot be proved to anyone who refuses to accept the point of view of morality. And it is only a person who refuses to accept the point of view of morality who would not consider that the statement, 'X is an instance of promise-keeping' is a good enough evidence, in principle, in favour of the judgment 'X is a right act.' Let us suppose that X represents an action of leaving a certain sum of money to a relative who was given to understand that the money would be left for him. When we say that this action is right because it is an instance of promise-keeping we are not offering whatever is called promise-keeping as evidence in favour of the rightness of the act of leaving the money in any ordinary sense (as freezing of water would be evidence for the fall of temperature). Rather we are saying that this act of leaving the money is an act of promise-keeping because (i.e. we are here explaining what it means to say that it is an act of promise-keeping) it involves the fulfilment of an expectation intentionally aroused in another. And in so far as it involves this, this act is a type of act which we value from the moral point of view, which is the same thing as calling it right, because (here we are explicating what is involved in our valuing it) it is by fulfilling such an expec-
tation as against frustrating it that we respect a person with whom we have dealings, and recognise a need of his which appears nothing but legitimate. Thus, in one of the senses mentioned by Strawson in which Q may be an evidence for P, namely, the sense in which Q is the sort of thing that we mean by P, promise-keeping (Q) is evidence for the rightness of the act of leaving a certain sum of money to the relative (P). For the paying of respect by one person to another in some definite way, or the recognition of a certain sort of legitimate need of a person with whom one has dealings in some special way, which is what promise-keeping is as viewed morally, is the sort of thing that we mean by the rightness of the act of leaving the money.

No particular ethical judgment is, of course, infallible. For although the relative was told about the money it is possible that under certain extraordinary circumstances it would be morally better not to leave the money to him. The judgment 'the man's act of leaving the money to his relative is right as he promised he would' then may become an untenable judgment or at least a less tenable one than another judgment. But if the sort of things we have talked about in the above paragraph constitute evidence (moral) for an ethical judgment then the untenability (or comparatively less tenability) of a moral judgment is not decided upon entirely without any evidence whatsoever. We can say that the man's act of leaving the money even when it is the fulfilment of a promise is morally
wrong only when we have reason to think that by paying respect to the promisee through the fulfilment of the particular promise made, the man has committed a disproportionately great act of disrespect towards somebody or other, also involved in the act, (it might even be the promisee himself in another capacity) and has overlooked other legitimate needs and interests of far greater urgency and importance also to be found in the situation.

To continue with the anti-intuitionist objections. "Of course these judgments are corrigible; but not in the way in which the diagnosis of a doctor is corrigible; rather in the way in which the musical taste of a child is corrigible. Correcting them is not a matter of producing evidence for them or their contraries, though it is (partly) a matter of giving reasons for them or their contraries. "Of course, as you said, when we produce our reasons, we are not often giving the causes of our emotional condition. But neither are we producing evidence for a verdict, for a moral diagnosis. We are using the facts to back our attitudes, to appeal to the capacity of others to feel as we feel, to respond as we respond."

Now the corrigibility of a doctor's diagnosis and that of the musical taste of a child are, quite obviously, different in some ways; for the doctor's diagnosis is a non-value affair whereas the musical taste of a child is a matter of developing a sense of value. But they are not entirely dissimilar in every possible way. A doctor's diagnosis may be shown to be

1. Ibid. P. 27 - 28.
2. Ibid. P. 28.
wrong by reference to certain facts not hitherto taken notice of, a boy's musical taste may be improved by helping him to learn to appeal to more satisfactory standards of evaluation than he has hitherto been used to; and a standard of evaluation may be referred to as a value-fact in the sense that it is this standard as against anything that opposes it that is acceptable in a certain context of evaluation. We can, says Strawson, give reasons why a certain kind of taste in music is a better taste, but if the reasons be such that the kind of taste that is being recommended is accepted as a better sort of taste then this is all the evidence that is needed or can be given in such matters which belong to a value context. In any case, when we offer reasons of this kind we certainly do more than use the facts 'to back our attitudes, to appeal to the capacity of others to feel as we feel, to respond as we respond.' We also say, that the attitude we are recommending is the sort of attitude that fits the facts concerned best from a certain value point of view. This is not only true about musical taste but also about moral distinctions. So there can be such a thing as a moral diagnosis after all, though we shall be disappointed if we tried to understand it in the model of medical diagnosis.

Now if moral intuitions are fallible we cannot assert as a necessary synthetic proposition, "All acts of promise-keeping are right". But if we intuit the moral characteristic rightness in an instance of promise-keeping there must be some sort of a
necessary connection between rightness and promise-keeping. We can, says North, who is an intuitionist, assert as a necessary synthetic proposition, "all acts of promise-keeping tend as such to be right". And we derive our knowledge of such general necessary connection from seeing or intuiting in particular cases, that the rightness of an action or the goodness of a state follows from its being an action or state of a certain kind. To this West replies; all As tend to be Bs, simply means most As are Bs. If the moral characteristics follow from some empirically ascertainable features of the action or state then they must always do so. If the characteristics follow in certain cases and not in others then the connection is not necessary.

To this remark of West I would say: there is a way of interpreting "all acts of promise-keeping tend as such to be right or to have prima facie rightness "which does not result in the dissolution of the necessary connection that an intuitionist talks about between rightness and promise-keeping. Promises are made in actual circumstances of life which may be of many different kinds, and which may show relevance of a moral nature in many different ways. The rightness of promise-keeping belongs to that particular feature of an actual situation which is the intentional raising of an expectation in another and the undertaking of fulfilling it. In so far as this feature is present in any actual situation the action of fulfilling what has been undertaken fits it from the moral point of view. And
this fittingness of this action to this feature of a situation is of a necessary character, i.e. we cannot say that sometimes the action of fulfilling what has been undertaken, and sometimes the action of not doing so fits from the point of view of morality that particular feature of a situation which can be expressed by saying, 'someone has aroused in another an expectation and has undertaken to fulfil it'. What actually happens is that some particular circumstance which presents this feature also presents another feature of moral relevance which cannot be respected if this feature is to be respected and then the action of promise-keeping does not fit this situation considered in the totality of its moral aspects, if the other feature appears in some ways more urgent or important. "All acts of promise-keeping tend as such to be right" then is a statement about the actual acts of promise-keeping as performed in concrete situations of life and not about the activity itself called promise-keeping which considered in abstraction from concrete and particular situations of life appear to be the only act that fits a possible feature present in a situation - and is in that respect possessed of rightness - namely that a promise has been made. West, of course, might reply to this that the characteristic which we intuit as morally good or right is then no longer a characteristic which we find to be what it is because of certain empirically ascertainable features of a situation. For the rightness of promise-keeping has now become an abstract conception of rightness that has
nothing to do with actual situations of promise-making and promise-keeping, and in so far as this is the case it is no longer a characteristic that can be found in the empirically ascertainable features of a situation. So the judgment 'promise-keeping is right' no longer expresses a synthetic necessity concerning our experience.

The force of this objection lies in the vagueness of the expression 'empirically ascertainable'. It is true that our conception of the rightness of promise-keeping as such is not derived from an examination of all the features that are present in any actual situation in which a promise may be kept. But the feature of a situation because of which the characteristic rightness belongs to the act of promise-keeping is an empirically ascertainable feature in the sense that it is found to belong to situations which are within our actual experience; and it is that someone has intentionally raised an expectation in another and has undertaken to fulfil it. But although this feature is empirically ascertainable, perhaps it is not empirically ascertained on any actual occasion of intuition of the rightness of promise-keeping. What I mean is this. When we have an actual intuition of the rightness of promise-keeping, it is not because we have consciously sought out the features of a situation and have found one because of which the characteristic rightness belongs to promise-keeping; but rather because we have been confronted with an actual situation, the most predominant or the only moral feature of which is the feature
we are talking about, and it has struck us that an act which is an act of keeping a promise is the act that fits it morally, which is another way of saying that it has struck us that the moral characteristic rightness belongs to an act which is an act of promise-keeping. We are struck in this way when we adopt a certain point of view (that of morality) towards the feature in question which means that the moral characteristic is not just given or found in experience in the same way as sensible properties are given or found in experience. It is given or found in experience when we are ready to take up a certain point of view - and this readiness presupposes a greater degree of maturity than is involved in our ability to receive sensible impressions - which means that we are in a position to adopt a certain point of view towards our experience and are not mere recipients. Why we must adopt this point of view, is a question that I cannot answer, and whatever mystery there is in our doing so remains insoluble as far as I can see. All I know is that adult human beings who are not markedly abnormal or below normal do adopt this point of view, at times and in certain respects, at any rate. When we have adopted this point of view, a moral feature of a situation becomes an empirically ascertainable feature (in the sense that we can find it in our experience) and the fittingness that a certain kind of action is found to have to it expresses a synthetic necessity. That is to say, when we adopt a certain point of view, the fittingness that a certain kind of act is found to have to certain sort of
feature of a situation appears to be a fittingness that holds in respect of other possible situations in which the feature in question is the most predominant moral feature. But the necessity remains a purely analytical necessity i.e. a matter of how you define rightness, so long as the point of view of morality is not adopted. The rightness of promise-keeping is, no doubt, an abstract conception in so far as we cannot deduce from it our conclusions regarding whether or not promises as they appear in actual circumstances of life ought to be kept, but it still pertains to experience in so far as the feature because of which this characteristic is found is a feature discernible in some actual situations of life.

The intuitionist, North, says that we derive our knowledge of general necessary connection between rightness and acts of promise-keeping by seeing that the rightness of a particular act follows from its being of a certain kind. I would say that the word 'derive' here might be misleading, for it may lead us to think that we see or intuit a particular necessary connection first and then subsequently arrive at a general necessary connection. But a connection can appear to be a necessary connection only when we implicitly recognise the generality that is involved in it. That is to say, we can find that a particular act which is an act of keeping a promise is the only act that is fitting to this feature of a situation, namely, one has intentionally aroused an expectation etc., only by recognising implicitly that this act is fitting to this feature
whenever this feature is to be found. It is only the explicit recognition of the generality of this connection that comes later. A moral intuition is then fundamentally a recognition of a general necessity of a certain sort which is involved in the presence of the sort of characteristic that is called moral.

Another question which is relevant in this connection is: 'is our knowledge of moral characteristics empirical or apriori?' An answer to this question depends on how we interpret the terms 'empirical' and 'apriori'. If by saying that we have an apriori knowledge of moral characteristics is meant that we know about these before we ever had any experience, it is clearly false to say that we have any apriori knowledge. We can intuit or come to know about these moral characteristics only through a recognition of certain features present within our experience. But hardly anybody could ever have meant that we have knowledge of moral characteristics before we started having experiences. The reason for calling such knowledge 'apriori' seems to me to be this. We do not have intuitions of moral characteristics unless we take up a certain value point of view in respect of the issue under consideration. To take up the distinctive value point of view which is the point of view of morality is already to be ready to recognise moral characteristic although it is not yet to have any understanding of them which comes from our actually being in situations in which moral distinctions have to be made and are made. Our knowledge of moral characteristics is, then, apriori in the sense that we would not have
such knowledge from experience unless we were ready to evaluate it in a distinct way. But there is a sense in which it cannot be called 'apriori', and it is this. We do not know what can be meant by the terms 'good' and 'right' so long as we have not found the distinction between good and bad, right and wrong in our own experience. In short, we may say that our knowledge of moral characteristics comes from experience which is moral not from experience which is not yet moral.
CHAPTER IV.

THE COMMAND THEORY OF MORALS.

The command theory of morals originates with the realisation that ethical sentences are closely bound up with our actions in a way in which purely descriptive sentences are not. In a sentence like, 'the colour of the dress she wore last night is green', our object is to describe a particular state of affairs which is easily identifiable as such from amongst various other similarly describable states of affairs that have taken place or may take place. In an ethical judgment like 'you should tell the truth', we are concerned not with descriptions of things that have happened or may happen (but with judging that conduct of a certain kind (truth-telling) rather than another (telling lies) is preferable in human speech, from the point of view of what is worthwhile for its own sake for beings who are human, whether or not such conduct has actually taken place or will take place. Ethical judgments are of various kinds and these are concerned with the particular actions that we should perform, the principles by which we should choose the action to be performed from amongst various possible ones, and the kind of persons we should be so that the particular actions we perform and the principles by which we choose them are of the desirable kind. The peculiar concern of ethical judgments is then with human actions as approached, of course.
in a characteristic manner and it is amongst their functions to tell us that we should do certain things and refrain from others.

But the question which is philosophically important in this connection is this; 'can we explain the characteristic nature of morality by reference to the fact that the function of a moral judgment is to tell us to do something? Or is it that the judgment tells us to do something because what it tells us to do under a specific circumstance is in accordance with a value-ideal (or ideals) of human conduct? If so, to say simply that moral judgments are imperative sentences or commands the function of which is to make us to certain things is not to offer an adequate explanation of moral conceptions. For moral conceptions not only tell us to do certain things, their function is also to explain how certain things which we think we should do are worthwhile for us to undertake.

Ethical statements, says Prof Ayer, are not statements which can in the literal sense be considered to be significant, for it is not their job to describe any fact. Their use lies in expressing the speaker's emotions and in exhorting the hearer to action. "It is worth mentioning that ethical terms do not serve only to express feeling. They are calculated also to arouse feeling, and so to stimulate action. Indeed some are used in such a way as to give the sentences in which they occur the effect of commands. Thus the sentence "It is your duty to tell the truth" may be regarded both as the
expression of a certain sort of ethical feeling about truthfulness and as the expression of the command "Tell the truth."
The sentence "You ought to tell the truth" also involves the command "Tell the truth", but here the tone of the command is less emphatic. In the sentence "It is good to tell the truth" the command has become little more than a suggestion. And thus the "meaning" of the word "good", in its ethical usage, is differentiated from that of the word "duty" or the word "ought". In fact we may define the meaning of the various ethical words in terms both of the different feelings they are ordinarily taken to express, and also the different responses which they are calculated to provoke.¹

Now it is not to be denied that certain ethical sentences are used purely as commands nor that all ethical sentences have an aspect which may be looked upon as a command. But it is doubtful whether to say that the sentence "it is your duty to tell the truth" expresses a certain sort of ethical feeling and commands one to tell the truth to explain all that is involved in it. For one might ask 'Is this feeling that is being expressed a feeling that is suitable in a moral context? 'Or is this command one that is morally defensible'? Suppose that the sentence was, 'You should not tell him the truth, he would not know about it unless you tell him, and the money would be yours.' This no doubt expresses a feeling and a command. But is this feeling a morally defensible feeling and the command

one that, ethically speaking, compels obedience? This can hardly be maintained. Moral feelings and commands are at any rate, a very special sort of feelings and commands, and to understand how they differ from other feelings and commands is to understand how they are suitable in a particular context that is moral.

In fact whether we should say that a sentence in the imperative mood is to be called a command or not depends upon the point of view from which it is uttered. Let us take for example a particular sentence, 'you should pay your fare even if the conductor forgets to ask for it,' which may be a piece of advice given by a father to his son. This sentence is different from the sentence which a conductor might utter when a passenger is trying to get off the bus without paying, 'you should pay your fare.' The difference lies in this. The father's advice to the son might be given even when a situation of non-payment has not actually arisen or even if there is no definite reason to think that the son is planning to have a ride without payment, while the conductor can say this to a passenger only if there is reason to think that he intends to avoid payment. The conductor's imperative is directly aimed at making the man pay his fare apart from its being an expression of indignation at his not having done so. The father's statement is, of course, also aimed at making the son act in a certain way, yet it can hardly be a direct command to the son to pay his fare there and then—in the way the conductor's statement
is a command to the passenger - if the situation is not such that the question of paying the fare is immediately relevant. The father's statement is more a suggestion than an order - a suggestion about the desirability of the son's behaving in one way rather than another even when he has a free choice to do either, although it is also expected that the suggestion will lead to the son's behaving in the way that is desirable. The passenger who is trying to avoid payment cannot come out with 'why should I'? the mere fact that the conductor is asking for the fare rules this out. (We can overlook exceptional cases for our present purposes.) But the son may (although it is not very likely that he would) ask, 'why should I pay the fare if I have a chance to get away?' which would show that paying the fare when the conductor asks for it and paying it even when the conductor forgets to do so are not identical actions. The answer to this question may be of two kinds. (1) The father might say, 'although the conductor might have forgotten, an inspector might suddenly appear and check just as you are trying to get off and that would mean trouble for you.' (2) He might say, 'It is only reasonable that one should recognise services received and be willing to return the benefit in the acknowledged form. You pay back in the form of fares the advantage you derive from the fact that a bus service is run by the State or other proprietor. You would not like anyone to take advantage of you, why should you want to take advantage of the bus service and not be willing to pay for it. 'Answer (1),
we would say, is from the point of view of prudence while answer (2) is from the point of view of what is desirable and reasonable for its own sake and is therefore an instance of moral reasoning proper. Every moral judgment of an imperative form, we can see from above, is then not a mere command, for it can also involve an assertion that what is being commanded is reasonable when looked at from the point of view of what is best for its own sake for beings who are human. A moral command (which is a command in an extended sense and is not the sort of command which anyone could issue to others on the strength of his superior position in some way) then has authority not primarily because it is backed by power but because it recommends itself to a rational approach to the question, what sort of behaviour on the part of human beings is desirable for its own sake. If the son cannot reject his father's advice, suggestion, or command, it is because he somehow recognises (speaking logically and not psychologically) that it is better to acknowledge advantages and benefits received than not to do so. It is only because of this recognition that he will be ready to pay his fare even when the conductor forgets to ask for it, and when he can be practically certain that there is no possibility of an inspector appearing before he has a chance to get off the bus. The authority of the command, if we call it a command, that the father has issued then comes not so much

1. The authority of the conductor over the passenger's action in respect of payment or non-payment of fare is backed by the power of the state, that is, why even the passenger who would rather not pay his fare would not ask 'Why'.
from the fact that the father has a superior status or power by virtue of which it can be expected that the son will obey his wishes, but from the fact that the son will have no difficulty, if the question is approached rationally, in telling himself to do what the father has told him to do. I have no wish to suggest that every authority that is backed by power is devoid of rational appeal. But the fact that it is backed by power and the fact that it appeals to a rational approach are distinguishable facts; and an authority backed by power may continue to issue commands even when it has not got, or has lost, rational appeal. If we understand what it means to say that the authority of moral judgments lies in their rational appeal, it can hardly be maintained as Ayer does that moral precepts have for some people the force of commands because of the sanction of society behind them or because of the fear of God's displeasure. "When one comes to pursue the psychological enquiries that constitute ethical science, one is immediately enabled to account for the Kantian and hedonistic theories of morals. For one finds that one of the chief causes of moral behaviour is fear, both conscious and unconscious, of a God's displeasure and fear of the enmity of the society. And this, indeed, is the reason why moral precepts present themselves to some people as "categorical" commands."¹

According to Prof. Ayer, moral judgments of whatever form they may be, 'it is your duty to tell the truth', 'one ought to

¹ Ibid. P.169.
tell the truth', 'it is good to tell the truth', can all be explained by saying that they are commands calculated to provoke certain actions in us, the difference being in the tone of emphasis put on the command. But a statement of the form 'it is your duty to tell the truth' is usually made in an occasion of a particular nature when someone has to say something, or when someone may do so, and what one says may either be the truth or not. 'You (in the sense of one) ought to tell the truth', is more of a general statement which may be made even when the question of saying something is not immediately relevant. Also, this general statement is compatible with a statement like, 'you should not tell him, at the present stage of his illness, that his best friend has died; the shock might be too much for him to bear.' The general statement then can be called a command only in an indirect way; and the difference between this statement and the particular one 'it is your duty to tell the truth' (now, in this case) cannot be explained by the tone of emphasis. One may be as emphatic about the general statement as about the particular one. The difference lies in what they "tell" us, not merely in what tone of voice and with what feeling they tell us to do a certain thing. The general statement no doubt has the practical object in view of influencing us in favour of telling the truth as against not doing so. But it is no less its function to make this implicit assertion that telling the truth is preferable, from the moral point of view, to telling lies in so far as not to tell the truth is to
violate the value that an individual's desire to know has for
its sake. If this is acceptable, it can hardly be said that
's... sentences which simply express moral judgments do not say
anything.'

Hare in his book 'The Language of Morals' criticises the
simpler type of the command theory as advocated by Carnap and
Ayer. "It is indeed true of imperative sentences that if any­
one, in using them, is being sincere or honest, he intends that
the person referred to should do something (namely what is
being recommended)..... But this is not quite what the theories
suggest. They suggest, rather, that the function of a command
is to affect the hearer causally, or get him to do something;
and to say this may be misleading."2 This is because, "The
processes of telling someone to do something, and getting him
to do it, are quite distinct, logically, from each other. The
distinction may be elucidated by considering a parallel one in
the case of statements. To tell someone that something is the
case is logically distinct from getting (or trying to get) him
to believe it. Having told someone that something is the
case, we may, if he is not disposed to believe what we say,
start on a quite different process of trying to get him to
believe it (trying to persuade or convince him that what we
have said is true) No one, in seeking to explain the function
of indicative sentences, would say that they were attempts to
persuade someone that something is the case. And there is no
more reason for saying that commands are attempts to persuade

1. Ibid. P.161
or get someone to do something; here, too, we first tell someone what he is to do, and then, if he is not disposed to do what we say, we may start on the wholly different process of trying to get him to do it.\(^1\)

What then is the difference between an ethical sentence and an ordinary sentence of the form 'S is P'? The language of morals, says Hare, is one sort of prescriptive language, while a sentence of the form 'S is P' is descriptive. Prescriptive language is the language which prescribes a course of action for us rather than describes a state of affair and it includes value-judgments amongst which are moral ones, as well as the different kinds of imperatives which may be covered by the single term 'command'. A moral judgment differs from an ordinary imperative by virtue of the fact that it employs terms like, 'right', 'good' and 'ought' which have an evaluative or commendatory function (i.e. they recommend something to our choice in the context in which some decision has to be arrived at and an action undertaken). Leaving this aspect aside, it has many features in common with an ordinary imperative sentence. We can therefore attempt an understanding of value-judgments through an understanding of imperatives.

A typical indicative sentence is a statement. It is used for telling someone that something is the case, an imperative is used to tell someone to make something the case. An imperative sentence cannot be reduced to the indicative. That does not mean, of course, that only indicative sentences are significant

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1. Ibid. P.13 - 14.
and imperatives merely express wishes. Hare in this connection compares an indicative sentence with an imperative to show how an imperative sentence has meaning other than that of expressing a psychological state of the speaker.

The indicative sentence 'you are going to shut the door' is different from the imperative sentence, 'shut the door'. Yet both are about the same thing, 'your shutting the door in the immediate future', which Hare calls the 'phrastic'. It does not, however, tell us what the speaker is saying about it. We do not know whether he is stating that your shutting the door in the immediate future is what is going to happen or be the case, or whether he is telling us to make it the case, or, something else. In order to complete the sentence, therefore, something has to be added to tell us this. This something else Hare calls the "Neustic". Both the indicative and imperative sentence being, in a certain sense, about the same thing, the indicative sentence may be rewritten in the form 'your shutting the door in the immediate future (phrastic), yes (neustic), and the imperative in the form, 'your shutting the door in the immediate future (phrastic), please (neustic). In the phrastic the speaker points out or indicates what he is going to state to be the case, or command to be made the case. In the neustic he nods, as if to say, 'It is the case' or 'Do it'. The way one nods depends upon whether one is using an indicative or imperative sentence, but one nods whenever one is using any sentence in earnest. Both indicative and imperative

1. Ibid. P.17.
refer to a state of affairs actual or possible.

Now, if this is the case, it is difficult to see why Hare should believe as he does, that moral judgments do not state any fact at all. It is one thing to say that a moral judgment is not a purely descriptive statement like, 'it has turned very cold', another to say that what it is concerned with is not fact but something else namely, prescription. It is not impossible for prescriptions however to involve some facts as well. If a doctor prescribes quinine for a patient of malaria, he is no doubt asking the patient to take it, but by prescribing quinine the doctor is also expressing his belief that quinine cures malaria. If we were to rewrite the moral imperative, 'Tell the truth', into phrastic and neustic, it would read like 'your telling the truth in the immediate future, please, and the corresponding indicative 'you are going to tell the truth', may be written as, 'your telling the truth in the immediate future, yes'. The phrastic in these two sentences 'your telling the truth' must stand for a recognisable state of affairs in much the same way as 'your shutting the door' does, and this is being referred to in both the sentences, although in different ways. It may then be said that the function of the conception of 'telling the truth' is to state a recognisable aspect of our experience and it is quite in keeping with common usage to refer to such aspects as facts. I do not mean, of course, that the sort of thing this conception stands for is of the same kind as the sort of things a conception like
'table' denotes; for the former conception is much more abstract than the latter. That is to say, the conception of telling the truth expresses a certain characteristic feature (that which is being said constituting a valid and accurate representation of that in which information is being sought) which we may conceive to be there in many different instances of human speech, while the conception 'table' stands for things of which we may have perceptual experience. What we mean by 'telling the truth' is not therefore a fact in the same sense in which what is meant by 'table' is a fact. Yet it is a fact in the sense that it is not a fiction (i.e. this expression explains a feature of our experience). The imperative 'tell the truth' then tells us to do something which a purely indicative or descriptive sentence does not; yet it has this in common with an indicative or descriptive sentence that it involves the conception of a recognisable state of affairs.

As for the hearer, to nod assent to an indicative sentence means (if he is sincere) that he believes the statement to be true, while to nod assent to an imperative one is to do what the imperative tells one to do. One cannot say, 'yes, sir' to the imperative, 'shut the door' and yet not do it. To assent to the moral imperative 'tell the truth' is actually to tell the truth when a relevant situation arises. "It is a tautology to say that we cannot sincerely assent to a second-person command addressed to ourselves, and at the same time not perform it; if now is the occasion for performing it, and it is in our (physical
and psychological) power to do so. But it seems to me quite possible for someone to accept 'tell the truth' as a tenable moral judgment (which is giving assent to it in some way) and yet not tell the truth when an occasion arises for doing so even if it is not impossible for him to do so for physiological and psychological reasons (except when 'psychological reasons' is so defined that it is not possible for an individual to do anything but what he does.) 'Tell the truth' cannot in such a case mean a second person command (which it sometimes is) but is a general statement to the effect that truth-telling is a characteristic of human speech which is preferable to its absence or opposite. This, of course, can not be called a descriptive sentence as ordinarily understood. (A sentence is usually called descriptive when the aspect it states is relatively concrete and particular in nature and is easily distinguishable as such) Yet, I do not see any reason why this can not be called an indicative sentence in so far as this indicates or asserts a case, however important a bearing it may have on our actions. Indeed, it seems to make little difference to our understanding of the fact that the action of truth-telling is morally desirable, whether this is formulated in the form of an indicative or an imperative sentence.

I have no wish to deny the distinction that there is between an indicative and an imperative sentence. Only, the understanding of this distinction does not seem to me to be the

1. Ibid. P.20.
central point in the understanding of morals.

Hare, like Popper, wishes to say that a normative judgment belongs to a category which is utterly different from a statement of fact. To quote Popper from his article on 'What can Logic do for Philosophy?' "Perhaps the simplest and the most important point about ethics is purely logical. I mean the impossibility to derive non-tautological, ethical rules - imperatives; principles of policy; aims; or however we may describe them - from states of fact."\(^1\) Says Hare, "...from a series of indicative sentences about 'the character of any of its objects' no imperative sentence about what is to be done can be derived, and therefore no moral judgment can be derived from it either."\(^2\)

The point in these arguments appears to be the same as Moore was concerned with in his refutation of naturalism - that 'what ought to be' cannot be derived from 'what is'. But the point of the distinction that Moore makes between 'what is' and 'what ought to be' does not seem to me to correspond exactly either to the distinction between an indicative sentence and an imperative one or to the distinction between what is a statement of fact and what is not. 'What ought to be' is not the same as 'what is', yet, 'what ought to be' may as well, in certain cases, be 'what is'. It is not only possible to say 'you ought to tell the truth', but also, 'I am pleased that you have told the truth'. This last statement indicates what a

certain case is but this is a moral judgment not by virtue of the fact that it indicates a certain state of affairs, but because of the fact that the state of affairs is what it ought to be. But if 'what ought to be' can also be 'what is' even though these two conceptions are not the same, a statement containing a conception of 'what ought to be' may be considered to be an indicative sentence or a statement of fact in so far as such a statement would assert or indicate that something is the case. That is to say, there is a certain sense in which what is of value may be referred to as a fact, although a fact which is judged to be of value (what ought to be) is not the same as a fact which is not so judged (what simply is). Now, all this may seem very unimportant. What does it matter, one might say, whether a moral judgment is called an indicative or an imperative statement, a statement of fact or not a statement of fact so long as we understand the distinction that there is between a moral judgment and a purely descriptive judgment like, "he is a very tall man." The point however is an important one. For once we have called a moral judgment an imperative sentence (some moral judgments are no doubt imperatives, the point at issue is whether the name 'imperative' expresses the distinctive nature of what morality is concerned with) meaning thereby that what moral conceptions have to say cannot be said in an indicative form, we begin to think that moral statements are not statements of facts, (only a fact can be asserted in an indicative sentence). And once we have accepted that moral
statements are not statements of facts without making it quite clear that the term 'fact' is being used here in a limited sense (in the sense of a distinct object, quality or event, identifiable as such in different instances of its occurrence) we begin to believe that what moral judgments are concerned with are somehow matters of a different order than what is rationally approachable and defensible (i.e. fact in another sense of the term). From this it is an easy step to begin to believe that moral matters are matters of feelings, attitudes, decisions (not necessarily to be understood in terms of certain definite standards), social customs and so on. The effect is that it is no longer considered to be the case that there are fundamental moral distinctions which we know and talk about. Moral conceptions have importance, it is considered, from the point of view of our actions and emotions but not from the point of view of understanding a characteristic kind of our experience.

But the denial of the status of facts to moral conceptions has a deeper root than a purely grammatical one. Our judgments about facts which are distinct objects, qualities or events have a degree of certainty and such judgments are on the whole shared by different individuals. The things to which a moral conception like 'good' or 'right' may be applied by an individual or a group of individuals may not be the same to which other individuals or groups would apply it and there is no formalised method by means of which the tenability of one
opinion as against that of the other may be established in the same way as a conclusion about a fact (as defined above) may be. It seems natural to conclude from this that moral conceptions do not signify any fact, but as they are still important in respect of our actions they stand for commands and decisions which follow from these commands. But this is really no way out. For no command, except when it is backed by absolute and autocratic power, is devoid of all implications concerning certain states of affairs which make it desirable or at least necessary, that the action should be undertaken.

Hare criticises, by way of establishing his theory, the opinion which holds that moral conceptions stand for self-evident facts; and he mentions in this connection the Cartesian system in morals which is supposed to assert that there are certain self-evident principles of conduct from which conclusions as to what we should do in particular circumstances of life can be deduced. It is the notion of 'self-evident' that he objects to; not the method of inference. (i.e. deduction) Rather he believes that a piece of moral reasoning does involve a deductive process which makes it necessary that its premises must be of such a nature that a particular injunction of the form, 'do so and so' can be deduced from it. Premises which will entail a particular injunction must themselves be of a particular nature which rules out the possibility of the self-evident general principles. "If we may take it that,... a piece of genuinely evaluative moral reasoning must
have as its end product an imperative of the form 'Do so-and-so', it follows that its principles must be of such a kind that we can deduce such particular imperatives from them, in conjunction with factual minor premises. If, for example, a moral system is to enjoin one not to say this particular thing which is false, its principles must contain implicitly or explicitly an imperative to the effect that what is false is not to be said in circumstances like these in which I now am. And, similarly, they must contain other imperatives such as will regulate my conduct in all manner of circumstances, both forseen and unforeseen. But it is obvious that a set of principles could not possibly be self-evident.\(^1\)

This seems to me to involve a serious misunderstanding about the nature of moral reasoning. A piece of moral reasoning is not a deduction in which a conclusion is drawn from a set of given premises. What is 'given' in moral reasoning is an action, attitude or state of affairs which is judged as 'ought to be done' or 'ought not to be done', 'ought to be' or 'ought not to be' in accordance with certain general conceptions of what ought to be done and what ought to be'. But the fact that a piece of moral reasoning is not an inductive or deductive process does not mean that moral reasoning is somehow loose as Hare accuses Toulmin of saying. What Toulmin says however, is that moral reasoning is a distinct type of reasoning peculiar to ethical arguments and not that it is loose.

1. Ibid, P.39 - 40.
"Suppose that we put forward an ethical argument, consisting partly of logical (demonstrative) inferences partly of scientific (inductive) inferences, and partly of that form of inference peculiar to ethical arguments, by which we pass from factual reasons to an ethical conclusion, - what we might naturally call 'evaluative' inference."¹ To this Hare replies, "A statement, however loosely it is bound to the facts, cannot answer a question of the form "what shall I do?", only a command can do this."² The implication again is that the only process by which we can arrive at a conclusion is deductive, so that if the answer to the question "what shall I do" in the situation Y is 'do X' there must be a command available to us to the effect, "Whenever in situation Y do X'. This however is not true, for many situations in life are unique and what the agent (or whoever is doing the job on behalf of the agent) has to find out is how far and in what way any established principle is relevant to the situation so that he may decide to act in a way that is morally satisfactory. This finding out is the peculiarity that differentiates a moral inference from a straightforward inductive or deductive process. There is no set method or rule of inference by which one can go about this business of finding out, but that does not mean that it must inevitably be loose.

Continuing his criticism of self-evident principles Hare says, "It is not in the least clear what could be meant by

¹. Reason in Ethics. P.38.
². Language of Morals. P.46.
calling any proposition, least of all a general principle of conduct, 'self-evident'. If such a principle is to be in some sense impossible to reject, this, it seems to me, can only be for one of two reasons. First, it might be said that a principle of conduct was impossible to reject, if it were **self-contradictory** to reject it. But if it were self-contradictory to reject a principle, this can only be because the principle is analytic. But if it is analytic, it cannot have any content; it cannot tell us to do anything rather than another."  

Again, "The view which I am attacking holds that by having special rules of inference we can say that there can be inferences from a set of indicative premises to an imperative conclusion. If we ask "What are these special rules of inference?" it is clear that they are nothing but the old rules of conduct in a new guise. What under the old dispensation appears as an imperative major premise reappears under the new as a rule of inference. The criterion which I suggest for deciding on the merit of these two ways of putting the matter is the same as before. Let us take an example. Suppose that I say "Don't say that because it is false". Are we to represent \( X \) the argument as follows:

\[
S \text{ is false} \\
\therefore \text{ do not say } S
\]

or shall we add the imperative major premise 'Never say what is false'? If the latter, the inference is valid by ordinary

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1. Ibid. P.41.
rules of logic; but if the former, we have to have a special rule of inference, which will just be this imperative major premise in another capacity. Does it matter which of these alternatives we choose? Surely it does if we are concerned to distinguish between on the one hand general principles about conduct, which have content, and tell us to do, or to refrain from certain positive acts in our external behaviour, and on the other hand logical rules, which are rules, not for behaving correctly, but for talking and thinking correctly, and are, if Popper is to be believed, not about our actions, but about the meanings of the words used.¹

The important points in this argument may now be summarised. First of all, a moral principle, if it is to be self-evident, must be analytic. An analytic proposition has no content, it can not therefore tell us anything about our conduct. The principle which acts as the imperative major premise of our deductive moral reasoning must have content, otherwise we could not deduce the particular moral commands from them. They are, therefore, synthetic propositions, which means they are not self-evident. If we said that there is no imperative major premise in a piece of moral reasoning and we just pass from certain given facts (of the type 'sis false') to a conclusion (do not say s) by means of a special rule of moral inference (of the type 'one ought not to tell a lie') we create a certain logical difficulty. For a rule of inference being logical it

¹. Ibid. P.48 - 49.
is a rule about correct thinking and talking and not about actions. How can we get a moral conclusion which does say something about our conduct (do not say s) merely out of a given fact (s is false) by the help of a logical rule which says nothing about conduct but merely deals with correct thinking?

This seems to me to be an example of that sort of apriori reasoning which seeks to show that certain things that happen can-not happen because of supposed logical difficulties. If we examine ordinary moral opinion on this question, there appears nothing unusual about saying that the principle 'one ought to tell the truth' (understood as an abstract, general statement) can-not be rejected in so far as its rejection implies the acceptance of its contrary (similarly abstract and general) 'one ought to tell lies'. Does this mean that this principle is analytic? If by an analytic proposition we mean one that has no content in the sense that it can-not tell us anything about matters of fact, then the statement 'One ought to tell the truth' is clearly not analytic; for it does say something about our conduct. Nevertheless, the statement has no content in the sense that it is a formal statement from which no statement about particular actions follows deductively although particular actions may be judged from the point of view of morality, to be suitable or unsuitable in a certain context in accordance with the conceptions that the statement involves. This statement is, of course, analytic in the sense that the
conception of moral 'ought' involves the conception of 'telling the truth', so that it would be self-contradictory from the point of view of morality to say 'one ought to tell lies'. Yet it applies to matters of fact, because that to which it applies acquires the factual character it has from the point of view of morality, by being looked at through the conceptions that the statement involves. Kant endeavoured to explain the characteristic nature of such a statement by the term 'synthetic (applies to experience) apriori (not derived from experience as it cannot be self-contradictory to reject anything that is derived purely from experience). It will perhaps be better, as the term 'apriori' is open to serious confusion, to explain these features by the term 'empirical (its function is to explain a certain feature of our experience) analytic' (can not be made false through experience as it has already been conceived in such a way as to explain a feature of our experience, so long, of course, as we continue to experience this feature.)

Coming back to the question of moral inference, it seems perfectly natural to infer 'do not say s' from the given fact 's is false'. We require the statement 'never say what is false' as an imperative major premise only if it has to be insisted upon that the nature of moral inference is deductive. If it can be accepted that a piece of moral reasoning may be other than deductive or inductive and yet not be inevitably loose then there seems to be nothing against saying that one can infer 'do not say s' from the given fact s is false, on the
strength of the moral standard 'one ought to tell the truth'.

We may not call this standard a 'rule of inference' as ordinarily understood; yet it is like an inference-ticket or licence which justifies our passing from certain given facts (s is false) to a conclusion of a characteristic kind (do not say s) when we approach the matter in a certain way. Now, the function of this inference-ticket is a logical function, yet it does not follow that the standard is purely a rule about correct thinking, like the law of excluded middle, and does not say anything about our conduct at all. For the logic here in question is the logic of moral reasoning, and this being reasoning characterised by a certain approach to the object of thought, the conceptions in terms of which we think appear also as the features of what is thought of. The logical nature of the standard 'truth ought to be told' does not stop it from being factually informative or, as Hare puts it, from being a rule for behaving correctly.

It seems to me that Hare himself realises the shortcomings of the theory that a piece of moral reasoning is deductive in process. "The gravest error, however, of the theory that I am criticising is that it leaves out of reasoning about conduct a factor which is of the very essence of morals. This factor is decision. In both the kinds of principle which I have been discussing, the principle falls short, in some sense, of being universal, only because in particular cases it is left to the decision of the agent whether to act upon the principle or not. Now to use the word 'inference' of a procedure like this is
seriously misleading. When someone says either 'This is false, so I won't say it' or 'This is false but I'll say it all the same, and make an exception to my principle', he is doing a lot more than inferring. A process of inference alone would not tell him which of the two things he was to say in any single case falling under the principle.\(^1\) This is all very true if we must believe that a process inference is a deductive process. If a process of moral (or any evaluative) reasoning is in some respects peculiar and therefore does not come under either of the formalised methods of inference - peculiar in so far as one has to find out how far and in what way a principle is relevant to the situation under consideration - then there is no reason why we must say that the essence (a term used by Hare) of moral reasoning is decision. For the conception of 'decision' explains that feature of human behaviour which stands for an individual's making up his mind to act in some particular manner. How far that manner is suitable to the situation as looked at from a certain point of view is a different question which the term 'decision' does not answer. And the process by means of which an attempt to answer this question may be made is usually expressed by the term 'reasoning or 'thinking'; and this applies to morals as well as to any other field of enquiry.

Hare does, of course, say that moral conceptions have a commendatory function as well as an imperative one. But he does

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1. Ibid. P.54 - 55.
not go into the question as to what distinguishes moral commendation from any other kind of commendation, to any serious extent. All he says is that the issues that are objects of moral commendation are of the nature of actions, and these are important for human beings. This no doubt is true, but it fails to point out the characteristic features of moral evaluation when that is distinguishable any other kind of evaluation. For there are human actions and important actions too, which are often commended from points of view other than the moral. What we want to know is why or by what standards we judge that certain issues or actions are objects specifically of moral commendation. To this the command theory, either the simpler variety or the more complex kind, supplies no answer.
I shall in this chapter discuss the Attitude theory of morals as advocated by Stevenson in his *Ethics and Language*. What Stevenson is doing in this book is meta-ethics i.e. his concern is with the language and logic of ethical terms and methods as they are used in moral evaluation. This is what he says at the beginning of his book, "This book deals not with the whole of ethics, but with a narrowly specialised part of it. Its first object is to clarify the meaning of the ethical terms - such terms as "good", "right", "just", "ought" and so on. Its second object is to characterise the general methods by which ethical arguments can be proved or supported." But the terms which Stevenson is proposing to analyse are terms that we find in normative ethics and not in philosophical ethics. For Stevenson believes philosophical ethics to be a confusion, in as much as its subject-matter is constituted of intrinsic and ultimate ends which are supposed to exist on their own, quite independently of all extrinsic values or means. Normative ethics is what we are all concerned with when we make our ordinary evaluative judgments about people's conduct or about existing states of affairs.

Now in order to carry on a meta-ethical enquiry of ethical terms it is necessary for us to understand the nature of a

1. Ethics and Language. P.I.
normative problem and the agreements and disagreements that it leads to. "Our first question, though seemingly peripheral, will prove to be of central importance: what is the nature of ethical agreement and disagreement? Is it parallel to that found in the natural sciences, differing only with regard to relevant subject-matter, or is it of some broadly different sort?"

If we can answer the question, we shall obtain a general understanding of what constitutes a normative problem; and our study of terms and method which must explain how this kind of problem becomes articulate and how it is open to argument or inquiry, will be properly oriented.¹

Stevenson gives a few examples of the sort of things that constitute a normative problem. Two people have decided to dine together. One suggests a restaurant where there is music, another expresses his disinclination to hear it and suggests some other restaurant. It then happens that they cannot easily agree which restaurant to choose. The disagreement springs more from divergent preferences than from divergent beliefs, and it will end when both wish to go to the same place. Again, Mrs. A. has social aspirations and wants to move with the elite. Mr. A. is easy-going and is loyal to his old friends. They accordingly disagree about what guests they will invite to their party. This disagreement can only be solved if Mr. A. and Mrs. A. agree in their attitudes.

¹. Ibid. P.2.
As to philosophical ethics. "There are a number of philosophers who take judgments about intrinsic value (in a sense of "intrinsic" which, if not always precisely like that to be used here, is roughly similar to it) to have an importance that is beyond question. They distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic value (or "ultimate ends" and "means"), in the first pages of their work, and from there on emphasise the former. Now why does this emphasis seem to them warranted? Perhaps the answer is largely this:

"They hold, in effect, that normative ethics admits of a division of labor. Philosophical moralists can limit their attention to intrinsic values, since these are issues to which the "speculative" methods of philosophy are suited. Questions about extrinsic value, being about things that derive their goodness at secondhand, can safely be left to others - to the statesmen, social scientists, psychologists, and so on, who, taking their views about what is intrinsically valuable from the philosophers, will be able to work out the involved pattern of cause-and-effect relations upon which all decisions about extrinsic value will then depend."¹

¹If the early writers, being lovers-of-wisdom in general, recognised no division of labor between moralists and scientists, considered as isolated groups of men, they often recognised the possibility of isolating moral and factual questions, and of making questions about intrinsic value an independent study.

¹. Ibid. P.174 - 175.
One could presumably decide about the ultimate ends in advance of finding the means of obtaining them.\(^1\)

The argument appears to be this. Questions of value occur only in connection with questions of fact and what are called intrinsic ends cannot exist without some means being adopted to bring them into existence. It is, therefore, futile to treat values as if they exist on their own independently of any fact and as if one could discuss these values quite apart from a factual context. Again, it is useless to suppose that a discussion about intrinsic ends can be profitable quite apart from a context in which the question of adopting some means or other to bring them into existence is relevant. If values do not exist except in so far as facts are considered valuable and if intrinsic ends do not exist except through the instrumentality of means then questions about intrinsic value cannot constitute an independent study as philosophical moralists thought they can. It is the statesmen, psychologists, social scientists etc. who pass normative judgments about the particular objects of their concern - people who are engaged in discussing not what is desirable as an end for its own sake but the relationship between certain states of affairs and certain courses of human actions which lead to such states - who are properly engaged on questions of value. And the sort of questions they ask is the only sort of value questions that is important for us to ask.

1. P.175.
Now one would entirely agree with Stevenson that values do not exist except in the context of facts, and that in actual life there are not two sets of questions — questions about values and intrinsic ends to be dealt with by specialists (philosophical moralists) and questions of facts and means to be asked by statesmen, social scientists etc. One would also agree that it is not the case that if and when the latter group of people wish to decide upon objectives they should consult the specialists in value. Nevertheless, I do not agree that questions about intrinsic ends cannot form an independent study or that philosophical moralists, who in a certain sense divorce questions of fact and means from questions of value and ends, do not ask questions as significant for human affairs as the questions asked by statesmen etc. who are concerned with directly existing facts and with means to bring about changes believed to be preferable to states of affairs actually existing. I have tried to indicate in my discussions of the concepts of 'good' and 'right' how the questions of intrinsic ends can become objects of an independent study. Here I shall indicate very briefly what I conceive a philosophical treatment of ethics to be and in what sense philosophical moralists are justified in divorcing the questions of ends and values from questions of means and facts.

Value questions, as Stevenson says, arise only in factual contexts. When statesmen are engaged in dealing with international political problems in the course of which they delib-
erate whether they should go to war to solve a dispute or whether they should meet the opponent half-way (speaking figuratively) and settle the issue peacefully they are engaged in settling questions of value. Let us suppose that the statesmen engaged in a conflict between two Governments are X and Y and the issue is Z, and naturally it is highly complex. That is to say, it has not got a simple, clear cut, precise nature that can be got hold of by using our senses and it itself is composed of different issues of a less general kind or has many aspects.¹ Now both the statesmen X and Y are concerned with Z but with different aspects of it or with Z as looked at from different points of view, and let us suppose that these are P and Q. P and Q themselves are systems of things rather than particular things and as systems are in some ways opposed to one another, X upholds P and opposes Q while Y does the reverse. Let us suppose further that they then pass the value judgments 'P is so much better than Q that one is justified in going to war in order to have P instead of Q' and 'Q is so much etc.'

Now R who is an ordinary citizen in either of the countries the Governments of which are in opposition might find that his own reactions to the matter are somewhat different.

¹ For instance if the issue is human freedom one could discern various aspects of the problem and talk about freedom of speech and political opinion, economic freedom or basic security and a standard of life for the mass of population which is in keeping with the wealth of the country, freedom or opportunity to exercise genuine choice in selecting one's career in accordance with one's capabilities and so on.
He might feel that neither P nor Q is thoroughly good or thoroughly bad and it is not at all obvious to him that P is so much better than Q that one is justified in starting a war that has immeasurable powers of destruction in order that P may exist as against Q or vice versa. As some people say that P is good and Q bad and others make the opposite judgment R feels that he needs a standard acceptable to all reasonable people by which to decide - if such a decision is at all possible. The issue is so important for so many people that he feels it ought not to be decided in such a way as inflicts a lot of suffering on them - purely on grounds of personal preference.

R might find in the course of deliberation that P appears good as against Q because of its aspect a, b, c etc the comparable ones in Q being i, j, k; and Q appears good as against P because of its aspects e, f, g etc. the comparable ones in Q being m, n, o. The aspects i, j, k etc. in Q are such that their existence definitely makes it difficult and in certain cases even impossible for some individual human beings to fulfill some of their deeply felt needs as a result of which they cannot develop themselves in their own ways or live their own lives as they would like to whereas the existence of a, b, c does not mean this for the same group of people. Again, the aspects m, n, o are such that their presence means the continuation of an injustice of a certain kind to some people whereas the presence of aspects e, f, g, does not mean this.
says 'P is good' he is possibly talking about the aspects a, b, c, etc in it, and the standard by which he is judging such things to be good is the conception 'opportunity for people to develop and live in their own ways.' When Y says 'Q is good' he is possibly talking about the aspects e, f, g, in it and the standard by which he is judging such things to be good is the conception of 'justice'. These conceptions are acceptable as standards of evaluation because the conceptions which oppose them like 'lack of opportunity for people to develop and live in their own ways' and 'lack of justice' cannot, from the very nature of the case, be appealed to by reasonable people to support the worthwhileness of what they value. That is to say, these concepts are such that they show themselves to be reasonable courts of appeal in certain contexts of evaluation while the opposite conceptions show themselves to be unreasonable. The man may further reflect on the question, why is it that we accept these conceptions as standards and not the conceptions which oppose them, and find that these conceptions are consistent with the possibility of the happiness of human beings as individuals while the conceptions which oppose these are not. And he further finds that it is reasonable, from the very nature of the case, to prefer human happiness to unhappiness while it is unreasonable to do the opposite.

R thus finds that there are certain conceptions of standards by appealing to which the worthwhileness of certain things
valued may be supported and this support may be expected to be satisfactory to people who will take up a reasonable attitude towards the question. That is to say, these standards have been conceived in such a way that an appeal to these rather than to their opposites is reasonable and this appeal does not need the support of arguments to show that it is reasonable. It is then the case that the notions of certain self-justified standards or ends are actually implied in our evaluation of human affairs when we believe that our evaluation stands for something over and above personal preference i.e. when we believe that if people are reasonable they will accept the worthwhileness of what we are valuing.

When R has come to have a fuller understanding of the conceptions that have been involved as the standards of evaluation of the states of affairs F and Q he might find that the actual judgments passed on F and Q are not fully satisfactory from the point of view of morality. Although aspects a, b, c, etc. of F are in accordance with a self-evident standard and in that sense good there are certain other aspects of F, namely, m, n, o, which do not satisfy another self-evident standard as well as the aspects, e, f, g, of Q do. Therefore the judgment "F is good" is not tenable as a value judgment if it is meant to be an unqualified judgment to the effect that F is good through and through and not merely that F is good in so far as F involves a, b, c, etc. A similar remark holds of Q. R might still find that it is possible to say that F is
on the whole better than Q and vice versa if it is at all possible to find that the one or the other leaves greater scope for the happiness of human beings as individuals when considered in the totality of their aspects. But he finds that the judgment 'P is so much better than Q that one is justified in going to war so that one may have P instead of Q\(^1\) or vice versa, is untenable as a value judgment because it is inconsistent with the requirements of human happiness as individuals. War as a method of solving disputes is one matter when it injures a restricted group of people directly involved in fighting, it is quite another when the lives and possessions of a large number of people are involved who are neither responsible in anyway in creating tension nor are personally interested in solving the dispute to such a degree that they do not any longer consider their lives and possessions to be valuable. For in the latter case starting a war means forcing a lot of people to be extremely unhappy when the unhappiness involved is such that the people concerned neither desire nor deserve it. Reflection on the meaning of ethical terms, - when these terms are used in a judgment which the evaluator believes to stand for something more than an expression of personal opinion, - then may actually lead us to consider some value judgments passed to be unsatisfactory or not wholly tenable,

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1. The actual judgments passed are much more complex. I have taken a simplified case for the sake of argument.
in so far as these judgments claim to be objective.

Philosophical ethics has to do with our thinking about ethical issues and with the satisfactory or unsatisfactory use of ethical terms in a value context which is accepted by the disputants to be in some sense objective (otherwise there can hardly be any argument and the matter would end with the voicing of personal preferences). It is then concerned with the clarification of the meaning of ethical terms in one sense and with intrinsic ends or self-justified standards of value in another, for unless conceptions of such standards are involved in the use of ethical terms the value context is not such that a judgment which is more than an expression of a personal preference can be passed. It is concerned with the clarification of the meaning of ethical terms in this sense.

Ethical judgments use such terms of evaluation as 'right' and 'good'. Some ethical judgments, at any rate, claim to be more than expressions of personal attitudes and preferences in as much as people making such judgments believe that others would find them acceptable if they looked at them from a value point of view that is rational. Now reasonable people may be expected to accept these judgments only if such judgments are in accordance with conceptions of standards that they will find acceptable because of their being what they are. In normative judgments of the sort that we are discussing then the terms 'right' and 'good' may be expected to involve certain self-justified standards of value or which is the same thing, to be
consistent with conceptions of intrinsic ends. Philosophical ethics may profitably enquire what these self-justifying standards (and their implications) are that are involved in the use of the terms like 'right' and 'good' in ordinary normative discourse when that discourse is held consistently within a characteristic point of view and when it is presumed to be based on something more than personal preference. To do this is, in a sense to explicate or analyse the meaning of these terms. And this analysis can be a guide in our approach to some of the actual uses that are made of such terms. For instance, if we say that a part of the meaning of the ethical term 'good'-when this term is used consistently within a characteristic point of view-is that whatever is referred to by that term may be supposed to be consistent with the conception of greatest good (a state of affairs in which it is possible for everyone concerned to be as happy as it is in his nature to be) then a particular use of the ethical term 'good' (or 'better') as in 'it will be better to go into war for P than not to have P' may be shown to be ethically untenable, if there is reason to think that the war in question will cause more unhappiness to human beings as individuals than the state of affairs lacking in P. Or again, take another ethical term 'justice' which stands for a self-justifying standard generally believed to be good. If we define justice as a state of affairs in which nobody is treated prejudicially or preferentially in respect of the fulfilment of his felt needs -
and we can do so if we find that this is how this term is used in ordinary normative discourse when it is used consistently - then the use of the term 'just' as in 'a society in which people do their duties belonging to their stations in life is just' may be shown to be ethically untenable. But this analysis of the meaning of ethical terms is at the same time an enquiry into intrinsic ends or self-justifying standards. For philosophical ethics does not just discuss the different senses in which ethical terms are actually used but tries to discern that particular meaning, out of all that are current in usage, which can be consistently applied from a characteristic point of view; and such consistent use of a value term can only be understood with reference to the conception of a standard that does not need any further support of arguments to show that it is acceptable from a rational point of view.

Philosophical ethics then divorces the conceptions of ends for a specialised study from the questions of means i.e. it discusses how the state of affairs that is involved in the conception of the self-justifying end called 'justice' is characterised without discussing how justice in some particular sphere or other can be brought about. (I do not say that a philosopher can not do this as well) But the conception of the end called 'justice' with which it is legitimately concerned is not a conception that is spun out of a philosopher's head, rather it is a conception that is found by the philosopher to be implicit in the undertaking of certain means by some people to
bring about certain changes in the existing state of affairs, as also in some actual normative discourse. Only, the phi-
osopher endeavours to choose a meaning that can be consistently employed within a certain characteristic context of discourse.

The justification of a philosophical treatment of ethics then lies in this. It is not that the statesmen, social scientists and the like should learn what things are intrin-
sically good from the philosophers, for they themselves are not lacking in the ideas of ends. On the contrary, they are concerned with the question of means only because they have ends to realise. But ethical terms stands for conceptions that are abstract and complex in nature and it is not unlikely that in a normative discourse - which claims to be based on something over and above personal preferences - they are sometimes used inconsistently i.e. the same term is used to imply different things not consistent with one another in different judgments put forward in the same context of discourse. A philosopher's study of the implications of an ethical term - when that term is used consistently from a characteristic point of view - may here be of use by helping the argument to be consis-
tent and to the point. The philosophers do not contribute to the laymen the conceptions of intrinsic ends, for they them-
selves arrive at the ideas of these ends in course of reflecting on some of the conduct, character, emotions, thoughts, and aspirations of people including non-philosophers. Their contribution - supposing that they succeed in contributing
anything - lies in explicating the consistent implications of these ends when the ideas of these ends are used from a characteristic point of view.

If philosophical ethics is conceived in the manner indicated above then some of the damaging criticisms that Stevenson offers against philosophical ethics, which he calls the 'specialists' conception of ethics', will not affect our position. Let us now look at some of these criticisms. "In the following argument,

Objects of the sort M are the only ones intrinsically good, and those of the sort N the only ones intrinsically bad X leads to a preponderance of M's over N's. Therefore: X is on the whole good.

the conclusion follows from the premises by formal logic, granted appropriate definitions; hence any further support of the conclusion requires only a support of the premises. The support of the second premise may be presumed to depend on well-known scientific methods. Only the support of the first premise, then, introduces methods that are characteristically ethical.

Now by the specialist's conception of ethics, the support of any ethical conclusion, provided that it is not itself about intrinsic value, would be reducible to a similar form. One might always isolate a purely scientific premise, relating some given X to some M or N. And one might always isolate a purely ethical premise about the intrinsic value of M or N. A philo-
sophical moralist, limiting himself to the defense of such a broad, basic premise as the latter, could pardonably be ignorant of the causes of $M'$s and $N'$s. For by the specialist's conception these would have nothing to do with intrinsic value, and figuring only in the second premise, could be left to others, along with the demonstrative inference to the work-a-day judgment about the value of the given $x^1$.

I do not think that a philosophical moralist is necessarily committed to the opinion that moral arguments are deductive. He might say that instead of starting with a general proposition that something or other is intrinsically good we actually start with the opinion that something or other in particular is good or bad and when such opinion is questioned we advance general considerations of the nature of standards on which our valuation can find a support in the eyes of others, or again we might be faced with a situation which we find to be unsatisfactory in some ways but do not know at a glance what exactly is bad or wrong about it or how it should be changed in order that the state of affairs may be considered to be satisfactory. This is a situation which leads us on to a process of ethical deliberation. In order that our deliberation may proceed we shall have to find why is it that we find the situation unsatisfactory or by what standard are we judging it to be so. Then it becomes possible for us to see in greater detail what exactly are the features in the situation which are inconsistent with

1. Ibid. P.175 - 176.
the conception of the standard. And it is then that we proceed to think of means by which changes can be effected, and some of the proposed means may appear to be inconsistent under a given set of circumstances - with general conceptions of standards that we accept while others may not. As general conceptions are formed out of reflection on particular happenings it is vital for a philosopher to be acquainted with particulars of experience even though his special concern may be with general conceptions and not with any happening in particular. He cannot be, as Stevenson puts it, pardonably ignorant of the causes of M's and N's, for they do have something to do with the understanding of intrinsic values. But if M's and N's are facts that belong specially to, say, sociology he cannot be expected to have as expert or as detailed a knowledge of them as a sociologist. It is enough for him to know them as well as is necessary to see their general value implications. If the actual argument runs as follows: X is good because (supposing that this contention is questioned or needs support in some ways) it leads to a preponderance of M's over N's and M is a sort of thing that is worthwhile for its own sake in human affairs, then what is involved is not a division of labour between people who will collect by means of logic and scientific method the second premise of the argument and the philosophers who will supply the first, but a reflective or philosophical understanding (i.e. an understanding that is conscious of the consistent implications of what is being said).
of that part of the argument, 'X leads to a preponderance of M and M is the sort of thing that is worthwhile for its own sake in human affairs.', on the part of those who will argue that X is good or contest it. Such understanding may already be there, or it may become fuller or more mature by listening to what the philosophers have to say - philosophers who have made a special study of the matter, and reflected on the general implications of particular acts of evaluations when such evaluations are made from a consistent and characteristic point of view.

To come back to the consideration of normative ethics, which, says Stevenson, is the only ethics that is feasible (for he believes that the specialists' conception of ethics is not feasible, see his chapter on 'Intrinsic and Extrinsic Value') I must confess it is not quite clear to me as to what normative ethics is to deal with. As far as I can make out the issues that are the concern of normative ethics are, according to Stevenson, like the following: 'Should or should there not be unemployment benefit in the country X', 'is caste or class distinctions in the society X a state of affairs that can be supported from an ethical point of view', 'should people in general have more leisure in society X than they at present enjoy' and so on. I quite agree that the asking of such questions is important and that philosophers can be profitably engaged in exploring them. But I would add that something more remains to be done and this is an analysis of the value
conceptions which act as standards of evaluation in our normative judgments of a characteristic kind. Now to support what I have said Stevenson considers the task of normative ethics to be I shall quote some of his remarks in this connection.

"What program for ethical methodology can be recommended to which the sciences will lend their full resources? Let us view the problem, more concretely, as one that might confront a writer on normative ethics - a writer, who, going beyond ethical analysis and ethical history, wishes to present moral views of his own, and is deciding what methods to employ in reaching and supporting his conclusions."¹ "What methods ought such a writer employ? Let us look first to an ideal that has long been current - the ideal of examining both sides of a normative question, and bringing to bear upon it as much knowledge as possible."² "In view of the magnitude of his task, we may expect our writer to begin in modesty. The aims with which he first deals will not be ones embodied in the broad principles of the philosophers; they will be those that concern the "middle principles" of daily life. He may hope eventually, perhaps, for some all-embracing aim; but he will not hope to establish it before all else, or to state it in a simple formula"³ "So our writer must begin with relatively specific judgments whose support, though still complicated, will be less so than that of the judgments that are more general"⁴ "There will be much, in all such predictions, that requires a

¹. Ibid. P.328.  ³. Ibid. P.330.
². Ibid. P.328.  ⁴. Ibid. P.331.
knowledge of human nature, but the relation of a given X to a given Y, we must remember, will not always be a topic that is exclusively psychological. The relation of a system of taxation to the conditions of the poor, for instance, may be partly an economic one; and it may even require elementary observations about the nation's climate, for this will determine the kind of clothes and shelter that the poor will need. What knowledge is there, indeed, that has not a potential bearing on evaluation?

"So our writer in seeking to provide his norms with rational support, will find his task to be one of establishing relevant factual conclusions about human nature and its environment. It will be exclusively that. It will not be a small task; and he can not be sure, even when he has surmounted it, that his judgments will be accepted by all his readers. Agreement in attitude may not arise, even if agreement in belief is secured. Yet a problem that can be characterised in empirical terms, and which at least permits the cautious hope of an empirical solution, becomes one which, however difficult, is intelligible and workable. It is free from that methodological bewilderment, that confused groping for the first steps of approach, which paralyse the whole of inquiry and thought. Thus our writer will find, in the present account not a ground for believing that enlightened norms lie permanently beyond human attainment, but rather a ground for believing that his slow results will be cumulative, contributing to an ethics that
progressively come to grips with the issues of practical life.\textsuperscript{1}

Let us now see what Stevenson has to say about attitudes. Ethical disagreement may be a matter of disagreement of belief, or of attitude or both. Disagreement in belief may be resolved by means of factual enquiry; not so disagreement in attitude which exists inspite of agreement on facts. A normative judgment on an issue is rooted in some attitude or other towards it. It is therefore important to understand that if an ethical agreement cannot be produced by producing agreement on all relevant factual matters it is a case of disagreement in attitude which cannot be solved in the way in which a purely factual dispute like, 'when was Jones last in to tea?' can be.

I would entirely agree with Stevenson that this is so. Now Stevenson does not say that ethical disagreement is a case of disagreement in attitude and leave it at that. It is possible and necessary to redirect attitudes, particularly attitudes that are involved in ethical judgments. But if a disagreement is fundamentally a disagreement in attitude (i.e. a case where relevant beliefs held by both the parties are the same) the method employed has to be a persuasive method rather than a rational one (i.e. a method in which the disputants advance certain facts believing that a consideration of these will make the person in opposition think differently). The terms by using which we try to change or redirect people's attitudes are normative terms like 'good' and 'right' which

\textsuperscript{1} Ibid. P.332.
work on them, according to Stevenson, through suggestions of emotive and imperative nature. Thus to say 'X is good' is to say 'I approve of X, do so as well'. When we use such terms we do not give anybody any additional information about the issue in question, but express our attitude of approval or disapproval towards it and appeal to others to feel the same about it as we do. No doubt it is possible for us to give reasons why we consider that X is good and the reason is of the nature 'X has relations and consequences F, Q, R'. But such reasons will change an attitude only where an existing attitude on X is what it is because of the ignorance of the fact that it has relations or consequences F, Q, R. But if an existing attitude on X has been formed - as is not impossible - in spite of the knowledge that it has relations or consequences F, Q, R, then the advancing of the reason 'X has relations or consequences F, Q, R,' will not change the attitude in question. There is no logical connection between a set of beliefs and an attitude, the connection is psychological. Two people may be aware that X has relations or consequences F, Q, R, and yet have different attitudes towards it on this very account - one approving of it and another disapproving.

The methods for solving ethical disputes are then two-fold. The ordinary rational method of advancing factual reasons where disagreement is rooted in someone's ignorance of such reasons, and the persuasive method for cases which show disagreement in attitude and not in belief; and this latter method works through
emotional appeal and imperative suggestion. Ethical terms 'right' and 'good' through employing which such appeal is made may then be said to be emotive and imperative in nature. That is to say, when we wish to redirect other people's attitude to X, - X being something that we value and they do not - we express our own emotion of approval towards it and suggest that the hearers may do the same and our expressions and suggestions may be expected to arouse a range of feelings in the hearers which would facilitate their coming to have the same attitude towards X as we have.

I believe that Stevenson is right in saying that many of our moral disagreements are disagreements in attitude and that such disagreement can be resolved only through a redirection of attitudes and not merely by producing factual evidence. I would also agree that in most cases attitudes can be redirected - if they can be redirected at all - by an appeal to the emotions; for, although I believe that ethical issues are in some sense rational our thinking upon them is initiated by our being emotionally moved by such issues. It is unlikely that an attitude towards an issue or object can be changed without there being produced an appropriate emotional orientation towards it. But I do not find Stevenson's theory acceptable in so far as he suggests: (a) that producing an emotional orientation towards an issue (i.e. a pro-attitude) is merely a matter of appealing to feelings; (b) that the meaning of ethical terms is emotive; (c) that the relation between a set of beliefs and an ethical
attitude can only be psychological and never logical; and (d) that ethical judgments cannot significantly be called 'valid' or 'true'. Let us now turn to a consideration of these questions.

(a) A and B have a difference of attitude (as bereft of all differences in factual beliefs) towards X. B says 'X is bad' which means that he has an emotion of disapproval towards X. A approves of X and wishing to produce the same emotion in B towards X, he says, 'X is good' and the use of the word 'good' here will, according to Stevenson, accomplish this by arousing a range of feelings in B. This account seems to me to be inadequate in two ways. Firstly, we cannot say categorically that the use of the word 'good' produces a range of feelings in the hearer, for it might leave him totally unmoved. All that can be said is that to use the word 'good' is to suggest to the hearer that he should change his feelings. Secondly, we can hardly expect all Bs to be so naive as to change their existing feelings towards X merely because a word has been used which suggests that they should change their feelings. Moreover human emotions or attitudes are much more complex than feelings, as they involve tendencies to think and act as well. We may come to favour something emotionally because it arouses our feelings, this may happen, equally, through our coming to think of the object or issue in a new light which

1. One of the differences between 'emotion' and 'attitude' is this. When we talk about attitudes we talk about tendencies that are relatively permanent, there may not be any suggestion of permanence when we talk about emotions.
helps to arouse our feelings. It is much more plausible that B's attitude can be changed - if B does have a fundamental disagreement of attitude with A - through A helping him to look at the issue from a point of view different from what he has hitherto adopted than that it can be changed merely by suggesting that he should change his feelings. And although one cannot be made to adopt a different point of view by means of what is ordinarily called 'arguments' it certainly involves persuasive processes that are in some ways rational and not merely emotional. For instance, B, who belongs to a higher caste, may be refusing to let P, who is an 'untouchable', to enter a temple. A might try to persuade B by saying that P is also a human being with the same sort of feelings and needs as people who belong to upper castes and his act of refusal is really a refusal to treat him as a human being. Now B whose attitude towards the question has been conditioned by tradition may never have thought of it in this light and what A has said might lead him to feel differently about the issue. But A appealed not merely to his feeling but to his capacity to think or reason as well. (and this use of reason involves more than a consideration of factual evidence).

(b) It appears to me that the meaning of ethical terms like 'right', 'good', 'justice', 'honest' etc. do have referents of a certain sort and by this I mean something more than what has been called their descriptive meaning'. The descriptive meaning of the term 'good' in the sentence, 'She is a good
'girl' uttered by a particular person in a certain context may be 'she goes to Church on Sundays'. It might be something quite different when uttered in a different context. To quote from Hare, "If two Indian Army Majors of the old school have been talking about a new arrival in the Mess, and one of them had said 'He's an awfully good man' we could have guessed that the subaltern referred to played polo, stuck pigs with elan, and was not on familiar terms with educated Indians". What I wish to say when I say ethical terms have referents is this.

A moral point of view is a characteristic point of view and to value or disvalue something morally is to look at it in a distinctive way. In so far as a moral point of view is a characteristic point of view - an evaluative point of view whose ultimate standard of judgment is the requirement that individual human beings should behave in such a way as to be as happy as it is in their nature to be and as to let others be happy in the same way as well - moral terms, when used consistently, imply that the objects referred to by them are characterised by being not inconsistent with the requirement of morality. In short, moral terms express and evoke emotions, suggest the undertaking of certain actions and so on and at the same time - if used consistently within a distinctive point of view - imply that the issues in respect of which they can be applied are characterised in a certain way which distinguishes them from issues of an opposite character. I have tried to clarify what

1. The Language of Morals. P.146.
moral terms refer to in the chapters in which I have discussed the concepts of 'right' and 'good'. This is not to say that all evaluative judgments do use moral terms in this way, as Stevenson and others have pointed out, usage allows the application of these terms in more than one way. What I am concerned with is the consistent application of a term within a characteristic point of view, and it is only when they are used in this way that they refer to what I have said they do. It is, of course, understood that moral terms do not have referents in the same way as purely descriptive terms like 'tree' or 'table' have. Moral terms embody certain conceptions in terms of which we approach our experience rather than refer to perceptual objects. But these conceptions are empirical (or experiential) in the sense that they arise in course of our trying to comprehend certain complex higher-order differences within our experience, although they are not empirical if by the word 'empirical' is meant 'verifiable through sense experience'.

That the use of the ethical term 'good' expresses something more than feeling is recognised by Stevenson himself. "As to the remark, 'Good has to do with what is worthy of approval not with what is approved', which is what our imaginary critic ended by implying that, of course, is essentially the case. "This is good" is more nearly approximated in its full meaning, by "This is worthy of approval" than by "I approve of this", for "worthy" has an emotive
strength which "approve" lacks. And "worthy" like "good" lends itself to discussions that involve agreement or disagreement in attitude. It does not, as "approve" does, readily lend itself to discussions which look only to agreement in belief about attitudes, which our critic so understandably feels to be of a psychological character, rather than a moral one. In fact, by the first pattern, "X is worthy of approval" becomes descriptively, "I approve of X's being approved by others", or else (and vagueness permits a choice) "I approve of X"; but it also emotively to induce the hearer to share the speaker's approval.

Now if what one approves of is also worthy of approval - the reason why the speaker would recommend its acceptance by the hearer - it must have some characteristics, however vaguely and imperfectly understood, by virtue of which it is to be differentiated from what is not worthy of approval; and this cannot be the mere fact that the object arouses the emotion of approval. What is worthy of approval does not necessarily produce the emotion of approval nor is the emotion of approval restricted exclusively to what is worthy of approval. In fact, it seems to me that Stevenson tends at times to cover by the term 'emotive' much more than is conveyed by the expression 'a range of feelings or emotions'.

"Although", he says, "a great many scientific terms are almost free from emotive meaning, even they tend to acquire a certain scientific prestige, and so, when defined in a new

1. Ibid. p. 107.
way, may make a gentle plea for the value of talking about the new designata." Emotive meaning then includes not only a range of feelings that accompany an attitude of approval, but also the implication that what is being approved of is also characterised by being worthy of approval by virtue of the value it possesses. This characteristic may belong to an issue of ethical deliberation in respect of which ethical terms are to be used. It is no doubt true that there can be no such characteristic unless there are evaluating subjects as well. This, however, would not obliterate the distinction that there is between the subject and the object of evaluation. It is quite possible, of course, that some people sometimes approve of things that are not worthy of approval and this will show that there can be such a thing as a faulty moral discernment or improper use of ethical terms, even though such discernment or use is accompanied by the emotion of approval. Thus to say that the meaning of ethical terms is emotive, meaning thereby the purely emotional or feeling aspects of the matter, is not enough for the understanding of moral issues although it is of practical use to a moralist who can often achieve his aims better by emotional appeals than by rational discussions.

Stevenson can no doubt defend his position by saying that 'X is worthy of approval means only that other people have an attitude of approval towards it, and it is this that

1. Ibid. p. 232.
is being approved and not any quality of characteristic of A. But this is not how the word 'worthy' functions in ordinary speech. 'Worthy' means 'having worth' and by 'worth' is meant, so says the dictionary - 'that quality or characteristic of a thing which renders it valuable or useful.' Stevenson might, of course, wish to give a technical meaning to it, but even so, his account does not appear to be very satisfactory. If when someone says 'A is good,' he is not simply expressing an attitude of approval towards A but is expressing an attitude of approval towards other people's attitude of approval towards A, then his attitude towards A (not his attitude towards others' attitude to A) is not a purely personal attitude but has an impersonal or objective element in it in so far as a great many people agree in having the same attitude towards it. It may then be said that A has some distinguishable features on account of which people come to have an attitude of approval towards it. No doubt Stevenson might say that the fact that other people have an attitude of approval towards A is an accident and does not signify anything objective about A, and he is entitled to his opinion. But if it is possible for us to indicate the sort of objective features that an object or issue which is called 'good' in a moral context may have, then it is more reasonable, so it seems to me, to think - when people agree in saying that A is good - that A has features approachable in common between them than to think
that it is purely an accident that they agree.

(c) Let us now discuss if the relation between an ethical attitude and a certain set of factual beliefs is purely psychological and never logical. If by saying that this relation is psychological Stevenson means that certain ethical issues are highly complex that it is possible for different people to have different attitudes towards them even when all their factual aspects have been fully explored - without anyone being necessarily guilty of unreasonableness - then I quite agree. But Stevenson says more than that, he says that this relation can only be psychological and never logical. Closely related to this question are the questions of the rationality and validity of ethical arguments and I shall discuss these altogether.

If any ethical dispute, says Stevenson, is rooted in disagreement in belief, it may be settled by reasoning and enquiry to whatever extent the beliefs may be so settled. But if an ethical dispute is not rooted in disagreement in belief no reasonable solution of any sort is possible. "The supporting reasons here mentioned have no sort of logical compulsion. Persons who make opposed ethical judgments may (as far as theoretical possibility is concerned) continue to do so in the face of all manner of reasons that their argument includes, even though neither makes any logical or empirical error. Supporting reasons have only to do with beliefs...."  

1. Ibid. p. 50-51.
Further, "The reasons which support or attack an ethical judgment have previously been mentioned. Subject to some exceptions that will be noted as we proceed, they are related to the judgment psychologically rather than logically. They do not strictly imply the judgment in the way that axioms imply theorems; nor are they related to the judgment inductively, as statements describing observations are related to scientific laws. Rather, they support the judgment in the way that reasons support imperatives." Talking about the validity of ethical arguments Stevenson says, "One of the peculiarities of ethical arguments lies in the inference from a factual reason to an ethical conclusion.... Now in a valid ethical argument must this step, no less than the steps in confirming the reasons, be valid? Or does the term "valid" here introduce an irrelevant consideration? That is if "R" and "E" stand respectively for a set of reasons and an ethical conclusion, related neither inductively nor deductively, then is it of interest to ask whether an inference from "R" to "E" is valid?

Clearly, the inference will be neither demonstratively nor inductively valid, by hypothesis. By these standards of validity, it will always be invalid. But this is a triviality. When an inference does not purport to comply with the usual rules, any insistence on its failure to do so is gratuitous. We have marked out the step between R and E as different from any found in logic or science, and cannot

1. Ibid. p. 113.
I expect it to be valid in the same way." Granted that demonstrative and inductive validity are irrelevant to this step, is there some other kind of validity, peculiar to normative arguments, that deserves equal emphasis? Perhaps the usual rules for demonstrative and inductive inference need to be supplemented by special rules for inference from R to E - rules which are enough like the others to be valid, generically to mark off valid inferences, but which are enough unlike the others to mark off a distinct kind of validity.

"The term "validity" is not free from vagueness, and so can be defined in several alternative senses without "unnatural" distortions of language. One might, accordingly, devise some broad definition of the term in which certain inferences from R to E could be called "valid". It seems wholly impractical and injudicious, however, to sanction such a sense." Stevenson's reasons are: "No matter how else we may define "valid", we shall very likely want to retain a sense which is intimately related to "true". The precise way in which the terms are to be related, and the precise meaning of them both, may occasion no little perplexity; but we shall in any case want to say that a valid method is more conducive to establishing truths, or probable truths, than any "invalid" one. Should anyone deny this, we should usually insist that he must be using either "valid" or "true" in

1. Ibid. p. 153.
some other sense than the perhaps poorly defined but still roughly intelligible one that we prefer. But if "valid" is to be applied to the step from R to E, then - as we shall see in a moment - the word could not have its accustomed connection with "true". Such a sense, which would almost certainly persist in addition to the truth-related sense or senses, might foster a misleading ambiguity, and keep people from making the requisite distinctions between reasons in ethics and reasons in logic or science.

Now when Stevenson is denying that reasons given in favour of an attitude can have any logical compulsion, he is using the term 'logical' in a limited sense - in the sense of processes that are involved in inductive or deductive argumentation. He believes that the reasons given have some sort of force, they support or back up an ethical judgment in such a way as to make it acceptable to the hearer. Now if this is to happen irrespective of who the speaker or hearer is, it does not seem to me to be quite correct to consider the necessity involved in this process as psychological rather than logical. Clearly, as Stevenson himself points out, the step from factual reason to ethical conclusion cannot be either inductively or demonstratively valid. In an inductive inference we are engaged in forming a generalisation on the basis of our experience of particulars; in deduction we are concerned with saying something

I. Ibid. p. 154.
about a particular on the basis of our knowledge of a general state of affairs of which the particular is an instance. Moral reasoning - as apart from moral reflection - is like this; x is good because (supposing that it is not immediately accepted) x means p and the absence of x means not-p, and p is a sort of thing which a reasonable person cannot fail to find preferable to not-p, if he is to compare the two seriously.

What Stevenson calls B or factual reason is constituted of the step 'because x means p'. Now it is possible for one to know that x means p and yet not conclude that x is good in a way in which it is not possible for a normal person not to conclude that x is mortal when he knows that all men are mortal and that x is a man. If this is all that is meant when it is said that the step from factual reasons to ethical conclusions is not valid or true, then it is true enough. But if it is understood that a piece of moral reasoning is not a piece of deductive reasoning, as I wish to maintain, then to say that do not find the sort of necessity in a piece of moral reasoning which we find in a piece of deduction is not to say anything that need to be disputed. But the point is if we understand a piece of reasoning to be a piece of moral reasoning then does it, or does it not, follow from 'x means p' that 'x is good'. To say

* Either because one has not reflected on the question of the intrinsic preferability of p to not-p or because one has failed to develop an appropriate pro-attitude towards p even when one knows that p is intrinsically preferable.
that we understand a piece of reasoning to be a piece of moral reasoning is to say that we accept certain value our conceptions of a characteristic kind to be appropriate standards of assessment in the matter; and this means that in the case under consideration we accept that \( p \) is the sort of thing which no reasonable person will fail to find preferable to \( \neg p \), if he is to compare the two seriously. And when we do so, it follows from '\( x \) means \( p \)'—according to the logic of moral reasoning— that \( x \) is good. When I say it follows I mean this. If we accept that \( p \) is the sort of thing etc. and that \( x \) means \( p \) we do not find the judgment '\( x \) is bad' a tenable (and in that sense valid) judgment. The term 'validity' does certainly have a truth-claim. But unless the term 'true' is used as synonymous with 'verifiable through sense experience' there is no reason why we cannot say that a piece of moral reasoning is valid or otherwise.

Of course, a piece of moral reasoning is quite often not so simple or straightforward and there are cases where we do not know which conclusion to draw from a given set of standards and facts. There are also cases where no evaluative judgment has as yet taken shape and we are perplexed as to how exactly to assess the thing or the situation, for there seems to be more than one standard involved or the standard involved may be so general and the situation so complex that nothing very conclusive follows. What I am contesting is the general theory that the notion of 'validity' does not apply
to moral reasoning. But what about the judgment \( p \) is a sort of thing which no reasonable person will fail to find preferable to not-\( p \) ? This judgment is not arrived at by a process of inductive reasoning, and it does not represent a generalisation. It is a matter of intuition or insight into a necessary connection which we gain when we reflect on some of our moral experiences. We may gain this insight from our experience of one instance of this connection or we may not as yet have gained it even when many instances in which it could be discerned are within our experience. As far as this judgment is concerned there is no step from certain factual reasons to a conclusion, for to come to make this judgment is to come to look at facts present in a characteristic way. Now in what sense is this judgment true or valid? It cannot be true if by calling something true we mean nobody could possibly refuse to accept it. It is true in the sense that it/an insight into aspects of human affairs, and if we lack this insight our understanding of human affairs is so much the poorer.

This brings us back to the question whether the relation between a set a factual reasons and an ethical attitude is merely psychological or whether it may, in some sense, be said to be logical. If by saying that this relation is psychological is meant that some moral situations are such that no one attitude seems to be the only attitude that fits the facts present, then, of course, it is true. But there are
other situations in which we do not doubt that a particular attitude (or type of attitude) fits the facts present as against an attitude of an opposite character, if, of course, we look at the facts from a distinctive point of view, namely, that of morality. In such cases then it will be reasonable — according to the logic of moral reasoning — to hold such an attitude and unreasonable to hold an attitude of an opposite character. Now the logic of moral reasoning, as we have already noticed, is not inductive or deductive in process. But there is no reason why the term 'logic' should be restricted to induction or deduction. The term 'logic' or 'logical' is also used to signify any necessity that we find to be involved in any process of thought. And in so far as there is a place of reason in ethical deliberations and in the moulding of attitudes and in so far as reasons given may establish a judgment or an attitude or fail to do so, it seems to be quite in keeping with common usage to say that a process of moral reasoning may either possess or lack logical force. This force is referred to by such remarks as that one is being reasonable or unreasonable in one's attitude or judgment. We hear of such expressions as the 'logic of a word' or the 'logic of language' where the word 'logic' has no association with induction or deduction. When we talk about the logic of a word we have some such thing in mind as the way in which — it may reasonably be supposed — a symbol functions in our thought and speech, or
the way in which a symbol fits in with the conceptions of things it may reasonably be used to describe. Now a symbol may function in more than one way some of which are not consistent with one another. But it is only reasonable to suppose that a symbol would have some sort of fixed reference within a certain context of thought, as otherwise any interchange of thought would not be possible. By the logic of a word then we mean the consistent functioning of a word that fits in within a certain context of thought. Thus it appears to be perfectly justifiable to talk about the logic of moral reasoning and thinking where the word 'logic' implies the necessity that is involved in this that certain conceptions and not others are acceptable as suitable standards of moral evaluation. (Of course, we can talk about this logic of moral thinking only if we accept the point of view of morality independently of the thinking that is to be undertaken.) If this is so, as far as the question of logic is concerned we cannot say that any attitude revealed in moral discourse is as acceptable as any other. For the fittingness of attitudes revealed is morally to be judged in accordance with certain highly general conceptions of attitudes and dispositions which appear to be intrinsically worthwhile for anyone to value when the question is looked at from the point of view of morality. That is to say, the conceptions of these highly general attitudes and dispositions are to act as standards of moral judgments that we make on
the value of the comparatively concrete and particular attitudes that we actually come across.

It is, of course, not difficult to see why Stevenson prefers to call the force that is involved in a piece of moral reasoning psychological rather than logical. Scientific arguments being directed to issues that are carefully isolated from all complicating factors (as far as one is able to do so at any one stage of knowledge) lead to conclusions that are much more definite than can be achieved in moral arguments in general. Moral issues - human actions, attitudes, states of affairs - occur amidst a welter of complicating factors and it is not always easy or even possible to decide which amongst these factors are relevant to the issue (and in what degree) and which not. We cannot therefore be sure in morals of uniform and definite conclusions even when we accept the authority of some standards. The conclusion that we reach in a complicated case will depend upon the decision that we have taken as to the relevance of certain factors and the degree of it; and for this no rule can be found. In fact certain situations are such that the conclusion any one individual will accept seems to depend as much upon his personal attitude towards the issue (i.e. upon his psychology) as on the acceptance of some standards. If he changes his attitude thereby reaching a different conclusion he seems to be acting under psychological forces rather than logical, for as far as the pure logic of it goes either of the
attitudes or conclusions - the one that he changes and the one that he adopts - may appear equally warranted. But it is possible for one to recognise this psychological element in moral decisions whenever it may legitimately be accepted as a deciding factor, and yet maintain that the conception 'logic' or 'logical' applies to an attitude or judgment, as viewed morally, in so far as it may be fitting to the situation in contrast to an attitude or judgment that is not so fitting.

Stevenson emphasises the point that in ethical arguments our concern is with the redirection or moulding of attitudes. But would we be interested in changing other people's attitudes unless we believed that their attitudes are not fitting to the facts? As Stevenson himself says, "If a man dislikes a wine that we consider good, we have no ready verbal means of changing him, and little occasion for trying to do so. Although we may urge him to drink what he doesn't like, promising that attention and habituation will finally lead him to like it, prolonged argument on such a point would have only its labor for its pains. But if a man upholds some moral end to which we are opposed, the matter is quite different. We are more able and more anxious to change a man's attitudes than to change the sensations of his palate." What reason can Stevenson offer in favour of our anxiety to change other people's moral attitudes? Under what circumstances should we be anxious to do so? It happens that we sometimes

I. Ibid. p. III.
approve of other people's approving of x and at other times do not and there must be a reason why this is so. This cannot be explained merely by factual disagreement, for people may disagree in attitude even after agreement in facts have been established. The only reason for this anxiety that I can find is the supposed moral suitability of the attitude recommended to the facts present.

what Stevenson is up against, however, is not so much the function of logic in moral reasoning and reflection as such, as the kind of logic which is thought to be the characteristic of the so-called cartesian system in morals. The cartesian system is said to uphold that there are some general moral principles and ends from which it is possible to deduce the particular moral rules that should be prevalent in human societies irrespective of any considerations of the special circumstances to be found in particular societies. There can therefore be only one moral code binding upon all. This Stevenson, as so many other thinkers, would reject. "Those who seek an absolutely definitive method for normative ethics and who want to rule out the possibility of rival moral codes each equally well-supported by reasons will find that the present account gives them less than they want." It seems that the attitude theory is an escape from this method. If what are right and good are matters of our attitudes which are emotive in nature and not the outcome of any rational

Ibid. p. 31.
process then there has not got to be the same system of moral code for all of us. Perhaps the so-called cartesian system admits of a different interpretation. It is not that there is only one moral code which is binding on all human societies and which is to be deduced from the conceptions of some ends and principles self-evident to all. Rather, we may begin our moral reflection with the fact that differing moral codes exist, but try to understand the satisfactoriness or otherwise of such codes or aspects of such codes, whenever any need for this understanding arises, by looking upon them as the working out of certain worthwhile ends and principles under specific circumstances of life. The question therefore is not, 'what rules and specific ways of behaving can we deduce from these ends and principles that will valid in any society at any time?' but 'is there any reason to think that the rules or the specific ways of behaving that are approved of in this society are not in accordance with the conceptions of ends and principles that have self-evident validity, considering that certain circumstances are what they are?' This is not a simple question, nor is there a straightforward answer to it. But it is intelligible question, as moral assessment of codes or aspects of codes are frequently being made in terms of standards that are somehow accepted as beyond question which the aspects judged are not considered to be.
Stevenson accuses the traditional writers on ethics of placing too much emphasis on the component of belief in ethical agreement and disagreement and too little on attitudes. The reason why the traditional writers have devoted their attention to what Stevenson calls the 'cognitive aspects' of the matter is not far to seek. The direct aim of philosophers, as distinct from that of practical moral reformers, is not to urge people to any particular course of action (which, of course, they may do) as to clarify the implications of the conceptions in terms of which the moral approach to facts is to be guided. And these implications are to be understood in relation to experiences of a characteristic nature with which these conceptions are found to fit in. Emotional factors are undoubtedly involved in any moral approach to facts, and they exert a considerable influence on the course that moral actions may take. But if what we are seeking is a clearer understanding of what is involved in the point of view of morality we shall not be satisfied merely by being told that moral issues arouse the emotions of approval and disapproval. We also want to know why it is that we approve of certain things and disapprove of others, and what are the standards, acceptable by all from a rational point of view, by which we judge certain things as worthy of moral approval. Hence the importance of belief or cognition in a philosophical treatment of ethics.
Moreover to have an attitude is not just to have a range of feelings towards some issue; it is also to think about it in some characteristic ways and to act in some ways rather than others in respect of this issue. Had Stevenson himself not placed an exaggerated emphasis on emotional factors and had he broadened his conception of attitude to include not just emotions but also ways of thinking and acting, he would perhaps have found the traditional philosophical approach to ethics less objectionable.

Of action, we are often moved by a range of characteristics of our natural responses to reality. Decision-making is not just a matter of selecting the best alternative in our actual moral world, but a matter of selecting how we will act in a world of morality by reference to the consequences of our actions. In our lives, we are faced with the necessity of making decisions in our lives. A decision may be itself in some sense or other to something that is of intrinsic value. If so, we cannot explain the fundamental reasons to act by stressing the importance of consequences alone.

A theory which denies that certain outcomes (of what are called normative laws) may not be considered to be facts is apt to show itself inadequate in morality. The function of normative laws is to explain
CHAPTER VI.

THE DECISION THEORY OF MORALS.

It is a commonplace that moral life as lived by us presents many occasions for decision. Indeed, when our duties come to us naturally, when no conflict is felt between opposing issues and no demand is made by the situation for conscious choice between alternative courses of action, we are often not aware of those distinctive characteristics of our conduct which we call its morality.

Decision no doubt is a fact of very first importance in our actual moral experience. But philosophically the question is, is it the most fundamental fact in morality? In other words, can we explain the characteristic nature of morality by reference to the fact that certain situations in our lives demand that we should make a choice between possible alternative? Or is it that the morality of any decision has itself to be understood by reference to something that is of intrinsic moral value? If so, we cannot explain the fundamentals of morals merely by stressing the importance of decision in moral life.

A theory which denies that moral principles (or what are called normative laws) can in any way be considered to be facts is apt to make decision the central point in morality. The function of normative laws is to guide
our choice between alternative courses of actions which result in our taking a decision. Natural laws deal with facts and are statements describing regularities of nature. The two kinds of laws, says Prof Popper, have hardly more in common than a name. A distinction has therefore to be made between "(a) natural laws, or laws of nature, or positive laws, such as the laws of the apparent motion of the sun, or the law of gravity; and (b) normative laws, or standards, or norms, i.e. rules that forbid or demand certain modes of conduct, or certain procedures; examples are the laws of the Athenian Constitution, or the rules pertaining to the election of members of Parliament, or the Ten Commandments. I believe that the distinction between natural and normative laws is fundamental, and I think that the various efforts to bridge the gap have been entirely unsuccessful. But I am not going to assume this without discussion. For instance, I shall later discuss the claim that certain norms are 'natural' in some sense or other. But in order to discuss such a claim at all, it is necessary first to distinguish as clearly as possible between laws in the sense of (a), and laws in the sense of (b), and not to confuse the issue by a bad terminology. Thus we shall reserve the term 'natural laws' exclusively for laws of type (b), and we shall refuse to do as has often been done and apply this term to any norms which have been claimed to be 'natural'. The confusion is quite unnecessary.
since it is easy to speak of 'natural rights' or of 'natural norms' when laws of type (b) are meant.

Now it is not to be denied that there is a distinction of fundamental character between normative laws or principles and statements describing regularities of nature as dealt with in empirical sciences, for the former relate to a value point of view and the latter do not. But it is not true that those who have considered normative laws to be natural in some or sense or other have always confused them with statements which we find in empirical sciences. This is suggested by Popper when he says that many thinkers believe that there are norms - prohibitions or commandments -which are 'natural' in the sense that they are laid down in accordance with natural laws in sense (a) (i.e., regularities of nature). In fact, the terms 'nature' and 'natural' are ambiguous. Clarke believed that what are morally right or good belong to the very nature of things and thus represent facts to be known by intuition. But then his conception of nature is very different from that of a physicist. 'Nature of things' stands for the whole of God's creation and this includes human beings with a sense of values. A moral principle is natural according to this conception of 'nature of things' not because it stands for any observed regularity in the non-human world (i.e., natural in one of its senses) but because it is

acceptable, and its contradictory is not, from the very nature of the case, to a rational being looking at conduct from a value point of view. Popper, however, thinks of nature exclusively in the sense of physical regularities. "The standards are not to be found in nature. Nature consists of facts and regularities, and is in itself neither moral nor immoral. It is we who impose our standards upon nature, and who, introduce in this way morals into the natural world, inspite of the fact that we are part of this world". But this only shows that Popper is using the term 'natural' differently from Clarke, not that those who talk about norms being in some sense or other natural are mistaken. It is well to remember here, of course, that Clarke, and observations similar to his, are concerned not with conventional moral views whose rightness - if they are right - often can only be understood by reference to the tradition and way of life of a particular community, but with general principles which can be found to be self-justifying to any rational being with a sense of value.

How difficult it is to get rid of the notion of naturalness in morals can be seen from Popper's own statements. The confusion between natural laws and normative laws, is quite unnecessary, says Popper, since it is easy

1. Ibid. p. 52.
to speak of 'natural rights' or of 'natural norms' when laws of type (b) (i.e. normative laws) are meant. If these laws have nothing in common with natural laws rightly so called except the name law, one would like to ask what would be the criterion of discerning what amongst our rights, obligations and principles are natural; and it does not seem to me that a decision theory gives us any such criterion. Indeed, it is difficult to see what Popper can mean by natural rights or norms. His theory of 'duality of facts and norms' sets forth that norms are by nature different from things that may be called natural. Why should we wish to say that laws that are by definition not natural have a natural character?

One would, of course, not wish to hold that general moral principles can be derived from any observed regularity of facts, natural or otherwise. For as Moore showed long ago in his refutation of naturalism 'what aught to be' is something different from 'what is'; and this difference lies in the fact that 'what aught to be' supposedly stands for something which we may consider to be of value when approached rationally, whereas what simply is makes no such claim. But it does not follow from the above that what is valued cannot be considered to be a fact, although, as is obvious, of a qualified kind. Why then can we not say that normative laws express the nature of value-facts?

To this the reply may be that the term 'value-fact'
presupposes a "queer" value world, a sort of world of "ghostly entities". But such a world is presupposed only if we insist that the word 'fact' has only one meaning, namely 'verifiable through perception and a direct inference based on perception'. If anything is called a fact and is yet not verifiable in this way it must be because it has a ghostly existence. But there is no reason why we must say that anything that is called a fact must have either a bodily or shadowy existence. We might and do mean by fact 'anything for the rejection of which no justifiable reason can be given. (As in the following conversation: 'is it a fact that you have just inherited a large sum of money? 'Yes it is'). And a thing like this exists only in the sense that it is possible for us to conceive of it. If such a use of the term 'fact' is not inadmissible then to talk about value facts is to talk about something which is worthy of being valued and acceptable as such for being what it is (or, in other words, against the valuation of which no justifiable reason can be given). The existence of such a fact is neither a physical nor a shadowy existence; its existence lies in its function, in its enabling us to think of certain things in a certain way, when this is called for by certain of our actual experiences.

A theory of absolute dualism between facts and norms—one may recognise the distinction that there is between a
statement of observed regularity and a statement concerning what ought to be and still not believe in absolute dualism—is fraught with grave dangers as it lacks any criteria provided by the nature of things by which moral decisions can themselves be valued. And nobody would deny that a valuation of our decisions is possible and indeed sometimes necessary. "... we can", says Popper, "compare the existing normative laws (or social institutions) with some standard norms which we have decided are worthy to be realised. But even these standards are of our own making in the sense that our decision in favour of them is our own decision, that we alone carry the responsibility for adopting them." Here Popper is making a distinction, notwithstanding his theory of critical conventionalism, without the recognition of which no theory of morals can do justice to the whole field of our moral experience—between conventional moral rules or practices connected with established institutions of a particular society and moral standards which are more than conventions. Conventional moral practices (to say that they are conventional is not necessarily to say that they are not moral) no doubt take shape through the decisions of generations belonging to a particular society. But they are moral not because of the decisions involved but because, as Popper says, of their being in accordance with certain standard norms. But what about these standard norms themselves?

I. Ibid. p. 52.
Popper says that the standard norms are those which we have decided are worthy of being realised, but these norms do not become standards of our judgments by reference to which conventional practices are to be judged through our decisions. On the contrary we decide in favour of them as ultimate courts of appeal in our moral judgments by recognising that they represent facts which are in some sense natural (i.e., not conventional). The standards, says Popper, are not to be found in nature. True enough if by 'nature' is meant the physical universe, but they are found in 'nature' if the term includes the sense of values of beings who are capable of reasoning and reflection. It is one thing to remember the important distinction between non-value facts and value facts and another to advocate that all norms including those of highest generality, which Popper refers to as standard norms, are conventional or artificial.

Critical conventionalism, Popper is careful to stress, does not assert that norms are, at any historical period, consciously introduced by men, or that they are not of importance. It has nothing to do with the assertion that norms are merely arbitrary. Yet, "It must, of course, be admitted that the view that norms are conventional or artificial indicates that there will be a certain amount of arbitrariness involved, i.e., that there may be different systems of norms between which there is not much to choose. (a fact that has been duly emphasised by Protagoras) But artificiality by
moral decisions then are somewhat arbitrary though not completely. This I believe follows from abandoning the position that moral values represent facts which are in some sense natural. Moral decisions have in the last analysis to be arbitrary, for no moral values, besides those of decisions, are recognised on which they could find a support. Be that as it may be, if there is an element of arbitrariness in moral decisions and yet at the same time, as Popper carefully stresses, they are not purely matters of taste, the question naturally arises how are we discern what in moral decisions may be allowed to be an issue of arbitrary choice and what not, and no satisfactory criterion is offered by the theory of critical conventionalism. The reasons Popper offers against the full arbitrariness of moral decisions are very inadequate to serve as criteria of distinction between the arbitrary and non-arbitrary elements of morals. "Many moral decisions involve the life and death of other men... It is, therefore, misleading to say that a man decides for or against slavery as he may decide for or against certain works of music and literature, and that moral decisions are purely matters of taste.... they are decisions of much greater urgency." Some moral decisions no doubt involve the life and death of other men but this certainly is not true of all. Suppose that A borrows $5 from B at the middle of a month which he

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1. Ibid. p. 54.
2. Ibid. p. 54.
promises to pay back at the end of the month when he receives his salary. This A does not do even though his financial obligations have not been more than what he anticipated. Let us imagine that those £25 are not a matter of life and death for B. Even so, he wants them back but A keeps on avoiding him. In course of some time, A is transferred to another part of the country and B loses all trace of him. Is this decision of A not to pay B back his money a decision that is morally tenable simply because non-payment in this particular case was not a matter of urgency for B? This will hardly be acceptable. Yet a decision theory which admits of an element of arbitrariness in morals and suggests no other criteria against it than urgency, fails to explain why this is unacceptable. To say that the unacceptable nature of this decision is so obvious that it needs no explanation is to create difficulties of another character. For many decisions which Popper will find unacceptable may appear obviously right to others. If it is said that only those decisions which are obviously acceptable to all are morally tenable, then there is a scope for asking the question, why only some and not all moral decisions which are not matters of great urgency or of life and death for human beings, appear to be obviously acceptable to all.

Added to these difficulties is the fact that the term 'arbitrary' is ambiguous. Moral codes are considered by Popper
to be arbitrary in the sense that there may not be much to choose between two existing codes. This use of the term is very different from the one according to which a decision would be arbitrary if it does not pay respect to all the facts relevant to the situation. There is no element of arbitrariness to be necessarily recognised in morals according to this latter use of the term.

By using the term 'arbitrary' Popper probably means 'made by men's fiat and therefore decided'. Now even if we accept it that Popper is talking only of conventional moral rules and not of principles, it is rather difficult to justify the use of the word 'arbitrary' in this sense if we are going to say that all moral rules are arbitrary. For some moral rules grow rather than being the product of a conscious decision and command of anyone in particular. It may, of course, be said that such moral rules represent decision of generations but then the word 'decision' has somewhat changed its meaning. For what Popper is advocating is a conscious decision on the part of an individual agent to act according to a norm or not to do so. The norm itself is not a product of decision in the same way and is therefore not arbitrary in the sense that it is 'to be decided by one's liking', 'dependent on will or pleasure', 'at the discretion of anyone', 'derived from mere opinion or preference' and so on. (see Oxford Dictionary) The term 'arbitrary suggest caprice; if a norm takes shape through decisions of generations, it cannot be
said to be determined or regulated purely by caprice, for the mere fact that generations have agreed in deciding to accept a certain norm as standard suggests that it is possible that the norm has satisfied a certain moral demand in some way or other in circumstances of a specific character for at least a number of people in the community at some particular time. As circumstances, aspects of the character of the society, and the moral awareness of the people change, it becomes necessary to change the norm into something which is more satisfying to the moral demands that are present under the changed conditions; although it often happens that due to the abhorrence with which a great many people regard any unsettlement or change such a norm lingers on for generations. This only shows that a certain norm may become arbitrary at a certain time, but not necessarily that a particular norm that ought to be changed has always been arbitrary.

The Oxford Dictionary defines 'arbitrary' also as 'not based on the nature of things'. But we have already seen that it depends on what meaning we give to the expression the 'nature of things'. I would say that norms, some at any rate, are based on the nature of things if 'nature of things' includes human nature that pays respect to the conception of intrinsic value, but I shall discuss this question later. The other meaning of 'arbitrary' as given by Oxford Dictionary is 'not fixed' or 'varying', and norms, some at any rate,
are arbitrary in this sense. Even so, they are not varying according to one's own liking or preference. In order to be deemed morally satisfactory they have to vary in accordance with certain conceptions of value.

There is a possible sense, of course, according to which all moral codes as actually existing may be said to be arbitrary, for no society has yet achieved the ideal which embodies the highest conceivable value in human conduct. But is not the sense in which Popper uses it. In any case, the highest moral ideal - that of organisations of life in which the opportunities for the happiness of an individual in conformity with the happiness of all others is fully provided for - is so very general, that different kinds of institutional practices may be compatible with it depending on the circumstances and the people concerned. Again the same practice may assume different values under two different circumstances. Thus of two different codes or practices neither may be arbitrary and the same code may be arbitrary in some situations and not in others. But here the arbitrariness or otherwise of a practice is judged in accordance with some criterion and is not considered to be an ultimate fact. Leaving aside the sense in which all moral codes are arbitrary, we judge established practices or codes to be arbitrary when we not only know that they fall short of the conceivable ideal but also can think of alternatives humanly attainable at the ideal moment of decision which, we have reason to think, realise the/
better than the prevalent practices do. In this sense moral codes and practices are more or less arbitrary and equally arbitrary; and a realisable practice which appears to be the least arbitrary at a certain stage, also appears to be the best.

But this arbitrariness is a feature of what can be called 'the morality of custom and convention' which includes institutional practices but not of general moral standards which stand for self-justifying moral values. Critical conventionalism fails to make this all important distinction between our moral standards - those that are conventional and those that are not and are in that sense natural. Although Popper does not clearly distinguish between moral rules (which are related to the conventions of particular societies) and principles (which are rationally defensible by human beings everywhere), it is the moral rules that he has in mind when he formulates his theory of 'critical conventionalism' or 'duality of facts and norms'. Too often conventional moral rules have been presented as if they are beyond human interference in the same way as physical regularities are. I quite agree with Popper when he says that these rules are man-made and can be altered by human beings deciding not to observe them any more. But what are called moral principles differ from moral rules in this that there is an element of naturalness about them. That is to say, moral...
principles embody general conceptions which, as against whatever opposes them, are acceptable to a human being when the matter is looked at from a rational point of view.

Hare in his book 'The Language of Morals' seems to be advocating a kind of decision theory. In his book a great deal of emphasis is placed on the question of moral education and rightly so. He seeks to show that moral conduct is not a process of deduction from self-evident principles, but a process of deciding on principles themselves. A moral education which teaches people to follow principles blindly and not to take individual decisions is therefore faulty. Hare takes an artificial example of a man who can know by a peculiar kind of clairvoyance everything about the effects of all the alternative actions open to him, but he does not yet possess any principles of conduct. If such a man decides between two alternative courses of actions and we ask him 'why did you choose this set of effects rather than that?' his answer may be of two kinds. He might say 'I can't give any reasons, I just felt like deciding that way.' On the other hand, he may say, 'It was this and this that made me decide. I was deliberately avoiding such and such effects, and seeking such and such.' If the man gave the second kind of answer he has started to form principles for himself."...for to choose effects because they are such and such is to begin
to act on a principle that such and such effects are to be chosen. We see in this example that in order to act on principle it is not necessary in some sense to have a principle already, before you act; it may be that the decision to act in a certain way, because of something about the effects of acting in that way, is to subscribe to a principle of action - though it is not necessarily to adopt it in any permanent sense."

It is not that Hare belittles the function of principles in our decisions. He argues that without principles we could not learn anything whatsoever from our elders. But "There is a limit in practice to the amount that can be taught to someone by someone else. Beyond this point, self-teaching is necessary." The point in Hare's argument is this. It is not good for us to be taught some principles allegedly self-evident like 'tell the truth'. For whether we should tell the truth or not depends on the situation in which we are to say something or other. There is no principle that is self-evident in the sense that it releases us from the responsibility of taking our own decisions. In fact, our decisions are decisions of principles which far from being self-evident, take shape through our acts of choice. This I believe is very acceptable as far as it goes, but I do not think that it goes far enough. No doubt it is not enough for us to know some principles by heart, we must learn to take

2. Ibid. p. 61.
decisions, and to take decisions is sometimes to form principles for ourselves which we were never taught. Yet a decision which we arrive at by a process of independent choice is worth its name not because of the fact that we have decided on it but because it is fitting to the moral situation. A principle like 'it is better not to tell the truth when it causes more mischief than good' may in a certain sense be said to be formed by us if we were just taught 'tell the truth'. But this modified principle as well as the unqualified one are both implied in the still higher principle, 'treat every man as an end in itself'. And this principle, whatever the case with other principles may appear to be, is not so much the effect of any moral decision as its cause, whether or not it is consciously before our minds in any act of choice and whether or not we possess any verbal knowledge of it whatsoever.

Bare recognises that there is a certain sense in which some moral principles are there already independently of our decisions. But he decides to give sociological and psychological explanations of it rather than explore their character from a value point of view. "In a sense it is/there already if our fathers and grandfathers for unnumbered generations have all agreed in subscribing to it, and no one can break it without a feeling of compunction bred in him by years of education. If everyone would agree - with complete conviction - that a certain kind of act ought not
to be done, then in saying that it ought not to be done, I do indeed speak with an authority which is not my own. And my knowledge that I speak with authority - that I do not need to do more than subscribe to a principle that is already well-established - is in a sense a knowledge of fact." But this sense is not such that principles gain a status independent of our decisions. Hare continues "But we must, nevertheless, carefully distinguish between two elements in the judgment. That the principle is well-established (i.e. that everyone would agree with it) and that I have feelings of compunction if I break it, are facts; but when I subscribe to the principle, I do not state a fact, but make a moral decision".  
No doubt I do but it may still be asked what about the principle itself? When I subscribe to a principle I take a decision, but whence comes the authority of the principle itself? To say that it has authority because my forefathers have subscribed to it and because it has been bred in me by years of education, is to reduce morality to sociology; to say because I cannot break it without compunction is to reduce it to psychology. Hare advances the same point in other connections. "For, though principles are in the end built upon decisions of principle, the building is the work of many generations...". "...for both

1 Ibid. p. 195-6
2 Ibid. p. 196
3 Ibid. p. 76
common moral notions and my own intuitions are the legacy of tradition and—apart from the fact that there are so many different traditions in the world—traditions cannot be started without someone doing what I now feel called upon to do, decide.

A principle is, of course, not a principle unless one can decide to act on it and the responsibility for the decision rests on the individual himself. Yet surely a moral decision does not create a principle (except in the sense in which a value-fact would not exist unless it was valued) but recognises one. It not here being suggested that principles have an ideal existence in a different kind of reality behind the scene. Their existence is nothing but the regulative authority they have over our moral choice; and this regulative authority is not constituted of our decisions, rather our decisions when morally suitable imply such authority. To understand morality, so it seems to me, is really to understand why, as Hare puts it, everyone would agree that a certain kind of act ought not to be done. And such understanding can only come from the realisation that the principle involved in the undertaking of such acts rather than their opposites, express some facts which a rational being, looking at

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I Ibid. p. 77
human conduct from a value point of view, cannot but take
cognisance of.

Let us now consider another attempt to establish
the concept of 'decision' as the most fundamental in moral
philosophy. The concern of moral philosophy, says Nowell-
Smith, is with concepts that we use in practical discourse -
in deciding, choosing, advising, appraising, praising and
blaming. It is therefore a mistake to treat moral concepts
as if they are concerned with the knowledge of theoretical
truths. Talking about the mistakes of moral philosophy
he says, "The most important and pervasive is that of
transferring to discussions of moral discourse the logical
concepts that have been successfully used to elucidate
the discourse of mathematics or science. This has led
philosophers to misrepresent knowing how to lead one's
life as knowledge of theoretical truths, either about
human nature or about a special realm of 'values'. This
error, combined with the realisation that truths of fact
do not entail imperatives and that neither truths of fact
not imperatives entail decisions, has led to the doctrine
that moral words must stand for special entities and to the
postulation of a special faculty for our knowledge of
moral truths. The crucial difference between practical
and theoretical discourse has been misrepresented as a
difference between sets of objects described instead of
represented as a difference in the role performed by different types of expression.¹

Now it seems to me that one need not deny that moral discourse is predominantly practical in its bearings and that it is closely bound up with deciding, choosing etc., in order to say that the concepts used in such a discourse cannot have theoretical implications as well. It is, of course, understood that moral concepts do not describe facts, in the same way as concepts used in a non-value discourse do; they refer to what may be called 'value-facts'. Now to talk about value facts is not necessarily to talk about a 'realm of value' if by this expression is meant a shadowy world of non-natural entities. It is to talk about facts which are valued in accordance with certain self-justifying standards of choice in a characteristic context, or about such standards themselves. In so far as these standards and the facts valued in accordance with them are acceptable - which their contraries are not - within a characteristic context of choice, they may be referred to as 'facts'; and this is quite in keeping with usage. Decision represents the most important issue in the context of the practical moral choice. But moral philosophy may - by way of explicating the implicit value reference of concepts used in moral judgments - may suggest

¹ Ethics p. 317-8.
criteria by which to judge whether our decisions, some at any rate, are adequate or not from the point of view of morality.

Although Nowell-Smith denies that moral concepts have theoretical and factual references he does, in effect, agree with what I have just said about moral concepts. The judgment 'x is good' implies a great deal more than the judgment 'I approve of x'. "It implies that my approval is not an unusual one and that I could give reasons for it. It implies also - what is a matter of objective fact - that the object conforms to certain standards which are generally accepted."

But only the fact that my approval conforms to certain accepted standards is an objective fact, the standards themselves, so it appears, have no factual status." The objectivist is right in drawing attention to the factual background which makes impersonal appraisals possible; but the facts which it contains are ordinary, empirical facts, not special, non-natural facts." I am not, of course, suggesting that standards are non-natural facts, but I do not think that Nowell-Smith includes standards amongst what are called 'ordinary empirical facts'. But if certain standards - accepted or acceptable - are implicit in the use of moral concepts they may be referred to as facts in a distinctive sense of the term 'fact'.

1. Ibid. p. 179.
2. Ibid. p. 180.
Let us now try to see why Nowell-Smith thinks that moral concepts have no theoretical reference. The function of the concept 'ought' is to express decisions while 'right' and 'good' give reasons for such decisions. The difference between 'right' and 'ought' is roughly, that while 'I ought' and 'you ought' are used to express decisions and injunctions, 'right' is mainly used to support decisions and injunctions in a special way..." To use the word 'right' in connection with an action that has been decided upon, for example, is to imply that the action conforms to a rule. "But the mere existence of a rule is not a (logically) good reason for anybody's doing anything; and if the function of 'right' was simply to promulgate or draw attention to a rule without implying a pro-attitude towards obeying it, it could not be used to give logically impeccable reasons for choosing and deciding." To use a moral concept thus is to imply a pro-attitude, and it is this that differentiates a moral concept from a theoretical one.

I would agree that a pro-attitude is implied in a moral discourse. But it is not at all clear to me that this consideration need make us say that the standards and rules implied in the use of 'good' and 'right' cannot be thought of as appropriate issues of theoretical understanding as well - so long as 'theoretical' is not defined so narrowly as to make everything else but issues that are technically scientific non-theoretical.

1. Ibid. p. 135-6. 2. Ibid. p. 186.
To continue with Nowell-Smith. Since the function of moral concepts is to help one to perform activities like deciding, choosing etc. which is different from the function of expressing theoretical truths, judgments like 'you ought to do x' and 'I ought not' do not contradict each other. "If Jones says to Smith "you ought to do x" and Smith replies" No, I ought not," are they contradicting each other? Must we say that one is necessarily correct and the other mistaken? We have seen that sentences used for registering decisions or giving advice contextually imply certain casual and predictive elements which are indeed true or false; so that if the dispute between Smith and Jones is found to be concerned with any of these elements, they are contradicting each other and one of them must be mistaken. Among these elements in the case of ought sentences would be the existence of a rule recognised by both parties or a command issued by an authority whom they both recognise. "But it is impossible that elements of this kind should be the sole elements in the use of ought sentences. If they were it would be impossible to understand the role that these sentences play in deciding, advising, preaching, and exhorting. For the first of these activities it is necessary that Smith should have a pro-attitude towards doing what he thinks he ought to do; otherwise 'I ought' is irrelevant to his problem of

I. Ibid. p. 194.
I choice". Further, "Now it is true that in ordinary life we should say that Smith and Jones were contradicting each other. But this only illustrates the danger of drawing philosophical conclusions from ordinary language. 'Contradicting' which literally means 'speaking against' can be used of almost any kind of verbal disagreement; but it also has a technical logician's use which was designed to elucidate empirical discourse. And if we speak of conflicting moral attitudes as 'contradicting' we run the risk of unconsciously assimilating moral disputes to empirical ones and of inventing in the logic of moral discourse elements analogous to these which are bound up with the notion of contradiction in empirical discourse. One of these is 'correspondence with the facts'. And this is court disaster.

It is no doubt true that the logic of moral discourse and the logic of what is called 'empirical discourse' are not entirely the same; for a moral discourse involve certain conceptions of value which an empirical discourse does not. But once we have understood a piece of reasoning to be moral reasoning - reasoning which is supposed to be in accordance with certain standards of value - it becomes possible for two people to contradict each other in the logical sense of the term 'contradiction' and not merely in the sense of speaking against; although I do not wish to say that every case of opposition in moral discourse

1. Ibid. p. 194.
2. Ibid. p. 195.
is necessarily a case of logical contradiction. Of course, if the notion of 'contradiction' is conceived to be necessarily bound up with the notion of 'correspondence with facts' then there can be no contradiction in moral discourse, since the only facts with which anything can correspond are descriptive facts and moral issues are not descriptive facts. But in any case, there is moral opposition and this opposition can be of a logical character, so long as we understand the logic to be the logic of moral reasoning.

Moral judgments are, says Nowell-Smith, expressions not of decisions and of theoretical truths. True enough, if we confine our attention to practical judgments like, 'I ought to do x', but general moral judgments like, 'the truth ought to be told' are expressions not of particular decisions to do anything but of what we may call 'moral truths', and these may be referred to as theoretical in some sense inspite of their practical implications.
CHAPTER VII.

SOME MORAL STANDARDS IN EUROPEAN AND INDIAN ETHICAL THINKING.

There are some moral principles which we have said are objective and self-justifying when looked at from a value point of view that is rational. These principles are different in character from conventional moral rules which, the point of view of morality requires, should be observed by some people whose social organisations are of a certain character and not by all. Some philosophers, of course, believe that all moral principles are conventional i.e., they derive their authority from decisions or generalisations of a social nature. Professor Macbeath admits of one exception to the socially derivable nature of morality, and that is the principle of justice which is self-authenticating and rational. Every other principle in morals, even one like telling the truth or respecting life, is, he holds, really a rule arrived at by a process of empirical generalisation from experience relative to the pattern of life of a particular people. The pattern of life of a people consists of some desired ends which are recognised and accepted as good (the moral ideal in operation). "The final test of the rightness of acts is whether they both fit into this pattern and are the realisation of such ends. Now acts which have certain general characteristics or are of certain sorts, such
as respecting life, telling the truth, helping others and so on, are normally found by experience, whether actual experience or ideal experience, to satisfy this test. And still more clearly the acts which have the opposite characteristics, such as not respecting life or not telling the truth, are normally found to be inconsistent with and to hinder the realisation of such pattern. Now moral rules are just assertions that acts of the former kind are right, and that acts of the latter kind are wrong. They are therefore generalisations true for the most part, but not universally so; and they do not contain the grounds of their rightness within themselves.\(^1\) Again, "Some ethical theorists tell us that we can see or know certain moral rules with the same certainty with which we see that two and two are four, or that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. We do not, they contend, merely believe these propositions. We know that they are true."\(^2\) This Macbeath does not agree with. But he does agree that there is such a thing as a self-authenticating moral principle. "I agree also that the ultimate principle on which the moral agent proceeds in his judgments, that is, the moral criterion, must be of this kind - self authenticating, unmediated, containing its evidence within itself - so that a person has only to grasp its nature to recognise its self-evidence."\(^3\) This is the principle of justice.

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2. Ibid. P.8 - 9.
The reasons which Professor Macbeath offers for this distinction between the principle of justice and other principles which are really rules are two-fold.

(i) The principle of justice is the only principle which is recognised by every social group primitive or civilised.

(ii) The principle of justice is the only principle an exception to which we know to be always morally wrong independently of any consideration of the circumstances involved in which an act of injustice is committed.

Let us first examine reason one. Professor Macbeath believes that this reason is relevant to a theory of morals because a theory must take cognisance of all the available data; and it is the actual moral practices of different social groups that provide us with the data of moral thinking. He criticises philosophers like Ross, Moore and Sidgwick for not paying respect to all the data available in the field of anthropology. Here, however, so it seems to me, is a confusion regarding the term 'morals' or 'morality'. When we talk about morality we might be thinking of two different things:

(i) The actual practices of people in a particular society, or in different societies. From this point of view no judgment need be passed whether these practices are satisfactory or otherwise as our purpose is to take notice of these practices for what they are.
This is how moral facts are looked at from the point of view of sociology or anthropology.

(ii) Morality as concerned with certain values in human conduct and character. These values are conceived as (a) certain dispositions or virtues which are to serve as the standards by which human attitudes as actually existing are to be judged from the point of view of morality, and (b) certain principles of conduct or right acts which are to be applied as the standards of moral evaluation of particular human actions. These are accepted as standards of our moral judgments because they are self-justifying, i.e., they are of such a nature that a rational being looking at human conduct and character from a value point of view cannot but accept their authority as against that of anything that contradicts them. This is the philosophical approach to morality and represents a value point of view in the understanding of moral facts.

The anthropological approach to morality has its own value as it answers some of the questions that we ask about human behaviour. But it must not be confused with the philosophical approach which answers questions altogether different from the ones asked from the anthropological point of view. If Ross, Moore and Sidgwick are discussing morality from the philosophical point of view their theories do not have to fit all the data of
an anthropological character. It is, of course, possible to deny that there can be any such thing as a philosophical approach to morality and some philosophers do actually deny this. But Macbeath is not one of them. For he admits that there is one moral principle - although no more than one - which is self-authenticating and rational. The principle of justice is a moral principle sui generis and cannot be understood in terms of anything other than what is experienced as possessing distinctive moral value. In this admission Macbeath contradicts his own insistence on the anthropological approach to morality as the only satisfactory approach to moral facts. Macbeath, of course, would say that the recognition of the principle of justice as a self-authenticating moral principle is not inconsistent with the anthropological approach for this principle is actually recognised by every social group. But this defense will not be logical. For if we recognise the principle of justice as a moral principle on the ground that it is actually recognised by every social group we cannot say that it is self-authenticating and rational. Moreover, to say this is to give up the other distinction that Macbeath makes between moral rules and the principle of justice. For this distinction is that we know an exception to the principle of justice to be morally wrong under all possible circumstances, whereas exceptions to moral rules are sometimes morally right. And this knowledge about the principle of justice, as Macbeath himself says, cannot be arrived at by a process of empirical generalisation from
experience. If so, we cannot say that the principle of justice is a moral principle because every group recognises it; the fact that every group does recognise it adds nothing to its self-authentic rational nature; if it has one. If the self-authenticity and rationality of justice is not derived from the fact that it is recognised by every social group then there is no reason why we should have to say that the principles of truth-telling and respect for life are not rational and self-authentic because they are not recognised by every social group. However, these principles - if the anthropological evidences Macbeath cites are to be relied on, - are actually recognised by the majority of primitive societies in some form or other however different they might appear from the same principles as recognised by modern civilised societies. The primary difference in the way of recognition of moral principles between modern civilised societies and primitive societies is this. Compared to modern civilised societies primitive communities are restricted and closed groups and the principles which are morally operative within the group are not considered to be binding outside the group; and in some primitive societies even the people living in the neighbouring villages are people outside the group.

The really important reason for the distinction that Macbeath makes is that the principle of justice does not admit of any exception while the principle of truth-telling does. An unjust act is wrong whatever be the circumstances under
which it is committed, but some circumstances are such that it is right not to tell the truth. The principle of justice is then known apart from all experience, whatever validity the principle of truth-telling has is derived from experience.

Now, it seems to me that there is a distinction between these two principles, but it cannot be explained by saying that one is independent of experience while the other is derived from it. No principle, not even the principle of justice is absolutely independent of all experience. For what can justice mean except that some characteristics of human relations are intrinsically preferable to their absence or opposite, and how can we conceive of these characteristics unless we know from experience what is involved in a human relation? Again, no moral rule, not even conventional ones, can be generalisations from experience considered from the point of view of what simply is, for a moral rule stands for something that ought to be. That the vast majority of individuals in any social group does actually follow a conventional rule might make us believe that it is a statement of an observed regularity. But to think so is to rob morality, even conventional morality, of its distinctive nature. A rule or principle, viewed morally, is not a description of a state of affairs observed to be regularly occurring even if it does describe one such state; it is a statement concerning how human beings should behave in certain situations, and this statement has its distinctive use even if most human beings do actually behave in that way. If 'experience'
is meant to include value experience of a rational nature which
is suggested by Macbeath's use of the term 'ideal experience'
then the principle of justice is as much derived from it as
any other principle if the term 'derived' can here be used at
all. Nevertheless, the fact that the principle of justice
admits of no exception while the principle of truth-telling
does, depending on the nature of the circumstances involved,
shows that our experience is a factor in the difference that
there is between these two principles.

The distinction lies in the kind of situations in which
these two principles are applicable. We apply the concept of
justice in respect of a situation of human relation in so far
as we know that such a situation presents the possibility on
the part of some individual (or individuals) of respecting the
claim that can be made by some legitimate human need (or needs)
or of not doing so. And in so far as this possibility is
present we can uphold the principle of justice against injustice
even without knowing the various aspects of the situation
in detail. Again, we talk about justice only if we believe
that some human need (or needs) involved in a situation which
is either being frustrated or is in danger of being frustrated
by someone can legitimately claim our attention. If we do not
believe it to be the case we talk not of justice but of something
else, and if we do believe it to be the case it is impossible
for us to say that injustice in this case would be better than
justice. The principle of truth-telling is concerned with a
specific human need of the nature of desire to know. This need is intimately connected with a legitimate human tendency and in so far as this is the case telling the truth is morally preferable to telling lies. Yet, actual human situations are often complex (i.e., more than one need is involved) and a particular situation may be such that the fulfilment of this need may be reckoned to be inconsistent with the fulfilment of some other need which, under the circumstances, we recognise to be more deserving of our attention. In a circumstance like this, we do not consider the particular need to know as actually involved to be legitimate.

Many human situations as they actually occur in life are in some way or other unique. It is therefore impossible to devise rules from which the comparative urgency of conflicting needs in any particular situation may be deduced. We generally believe that the need to be alive is of greater urgency than the need to be told the truth. But it also depends on what the truth is about, and it is not impossible that in some exceptional situation the need to know the truth would override the need to be alive from the point of view of morality. If the situation is such its moral evaluation has to be made in terms of some other standard than truth-telling.

The principle of justice is concerned with the question of providing needs which are believed to be legitimate with opportunities for fulfilment equally with other needs that are already enjoying such opportunity. The principle of truth-telling is
concerned with the fulfilment of a need which is considered legitimate so long as the situation does not compel us to ignore it as undeserving of respect in favour of some other need.

The obligation to tell the truth is therefore as Ross puts it a 'prima facie' obligation - an obligation which morally speaking can be set aside only in favour of another obligation still more pressing under the circumstances. We may not tell the truth in a certain case and believe that it is morally right not to do so. But in such a case we also think that we would not have acted in the way we did unless the circumstances were of the nature that they are. Because certain situations in life render it impossible for us to fulfill the 'prima facie' obligation of telling the truth we cannot conclude that this obligation even when it should be fulfilled is purely a generalisation from experience. No doubt it may be asked, 'how do we know when it should be fulfilled and when not?' The fact is that we do not know beforehand, and the question of knowing this is relevant only in a specific situation where some prima facie obligation has to be overridden. A prima facie obligation then leaves the interpretation of conflicting moral situations to individual agents who are called upon to act in some way or other, and it is quite possible that the opinion whether a prima facie obligation ought to be respected or not will vary from one agent to another in exactly the same situation. These opinions may be more or
less well-grounded, in so far as all the facts relevant to the moral situation may be taken account of or not, but there is no way of devising rules whereby absolute uniformity of opinion or action may be ensured in all moral situations involving conflicting obligations. It is also possible that a particular situation is so highly complex that we are not even able to say which of the two opinions is better-grounded. But these facts, disturbing as they are, do not lead us to say that there is no such thing as a general moral obligation to tell the truth. Only these require us to bear in mind that this obligation is not such that we must follow it in practice under all possible circumstances. Hence the term *prima facie* obligation.

In fact, the possibility of individual variations in the interpretation of moral situations is not altogether absent in the case of 'justice' which we know admits of no exception. For I have said we apply the concept of 'justice' when we believe that the needs involved can legitimately claim our attention, and individual beliefs in this respect do not necessarily coincide even though all are agreed that justice is better than injustice.

'Legitimacy' being an unspecified concept we may be more or less justified in our beliefs as to whether the concept of justice is applicable in a particular case or not, but there is no way of securing absolute agreement in every single case. But so far as the concept of 'legitimacy' and those involved in the principles of justice and truth-telling are conceived
as standards of evaluation there can be no doubt as to their suitability in the context of moral behaviour. There can also be no doubt that the conceptions contradicting these cannot rationally be conceived as suitable standards of moral decisions and judgments from a rational point of view just as it cannot be conceived that \(2 + 2 = 5\), our conceptions of quantitative distinctions being what they are. These standards cannot have any meaning or use unless some human experiences are of the kind that they are. These are, therefore, relative to experience. Yet, it can be said that they are arrived at by a process of empirical generalisation from experience.

There are, broadly speaking, three kinds of moral judgments as actually passed by human beings. (i) A judgment which asserts that the character of a moral agent as exhibiting itself in some attitude or habit recognisable to be possessed of or lacking in intrinsic worth is morally good or otherwise. (ii) A judgment which asserts that a particular voluntary action is morally suitable (ought to be done) or unsuitable (ought not to be done) as indicative of a principle which is self-evidently right or otherwise. (iii) A judgment which asserts that a state of affairs as exhibiting a characteristic kind of human relation is good or otherwise. In this discussion of moral values (involving moral principles and not conventional rules) as found in various thinkers European and Indian, I shall treat them as standards of evaluating, from the point of view of morality, human character, conduct and states of affairs that
actually exist. How far these standards are satisfactorily applied in concrete situations of life is a question that remains outside my scope. We can say that friendliness as a human attitude is intrinsically valuable from the moral point of view. How far A's attitude to B is friendly is a different question which cannot be answered merely by knowing that friendliness is a desirable trait, nor even by knowing what is involved in the attitude that we call friendly. This question can only be answered by observing how A actually treats B, although the understanding of what is involved in a friendly attitude can give a direction to this observation. In this chapter I shall, however, be concerned more with stating what the standards have actually been conceived to be than with discussing their implications which I shall attempt in subsequent chapters. I shall first discuss the position of some European philosophers and then state some comparable views of ancient Indian thinkers.

The end which is self-sufficing and final in all man's endeavours is happiness, says Aristotle, for happiness cannot serve as a means to anything else. Being happy is living well, and living well for a being who possesses reason and manifests himself in conduct is doing well. To do well is to act in accordance with excellence. Excellence is not mere habit but active exercise of virtue, which, necessarily realises itself in action. "...the happy man is he who manifests the highest excellence or virtue in living energy, and is duly furnished with external goods, not for any chance period of time, but for
a full term of years.\textsuperscript{1} The highest virtue is conceived by Aristotle to be wisdom or philosophy which manifests the goodness of the rational soul. But it is open to all to attain happiness who are not incapacitated for moral virtue. Moral virtue is formed by habit and is not implanted in us by nature, but neither is it contrary to nature. We have a natural capacity for acquiring them, but they are developed by habit. We become just by doing just actions. The sign that a habit has been formed we must take to be the pleasure or pain that attends our actions. "Pains and Pleasures, indeed, may be said to be the chief concern in all that relates to morals. For, in the first place, it is pleasure that tempts us to do what is wrong, and pain which keeps us from doing what is right. And therefore, as Plato says, man needs to be so trained from childhood that he may find pleasure and pain in the right objects."\textsuperscript{2}

What then is this excellence or virtue? It is a disposition of the mind to choose in accordance with a principle - the principle of realising the mean, relatively to the agent himself, between two vices, one of excess and the other of defeat. This means there is no standardised quantity which every moral agent has to achieve in moral decisions. "...the agent himself must consider the circumstances under which he is called upon to act, just as the doctor and the navigator have to do."\textsuperscript{3} But although to attain a mean state between two

\begin{enumerate}
\item Chapters from Aristotle's Ethics Muirhead, P.227.
\item Ibid. P.235 - 236.
\item Ibid P.234.
\end{enumerate}
possible extremes is the principle which should guide us in our choice of actions the right act itself is not a mean. "But we must remember that when we look at it from the point of view of what is best and "well done", it is itself an extreme."¹

"Pursuit and avoidance in the sphere of Desire," says Aristotle, "correspond to affirmation and denial in the sphere of the Intellect. Hence in as much as moral virtue is a disposition of the mind in regard to choice, and choice is deliberate desire, it follows that, if the choice is to be good, both the principle must be true and he desire right, and that desire must pursue the same things as principle affirms."² Virtues or excellent dispositions are of two kinds intellectual and moral. The goodness of the rational soul lies in wisdom or philosophy, of the passionate in gentleness and courage, of the appetitive in sobriety of mind and self-control, of the spirit as a whole in righteousness, liberality and great spiritedness.

"It belongs to wisdom to take counsel, to judge the goods and evils and all the things in life that are desirable and to be avoided, to use all the available goods finely, to behave rightly in society, to observe due occasions, to employ both speech and action with sagacity, to have expert knowledge of all things that are useful."³

"To gentleness belongs ability to bear reproaches and slights with moderation and not to embark on reason quickly.

1. Ibid. P.241.
and not to be easily provoked to anger, but free from bitterness and contentiousness, having tranquility and stability in the spirit.\textsuperscript{1}

"To courage it belongs to be undismayed by fears of death and confident in alarms and brave in face of dangers, and to prefer a fine death to base security, and to be a cause of victory. It also belongs to courage to labour and endure and play a manly part. Courage is accompanied by confidence and bravery and daring, and also by perseverance and endurance."\textsuperscript{2}

"To sobriety of mind it belongs not to value highly bodily pleasures and enjoyments, not to be covetous of every enjoyable pleasure, to fear disorder, and to live an orderly life in small things and great alike. Sobriety of mind is accompanied by orderliness, regularity, modesty, caution."\textsuperscript{3}

"To self-control belongs ability to restraint desire by reason when it is set on bare enjoyments and pleasures, and to be resolute, and readiness to endure natural want and pain."\textsuperscript{4}

"To righteousness it belongs to be ready to distribute according to desert, and to preserve ancestral customs and institutions and the established laws, and to tell the truth when interest is at stake, and to keep agreements. First amongst the claims of righteousness are our duties to the gods, then our duties to the spirits, then those to country and parents, then those to the departed; and among these claims is

\begin{flushleft}
1. Ibid. P.493.
2. Ibid. P.493.
3. Ibid. P.493.
4. Ibid. P.495.
\end{flushleft}
piety, which is either a part of righteousness or a concomitant of it. Righteousness is also accompanied by holiness and truth, and loyalty and hatred of wickedness.\(^1\)

"Liberality is accompanied by elasticity and ductility of character, and kindness, and a compassionate and affectionate and hospitable and honourable nature."\(^2\)

"To greatness of spirit it belongs to bear finely both good fortune and bad, honour and disgrace, and not to think highly of luxury or attention or power or victories in conquests, and to possess a certain depth and magnitude of spirit. He who values life highly and is fond of life is not great-spirited. The great-spirited man is simple and noble in character, able to bear injustice and not revengeful. Greatness of spirit is accompanied by simplicity and sincerity."\(^3\)

Although a great-spirited man is able to bear injustice a just disposition - a disposition to give a man his due - is considered by Aristotle to be a virtue. The other important virtues mentioned by Aristotle are forgiveness, honesty, reasonableness and friendliness.

Aristotle holds that a virtuous disposition is a habit formed through the performance of right actions. But he concerns himself more with those habits or permanent directions of the mind towards acting in certain ways that are essential for attaining happiness, than with the determination of right activities through the performance of which the habits are to be

\(^1\) Ibid. P.495.
\(^2\) Ibid. P.495.
\(^3\) Ibid. P.497.
formed. He does say that a right action is an action in accordance with a rational principle of choice, and this principle is the principle of mean between two extremes relatively to the agent. But this principle is rather a standard for judging the character of the agent which must be disciplined than for judging the suitability of a particular action performed by him. Whatever be the importance of this principle in the formation of a well-ordered character it does not provide us with an adequate criterion for deciding between alternative courses of action possible in a situation. We cannot hope to do what is right under circumstances of many different kinds merely by the practice of moderation. For, as Aristotle himself says, the right action itself is not a mean but an extreme.

A person may yet need some criteria by which to decide which particular action amongst the various possible ones is most fitting to the situation in which he is called upon to act even if his intentions are good and his sentiments well-disciplined. It is in providing us with principles or standards for judging the moral fittingness of particular actions that the special contribution of Kant to ethics lies.

Kant agrees with Aristotle in upholding the supreme value of a good character in our concrete moral conduct. For he says that there is nothing so admirable in the whole world as the starry heavens above and the moral law within. This moral law is based on good will and good will is a disposition to do
what is right. But if a disposition is formed through our acting in certain ways it is important for us to understand the principles or standards by which an act is to be judged as right so that it becomes a duty and does not remain merely a matter of inclination of a moral agent to perform it. A duty means an obligation and an obligation, if it is to move a rational agent to action, must have the force of a law which carries with it absolute necessity. "The pre-eminent good which we call moral can therefore consist in nothing else than the conception of law in itself, which certainly is only possible in a rational being, in so far as this conception, and not the expected effect, determines the will."¹ And good will signifies "nothing but the universal conformity of its actions to law in general, which alone is to serve the will as a principle, i.e., I am never to act otherwise than so that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law. Here now, it is the simple conformity to law in general, without assuming any particular law applicable to certain actions, that serves the will as its principle, and must so serve it, if duty is not to be a vain delusion and a chimerical notion."² The right act which it is our duty to perform is then rooted in a principle which can be a possible universal legislation and doing our duties implies respect for the conception of a law which is of the nature of a categorical imperative for every moral agent. This respect for law is the very foundation of a disposition to discharge one's

². Ibid. P.24 - 25.
There is but one categorical imperative, says Kant, namely this:— 'Act only on that maxim whereby thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law.' Thus whether an act is morally right or not is to be judged by applying this standard, 'can it be consistently maintained from a rational point of view that no human being is to be denied the right to act in this way under precisely the same circumstances?'

This implies that morally speaking no human being is to enjoy exclusive privileges, thereby treating others as mere means to his personal ends. So the moral criterion is formulated by Kant also in this way:—

'So act as to treat humanity whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as a means only.'

This principle that every man is an end in himself is the 'supreme limiting condition of every man's freedom of action.' We can judge an action then, morally speaking, by asking, 'is it consistent with the conception that the individuals affected by it are ends in themselves?'

Kant seems to differ very much from Aristotle on this question, 'what should be final goal, or goals, of human endeavours?' For him a virtuous disposition or a desire to do what is one's duty because it is one's duty is the final goal of life from the moral point of view, and nothing better than a good will can be conceived to exist in this world. Aristotle's
conception of end is happiness through virtue. Although the difference is radical if we keep strictly within the moral point of view it disappears when we consider man in the totality of his strivings. For says Kant, "...Virtue (as the worthiness to be happy) is the supreme condition of all that can appear to us desirable, and consequently of all our pursuit of happiness, and is therefore the supreme good. But it does not follow that it is the whole and perfect good as the object of the desires of rational finite beings; for this requires happiness also, and that not merely in the partial eyes of the person who makes himself an end; but even in the judgment of an impartial reason, which regards the persons in general as ends in themselves. For to need happiness, to deserve it, and yet at the same time not to participate in it, cannot be consistent with the perfect volition of a rational being possessed at the same time of all power, if, for the sake of experiment, we conceive such a being. Now, in as much as virtue and happiness together constitute the possession of the summum bonum in a person, and the distribution of happiness in exact proportion to morality (which is the worth of the person, and his worthiness to be happy) constitutes the summum bonum of a possible world; hence this summum bonum expresses the whole, the perfect good, in which, however, virtue as the condition is always the supreme good..."¹

Here then are two different conceptions of ethics as the

study of human conduct. Ethics, as Aristotle conceives it, has to do with the end or ends a human being should have in the totality of his endeavours in the process of living. And these ends include not only the performance of duties but also a realisation on the part of an intelligent agent that he is doing as an individual human being as well as he could have done under the circumstances. This realisation is possible, Aristotle believes, only if the individual possesses certain mental equipments or states of preparedness, ordinarily known as virtues, in his encounter with the circumstances of life. Ethics, as Kant conceives it, has to do with that part of man's conduct which is rooted in a sense of obligation arising out of the fact that every human being, he himself included, is an end in himself. A moral action is then one which we must perform whether or not it leads to happiness, even though it is better that a rational being should be happy than that he should not be. The discrepancy between these two goals of life did not worry Kant because he believed that a virtuous man will attain happiness in another world.

But there is not only this difference between Kant and Aristotle as to the function of ethical conceptions in man's life - to make him do what he should do out of respect for a law that holds for every agent, or to make him act not only out of a sense of obligation towards others and himself but also out of a feeling that he is, through his actions, realising his purposes as an individual human being as well as he could - their
conceptions of 'happiness' are also different. Kant thinks of happiness as a goal which one reaches at the end of a process, and if it cannot be had here, it can still be received as a reward of virtue in another world. Aristotle's happiness lies in doing well which includes doing one's duties. With him it is more a question of finding happiness in the process of living, through doing one's best in every situation rather than getting it at the completion of certain activities as one gets to one's destination at the end of a railway journey.

Our ordinary moral thinking seems to be dominated by the conception of 'obligation' or 'duty', although to accept duty as the central moral fact is not to deny the importance for a human being of realising happiness in and through doing his best in various situations of his life. By happiness, of course, we do not mean any one thing in particular, nor a fixed degree of different kinds of things, so that one has either got it or has not got it. It is a characteristic way of living - a way that is reflected in an individual's thoughts, actions and feelings, that what he is doing or what is happening to him realises or contributes to the realisation of some purpose, that he can accept as his own. One's way of living may be more or less characterised in this way and, as Aristotle points out, a measure of external goods is an essential requirement for achieving this to any degree. Yet, it is possible to have external goods and not be happy for the lack of a disposition disciplined in accordance with some principles.
To get back to Kant. Apart from the most general law of morality which constitutes the very condition of righteous action, Kant discusses several other moral standards for judging the suitability of our actions. These he conceives as our duties to ourselves and others. The fact that the moral agent is an end in himself gives rise to certain self-regarding duties, i.e., it requires that we should be actuated by certain considerations in acting or not acting in certain ways insofar as we ourselves are affected in such actions. These are:

1. Self-respect. This includes both humility as an imperfect individual in relation to the perfection required by the moral law and proper pride as an individual representative of humanity potentially as much worthy of respect of any other.

2. The duty of developing conscience or acquiring the attitude of judging ourselves in accordance with the requirements of the moral law.

3. A duty of acquiring some worth in our own personality so that we become objects of esteem and not merely of love.

4. A duty of acquiring discipline and self mastery, and this means that we should strive to achieve some unity and harmony between our mental powers which reveal themselves in the process of our carrying a business through.

5. A duty to care for one's own life. To commit suicide is to throw away one's dignity as an individual, in so far as it means that one has yielded so completely to the torture of circumstances that life has lost all purpose.
that
(I believe it is possible to make a distinction between suicide as Kant thinks of it and taking one's life when that is the only honourable course left to an individual.)
(6) The duty of having an occupation.
(7) A duty to enjoy life through the practice of moderation.
"...to deprive oneself of all enjoyment proper to human life is monkish virtue;" "we ought to enjoy the good things of life, but only in such a way that we can at any time dispense with them, and they do not become necessities;..."¹ Wealth in itself is pleasant, and is not to be condemned. What we must avoid in its pursuit is greed and avarice, i.e., an appropriation of it for ourselves in such a way as to deprive others of a share in it necessary for their purposes.

Our duties towards others include :-
(1) Duties of benevolence.
(2) Duties of indebtedness and justice.

"Everyone of us, therefore, in enjoying the good things of life must have regard to the happiness of others; they have an equal right and ought not to be deprived of it."² This is the source of obligation to benevolence from principle and not from love. There is nothing more sacred in the wide world, says Kant, than the right of others and respect for these is rooted in principle. "Although we may be entirely within our rights, according to the laws of the land and rules of the social structure, we may nevertheless be participating in general

¹ Lectures on Ethics p.172.
² Ibid. p.192.
injustice, and in giving to an unfortunate man we do not give
him a gratuity, but only help to return to him that of which
the general injustice of our system has deprived them."¹

The duty of benevolence then shades into the duty of jus­
tice if the needs of others that we help to fulfil out of kind­
ness are of such a nature as can rightfully claim satisfaction.

Friendship involving a generous reciprocity of love is a
moral value that should inspire our respect. For uprightness
of disposition, sincerity, trustworthiness, conduct devoid of
falsehood and pride, and a sweet cheerful and happy temper are
the elements which make up the character of a perfect friend.

Amongst our duties towards others mentioned by Kant are
also avoidance of injury, vengeance (insistence on one's rights
beyond what is strictly necessary), slander, envy, grudge,
ingratitude and haughtiness, and cultivation of truthfulness,
reserve, courtesy and politeness. "Virtue," says Kant,
"implies ability and readiness to overcome our inclinations to
evil on principle".² A kind heart unless supported by respect
for others on principle does not necessarily imply a virtuous
character. Kindness when a matter of mere feeling may vary in
a way that a habit based on principle does not.

Sidgwick considers virtue to be a quality exhibited in
right conduct. That does not mean, of course, that if anyone
wants to know what virtue is all we have to do is to mention
some conduct which we recognise to be right, just as we would

¹. Ibid. F.194.
². Ibid. F.244.
point out a ripe tomato to someone who wishes to know what the red colour is like. To say that virtue is a quality of right conduct is to say that conduct which is right has certain distinctive characteristics which conduct that is wrong has not, and if we reflect on what these are we come upon certain human attitudes of intrinsic worth which we find are implied in the undertaking of an action that is recognisable as right. The attitudes which are pre-supposed in actions that are right but not in those that are wrong we call virtues. These are wisdom, self-control, a benevolent disposition, gratitude, loyalty, patriotism, courage, veracity, justice and good faith.

Wisdom, says Sidgwick, is comprehensiveness of view, and a habit of attending impartially to a number of diverse considerations difficult to estimate exactly and good judgment as to the relative importance of each. This right judgment applies to ends as well as to means. Wisdom as it functions in practical affairs is a moral virtue. As our insight into practical matters is liable to be perverted by desire and fear, resistance against them is also a moral virtue; this is the virtue of self-control. Resolution or firmness of purpose is an important auxiliary to wisdom.

The duty of benevolence concerns not only, as Kant says, the determination of the will to seek the good or happiness of others but cultivation of kind feelings towards those whom we ought to benefit. The promotion of happiness - the greatest possible amount of pleasure on the whole - of others is the
chief part of the duty of benevolence.

The conception of justice includes, according to Sidgwick, several notions, those of fairness, equity, best distribution of the means of well-being and reward in proportion to desert. An impartial man is 'one who seeks with equal care to satisfy all claims which he recognises as valid and does not let himself be unduly influenced by personal preferences.'¹

"Ideal justice, as we commonly conceive it, seems to demand that not only Freedom but all other benefits and burdens should be distributed, if not equally, at any rate justly, - Justice in distribution being regarded as not identical with Equality, but merely exclusive of arbitrary inequality."² Ideal justice is not realisable in practice, so we must reward human effort in proportion to the worth of the services rendered and this is assessed by the economic law of supply and demand.

"For in any case it does not seem possible to separate in practice that part of a man's achievement which is due strictly to his free choice from that part which is due to the original gift of nature and to favouring circumstances: so that we must necessarily leave to providence the realisation of what we conceive as the theoretical ideal of Justice, and content ourselves with trying to reward voluntary actions in proportion to the worth of the services intentionally rendered by them."³

It seems, from above, that Sidgwick insufficiently realises

1. The Methods of Ethics. F.268.
2. Ibid F.278.
what function the theoretical ideal of justice plays in our moral endeavours. The ideal of justice is not a state of such particular nature that we can either realise it or fail to do so in the same way as we can either get a job we have applied for or not get it. The function of the conception of 'justice' in moral strivings appears to be this. We sometimes find that some state of affairs that has actually occurred, to be morally undesirable. The reason for finding it so may be that it leads to the frustration of some need actually felt by somebody when we see no justification for believing that this need ought not to be satisfied, while the need it is in conflict with is enjoying the opportunity for satisfaction even though we cannot say that it has any better claim (in so far as we can make a comparative assessment). Here we judge the state of affairs characterised in the way it is in terms of a conception of how it ought to be characterised. This is the conception of justice. If this state is of such a nature that it can be changed, some people who find the duty of justice to be obligatory may be led to undertake actions so that what ought to be may have the possibility of coming to be. Whether human beings will ever reach a state in the organisation of their economic structure in all its concrete details, so that no further change could be wished for from the point of view of justice we do not know beforehand. But the conception of justice as we know it is rather a standard by whose requirements we judge and change existing states of affairs, economic or
otherwise, than a concrete state, arranged in some particular way which can be realised and be done with through our acting in some way rather than another. Considered as a standard the ideal of justice is realisable here and now in the sense that it is possible for us to continue to alter our existing arrangements according to its requirements, if existing arrangements are found for some reason or other to be unjust although it may be that we shall never reach finality in this process. It is only when the law of supply and demand in the determination of wages is found to be inadequate for the assessment of the worth of the services intentionally rendered, by people who can suggest improvements economically realisable that it can justly be said that this law does not realise the ideal of justice in the field of its operation.

Amongst our more particular duties to other discussed by Sidgwick are:

1. The duty of non-maleficience, i.e. of abstaining from causing pain or harm to any of our fellow beings except by way of deserved punishment.

2. A duty to render positive assistance to others when that entails no self-sacrifice.

3. The duties of politeness, gentleness, courtesy, as expressing general goodwill and abstinence from anything that may cause pain or inconvenience to others.

4. The duty of reverence or of recognition of superiority and worth in others.
(5) The duty of fidelity, the essential element of which is conformity to expectations intentionally raised in others.

(6) The duty of truth speaking.

(7) The duty of gratitude.

(8) A duty arising out of special need. We owe to all men such services as we can render by a sacrifice or effort small in comparison with the effects of the services rendered.

(9) The duties of good humour, which prevents one from feeling pain to a great extent from trifling annoyances inflicted by others; of meekness which does not revenge small injuries; of placability which affords forgiveness rapidly and easily; of mercy which spares deserved punishment.

(10) The duty of virtuous indignation, for a rational being is bound to take precaution against future mischief.

Self-regarding duties are temperance in respect of food, drink and appetite of sex; courage to bear pain and face danger in the course of duty; humility and self-respect.

Nicolai Hartmann makes a distinction between basic and special moral virtues. All these have a place in morals if by virtue we mean an excellence of character attainable by human effort which we judge to be so through one's habitually responding to situations in some way rather than in another.

Basic moral virtues are:

(1) Nobility of character which Hartmann opposes to commonness. By this he means not only large-heartedness and generosity, but also a hatred of compromise regarding what is possessed
of value.

(2) Richness of experience as opposed to inner impoverishment. This confers on us the duties of cultivating many-sidedness, diversity of interest, and positive breadth of valuational judgment.

(3) Purity. This stands for sincerity, frankness, simplicity and unspoiled moral sensitiveness.

The special moral virtues are of a more particular nature. Apart from the ancient Greek virtues of justice, self-control, courage and wisdom, there are others which Hartmann considers to be distinctive of Christian civilisation. These are:

(1) Brotherly love. Justice is concerned with the recognised claims of others, not with whatever affects them. "Brotherly love affirms and welcomes the entire wellbeing of others, deploiring and contending against their hardships of every kind."^1

(2) Truthfulness and straightforwardness.

(3) Trustworthiness and fidelity as expressions of personal stability.

(4) Modesty, humility and aloofness. A modest man is self-critical. That does not mean of course that he belittles himself in comparison with others, only he aims high in his own conduct. Aloofness or due reserve is a virtue as it means the preservation of the intimate privacy of an individual out of respect for others.

(5) Virtue of neighbourliness. This applies itself seriously to the preservation of social forms which, although historically

^1 Ethics Vol. II. P.269.
accidental, and perishable are not neutral in value in life as lived by human beings.

Ross says in his "The Right and the Good" that the things that are intrinsically good are knowledge, well-grounded opinion, virtue (disposition to act from any one of certain motives) deserved pleasure or happiness, and allocation of pleasure to the virtuous. Amongst these virtue which alone is morally good is the highest, yet intellectual integrity, the love of truth for its own sake, is amongst the most salient elements in a good moral character.

Amongst the motives that are virtuous are :-

(1) The desire to do one's duty.
(2) The desire to bring into being something that is good.
(3) The desire to make other people happy.
(4) The desire to improve one's character.
(5) The desire to improve other people's character.

What we call morally right is not a motive but a principle, (i.e., an act is considered morally right by virtue of being of a certain sort.)

These principles are known to be self-evidently valid by inductive intuition and they represent certain 'prima facie' obligations on the part of a moral agent. These as Ross holds in 'The Right and the Good' and 'Foundations of Ethics' are :

(1) Beneficience.
(2) Non-maleficience.
(3) Self-improvement.
I shall now deal with some of the principles which we find in the ethical thinking of Ancient India. A few remarks at the outset may be of help before I state the position of any individual thinker or of a particular school of thought. For although there are great similarities in the conception of moral principles between Indian and Western philosophers there are some differences which concern the conception of the final end worthwhile for men to strive after. Like Aristotle, the majority of Indian Philosophers believed that man has an end to achieve which can either be looked at as a state of affairs or a kind of activity nothing better than which in human affairs can be conceived. The end which is the final goal of all man's endeavours is something different from the processes of unreflective and spontaneous experiences that happen to man and that are so full of pleasures and pains which come in cycles. That man has an end to strive for suggests that he can actively determine the sort of experiences are worthwhile for him to have. This he can do considering that he is conscious of himself as
having a distinct existence and that in many situations of life he is free to choose between possible alternatives that life presents if he is willing to do so. This end can, of course, be expressed only in terms of highest generality, for it does not signify any particular kind of experience, nor even any specific characteristic of different kinds of experiences, but a characteristic attitude, to be developed by an individual towards all that he does and all that happens to him. This end which is technically known as liberation (Moksha) has been conceived both negatively and positively.

(1) Liberation is a state in which man has altogether ceased to be affected by all kinds of experiences connected with desires. Men cannot have pleasure without pain for desire out of which comes pleasure also begets pain.

(2) Liberation is a state of mind characterised by being free from all sufferings with which life can assail one.

(3) Liberation is a state of unalloyed happiness or transcendental bliss (Ananda). But whatever liberation may mean for a particular thinker it stands for a conception of what is supremely desirable (shreyah) for man as opposed to what is merely desired (preyah).

This state when positively conceived can be achieved only if a man's life is characterised in two ways - that he understands himself to be a self as distinct from all that is not a self (Atmā-tabha), and that he finds contentment in being a self (Atmā-sontosh)
But although liberation is the final goal of life it is not the only worthwhile goal throughout life. The goals of life are four-fold, as recognised by the Vedas. (1) Virtue (dharma) (2) Wealth (artha) (3) Enjoyment (Kama) and (4) Liberation (amoksha). All man's life, ethically speaking, is a progressive development towards the goal of liberation and it was believed that the full term of a man's life should be divided into four different stages for the training and discipline necessary for the realisation of the full possibilities of a human existence. The successive stages known as ashramas are four:—

(1) Life as a student who would live with a teacher and be devoted to learning and discipline of the senses (Brahmacharya).

(2) Life as a married man and a householder (Garhasthya) who is the mainstay of social life.

(3) Life of recluse and contemplation (Banaprashta) after one has enjoyed social life and fulfilled its duties.

(4) Life as a mendicant-seer after the individual has adequately realised what it means to be a self-serene and self-possessed, gentle and kind to all creatures.

Doing one's duties forms an integral part in this process of attaining liberation; but there are three ways of realising oneself as a self, (1) the way of knowledge (Jnana-Marga).

(2) The way of action (Karma-marga) and (3) The way of devotion (Bhakti-marga). These ways are different, but they do not contradict one another. And an individual may live a
worthwhile life by predominantly following any of these ways.

We shall now consider in brief the ethical views of several Indian schools of thought as we find these in Gita, Manu, the Nyaya-Vaisesikas, the Buddhists, the Jains and in Sankara.

The Gita is an ethical as well as a religious work containing elements of mythology. Our concern here is with the purely ethical elements in it. Its central ethical tenet is the doctrine known as Nishkama Karma which is essentially the same as the doctrine of 'duty for the sake of duty'. It is only when a man chooses to act in a certain way because he finds that he is obliged to do so - even though he is not compelled to - and not because it fulfils a personal desire that he does his duty. (The desire to do one's duty is no doubt itself a desire, but of such a distinctive nature that it may be classed apart). The same action may be done purely out of desire for some consequence, and not at all out of a realisation that one is obliged to act in this way. But this binds one to the fruits of one's actions in such a way as is prejudicial to impartiality and tranquillity of mind, attitudes essential for a moral agent to possess.

"He who regardless of the fruits of actions, performs the actions which ought to be performed, is the devotee and the renouncer; not he who discards the (sacred) fires, nor he who performs no acts. Know, O son of Pandu! that what is called renunciation is devotion; for nobody becomes a devotee who has not renounced (all) fancies."1 ...."He who is without

devotion, and attached to the fruits (of action), is tied down by (reason of his) acting in consequence of (some) desire.  

"He who even in this world, before his release from the body, is able to bear the agitations produced from desire and wrath, is a devoted man, he is a happy man. The devotee whose happiness is within (himself), whose recreation is within (himself), and whose light (of knowledge) also is within (himself), becoming (one with) Brahman, obtains the Brahmic bliss. The sages whose sins are perished, whose misgivings are destroyed, who are self-restrained, and who are intent on the welfare of all beings, obtain the Brahmic bliss."  


The Manusmriti is a leading work on the principles and rules of conduct (dharma-sastra) of ancient India. Our obligations, says Manu, have two different sources - obligations to the community to which we owe our being (pitrrna) and obligations to the larger experiences of human race by which we profit (rshirna). Our duties are of two different kinds,
both equally obligatory. (1) Duties which we have as members of an organised community; these are relative to one's status in society and stage of spiritual discipline. (Varnashrama dharma). (2) Duties which belong to man as a man and are common to all human beings. (sadharanadharma).

We have already seen what is meant by stages of spiritual discipline. By one's status in society is meant the caste to which one belongs which has a distinctive function in the working of the society as a whole. (It is believed by many scholars of Sanskrit that before the system of caste became purely hereditary one's caste could also be determined on the basis of one's function and there are historical evidences in favour of this view.) Manu discusses in great detail what the way of life of each caste should be, what specific duties, including ceremonial ones, each caste ought to perform and how these ought to be performed. These duties and rules are of conventional nature and are not relevant for our purposes here. I shall concern myself with those principles that we find in Manu on which a man ought to act because he is a man.

Manu believes like Kant that morality is based on law that is not arrived at by a process of empirical generalisation from experience. "The rule of conduct is transcendent law, whether it be taught in the revealed texts, or in the sacred tradition; hence a twice-born man who possesses regard for himself should

The higher castes are supposed to undergo a process of second birth - the birth of a social and spiritual life over and above the birth which initiates the vital process.
always be careful to (follow) it. 

The highest virtue, according to Manu as according to many other Indian thinkers, is self-knowledge. "He who sacrifices to the Self (alone), equally recognising the Self in all created beings and all created beings in the Self, becomes (independent like) an autocrat and self-luminous." Again, "He who thus recognises the Self through the Self in all created beings, becomes equal(-minded) towards all, and enters the highest state, Brahman."

Another virtue is justice. "Justice, being violated, destroys; justice, being preserved, preserves; therefore justice must not be violated, lest violated justice destroy us." Manu does not, of course, say that it is the duty of every man to cultivate a sense of justice or to act justly. For, it is very likely that he conceived justice as the harmonious working of the society as a whole, otherwise he could not have approved of the servile position of the lowest caste in society. It is to Manu's credit to have recognised their right of subsistence. "They must allot to him out of their own family (property) a suitable maintenance, after considering his ability, his industry, and the number of those whom he is bound to support."

2. Ibid. P. 503.
3. Ibid. P. 513.
4. Ibid. P. 255.
5. Ibid. P. 429.
Nevertheless, the position of this caste did not appear to him to be unjust. Rather he found support for it in their inherited characteristics. "A Sudra, though emancipated by his master, is not released from servitude, since that is innate in him, who can set him free from it?"¹

It is then, the special duty of the King to preserve justice. But to act justly one requires other qualities of character as well. "They declare that king to be a just inflictor of punishment, who is truthful, who acts after due consideration, who is wise, and who knows (the respective value of) virtue, pleasure, and wealth."² Again, "By him who is pure (and) faithful to his promise, who acts according to the Institutes (of the sacred law), who has good assistants and is wise, punishment can be (justly) inflicted."³

Respect for human beings even those who may be in some way or other unfortunate is an attitude which Manu considers should be cultivated by every social being. "Let him not insult those who have redundant limbs or are deficient in limbs, nor those destitute of knowledge, nor very aged men, nor those who have no beauty or wealth, nor those who are of low birth."⁴

Speaking the truth is another virtue. "Let him say what is true, let him say what is pleasing, let him utter no disagreeable truth, and let him utter no agreeable falsehood; that is the eternal law."⁵

1. Ibid. P.326.
2. Ibid. P.220.
3. Ibid. P.221.
4. Ibid. P.151.
5. Ibid. P.150.
Other important social duties are hospitality, liberality and charity. We may now sum up the virtues of men in Manu's own words, "Contentment, forgiveness, self-control, abstention from unrighteously appropriating anything, (obedience to the rules of) purification, coercion of the organs, wisdom, knowledge (of the supreme Soul), truthfulness and abstention from anger, (form) the tenfold law."¹

Frasastapada of the Varisesika school holds like Aristotle that our moral life has to do with pleasures and pains, which arise out of desire (ichchha) and aversion (dvesha). Since man has a good to attain that good has to be desired. But pleasures that result from human desires are not all of the same kind. Apart from the pleasure of the sense organs there are pleasures of reminiscence (smrtijam) of choice and resolution (sankalpajam). Again there are pleasures that come from self-knowledge (atmajnana), from self-collectedness (shama), from contentment (santosh) and from righteousness (prakrstadharma). The moral problem therefore is to train our will so that we desire only such pleasures that do not bring suffering with them.

The will of a moral agent is to be trained through the attaining of some virtues obligatory on all to possess. Those that are of the nature of moral principles are:

(1) Regard for moral values (Dharme Shraddha)
(2) Refraining from injury to others (Ahimsa)

¹. Ibid. P.215.
(3) Seeking the good of all creatures (Bhutahitatva)
(4) Speaking the truth (satyavachana)
(5) Refraining from theft (Asteya)
(6) Sexual Restraint (Brahmacharyya)
(7) Sincerity (Anupadha)
(8) Renouncing anger (Krodha-Varjana)
(9) Personal cleanliness (snana)
(10) Moral Watchfulness. (apramada)

(Vide 'Ethics of the Hindus' by Dr. S. K. Maitra).

Amongst the duties that are enjoined on men by the scriptures are ones that are ceremonial. All the systems of Indian Philosophy except the Purvamimamsa hold that ceremonial duties have no moral value or at any rate no independent moral value of their own. Purvamimamsa considers ceremonial duties to be amongst the very basis of ethical life. Nevertheless, the obligatoriness of duty, says Pravakara of this school, is not of the nature of compulsion but of impulsion (prerana). Impulsion is a unique feeling which arises out of the prompting of the imperative in consciousness as the subject identifies himself with what is to be done. According to the Pravakaras, says, Dr. Maitra, impulsion through suggestion or vedic commands is essentially of the nature of enlightenment or inducement by knowledge which does not interfere with the agent's freedom or compel obedience. Ceremonial duties being far removed from human needs and purposes the analysis which Pravakara gives of moral willing includes the following processes:—('Ethics of
the Hindus).

1. Consciousness of something to be done (Karyatajnana)
2. Consciousness that it can be done. (Kritisadhyatajnana).
3. Act of volition (Prabritti)
   And this involves qualification of the self as doer.
4. The motor impulse (Chesta.)
5. The overt act (Kriya)

The Nyaya school of thought finds this analysis unsatisfactory, for in moral willing there is not only the consciousness of something as capable of being done by me, but also the cognition that it is desirable for me as an agent that I should do it (Ishta) and that it involves no evil for anyone (anishta).

The standard of moral desirability is, of course, not happiness but cessation of suffering for one's own self.

Vatsysyana of Nyaya school classifies virtues and vices according as they concern our body (sharira) speech (vak) and mind (mana) (Vide Ethics of the Hindus). Unrighteous acts which concern the body are cruelty (himsa), theft (chaurya) and sexual excess.

Unrighteous acts which depend on speech are mendacity (mithya), use of rude and harsh words (katukti), scandalmongering (suchana) and gossip (asambaddha).

Unrighteous tendencies of the mind are hostility and malice, (paradroha) covetousness with regard to others' possessions (paradrabya abhipsa) and irreverence.

Similarly, virtuous acts which have physical welfare in
view are charity (dana), helping the distressed (paritrana) and social service (paricharana).

Virtues of speech are veracity, speaking with a view to good of mankind (hitavachana) gentleness and agreeableness in speech (priyavachana) and reciting the scriptures. Virtuous altitudes are kindness, tenderness, benevolence, indifference to material possessions and reverence.

Patanijali of Sankhya school says that veracity requires there should be no error in judgment as far as that can be avoided (bhranti), nor intentional deceit (vanchana), nor indulge in meaningless words or faulty expressions (prati-patti vandhyha) through lack of proper care.

The path of salvation, according to Jaina philosophy, (this like the Buddhist and Carvaka schools of thought deny the absolute authority of the Vedas) lies through right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. Faith is no blind adherence to any doctrine, for right faith can only be attained by discarding superstitious beliefs including belief in gods.

"Jaina Ethical code does not prescribe duties according to caste. All men are equal in birth and every one is entitled to be either a householder or an ascetic according to his capacity and taste."1

Right conduct, according to this school, depends on purity of intentions. (vide Ethics of the Hindus) Impurities of intention arise out of:

(1) An effort to escape from the contact with the unpleasant.

(2) An effort to attain the pleasant when separated from it.
(3) Absorption in the experiences of pain and suffering.
(4) Desire for power.
(5) Aggressiveness expressed in cruelty, theft, mendacity
and in preservation of one's own property.

Purity of intentions depends on:
(1) Contemplation on the ideal of duty and an attitude to act
from it.
(2) Contemplation on the ideal of perfection of soul and a
desire to attain it.

The virtues which everyone either a householder or an
ascetic should strive to attain are non-violence, truthfulness,
non-stealing, abstention from greed and from sensuality. The
attitude of non-violence is an attitude of love and kindness
to all and it involves our mind, speech and body. We can be
responsible for actions done in three different ways, (1) through
direct performance of an action (Krta), (2) through indirectly
causing it to be done by another agent (Karita), and (3) through
permitting evil conduct in another (Anumata). Non-violence is
to be observed in all these three ways. The principle of
truth-speaking must be consistent with the principle of non-
violence and respect for pleasantness and wholesomeness. Non-
stealing includes use of false weights and measures by traders,
or acquiring property and wealth by unjust means. Abstention
from greed means for a householder the principle of limited
possession (parimita-parigraha). It is his duty to restrict
accumulation of wealth voluntarily to a certain limit.

Sexual restraint involves strictly monogamous marriage and mutual fidelity (eka-dara-brata) for the householder and complete abstention for the ascetic.

The Buddhists distinguish between the two sides of a virtuous action, mental disposition and overt action. It is in the disposition that moral value lies. A disposition which is virtuous is formed by a conscious effort of the mind to achieve righteousness (manaskarma). Dispositions which grow out of subconscious modifications of personality through institutional and communal practices (paribhanganvyam Karma) may or may not be righteous. Some actions, for example, sacrifice of animals to gods, the responsibility for which lies with the institutions of the community are unrighteous.

Righteousness consists in an attempt to do good to all creatures, human and non-human, to refrain from injuring others, to be truthful and sincere in speech, to maintain physical health and to enjoy peace and amity with all creatures. (Vide 'Ethics of the Hindus')

The answer to the question, wherein lies the authority of a moral principle, has variously been given by the ancient thinkers of India. Some believed that this authority lies in tradition (loka-upadesh) and consensus of social opinion (loka prasiddhi). Others thought it is derived from social utility. By social utility is either meant maintaining social equilibrium (loka-sthiti) or realising some social good (loka-siddhi). But
Aryadeva in Chatusatika argues that to think of morality as a means to social conservation is to deny its intrinsic character. Still others believed that the authority of moral principles lies in the conception of some end worthwhile for human beings to achieve. This end, the Carvakas believed, lies in enjoying maximum of pleasure with minimum of pain. There is no other kind of pleasure - pleasure which is unalloyed with any association with pain - than we have experience of. Only, it is our duty to avoid as much pain as we can.

The end, the summum bonum, (nishreyasam) is a state of transcendental bliss, says Sankara. It is constituted of knowledge and truth whereas ordinary pleasure is a mode of error and illusion. The good and the pleasurable come to man in mixed form; the dull and the short-sighted choose the pleasurable but the wise and the discriminative know how to separate the two as the swan knows how to separate milk from water.

The good one has to attain is nothing but one's own self, the only thing one can really possess, for everything else is external. The essence of self, when one comes to know it, one finds to be a state of happiness that is autonomous and intrinsic (svayamlabdha) while the source of empirical pleasure lies elsewhere (anyapeksha). When asked to define the nature of this happiness Sankara replied that it can be realised through knowledge but cannot be described in terms of anything else but itself. It can be negatively described as not this.
pleasure, not that pleasure nor any other pleasure of empirical experience. This doctrine is know as neti-neti vada.

According to this conception of end morality which is concerned with the satisfaction of empirical needs, at least of other people, has only a relative importance. Man's end in life is not to be virtuous, but to obtain bliss. Nevertheless, Sankara insists that doing our duties is a necessary stage towards achieving bliss. He who has know what it is to be a self and has realised that it is the same self that each one possesses is above duty for he would do what is right out of sheer sense of oneness with others and not out of obligation. But so long as this stage is not achieved it remains true to say that we should do our duties. Our duties are not unreflective, but involve judgments of truth. (Vide 'Ethics of the Hindus'). These are :-

(1) Sympathy with the happiness of others.
(2) Compassion towards the suffering.
(3) Rejoicing at the happiness of all sentient creatures.
(4) Indifference towards the unrighteous.
(5) Self-collectedness and tranquillity of mind.
(6) Repression of the senses.
(7) Endurance of pain.
(8) Renunciation of empirical pleasures.

It is difficult for us to believe that life as we know it in empirical experience is an illusion even though Sankara insists in his doctrine of degrees of truth that one cannot
know it to be an illusion until one has gained the knowledge of self as bliss and has realised that there is but one self in all. As Īṣuna-Qhadra in Atmanushasana points out, the experience of empirical pleasure is not by itself a sin nor need it necessarily lead to pain. He says like Aristotle that it is only the particular kind of pleasure, the pleasure which goes beyond the right measure, (matradyatikrama) that leads to unrighteousness and unhappiness. What is necessary for us is to regulate and co-ordinate our pleasures and not to deny them altogether.

The state of happiness which a perfectly virtuous moral agent may be conceived to attain is very different from the pleasures that we ordinarily know of. But that does not render our ordinary pleasures unreal. For this happiness is of the nature of an ideal that a moral agent may hope to attain while striving to be virtuous through the regulation of his pleasures. Unless his pleasures were real the ideal will have no function. This ideal of happiness is a standard by which we are to judge the degree of one's moral perfection, but it is not, as Sankara believed, an eternally realised state of existence which a moral agent attains through some kind of super-empirical mode of knowledge.

The authority of moral principles, according to the Vedanta, lies not only in the nature of the end, but also in their nature as laws, having self-evident validity (svata-pramanya). The knowledge of a moral principle is a self-validating experience
which does not require the support of anything else to establish claim to our respect.

'THE CONCEPT OF GOOD'

E. F. Carritt suggests in his "Theory of Morals" that the term 'good' is being used in so many different senses that it would be altogether better not to use this term in ethics. No doubt, the term is used in many different ways; for, as the dictionary says, it is the most general term of commendation and condemnation may be made from different points of view. These points of view overlap in our speech, leading to vagueness and ambiguity of words used in their connections. But it is futile to believe that a discussion of morals can get along without the use of the word 'good'. For although the concepts of 'right' and 'duty' are important concepts they are not sufficient to explain every aspect of our experience in a moral context. Aspects of our experience concerning human conduct are such that they can only be explained in terms of certain conceptions of attitudes or dispositions accepted as worthwhile for their own sakes. The concept of 'good' serves an essential purpose in our moral thinking by explaining the authority the ideas of these ends have over our moral judgments. This use of the term is one amongst the various uses that are actually made of it, but it is a distinctive use and we cannot dispense with it as long as we are to recognise the features of our experience of which this concept constitutes
CHAPTER VIII.

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an explanation.

Stevenson in "Ethics and Language" seems to labour under a misconception as to the function of the notion 'intrinsic value' or 'intrinsic good' in the explication of aspects of our moral experience. In the chapter on 'Intrinsic and Extrinsic values' he takes the philosophers to task who take judgments about intrinsic value to have an importance that is beyond question. There he seems to imply that to believe in intrinsic values is necessarily to make a moral approach to matters of fact by way of deduction from self-evident premises. But, says Stevenson, in no case does an emphasis on intrinsic value permit one to ignore the use of reason about matters of fact. It is, of course, not unlikely that some people who believe that impartiality is an intrinsically good moral attitude would condemn A's treatment (partial?) of B without at all considering whether this treatment is to be considered partial or not, under the circumstances. But this is not necessarily the case and a belief in the intrinsic goodness of a disposition like impartiality is quite compatible with a fact-finding attitude. Even when one finds that A's treatment of B can not be considered to be partial in the light of all the facts present in the situation, inspite of its looking like a case of partiality when some of the facts are ignored, one may still hold with perfect sense that it is better to be impartial than to be partial and this is one of the things that is implied in the conception of intrinsic ends in a moral context.
There is no doubt a doctrine to be found in some quarters that the distinction of means and ends is such that one is justified in adopting any available means in order to achieve certain ends which are recognisable to be worthwhile. And admittedly this doctrine holds true in certain contexts. If one wants to slim, one may be offered a choice between two methods - those of dieting and exercise and one is justified in adopting one or the other if one finds that it achieves the result more quickly. But to believe in intrinsic ends is not necessarily to advocate a doctrine of means and ends, as Stevenson seems to think, for one of the reasons Stevenson advances against the tenability of the conception of intrinsic ends is that due to the 'general adaptability of human nature' "What is first favored as a means may on that very account grow to be favored as an end." But strictly speaking this distinction is not a significant one as far as intrinsic moral ends are concerned. What are called intrinsic ends in morals are not like particular objects, like a house or a car which one may acquire by different means, or even a particular state of affairs like a peace treaty which may be achieved on honourable or dishonourable terms. The conceptions of these ends are conceptions of value-standards in accordance with which the moral worth of human personalities, character, conduct, relations, and states of affairs are judged. These are, in other words, standards for human beings for living well, which speaking morally, is doing well. If these standards are ends which it

1. Ibid Page 193.
is worthwhile for us to try and realize in our moral endeavours they are no less means for living a life that is morally worthwhile. In short, they are not the sort of ends which stand over against various alternative means, some to be recommended, others not.

Stevenson, of course, says that what are called intrinsic values are really intrinsic attitudes. But "Amongst the factors that determine our attitude we must recognise habituation - the sheer getting used to something."¹ So Stevenson's intrinsic attitude is not intrinsic in the sense that it is desirable for its own sake that we should possess it, for it is looked upon as a matter of habit or getting used to irrespective of what one gets used to. No doubt people develop all sorts of attitudes through habituation, but this does not in any way tend to disprove that it is better for us to have some attitudes rather than others as some philosophical moralists have contended.

Coming to the question of defining ethical terms, Stevenson says that the object of a study of ethical terms is not to devise in an arbitrary fashion a sense for them that suits a technical purpose but to free the language of everyday life from confusion. This is a very tenable observation, but it seems to me that the definitions of ethical terms that Stevenson advances add to the confusions instead of removing them. I shall seek to show how this is so.

Ethical terms, says Stevenson, are used in different

¹. Ibid Page 193.
senses, and they are vague as far as usage goes. Although certain factors at any one time are definitely included among the designata of the terms and certain others excluded, there are certain others which are neither included nor excluded. The limits of the undecided region are so subject to fluctuation with varying contexts and varying purposes, that it becomes arbitrary, so far as common usage is concerned, to specify where one sense of the term leaves off and another begins. It is not easy to see what exactly Stevenson has in mind here. It is true that certain terms, particularly terms of assessment are used in many different ways, sometimes even within the same context of discussion. It would, therefore, be arbitrary to say that they are not used in this way. But would it be arbitrary to say that the significance of a term used should be limited by the context in which it is used, simply because such limit is not always observed by people? I do not think that this is tenable. On the contrary, it appears that it is a legitimate concern on the part of a philosopher to find out what these several meanings of a term are, as limited by the context in which it is used. It is surely possible to define a term by reference to a particular context in which it is applied in human speech and it is only thus that a confusion between different meanings can be avoided. The definition that Stevenson advances of the ethical term 'good' namely "I approve of it" is an omnibus definition which is designed to cover every shade of meaning that anyone could
possibly wish to express by it and this fails to tell us what the use of the term is in a distinctively ethical context. Stevenson's definition has two parts - a declarative statement "I approve of it" which expresses the attitude of the speaker, and an imperative statement "do so as well" which is addressed to clarifying or intensifying the attitudes of the hearer. These two meanings may be implied in the various possible uses of the term good but exactly how does this knowledge remove our confusions? For surely confusion arises not because one fails to understand that the speaker approves of what he refers to as good and would like the listener to do the same as well, but because one is not quite clear as to the ground on which what is being approved is approved. And it is the latter understanding that we are primarily in need of for the purposes of clarity of thought.

Stevenson argues that one can give reasons for one's attitudes of approval "Although imperatives cannot be "proved", are there not reasons or arguments which may at least support them?" Nevertheless, the attitudes, as far as the question of defining them is concerned remain obstinately emotive; for a definition, so Stevenson thinks, has to cater for attitudes which are well-grounded as well as the attitudes which refuse to be changed through knowledge of facts that are morally relevant. But an attitude need not necessarily be emotive. The concept of attitude is an explanatory concept whose function is to point to the relation that there is between

1. Ibid. Page 27.
certain characteristic ways of behaving, emotional or otherwise. (I shall presently elaborate this point). This notion then has an emotive significance. But to say that the meaning of the term 'good' is emotive, is to claim more than that. It is to say that the distinctive nature of what is morally good is that it arouses the emotion of approval. If arousing the emotion of approval is only one element amongst others and not the most characteristic one which distinguishes the ethical ideal of good from what is not good, then the notion of good does not specifically merit the name 'emotive'. It would perhaps be agreed that the emotion of approval may be aroused by what is good, as well as by what is bad or indifferent from the moral point of view. And this means that arousing the emotion of approval is not the characteristic meaning of good as far as ethics is concerned.

The other meaning of 'this is good' is "This has qualities or relations X, Y, Z...." except that "good" has as well a laudatory emotive meaning which permits it to express the speaker's approval, and tends to evoke the approval of the hearer."

This is not a definition of 'good' but a formal schema for a whole set of definitions. What are the variables by which the schema may be replaced? It will not do, says Stevenson, to admit of any substitution whatsoever, for certain descriptive meanings will be obviously unsuitable according to our linguistic habits or usage. Now, there is a perfectly

1. Ibid Page 207.
good sense, of course, in which usage may be said to determine the meaning of terms. We must mean by a term what other people mean by it as well if we wish to be understood. But to say that a term can not be used to mean certain things because usage would not allow it is no explanation of the meaning of a term. Rather, it tends to arouse a misconception that our linguistic habits are ultimate facts in the understanding of what we means by words. From Stevenson's account it appears that the reason why we can not say 'stealing is good', is that it is not in our linguistic habit to do so. But no social habit is unalterably fixed and if people start referring to stealing as good we shall be justified in thinking it is good.\[X\]

Now, it is not to be denied that we can learn to use words only by learning or more or less unconsciously assimilating the uses other people make of them. But words are no more than symbols for recognisable aspects of our experience and when people use them in common and agree about statements in which such words are used it means that they are referring to certain aspects experienced by them in the same way. To form a language habit is not a case of mechanical manipulation or blind imitation; it is to be able to refer intelligently, whenever any need for it arises, to certain features which are experienced by the hearer in the same or corresponding ways as they are by the speaker.

\[X\] (Stealing from foreigners is actually considered to be good in some primitive societies. See "Experiments in Living" Macbeath.)
The nature of our experience, therefore, is a factor in determining the meaning of words and the plausibility of usage is relative to it. If it is true that usage determines the variables by which we can replace X, Y, Z in Stevenson's schema of definition of good, it is no less true that usage itself grows through reference to more or less stable features of experience that can be had in common between different people. There is thus a deeper reason why we cannot replace X, Y, Z by any variable we like, than the fact that the way words are used are more or less settled. It is that the way we use words are limited by the nature of the experience that we have in common with other people. If we use a word to refer to an aspect of experience in respect of which it is not used by other people and for which there already exists a different word, then it either ignores or opposes other people's experience and thereby ceases to be a symbol significant for purposes of thought and communication in respect of a common world.

Stevenson continues "Meanwhile it may be observed that the boundaries for the "natural" meanings that may be assigned to "good", as is true of any vague term, are so shadowy and unstable that it is difficult to specify them even in a rough way. And there will be little gain if this were done; for confusions arise not from inattention to the boundaries, but from inattention to the many possible senses that lie between them. The unformulated boundaries of common usage are unquestionably wide enough to permit a great number of second-
But how are such remarks pertinent to an ethical enquiry? What is necessary for us to do in an ethical context, is to examine usage with a view to understand that use of the term 'good', which is distinctively ethical, and not to analyse the various possible senses in which it may be used, although such analysis undoubtedly has its value for certain purposes. Admittedly, the nature of the moral term 'good' is so complex that it may be formulated in more than one way. But such formulations are either adequate or not for the purpose of signifying what are of moral value.

Stevenson concludes that the word 'good' is strongly emotive and vague, and this is true of all other ethical words. A purely intellectual analysis of ethical terms like Sidgwick's definition of a just man as one who does not let himself be unduly influenced by personal preferences, has according to him veiled and confused emotive meanings. To say that a just man does not let his personal preferences unduly influence him, is to say that he does not let his personal preferences influence him more than he ought to and to use the word 'ought' is, in Stevenson's opinion, to express an emotive attitude. If this is the case then Sidgwick is defining a just man as one who does not let his personal preferences influence him in a way which he (Sidgwick) disapproves of. If Sidgwick says in reply that he disapproves of the way in question because it is unjust, and not that he thinks it is unjust because he disapproves of it,
then Stevenson has little justification in insisting that Sidgwick has confused his emotive attitude with an objective state of affairs that can intellectually be analysed. It is surely not impossible for us to understand what Sidgwick means when he is talking about a person not being influenced by personal preferences, without our having any knowledge of his emotional states. It might be said in reply that we can not but know of his emotional states when we hear him say 'a just man etc.' But exactly what do we know? We know that he has an emotion of approval. But do we know any more about this emotion itself as a state of feeling so that by understanding its distinctive characteristic we understand the ethical significance of Sidgwick's statement? And we have to have this knowledge if the significance or meaning of Sidgwick's statement has to be understood in terms of his emotion considered purely as a state of the speaker. For suppose someone says, 'It is very good that you managed to escape the customs' we know that the speaker is expressing an emotion of approval. But we also know that the sort of attitude expressed here is not the same as Sidgwick is expressing. But we can not explain how they differ if we keep merely to feelings. If we wish to understand their difference we shall have to understand the difference between objects which give rise to the emotions of approval that people feel, and the difference between contexts to which they are suitable. It might, of course, be said that in so far as these attitudes
express an emotion of approval they are identical. But this ignores a recognisable distinction that there is between these two attitudes and insofar as we recognise this distinction it is true to say that the meaning of terms that express attitudes cannot be understood merely by reference to an emotional state. Thus we would not understand the meaning or the ethical significance of Sidgwick's statement even if we understood that he is expressing an emotion of approval when he is saying 'a just man etc.'.

Moore argues in his 'Principia Ethics' that ethical statements are more than statements of personal approval or disapproval; for when we say that something is morally good our purpose is to refer to some quality of that which is good, and this may be understood in common by the speaker and the spoken to. What then is this quality? Moore says that it is impossible for us to define the term 'good' just as it is impossible for us to define the term 'yellow' both of which stand for a quality simple and unanalysable. We cannot define 'yellow' none the less we know the quality that is meant by it. Similarly, our inability to define 'good' does not stand in the way of our understanding what is meant when someone says 'personal affection is good'. Good is a unique quality which cannot be expressed in terms of anything but itself and if we attempt to define it by saying 'good is pleasure', 'good is evolved' or some such thing, we commit the naturalistic fallacy. To say 'pleasure is good' is
different from saying 'good is pleasure'. The former is a synthetic proposition, the latter is analytic, i.e. here good and pleasure stand for one and the same thing and this clearly is false. A definition of good can only be an analytic proposition and in such a proposition the unique quality good is lost.

Moore's criticism of Naturalism, has indeed been of great service to ethics as he believed it would be, for it brings home to us afresh the important fact that the distinctive nature of morality cannot be realised merely in terms of non-value facts. But his theory that the quality 'good' is simple and absolutely unanalysable cannot be said to have positively helped our understanding of moral values. As has been pointed out by various thinkers, if good is as simple as yellow, why is there not the same conformity of opinion as to what, amongst the existing states of affairs, we may call good as is there about what objects are yellow in colour. If good is a complex notion then there can be nothing against its being analysable although it may not be analysable into what is not of moral value. That Moore's idea of what constitutes the moral quality good is inadequate is shown in his opinion as to what things are morally good. The two things that are morally good, says Moore, are (1) personal affection and (2) experience of beauty. However good these two may be, it does not seem to me that they are good in that specific sense of the 'good' which is moral. The term 'personal
affection might be interpreted in such a way as to make it a moral good, but the term 'beauty' (or experience of beauty) does not indicate a good that is characteristically moral. It might here be asked how I am deciding that these are not morally good when they are actually thought to be so by some people. But if there is to be a characteristic use of the term 'good' in ethics it ought to be a consistent one, and the concept of beauty belongs to another context, namely the aesthetic context, which is not the same as a moral context. How then shall we define the characteristically ethical use of the term 'good'?

Now we have not only the general term 'good' which can be predicated of everything the commendation of which is consistent with a rational point of view, but also a conception of greatest or highest good which is a notion of maximum value nothing better than which can be conceived in human states of affairs. I am not saying that there is a concrete state of affairs the details of which are arranged in some definite and particular manner which corresponds to this notion; only that it is possible for us to conceive of the notion as a sort of ideal limit of what human beings can achieve. This ideal limit has a function other than, or over and above, that of describing definite and specific things, it is a concept which explains why some of the things that human beings do value are

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X The term 'good' may also be used to express the purely psychological fact of an individual's approval of something or other, but I am not here concerned with that.
valued. That is to say, it is a concept of an ideal standard in terms of which all that is of value in human affairs is to be understood from a characteristic point of view. This ideal is the conception of a characteristic kind of human existence where it is possible for every individual to be as happy as it is in his nature to be, through the fulfilment of all the felt needs of a legitimate nature in conformity with the similar happiness of all others. It may well be that this ideal will never be realised in human societies to the extent that no further effort towards its direction will any longer be necessary. But that does not render this idea a fanciful one. For its function is not to describe any particular society that is existing, or will at a future date be existing, but it explains (in the sense of turning light on) the strivings of particular societies to achieve something better than what has already been achieved from the point of view of the happiness of individuals in different aspects of social and individual living, or to continue to enjoy whatever of value in such matters has already been realised.

In this conception of general happiness through the fulfilment of all the felt needs of a legitimate nature is implied the possibility of realising all that is of value or is good for human beings, intrinsic or instrumental, from a rational point of view - like innocent pleasure, health, personal affection, intellectual advancement, aesthetic creation and appreciation, virtue, a contented personality, efficient
production and distribution of goods and so on. These things are of value from different points of view. The most consistent use of the term from the point of view of morality is in respect of certain human motives, attitudes (relatively permanent tendencies in an individual's reaction to situations of a certain sort) dispositions, (settled habits of behaving in some characteristic ways), character (which stands for the characteristic connection that there is between an individual's actions, motives, attitudes and dispositions) as well as states of affairs that are consistent with the existence of motives, attitudes, dispositions and character that are morally good. To say this, is not to deny that the term 'good' which is specifically moral we must try to discern a characteristic and consistent use of it from amongst the various actual uses that are made of it. To say that a term has a characteristic use is to say that the objects referred to by it have some discernible features by virtue of which they may be consistently thought of as similar to one another or as forming a relatively specifiable and distinguishable context of discourse. We may then define the conception of moral good as the conception of motives, attitudes, dispositions, characters and states of affairs involving human relations which are consistent with the conception of highest good and which may, generally speaking, be considered to be attainable
through human effort, insofar as they do not necessarily exist without such effort, and insofar as they can exist without necessarily implying the exercise of any inherited ability of a high degree, like more than average intelligence, aesthetic imagination, and susceptibility, or abundance of vital energy and so on. This is not a simple way of defining 'good' but the complexity of the whole conception makes it impossible to define it simply. No doubt the definition attempted here can be improved upon, and I have no wish to claim finality. All that I am concerned with in this definition is to emphasise the characteristic features of all that can consistently be referred to as good from the moral point of view. This definition is, as Moore says all definitions are, analytic, and it is true to say that it reveals nothing new to people who are familiar with moral conceptions. This is how it should be, for I am not here dictating terms to all who wish to understand morality but merely trying to formulate in a systematic way, certain implications of the point of view of morality

I have already stated in a previous chapter certain of the attitudes and dispositions which some moral thinkers have considered to be good, here I shall try to analyse somewhat in detail how the attitudes and dispositions that are morally good are characterised in the way I have spoken of in the definition of good attempted above. But perhaps it is necessary, to avoid certain misunderstandings, to explain
how I am using the words "attitudes" and "dispositions". To have an attitude is not the same sort of thing as to have muscles in one's arms and its presence or absence cannot be detected in the same way as we find out if one has muscles or not. Again, to express an attitude is not to do anything so specific as the action of posting a letter and we do not know that one has expressed an attitude on the same sort of evidence which leads us to be reasonably sure that a letter has been posted. The term 'attitude' does not stand for any process which is identifiable as a distinct occurrence, and there is nothing in our direct and immediate experience which corresponds to it exactly in the way that a certain mode of movement corresponds to the idea of running. This does not mean, of course, that this idea serves no purpose in the organisation of our thinking about human behaviour. It is an explanatory concept whose function is to express the characteristic relation that there is between a variety of occurrences. Relation, of course is not a thing, nor an extra piece of occurrence, so we cannot experience it in the same way as we experience a thing or an occurrence. Let us see what we mean when we say that someone has an attitude. To say, that one has an attitude, says Ryle, is to say that one is likely to behave in such and such ways in such and such circumstances. That Mr. X has a patriotic attitude means that Mr. X can be expected to behave (i.e. think, feel and act) in certain ways in situations of a certain sort involving his country. For
instance, he is likely to feel happy when he finds that his country is winning in what he considers to be a just war, to have concern and worried thoughts when he finds that his country is losing, to be ready and eager to do things he is able to do for his country when a need for it arises and so on. But it seems to me that we mean more than that, we mean that some of the ways in which Mr. X is likely to think, feel or act when his country is concerned are characterised by being connected and consistent with one another, in a way, different other ways of thinking, feeling and acting are not consistent with them. For instance, if we find that a man is expressing great concern over the future of his country and yet is not willing to do something he is able to do for improving its condition, we shall not believe that he is patriotic (we shall say 'he is not really patriotic') or again if we know of a man that he is fond of going to pictures and thinks boxing should be made illegal we shall not conclude that he is patriotic. The conception of an attitude has an explanatory function over and above that of describing possible or actual occurrences. It serves as an explanation of the fact that some of the tendencies that an individual has to think, feel and act in certain ways are characterised by being connected and consistent with one another in that particular manner which we find to be the case.

The term 'disposition' is a stronger term than attitude. To say that a man has a certain disposition is to say more
than he has tendencies to think, feel and act in certain ways, it is to assert that he thinks, feels and acts in certain ways rather than others; or, in other words that his habits are, in some respects, fairly settled. Further, 'disposition' is a more general term than 'attitude'. One can be said to have a friendly attitude to specific individuals or groups but one is said to have a friendly disposition only if his treatment of others is friendly in general. Furthermore the term 'disposition' is more abstract than the term 'attitude'. We talk about a person having an attitude rather than a disposition when the kind of situations in which the characteristic ways of thinking, feeling and willing are stimulated are relatively specifiable. For instance, we say 'his attitude towards his social inferiors is very rude' but when we want to talk of a disposition or general habit of rude behavior we leave the situations in which that is shown unspecified, as when we say 'he is a very rude man'. But neither 'attitude' nor 'disposition' is what Ryle calls an occurrence term. Nevertheless they both have a legitimate function in the organisation of our thinking about occurrences as certain occurrences do show themselves to be related in some special way. We need to deny this significance only if we demand the same sort of meaning from them as we are accustomed to in the case of what is purely an occurrence term like eating or writing.

I shall now discuss the attitudes and dispositions that
are morally good. The conceptions of these attitudes and dispositions belong to different levels of abstraction and generality in our thinking about human conduct. We say something relatively concrete and more directly informative about a man when we say 'he is honest' than when we say 'he is a great man'. The most abstract and general of all the conceptions of attitudes or dispositions that are morally good is the conception of greatness which is expressed through the conceptions of attitudes or dispositions relatively less general and abstract like wisdom. One of the ways in which wisdom is manifested in moral life is through an attitude which we may call 'regard for moral values or virtue'. Moral virtues may be conceived to be of two different kinds, self-regarding and other-regarding. There is, of course, no hard and fast distinction between the two, for man is a social being and almost all his actions and attitudes affect others. Yet it is useful to make this distinction for certain purposes. Honesty for example, we shall say is a self-regarding virtue, for it is possible that a particular dishonest act would not bring about any noticeable harm to the persons against whom it is committed; but it harms the character of the person who commits it from the point of view of the ideal of perfection in character. Amongst the most abstract and general of self-regarding moral virtues is one's desire for self-

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\[X\] Honesty is self-regarding when it is thought of as a character trait, as when a man takes just pride in being honest. But considered as activities it is other-regarding as well.
knowledge with a view to attain as much perfection in one's character as possible or with a view to realise as much of a contented personality as one can. The understanding of the value or self-knowledge is shown in such relatively specific attitudes as trustworthiness, courage, patience, perseverance etc. Trustworthiness is again manifested through still more specific attitudes like sincerity, honesty etc. Amongst other-regarding virtues the most abstract and general is what we may for want of a better word, express by 'social consciousness', which is shown in such attitudes or dispositions as benevolence and righteousness. Benevolence is shown in such relatively specific attitudes as kindness, charity, sympathy, friendliness etc., and the disposition of righteousness shows itself in the desire to do one's duty in general and in respecting justice in particular. This is a rough classification only, but some such classification is necessary in order to show what function these ideas play in our moral thinking about human character.

The idea of greatness is the idea of a disposition to respect some value to such a degree as not to be willing to compromise with it on account of personal pleasure, comfort, security and sometimes even life itself. It expresses our notion of the intrinsic value of a disposition to the highest possible degree that is humanly conceivable. And the function of this notion is to explain some of the conduct of exceptional individuals who place what is or are of value for human beings
above everything else as evidenced in their behaviour pattern in general. When we say somebody or other is a great man we do not mean that he has realised or is realising the values that are humanly achievable. We only refer to his actual respect for value in some particular sphere or in particular spheres. This ideal is, of course, only more or less achievable. And the requirements of this ideal - covering as it does almost all the behaviour of an individual in a certain context or in certain contexts - is too high to be achievable in any considerable degree by people in general. That does not mean that this idea is a pure fiction, for it is in the light of this conception that we understand and appreciate the character of those who give evidence of fearlessness and dignity in upholding something that is of primary importance from a value point of view. This idea is consistent with the conception of greatest good. And although only a few exceptional people are able to achieve this to any degree, we may still include this notion amongst what are morally good as it is possible for all of us - unless we are incapacitated for special physiological or psychological reasons - to try to realise it as far as we can within the limitations of our nature.

I have said in course of defining 'good' that moral values that are referred to as good are achievable by ordinary people. Greatness however is not achievable by all and although we have included it amongst moral goods we can not
demand it of any one nor can we blame any one for failing to achieve it as we can in case of ordinary moral virtues. The point of calling it a moral good is two-fold; (a) it involves qualities of character which are moral like courage, perseverance etc; (b) ordinary people can at least endeavour to achieve a degree of greatness in their day-to-day moral behaviour even if they can not do so in any other respect.

A similar remark holds of wisdom.

One of the ways in which greatness of character expresses itself is wisdom. To put it differently, one of the character-traits on account of which we ascribe greatness to people is wisdom. The notion of wisdom is the notion of a disposition which seeks comprehensiveness in the practical approach to an issue and is based on the habit of attending carefully to everything that is relevant to the matter under consideration from the point of view of achieving as much value, both intrinsic and instrumental, as is possible under a specific set of circumstances. Real circumstances of life are complex and there are often many sides to an issue which involves questions of value. A man is said to be wise when he recognises and understands the comparative importance of all that is concerned in a complex situation and give them their due weight in arriving at decisions. He is careful not to be biased in favour of factors in some way convenient to himself, nor is he likely to ignore them completely unless this is specifically called for. He understands that what is desirable may not necessarily
be what is desired, but he strives to desire that which is desirable as it is only thus that a relatively permanent satisfaction may be had in life. In short, the conception of a wise man is the conception of a person who is disposed towards attaining that delicate balance which is based on the understanding of the comparative importance of all that is involved in one's approach to experience that raises questions of value.

Now, to possess wisdom is not like possessing a particular skill, like say, playing the violin which is 'shown' in specific types of situations and actions. It is to have a characteristic kind of approach to many different kinds of situations. To understand that a man is wise is to understand how his reactions are appropriate on the whole and in the long run to situations in which we ask how far that which has been achieved is worthwhile.' Like greatness, wisdom is the conception of a disposition which is possessed by people more or less. Also, one may be wise in some ways and not in others.

Wisdom is manifested through dispositions and attitudes of a comparatively less general kind amongst which is regard for moral values or virtues. This should be referred to as a disposition if it were to mean that an individual never compromises where moral values are concerned. That will be a perfectly virtuous disposition. But an attitude of regard for moral values may exist even though the moral agent is not
virtuous in every possible way. The presence of this attitude means that the agent has a positive resistance against doing anything that is objectionable from the point of view of morality. How far he is successful in withstanding the pressure of temptation depends upon the nature and intensity of his felt needs that conflict with the realisation of values, upon the strength of the specific habits that he must have if he is to act satisfactorily from the point of view of morality and upon the degree of integrity of his character which helps one not to be moved too easily in situations which are novel and when the type of action one is required to perform is not covered by established habits. To have regard for moral values is to have a tendency to behave in certain ways which are consistent with one another, for example, to follow established rules and recognised principles when there is no satisfactory reason for not doing so, to give careful consideration to conflicting principles which may be relevant to a situation and to follow the one whose demand is most urgent, as far as one can make it out, to exercise pressure on one's own desires which conflict with the performance of duties, to feel compunction and remorse at one's own neglect of duty, to approve behaviour like these in other human beings and to disapprove the contrary and so on. It is possible for people to have it in some ways and not in others. This regard is consistent with the conception of greatest good and its cultivation does not require the exercise of any special skill or ability.
This conception helps us to explain the presence of dispositions and attitudes which are of a more specific kind amongst which is an attitude which is sometimes referred to as self-knowledge. This is an attitude which orients one to gain knowledge of one's own self with a view to achieving moral perfection or to achieving a relatively contented personality. This is an important moral attitude. Many moral situations are such that the actions to be performed stand over against the immediate interest of the agent. It is therefore important for him to understand, from the point of view of what is possessed of value for its own sake, how to choose between the various interests that press upon him.

Self-knowledge, as is the case with wisdom, is not a body of specific information about one's own nature as understood purely psychologically. Rather it stands for a characteristic attitude towards one's own impulses, inclinations, desires and needs as they are actually felt. One shows this attitude when one asks questions as regards the most prominent needs of one's own nature, whether they can legitimately claim satisfaction, (i.e. they are in conformity with the demands that can be made on the agent by other people) whether certain of the desires felt are consistent with the most predominant needs of the person through the satisfaction of which the agent can achieve a relatively permanent sense of fulfilment and purpose, and so on. One also shows this attitude when one asks about one's own abilities as well as limitations and
short-comings and accepts them when these are brought to one's notice; and it is thus that one faces life with a degree of security and self-confidence which is reasonable for one to possess. Self-knowledge thus includes the attitudes of self-criticism, self-control and what is sometimes called calmness or tranquillity. Also these attitudes, of course, may be present in different degrees or shown in different directions.

It is likely that the word 'self' here would be objected to as symbolic of some metaphysical entity. But here it is used only in the sense of a conception which explains the characteristic connection that there is between all the impulses, desires, needs, feelings, emotions, thoughts and actions that can usually be attributed to one center of experience (i.e. a person). And we cannot deny that the thoughts and purposes of one person, however multifarious and varying they may be, have a certain connection and continuity with one another which they do not have with the thoughts and purposes of another person.

Connected with the attitude that we have called self-knowledge is a conception usually referred to as 'conscience'. It is conceived as an inner voice which not only tells one what one is to do but also reprimands one for the violation of one's duties. This inner voice is, of course, nothing but an aspect of one's own personality which is discerning as to what one's duties are and watchful that due regard may
be paid by one to one's duties. People develop this discerning aspect more or less and it is manifested in an individual's being conscious that he should do something even though he feels no desire or urge for it and in the feelings of remorse which he suffers whenever he does what he should not do or fails to do what he should have done.

We say that a man has knowledge of his own self when we find certain relatively concrete character-traits in him as manifested in his behaviour. These character-traits are, in a certain sense, essential for a person to possess in order that he may fulfil certain long-term aims or goals which he - if he is to realise worth in his own life - may be expected to have.

There are straightforwardness, trustworthiness, courage, patience, perseverance etc.; we call a man trustworthy when we find that he is habituated to respect the confidence which people place in him either implicitly or explicitly except in cases where there are justifications for not doing so. Our conduct which involves other people's trust is of different kinds and such conduct may concern our speech, our emotions

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\( ^{X} \) It is not important for our present purposes to ask whether this aspect is introjected into us by the moral prohibitions of our parents and of society in general or whether it is one which grows in us through inner maturity as well as through developments that are socially influenced or whether it may be a mixture of the two.
and our actions. For instance we may talk about a certain thing 'X' in a certain fashion which we know would naturally lead someone to believe that we hold opinion 'Y' about it. Now, we shall be violating his trust in us which he may have no reason for not having if we really hold opinion 'Z' while he acts on the supposition that we hold opinion 'X', or again if we behave in a way which would give him the impression that we are going to perform the action 'P', thus producing a natural expectation for it while actually performing 'Q' we are also violating the trust which people normally place in us. Such behaviour is explained in terms of an attitude which is usually called insincerity and its opposite is called sincerity which characterises our conduct in different degrees. Also, we may be sincere in some respects and insincere in others. Similarly, a man is said to be honest if in his dealing with people he neither takes any more from people than it is reasonable to expect is his due, nor does he give any less than it is reasonable to expect is their due. One can be honest not only in financial transactions but in any situation of social intercourse. As is the case with any other attitude we may be honest in different degrees and in different ways.

Courage which is shown in the willingness to sacrifice personal needs (which sometimes includes even the need to be alive) in the service of some end, as well as in the willingness to endure pain and suffering is another attitude through
which one shows one's understanding of one's own self from the point of view of morality. It is hardly conceivable, human nature being what it is, that anyone can live a worthwhile life (i.e. life which may be judged to be relatively satisfactory on the strength of some standards of intrinsic worth) without meeting with oppositions which are sometimes of great magnitude. It is in dealing with these oppositions that one shows the attitude (if it is expressed in particular fields only) or disposition (expressed in all or most fields) which we call courage. It may here be said that circumstances of human existence may be made so favourable for all that the necessity for enduring pain and suffering or the necessity of the readiness to take personal risks will no longer be felt. No doubt, some of the sufferings which one needs to undergo and some of the risks one has to take in a society of a particular nature may be removed by altering some of the relations and arrangements of the society in question. But there are certain unfavourable circumstances which are beyond human control (as far as we can tell), death of one's own near ones for example, or physical deficiency, or inability to achieve what one wants to achieve due to shortcomings of one's own nature; and one would still need courage in coping with these. Moreover, it cannot be considered desirable that, human beings being what they are, a man's environment should be made so favourable that there is never any opposition between him and his environment. For
man's happiness (the conception of which includes the ideas of relative permanence and a sense of fulfilment) consists in the pursuit of excellence of some form or other and this pursuit gains in strength and scope through the overcoming of oppositions met in the way. Human potentialities do not necessarily develop as a process of natural growth and quite often they need to be drawn out. One of the ways in which this is done is by setting oneself a task somewhat above one's immediate reach, so that one has to persist in trying to do one's best in the face of oppositions that temporary frustrations cause. There is no one specific way in which one could show courage, also one could be courageous in some respects and not others.

Coming to discuss the virtues which are sometimes called other-regarding, the most general attitude through which regard for moral values is shown is interest in other people and in social affairs generally. Human beings necessarily live in a society. What an individual person becomes and the values that he realises depends to a great extent on the contribution of other members of the society in maintaining and further improving

X The term 'society' here, of course, does not denote an entity but stands for a conception that explains the characteristic connection that there is between the different institutions, practices, traditions, customs, laws etc., which bind a group of people together by distinguishing them from every other such group.
these institutions, laws, etc. It is therefore only be­
coming that an individual who appreciates the value of the
characteristic kind of existence that is human should have
interest in other individuals who play a part in shaping
social affairs and in social affairs themselves. I am
not implying that there are people who are entirely devoid
of all social consciousness. But there can be more or
less of it, and it is the people who have the lowest
degree of it that are usually referred to as lacking in
social consciousness.

Social consciousness is manifested through attitudes
and dispositions which are relatively more specific - like
benevolence and righteousness.

We call a man benevolent when he shows a tendency
to think sympathetically about the distresses, suffer­
ings and wants of people in society who are in some way
in need of help, (whether or not they can be said to de­
serve it in any strict sense) to feel it sufficiently
strongly as to be moved towards action, and to act, as
far as that is within one's power, with a view to alle­
viating the causes which make such suffering necessary.

To be benevolent is to be ready to do much more than what
others can, strictly speaking, expect of one. It no doubt
implies that one is in a position to render specific help, the need for which exists to any noticeable extent. One may be in this position because one has, say financial resources, or leisure to devote to other's purposes, or because one is possessed of a special skill and ability, like knowledge of medicine which may be usefully employed to deal with some human problems.

This attitude of benevolence is quite compatible with the satisfaction of one's own felt needs unless such needs are to be considered unjustified for some reason or other but it is equally compatible with their sacrifice if this is specifically called for and the agent is disposed to do so. But the duty of benevolence is not the duty, as such, of sacrificing one's own desires and needs. It is the duty of employing the fund of energy, ability or resources, which some people have to a greater degree than is expected to be exhausted in the pursuit of their personal ends, for the purposes of others. To be benevolent is not to do anything in particular but to be ready to do a variety of things as and when a situation demands. It shows itself through attitudes and dispositions of a more specific kind like kindness, charity, sympathy, friendliness, etc. These are allied tendencies. Kindness for example is shown in one's willingness to confer benefits (of different kinds) on others, charity in rendering financial assistance and help, sympathy in the imaginative sensitiveness to others' pleasures and pains, and friendliness in considerateness and agreeableness of conduct.
Some moralists have considered love to be a moral virtue. There is no doubt that the emotion of love which stands for the affection of one person for another for his own sake is one of the intrinsic values to be cherished by human beings. But if by love we mean the kinds of emotion that exist between parents and children, brothers and sisters, and between man and woman, it does not appear, according to the definition of good here adopted, to be a moral good. Love, understood as an emotional relationship, is necessarily selective and between husband and wife conceived to be exclusive (at least in some kinds of marriage). The spontaneity of affection that exists between parents and children and brothers and sisters is conditioned by instinctive urges and by close sharing of somewhat the same experiences. The marriage relation is entered into with an explicit or implicit undertaking to maintain the exclusiveness of the relation and the central importance of one party for another is here understood and voluntarily accepted. The bond of affection here grows spontaneously through the interplay of some deeply felt urges of human nature, physical and mental. The love that is required of an individual for his fellow beings can not predominately be a state of affection (in the sense of an emotional overflow) for this is spontaneous and not so much the result of effort. Cultivating universal love is really a matter of cultivating kind thoughts and considerate feelings as far as that is possible. In short, it is a matter of developing sympathy,
kindness and friendliness towards those for whom one feels no spontaneous affection.

The characteristic kind of relationship which we call 'friendship' and which is considered to be a moral value, of course, implies much more than the attitude of friendliness that can be universally cultivated. For friendship is also to a great extent exclusive, and it involves the emotional state of affection. But it differs from other love relationships in two important ways. A relation of friendship grows out of free choice as opposed to a blood relation which is given. It has not got a contractual character that is socially enforceable as has the marriage relationship. The mutual respect, kind consideration and affection which friends have for each other are thus given and received throughout the course of friendship out of free choice of the individuals concerned. (We are here concerned only with that particular type of friendship which grows out of kindred dispositions and is not cultivated for any other purpose than friendship itself, or with friendship in so far as it is based on a desire for friendship for its own sake). Friendship demands more effort to maintain itself than does other love relations, as it is fed to a lesser degree by instinctive urges. But this effort, theoretically speaking, is made more freely than in other cases, as social pressure in the form of 'natural' expectations is here less evident. It is in all these that the moral relevance of friendship lies.

The usefulness of the term 'conscientiousness' lies in
explaining that aspect of character which is manifested in
the desire to do whatever is one's duty - the conception of
duty being here a stringent one. The duty of doing some good
to others is no doubt a duty but it is not considered as
stringent a duty as the duty of not positively harming anyone.
Of course, the distinction between what one must consider one's
duty and what one may is not always a purely ethical distinction.
According to one interpretation of stringency what we must
consider our duty are those which - the society we live in
being of a certain kind - it is reasonable on the part of others
to expect of us. We are blamed for not performing the duties
that are stringent even though their performances are not
particularly praised, whereas the non-performance of the less
stringent duties do not call for blame, but their performance
meets with special admiration. In so far as this distinction
is purely ethical it appears to lie in this. Our actions may
violate the value that an individual has from the point of view
of morality or recognise it in different degrees. Also, the
actions that an agent is obliged to perform may call for a
greater or lesser degree of personal sacrifice. Those actions
the non-performance of which involve the violation of the moral
value of individuals to a relatively great degree as well as
those the performance of which do not call for great personal
sacrifice are usually called the more stringent duties.
Conscientiousness as distinguished from benevolence kind-
ness etc., is an attitude which shows strict regard for the
more stringent duties some of which are of the following kinds
(1) Duties which arise out of characteristic relations in
which we find ourselves or which we develop (e.g., parental)
(2) The duty to follow the established laws and customs of
the society one belongs to unless it is necessary to oppose
them on moral grounds (3) Duties which arise out of responsi-
bilities voluntarily undertaken (e.g., the duty of keeping a
promise or professional duties) (4) Duties which are understood to be involved in relations of a contractual character,
implicit or explicit (e.g., the duty of repaying a debt)
(5) Duties which result from our having been helped by others
in our needs and purposes (e.g., the duty of returning a benefit)
(6) Duties which arise out of the requirement that no individual
should be treated prejudicially or preferentially (the duty of
justice) (7) Duties which arise out of the requirement that
life should be preserved and avoidable harm to it should not
be done (non-malificience).

The desire to do one's duty is a desire like any other
desire. Yet it has this characteristic difference from other
desires that it does not arrive out of any spontaneous and
natural urge but exists necessarily as a result of training
and regulation of one's naturally felt urges with reference
to an ideal. Conscientiousness does not require of us as
is sometimes thought, that we must always sacrifice our self-
regarding desires whenever they clash in any way with those of
others with whom we stand in some way related. It requires
that we should not assume that our needs and purposes are any more important than the needs and purposes of other people, but not that we ourselves have no claim to consideration. To have regard for humanity we must have regard for ourselves as well. And as some of our needs and purposes are legitimate we are not morally bound to sacrifice them. To have regard for one's own self is different from being selfish. A man is said to be selfish when he is bent upon his own satisfaction in complete disregard of others. A man is said to have regard for himself when he seeks satisfaction of his desires consistently with the integration of his personality without interfering with the legitimate satisfaction of others. No doubt in actual life the balance is difficult to achieve. The concept of 'legitimacy' being an unspecified concept it is hard and sometimes even impossible to tell whether in any crucial instance one is being merely self-regarding or selfish. But it is still possible for us to understand the distinction between the two types of conduct and in complex circumstances do our best by being critical of our own motives and purposes. We can ask ourselves, when we cause any frustration of an other's satisfactions whether it is reasonable on their part to expect that they should not be frustrated. That is to say, we may try to find out what reasons we have for behaving in the way we did and if these reasons will recommend themselves to morally reflective people (i.e. people who will judge the moral value of a behaviour by considering whether it is
consistent with the conception that every human being, including the agent himself, is an end in himself). In view of the generality of the moral criterion it is quite possible that we shall not be able to arrive at any definite conclusion in highly complex situations and there the criterion of decision can no longer be purely conscientiousness (i.e. the stricter conception of duty). In case of instances where there is something to be said both for self-sacrifice and self-satisfaction we generally tend to admire those who show a greater sensitiveness to other people's satisfaction than their own, however legitimate their own satisfaction may appear, although we do not blame those who do not do so. This is because a person who can take pleasure in the satisfaction of other people's needs even when it involves sacrifice of his own has altogether a more valuable personality than one who cannot do so. That is to say, he has greater potentialities for happiness than others - through the satisfaction of his own needs as well as through that of others.

Conscientiousness shows itself in dispositions and attitudes of a more specific kind amongst which are the disposition called just and the attitude of impartiality or fairness. The conception of a just disposition is the conception of a person who treats human beings as unequal only on the basis of inequalities of acquired merits and of inherited abilities of which they have given evidence. He is not happy about existing inequalities between people which may be traced merely
to favourable circumstances 'given' to an individual rather
than acquired by him through individual effort and ability. He prefers to see that the states of affairs which affect human beings socially are not unfavourable to any group of individuals, as judged under a specific set of circumstances, from the point of view of achieving as much happiness as they are potentially able to. Now, it is by no means easy to achieve this is any aspect of social affairs which concerns multitudes of human beings differing in their abilities and needs, or even, as far as I can see, possible to achieve it to the complete satisfaction of all at any one stage. For possibilities for human happiness are unlimited and we can have little knowledge of an individual's inherent abilities as bereft of all environmental influences which make it possible for an ability to grow and develop. Nevertheless the idea of a just disposition has a legitimate function, that of explaining the behaviour of people who look at social organisations in general from the point of view of judging whether they are unfavourable to some members of the society in some respects for the perpetuation of which, under the circumstances as existing, there is no adequate justification. When we say that the attitude of a man is fair or impartial in such and such respects, we usually mean that he is inclined to give due considerations (weigh the respective merits of individual needs, abilities and circumstances) to the claims of all involved in such respects, that he is careful to ensure,
as far as that is possible, that his treatment of others in such respects is not influenced by personal preferences and prejudices, that he looks upon contrary treatment on the part of others as morally blameworthy, that he is willing to act, if that be within his power and province, to secure that individuals hitherto treated prejudicially in these respects are given proper considerations and so on.

A just attitude or disposition implies the desirability of a characteristic state of affairs involving human relations known by the term 'justice'. The term 'justice' is open to various interpretations. Here I shall try to expound that characteristic use of it which is consistent with the definition of moral good here adopted.

The function of the conception of 'justice' is to explain a characteristic way in which we look at some human relations and human states of affairs. The way in question requires that (1) the relations between individual human beings should be characterised by the fact that due respect is being paid by each to the legitimate needs and purposes of others and that (2) human states of affairs should be arranged in such a way that each individual has opportunities equally with others for fulfilling all his needs of a legitimate nature and thereby of attaining as much satisfaction as he is capable of having. (This does not mean that opportunities must be just the same for all irrespective of individual abilities to profit from them, unless of course human societies develop in such a way -
which they have not done so far - that any discrimination would no longer be necessary). This conception acts as a standard in terms of which we judge the satisfactoriness or otherwise of existing relations and arrangements whenever any cause for doubt arises. This is not to say that existing relations and states are either just or unjust. Rather they may be considered to be just in some ways and unjust in others or they may satisfy its requirements in different degrees. The term 'justice' does not stand for any concrete state whose features are of a particular nature with which existing relations and affairs may correspond point to point or they may not do so. It is an abstract conception which explains why we are happy about accepting certain existing relations and affairs which questioning others from a moral point of view. This further explains the struggle that goes on in any particular society with a view to changing existing relations and states to something better from the point of view of opportunities for individual happiness. (This is not to say that every struggle for change is a struggle for justice).

Justice is concerned with human needs - with the requirement that any group of groups of individuals are not to be treated in such a way as to assume that the needs of some have a prior claim to fulfilment. Now, the concept of 'need' is not a purely descriptive concept. It has an explanatory function as well. That is to say, we do not mean by the term 'need'
any specific and particular impulse or desire nor any group of such desires although what we mean by it include particular desires. Human desires are of various kinds and of various degrees of intensity. They are much more complex than impulses and are conditioned by social environment in a way what we may call a pure impulse is not. We feel an impulse to eat when we are hungry but we usually talk of a desire to eat when we want to eat, not just anything, but something in particular, say chicken - roasted or curried according as our taste has been influenced by socially established ways of cooking. The nature of our desires then have a social aspect and their fulfilment is also consequent on certain established ways in the society in question. Thus the word 'need' in one of its uses i.e. the use that is morally relevant, means - at the present stage of human history, at any rate, - particular desires of individuals relative to a particular society and not something which is uniformly present in all human beings. For all human beings do not live under social conditions the existence of which is necessary before certain desires are felt and can be satisfied. When we say that a need is legitimate we mean that it can be rightfully claim satisfaction in the society of a certain kind, for it can be fulfilled in conformity with the fulfilment of similar needs in other individuals and the special needs of those who have special abilities or are in special circumstances.

This is a highly general conception and it is doubtful if
anything very conclusive regarding the legitimacy of quite a lot of human desires can be said on the strength of this conception. Yet some such conception is involved in some of the campaigns of social reformers for a rearrangement of particular states of affairs in a particular society so that the needs of some people - which they believe to be legitimate considering the potentialities of the society in question in respect of their fulfilment - are no longer frustrated.

Here no doubt is involved a difficulty. Societies are at different stages of development but there is no reason to believe either that societies which are at a certain time at a low level of development in comparison with others cannot progress any further, or that societies which are comparatively developed can not develop any more. This makes it difficult to apply the conception of 'need' with any degree of rigidity. Nevertheless it is at least possible, theoretically speaking at any rate, to distinguish between the actually felt desires which could be fulfilled under existing conditions if existing conditions are somewhat rearranged, and desires, if they are actually felt, which could be fulfilled if certain further developments not impossible to take place do take place. Justice requires that the first group of desires be fulfilled here and now whereas as far as the second group of desires are concerned what is required is to develop the conditions first on which the satisfaction of desires in question is consequent. But the question of justice becomes relevant whenever certain
actually felt desires are being frustrated in any particular society thereby hampering the possibility of individual happiness to some degree or other due to causes that are socially controllable.

An important point which arises in connection with applying the conception of justice to concrete cases should here be mentioned. According to the account of happiness we have adopted here it is neither necessary nor desirable that every felt desire of an individual should be fulfilled if he is to achieve a relatively contented personality. But to say that an individual needs to suppress or regulate desire \( 'X' \) for achieving an integrated and contented personality is different from saying that \( 'X' \) is a sort of desire which justice requires some individuals in a particular society should not have a chance of fulfilling. Regulation and control of desires with a view to some purpose ought to be a matter of individual decision as far as adults are concerned. Compulsory or forced denial cannot produce a healthy and happy personality. Even if it is morally desirable that an individual should regulate his desire \( 'X' \) it may still be desirable from the point of view of justice that social arrangements should not make the fulfilment of desire \( 'X' \) impossible.

It must here be mentioned that the concepts of 'legitimacy' and 'need' being abstract and unspecified concepts we cannot look forward to definite results wherever we apply them to concrete situations of life. Nevertheless, they serve an
essential purpose in human thinking by leading us or making it possible for us to look at certain human phenomena in some characteristic way and by giving a certain amount of guidance to this characteristic approach to facts. Their usefulness lies not only in definite results which we might achieve by applying them to real life situations, but primarily in the method of approach to facts which they initiate.

Now to say a few more words on 'attitudes', 'dispositions' and 'state of affairs', in general before I close this discussion on moral good. The attitudes, dispositions and states of affairs that have been under discussion here are all abstract and general conceptions although they belong to different levels of generality and abstraction. The attitudes, dispositions and states of affairs of which we have relatively direct experience are more specific and particular in nature. For instance, we have a more direct experience of the fact that a man has developed a habit of drinking more than he should than that he is lacking in self-control. Of course, we do not have direct experience of specific habits either, but we explain the repeated performance of certain types of actions by an individual which we know more directly by using the term 'habit'. But to say that a man has a habit of drinking requires less abstraction from experience (i.e., it is more directly connected with experience) than to say that he lacks in self-control. Similarly, the states of affairs that we directly experience in a society are of a particular nature. For instance, we may
find that the educational facilities in the society 'X' are so meagre that 80% of the population remain illiterate but do not know as directly that it is unjust. (We can say that it is unjust by knowing further that more opportunities could be provided and by looking at these two together from a different point of view altogether). It may be true that this is unjust, but the concept 'unjust' does not describe anything that is relatively directly experienced about the educational organisations of the society, it explains the discontent that some people, however few in number, have with its indefinite continuation as well as the attempts made by some people to alter it in such a way as to give as many people as possible, at a certain stage, a chance to be educated. The state of affairs, attitudes and dispositions that have been discussed here are thus not the ones of which we have relatively direct experience in actual life. They are of the nature of conceptions or standards in terms of which we explain the judgements that we pass from the characteristic point of view that we call moral, on the state of affairs, attitudes and dispositions of which we have relatively direct experience. This is why we do not necessarily have to say that things that we directly experience are either morally good or bad, just or unjust. They may be better or worse than other things, or more or less just. Again they may be good or just in some ways and bad or unjust in others. And we can say these things on the strength of the conceptions of some standards that are acceptable as self-evidently valid from a rational point of view.
CHAPTER IX.

THE CONCEPTS OF 'OUGHT', 'RIGHT' AND 'DUTY'

"...ethics and ethical language", says Toulmin, "can be regarded as part of the process whereby, as members of a community, we moderate our impulses and adjust our demands so as to reconcile them as far as possible with those of our fellows." Again, "The concept of 'duty', in short, is inextricable from the 'mechanics' or social life and from the practices adopted by different communities in order to make living together in proximity tolerable or even possible. We need not therefore worry about the apparent duality of ethical arguments -- about the contrast between arguments from 'duty' and argument from the welfare of our fellows. And we can fairly characterise ethics as a part of the process whereby the desires and actions of the members of a community are harmonised."

It is no doubt true that ethical language is in some ways concerned with the harmonious existence of the individual members of a community. But Toulmin's language tends to suggest that moral concepts are used by us as so many tools for making social existence possible which is saying, in effect, that morality is a handmaid of sociality. This is what I wish to contest.

2. Ibid. p.136.
The very conception of social or communal life, says Toulmin, involves the idea that the individual members of the community concerned recognise, speaking generally, of course, the virtue of performing their duties. Thus, if we understand what is involved in social or communal life we also understand the implications the concept of 'duty' bears. "The 'anthropological discovery' that 'all communities recognise the absolute value of duty' is therefore not a discovery at all, but something which an anthropologist could safely announce before he ever set out: it only explains in an obscure and roundabout way, part of what we mean by the notion of a 'community'. In all 'communities' (i.e. groups of people living together and respecting one another's interests), our informant is saying, in effect, 'people control their behaviour so as to have regard for one another's interests'."¹ Again, "... the only context in which the concept of 'duty' is straightforwardly intelligible is one of communal life -- it is, indeed, completely bound up with this very feature of communal life, that we learn to renounce our claims and alter our aims where they conflict with those of our fellows".² It is not of course my intention to say that what Toulmin is saying here has no truth in it. But it seems to me that instead of its being the case -- as a superficial acquaintance with Toulmin's language might lead one to suppose -- that social life is brought

¹. Ibid. p. 135
². Ibid. p. 133.
and kept in existence by using the notion of duty as a mechanism of adjustment, a certain amount of adjustment (however little in comparison with the moral requirement) takes place wherever there is human existence because of certain primitive (not entirely learnt) ways in which human nature responds to its conditions of life. The notion of duty is of a later growth and it has to do not only with the very possibility of social existence but also with the achieving of a characteristic kind of value in individual behaviour and in social relations. Social existence is no doubt itself a value but the concept of 'duty' aims at more than that, - it aims at a characteristic kind of social existence that is in agreement with conceptions of what are desirable in human behaviour for their own sakes. I do not wish to suggest that Toulmin would deny this, but his language might easily lead some people to believe that morality is nothing other than sociality. Incidentally, it is not the concept of 'duty' alone which is intelligible in the context of social life. There are many other concepts, the concept of 'politics' for example, or 'economics' or 'language', which are intelligible only in a social context. Social existence is a condition of all characteristically human activities. But we do not understand their nature as distinct human activities merely by understanding their social significance. And Toulmin himself says, although with reservations, that there is something more involved in moral conceptions than social existence and harmony. "The second type of reasoning about
the choice of individual actions - that concerned with Happiness rather than with Harmony - has its counterpart in social ethics just as much as the first; and it is one which comes into the picture in similar circumstances. If we took a restricted view of 'ethics' it might seem to be the case that, when the existing social practices were causing no positive hardship, so that people did not actually complain about them, then there was nothing to be said against them; and that the institutions were therefore 'perfect' - by definition, as it were. This is a position which few people would wish to maintain. Over individual actions, to say that it does not matter what one decides to do, as long as it is within the moral code, is simply to shirk a proper decision - for often enough moral (Toulmin is here using the term 'moral' in the sense of 'leading to social harmony') considerations do not take us all the way - and so also is it if one says that it does not matter what the present institutions and social practices are, as long as they do not cause positive and avoidable hardship. Certainly this is the first thing we must ask of our institutions; but when we have satisfied ourselves about this, they are not necessarily exempt from all criticism. We can now enquire whether, if some specific change were made, the members of our community would lead fuller and happier lives. And again, if there are reasonable grounds for believing that they would, the change is surely justified.
"One might naturally and properly argue that our definitions of the 'function' of ethics should take account of these considerations too. And we could extend it to do so, if we chose. It is important, however, if we are going to do so, to notice one thing: namely, that this is an extension. Our ideas of 'right', of 'justice', of 'duty', of 'obligation', are manifold: each word covers a genus of concepts. But some members of each genus are more characteristically ethical than others." ¹

The decision that the ethics that concerns itself with the conceptions of a better and happier life is an extension while the ethics that concerns itself with social harmony is ethics proper appears to be an arbitrary one, for as far back as Aristotle in the history of western thought ethics was conceived to be concerned with the question of living a good and happy life. The distinction drawn however may be useful for certain purposes as long as it is not concluded that the ethics that may be regarded as an extension is any less fundamental and significant than the ethics that is 'original'.

Coming to discuss the concept of 'right' Toulmin says, "Consider, secondly, the musty old conundrum over which moral philosophers have battled for so long: namely, whether the 'real' analysis of 'X is right' is 'X is an instance of a rule of action (or maxim or prima facie obligation)' or 'X is the alternative which of all those open to us is likely to have

¹. Ibid. p.158 - 159.
the best results'. If the scope of ethical reasoning is limited by its function, does this question fall within or outside the limit?

"To begin with, it must be clear from our discussion that, in talking of the analysis of 'X is right' philosophers cannot be referring to the 'meaning' of 'X is right'. The 'meaning' of 'X is right' is certainly neither of the alternatives proposed: it is 'X is the thing to do in these circumstances, to encourage others to do in similar circumstances etc., etc.' . To suppose otherwise is to be trapped into the 'naturalistic fallacy'—that is to say, it is to confuse facts and values (the reasons for an ethical judgment, and the judgment itself), by attempting to express the meaning of an ethical judgment in factual form. The question which the analysis of 'X is right' can answer is the question 'which kinds of reason are required in order to show that something is right (i.e. the thing to do, to encourage others to do, etc.)—(i) that it is an instance of a rule of action, or (ii) that it is the alternative likely to have the best results?'

"The answer, with comparatively little over-simplification, is that it depends upon the nature of the 'thing'. If an action is an action which is an unambiguous instance of a maxim generally accepted in the community concerned, it will be right just because it is an instance of such a maxim; but if it is an action over which there is a 'conflict of duties', or is itself a principle (or social practice) as opposed to a
particular action, it will be right or wrong according as its consequences are likely to be good or bad." ¹

Thus when we say that something is right we can only mean that it is the thing to do, to encourage others to do etc. No doubt we mean this. But do we not also mean that the thing to do is characterised in some distinctive way by virtue of which we consider it worth our recommendation from the point of view of morality? Toulmin of course would prefer to say that there are good reasons why the thing is to be recommended to saying that the thing to be recommended is characterised in some distinctive way; and the reasons for recommending something are not to be confused with the recommendation of the thing itself. To interpret 'x is right' as 'x is the thing to do because of p,q,r,' (the factual reasons why x is the thing to do) is to confuse fact with value. If this is so, what Toulmin and others have called a good reason in favour of x does not quite convey what is expressed by saying 'the characteristics by virtue of which that which is said to be right is valued from the point of view of morality'. To interpret 'x is right' as 'x is characterised in such and such ways by virtue of which it is to be recommended is not to confuse fact with value but to explicate the value of x. The apparent discrepancy between Toulmin's way of interpreting 'x is right' and the traditional way is due to the fact that by x Toulmin primarily means some particular act or some particular practice which does not recommend itself but can be

¹ Ibid. p.154.
supported by reasons given in its favour whereas philosophical writers have discussed the word 'right' mainly in connection with some ways of acting in general, which are characterised in such a way as to recommend themselves to us when we look at them from a particular point of view. The fact that we can give reasons in favour of some particular action which does not obviously appear to be fitting to a situation of a specific nature need not stop us from trying to understand the distinctive nature of a type of action which does recommend itself as fitting to a type of situation (i.e. not to any specific situation in particular but to a sort of situation in so far as it is conceived to be of a certain nature that is morally relevant) I shall discuss this point presently.

The reasons that can be given in favour of a thing being right are two-fold. If it is an action which is an unambiguous instance of a maxim generally accepted in the community concerned it is right just because it is an instance of such a maxim; if it is an action over which there is a conflict of duties or is itself a principle (or social practice) as opposed to a particular action it will be right or wrong according as its consequences are likely to be good or bad.

But suppose that the action is an instance of a practice or principle that is not recognised by the community to which the individual asking the question belongs. The immediate consequences of introducing this practice into the community may not appear, as far as one can judge such matters, to be
any better than the circumstances already prevailing, in so far as a degree of unsettlement of existing arrangements and relations would be involved. Suppose that two sets of consequences, one related to the introduction of the practice x and the other to its non-existence or existence of its contrary, appear to be equally good or bad at a certain period. Have we not any other criterion by which to judge the rightness of the practice in relation to that period? Do we not say - even though there is no appreciable difference in the measurable consequences in terms of positive hardship or suffering - practice x is better than its absence or its contrary because it shows greater justice or more respect for some people than before? This point can be illustrated by the example that Toulmin has used. Let us suppose that the practice of polygamy in a society causes a certain amount of positive hardship to some women. (Not every woman who is given in a polygamous marriage suffers consciously because of the long process of social conditioning by tradition). Introduction of monogamy would remove such hardship but bring into being new ones for people who are steeped in the tradition of polygamy, have grown up with certain expectations attached to this institution and have something at stake in the social and economic arrangements connected with the practice of polygamy. So long as we think merely of the suffering that can be contributed to the continuation of polygamy or its abolition there may not be very much to choose between the two at a certain
stage of transition. Yet some people would say, and I believe rightly, that it would be morally better to abolish polygamy and introduce monogamy, in as much as monogamy does greater justice to women or pays greater respect to them as distinct individuals; and this holds true even in the period when monogamy is being introduced and is attended with a certain amount of suffering for some people.

It is, of course, not my intention to say that we never judge anything to be right by its consequences or that the magnitude of the consequences is not a contributory factor in actual moral evaluation. There certainly are cases where our choice between alternatives, otherwise of equal merit, is determined solely by the expected consequences, or where we choose not to adopt a principle as a guide to our action in a particular case, however commendable it may appear to be when considered on its own, if we feel that the consequence of such an action would be a great deal of suffering for a lot of people which can be avoided by avoiding the action. What I am contesting is the theory that we have said all that can be said in the matter when we have remarked that an action is right because of two reasons, (i) it is an instance of a rule of action generally accepted by the community (ii) the consequences which follow it are good. These two reasons, amongst others, may support our particular contentions to the effect that something or other is right; but they do not exhaust all that is implied in calling something 'morally
right'. And the question of the meaning of 'right' remains in spite of the attempts to dissolve it as meaningless. No doubt 'X is right' does mean 'X is the thing to do' and so on, but it also means, and this is important for our purposes, that X has a distinctive nature which whatever cannot be called right has not. And it is this meaning which is philosophically most important.

I am, in this enquiry, treating the terms 'good', 'right' and 'duty' as distinct from one another in some ways. It is, of course, quite obvious that the terms 'right' and 'good' and the terms 'right' and 'duty' are often interchangeably. But I believe these terms have also their distinct applicabilities and in so far as this is the case, it is justifiable to look for that meaning of each term which is distinguishable from that of the other two. All the three terms, of course, are moral value terms and this explains why we can use them interchangeably for certain general purposes of moral evaluation. Now the term which is used to convey moral value in general is 'ought'. We say such things as, 'He is a sort of man one ought to be' (i.e. he is a good man), or 'One ought to keep one's promises' (i.e. it is right to keep a promise'), or, 'You ought to visit your friend in the hospital this evening' (i.e. it is your duty to visit your friend in the hospital this evening). Perhaps a few words ought to be said about the concept of 'ought' in so far as it expresses moral value in general. It does not seem to me that there is any occasion
to doubt the possibility of a genuine value experience i.e. of a kind of experience in which one finds oneself cherishing certain things or desiring them in preference to others in that characteristic manner which fits in with the thought that the things in question are worthy of being cherished or desired not only by the agent who is actually having the experience but by others as well. A value approach to experience is then an approach which is characterised in such a way that we could say that the person valuing considers the object in question preferable to some of the objects which could be chosen or desired instead. Now, it is true that our preferences, as psychological acts, may be purely matters of taste for which no reason can either be given or asked for. But when we say that we consider an object preferable to others we say much more than that we are experiencing a feeling of preference. We imply that there is some conception of a standard -- whether or not we could produce it on demand -- which is acceptable by people concerned in a certain context of discourse, and in terms of which the object (or objects) rejected in favour of the one chosen or desired could be considered to be less worthy of acceptance. To say that a standard is implied is not to claim that we must have a standard consciously before our minds before we start to assess things. Our actual value experiences come first; we value things or prefer them to others which could also claim our attention without perhaps any understanding of why we do so.
An act of valuing, at the stage when it is unreflective and unconscious of its implications, may be described as a characteristic kind of reaction -- a reaction involving choice of certain things in preference to others -- that a human personality may have to certain aspects of experience. The conception of a standard takes shape only when many such reactions have taken place -- reactions which show consistency of choice or preference of a certain kind. It takes shape through our trying to explain the persistent occurrence or a certain kind of choice in many different situations. As we formulate the idea of a standard of choice we understand the consistency in choice that we actually have come across more fully than we had done before, i.e. we understand that the consistency displayed by a certain type of choice is not accidental but is a significant occurrence. Now although it is true that one can and does value, and value in a characteristically consistent manner, without at all being conscious of applying a standard, we can say that the idea of a standard that can be formulated on reflecting on some characteristically consistent acts is logically implied in any such act. That is to say, if a man, to take a concrete example, consistently resists temptation to tell lies we would expect him to agree with our contention 'truth ought to be told'. And if he does not, we shall be puzzled by his behaviour in a way in which we shall not be puzzled if he does agree.

That the use of the term 'ought' implies the presence of a
standard or principle is a point that has been made by Hare in his book 'The Language or Morals'. He of course, does not accept the idea that there are certain general principles of morals that are self-evidently valid. Nevertheless he argues that moral language and moral decision involve implicit recognition of some standard or principle whose authority we accept. "The word 'ought' is used for prescribing; but since prescription can be of more than one kind, several distinctions require to be made. Suppose that someone is asking himself, or asking us, 'what shall I do?' or some other question of this general form. In order to help such a person make up his mind, we may say at least three different sorts of things. I shall distinguish them by the terms 'type A prescriptions', 'type B prescriptions', and 'type C prescriptions'. Type A is of the form 'use the starting handle', type B, 'if the engine fails to start at once on the self-started one ought always to use the starting handle', type C, 'you ought to use the starting handle'. Type C prescription has some of the characteristics of both the types A and B. It applies directly to an individual occasion, but it also involves an appeal to some more general type B prescription. "Thus, by uttering a type C prescription we seem to imply (in a loose sense) that there is some principle of type B that we are invoking -- though it may not be at once clear, even to us, exactly what this principle is. This is not the case with type A prescriptions; if I say A, I

may be merely prescribing for this particular occasion (perhaps because I have thought, 'Let's see if he knows how to crank a car') without any thought of there being a general principle for all occasions of this kind. It is true that if I am asked to justify A, or give reasons for it I may appeal to a principle; but even so, type A prescriptions imply B principles only in the minimal sense that if someone gives us such a piece of advice, we can usually assume that he can give us some general reason for it; whereas type C implies type B in the stronger sense that it would be logically illegitimate to give a type C prescription while denying that there was any principle on which it depended. By 'logically illegitimate' I mean that my use of the word 'ought' would be to eccentric as to make people wonder what I meant by it.

The difference between type A and type C prescription appears to me to be this. In case of a type A prescription like 'use the starting handle' one is expressing an attitude or preference for what one is recommending but one is not necessarily implying that it is preferable. But in case of a type C prescription like 'you ought to use the starting handle' one is definitely implying that what is being recommended is preferable -- in the context of argument, of course, -- and that is so in terms of a conception by reference to which that which is being recommended can be considered to be most fitting.

1. Ibid p.156 - 157.
Type A prescriptions which do not use 'ought' thus differ as from type C prescriptions which use 'ought' for Hare himself says, 'ought' cannot be used without an appeal to a principle.

To continue with Hare. "When we ourselves recognise that an act which we have done conflicted with a principle which we determine to abide by, we say 'I ought not to have done that'. When we recognise that an act which we have been contemplating would be a breach of such a principle, we say 'I ought not to do that'. In both cases, it may be the first time that we have thought about the principle — it may be the first time that anyone has thought of the principle; the decision of principle that is expressed by this 'ought' sentence may be an entirely new one."

The function of 'ought' is thus to prescribe with reference to a principle, and this is true not only of the moral use of 'ought' but also of non-moral. The primary meaning of the word 'ought' is the following two sentences, 'you ought to give a second dose' (said to a would-be poisoner) and 'you ought to tell the truth' is the same, the difference being that the former is appealing to a standard or principle of a non-moral nature (i.e. poisoning) while the latter of a moral nature. This I would entirely agree with. But it is Hare's explanation of the difference between moral and non-moral principles that I find inadequate. "All this does not mean that there is no important difference between moral principles

l. Ibid. p.157 - 158.
and principles of successful poisoning. As we have seen (9.2) we can not get out of being men; and therefore moral principles, which are principles for the conduct of men as men -- not as poisoners or architects or batsmen -- cannot be accepted without having a potential bearing upon the way that we conduct ourselves. If I say to a certain person 'you ought to tell the truth', I signify my acceptance of a principle to tell the truth in the sort of circumstances in which he is; and I may find myself placed unavoidably in similar circumstances. But I can always choose whether or not to take up poisoning or cricketing as a profession. This is bound to make the spirit in which we consider moral questions very different from that in which we consider how we ought to poison Jones or build him a house; but the logic of the word 'ought' is not markedly different in the two cases.¹

I do not, of course, wish to say that there is not the sort of distinction between moral and non-moral principles that Hare is here pointing out. But it does seem to me that Hare has not faced the problem as fully as is necessary for an understanding of the distinctive nature of morality. Moral principles are principles for men as men but they differ from non-moral principles in that they embody certain value conceptions of a characteristic kind. I shall return to this later.

¹. Ibid. p. 162.
Now the use of the word 'ought' involves the idea of obligation in some sense or other. But exactly how the idea of obligation is involved depends on whether we are talking about a particular action that ought to be done or a general state of affairs that ought to be. As far as a particular action is concerned the obligation is personal, somebody or other in particular is obliged to do it. But when we are talking about a general state of affairs we do not ascribe any obligation to any one in particular. It is an obligation that we find belongs to human beings in general on an abstract consideration of human nature. If by \( x \) we mean a general state of affairs to say '\( x \) ought to be' is to say '\( x \) is the sort of thing that is, speaking generally, preferable in human affairs and considered from an abstract point of view of what sort of persons human beings can be, they are, again speaking generally, under an obligation to bring it into existence.' The idea of human nature, of course, includes everything that a human being is or can be. The human nature on an abstract consideration of which a general moral obligation is imputed to human beings in general is arrived at by a process of a value judgment which singles out as desirable some traits which it is not impossible for human beings to develop. (except in some special cases). This abstract human nature, on which is based the idea of general obligation to bring into being that which ought to be, is then a value conception and is not a purely descriptive
one in respect of what all human beings actually are as individuals.

Ross in his 'Foundations of Ethics' treats the word 'ought' as more or less synonymous with 'right' when by 'right' is meant a particular action which ought to be done. Accordingly, he believes that the use of the word 'ought' always involves an idea of personal obligation. Speaking of Prof. Broad's discussion of the meaning of 'ought' and 'right' he says, "He begins his discussion by distinguishing a wider and narrower sense of 'ought': 'In its narrower sense', he says, 'it applies only to actions which an agent could do if he willed. But there is a wider sense in which there is no such implication. We can say that sorrow ought to have been felt by a certain man at the death of a certain relation, though it is not in his power to feel sorrow at will. And we can say that virtue ought to be rewarded.'

"On this I would comment as follows. I should agree that we often use 'ought' in this wider sense. But I should maintain that such a sense is not strict. Can we seriously say that sorrow ought to have been felt by someone at the death of a relation? Only, it seems to me, (a) if we think that it was possible for him (and I agree with Prof. Broad in holding this to be impossible) then and there to summon up a feeling of sorrow, or (b) if we think that by acting differently in the past he could have so modified his
character that he would now have felt sorrow; and in the latter case the proper application of 'ought' is to say 'he ought to have so acted in the past' not 'he ought to have felt sorrow now': Apart from such a thought, all we are entitled to say is, not that he ought to have felt sorrow now, but that his not feeling it is a bad thing, a manifestation of a bad character. The wider use of 'ought' is really an improper use of it, one which we could not seriously defend. Or again, take the saying that virtue ought to be rewarded. We can say this properly only if we think that some being or beings, God or men, can and ought so to act that virtue will be rewarded. Unless we think this, all we are justified in saying is that an arrangement of human affairs in which virtue is not rewarded is a bad one; the specific justification required for saying 'virtue ought to be rewarded' is absent.  

One would agree with Ross that 'sorrow ought to have been felt by a man at the death of a certain relation' cannot mean that it ought to have been felt by the man now, irrespective of the character and the actually existing sentiments of the person concerned. Or virtue ought to be rewarded cannot mean that any-body in particular is obliged to reward virtue.

But I do not see why the use of the word 'ought' in these sentences should be considered to be improper, i.e. why the idea of obligation involved in 'ought' should necessarily be

considered as a particular or personal obligation. The use of this word certainly brings the idea of obligation in our mind but sentences like, 'one ought to tell the truth' or 'virtue ought to be rewarded' do not imply that anybody in particular at a particular time is responsible for doing anything. They only mean that, on an abstract consideration of what human nature can be, human beings in general are under an obligation to do certain things rather than others, whenever a suitable occasion arises -- unless, of course, there are morally tenable reasons why they should not. A man cannot feel sorrow whenever he likes. But if sorrow is a sentiment that is fitting to the occasion of death of one's relation, human beings in general are under an obligation to cultivate it, considering that they have it in their nature to feel sorrow at certain appropriate occasions. The sentence 'sorrow ought to have been felt by x at his relative's death' might only refer to this general human obligation, or to the failure of the man in particular in discharging the obligation of cultivating a suitable human sentiment, if there is no reason to believe that the man in question is incapable of the sentiment in question. If Ross's recommendation has to be accepted, all general ought-sentences have to be rewritten, and instead of its functioning as a general value term in morals, as it actually does, it will have to function as a synonym of 'duty'.

Now, what actually is meant in morals by the concept of
'obligation'? To say, 'x is under an obligation to do y' is to do more than to refer to the actual doing of y by x. The question of obligation arises not only because we want y to be done but also because we believe certain things about the nature of x as a human being and about the nature of y as a type of activity. That is to say, we believe that it is not only possible but in some sense natural for human beings to have inclinations which run counter to the doing of an activity of the type y. But we also mean that in spite of its being natural in some sense that human beings would feel these inclinations it is not necessary that these must have satisfaction whenever they are felt, considering the power that human beings in general have of regulating themselves with reference to some purpose or standard. Now x being an human being we presume that it is not impossible for him to have similar inclinations contrary to the doing of y. But we also believe, unless there are reasons to the contrary, that he is able to control these inclinations. As regards the action in question we believe that it represents a type of activity which is in accordance with a principle of action that appears on general considerations to be worthwhile for its own sake. To talk about the obligation of a particular person to do a particular thing, then, is to suppose that there is a general human obligation to do certain kinds of actions whenever such actions are called for. The idea of particular obligation differs from the idea of general obligation in this.
To impute an obligation to do a particular act to a particular person we shall have to make sure that there are not special physiological, psychological, social or other reasons which make it impossible for the person to carry out the responsibility in question under the circumstances. The idea of general human obligation takes no account of such special factors which may be present in special circumstances and is concerned with what is possible for human beings in general on an abstract consideration of their nature.

Let us now turn to the question of the meaning of 'right' in so far as it is distinguishable from 'duty'; and when thus distinguished it refers to a principle of action rather than to any act in particular. The consequence theory advocates that an act is to be judged right if the results it brings forth are good. But some of the results of a particular act which is in some ways an instance of what is usually recognised to be a right type of activity are sometimes not good. The consequence theory has thus to fall back on the idea of 'good usually and on the whole'. Whatever be the result of telling the truth in a particular case, truth-telling usually and on the whole produces good results. One could hardly deny that this is so. But the question is, do we mean by calling something right that it produces good results? I do not believe that this position can be defended. And one of the reasons why it cannot be is this. No theory, if it is to respect practice, can advocate that no exception must ever be made to a principle.
when is it right then to tell a lie? we are justified, according to the theory in question, if the consequences of doing so will be good on the whole. now there are cases where it is possible for us to be reasonably assured that the consequences of telling a lie would be on the whole better than telling the truth. but there are also cases where we find that although the specific bad consequences that follow from telling the truth can be avoided by telling a lie, telling a lie would give rise to consequences which will be bad in other ways; and there may not be any criterion by which to assess the comparative goodness (by which rightness has to be defined) of the two sets of bad consequences. how then shall we decide which would be right to do? a theorist of the consequences school would have to reply that in a case like this it does not matter what one does. but this would be contrary to our ordinary moral convictions. we certainly believe that in such cases as these, telling the

suppose that it has just been found out that x, although apparently healthy, is suffering from a disease which is almost incurable. the doctor who has made the diagnosis is a great friend of x and he wishes to spare x of this knowledge which is bound to give him a great shock and to make life appear cheerless and without hope. yet, if after the check-up x is told that he is all right he will possibly not take any precaution and there is a chance that a failure to take certain precautions may shorten the expectation of his life. the doctor may be undecided whether it is better to live a cheerful but possibly short life or a cheerless but comparatively longer life. the ordinary opinion is, i believe, that a man should not be kept ignorant of the state of his health particularly because if told in good time he might get used to his misfortune and decide to make the best of a bad case.
truth would be right in spite of the bad consequences. However true it may be that the results of right acts are usually and on the whole good, we cannot understand the meaning of 'right' merely in terms of the goodness of the consequences that are somehow measurable.

Joseph says in 'Some Problems in Ethics' that a right act is causally related to good; but by good he does not mean any particular consequence, but a form of goodness that is to be found in acting rightly. "We must look beyond the particular action not to its effect but to the rule of action of which it is a manifestation. This, however, is not enough. We must look to the whole form of life in some community, to which all the actions manifesting this rule would belong, and ask whether it, or some other form of life is better, which would be lived by the community instead, if this rule were not helping to determine it. If we judge that it is better, then the particular act is right, for the sake of the better system, to which it belongs."¹ Here the word 'right act' stands for an action which is an instance of a rule manifested in an established social practice or institution. This is why the rightness of the act has to be looked for in the goodness of the way of life of the community of which the practice or institution is an integral part. But not all acts which are called right acts are instances of a social

¹ Some Problems in Ethics, p. 98.
practice unless we are prepared to refer to principles like 'one ought to tell the truth' as social practice. But if we do so, we lose the criterion by which Joseph would determine the rightness of an act. For a principle like, the truth ought to be told, might be accepted as a moral principle in societies (Indian and European, for example) whose ways of life may be quite different and in some ways opposed. The rightness of the principle is then independent of any particular society and cannot therefore be sought in the goodness of any way of life in particular.

There are other philosophers who find the rightness of an act in the goodness of the motive from which it springs. It certainly seems to me true to say that many of the acts that we call right do spring from motives that are good. But the question is, do we call them right because of these motives or is it that the rightness of an act has to be understood independently of any motive that may be involved? To take a concrete example. A man risks physical injury for himself in order to save a child from being run over by a car. The important motive in this particular case, let us suppose, was to impress his girl friend who, he knows, suspects him of cowardice and is consequently hesitating to accept his proposal of marriage. Was this act of saving the child's life right or was it wrong on the ground that the primary motive involved was morally neutral? I do not think that any one would say that the act was wrong, even morally wrong, because of the absence
of a morally good motive. When, therefore, people say that this act was not right, they do not mean that what the man did was in any way unsuitable to the situation or that it was in any way improper on the part of the man to do it. They only mean that the motive of the man was not good, or not good enough; and this is not a judgment about the actual act itself. An act is right if it is fitting to a situation as viewed morally, or if it is morally called for in a situation; and it is not necessary in order that an act may be fitting to a situation that it must be the outcome of any particular motive. Morality of course requires both from us, that we shall do the right acts and that we shall have the good motives. But this is a different question from what is right. What is true in the opinion is that it is only when we have certain good motives that it can generally be expected of us that we shall act rightly. Otherwise our acting rightly is a matter of chance or accident. But this would not show that our acting rightly and our having good motives are the same or even that they are absolutely inseparable. If they were, it would not have been possible for us to say anything like, 'although his motive was good what he did was not right.'

I, therefore, agree with Ross when he says that the question of rightness has to be understood as distinct from the question of goodness. Right acts are right for being what they are, that is to say, for being fitting to certain
situations which call for actions of certain types. It is only motives, attitudes, disposition, character that are called good. But it is not to be concluded from this that right acts, as divorced from good motives, have no moral value. Both 'right' and 'good' are moral value terms, only they (in so far as these two terms are distinguishable) refer to the value of different kinds of issues in a moral context. The act of saving a child's life is possessed of moral value because of the saving of the child's life that is involved (or to put it differently, because of the saving of the child's life being suitable to the situation in which his life is in danger) whatever be the motive behind it. What we can say of the situation in which a child's life is saved but in which the motive to save his life is not present is that it is lacking in some value which could also have been present in the situation along with the value of the right act, and this is the value which a good motive has as a manifestation of a good character. This rightness of the act can easily be seen if we contrast it with the absence of the act in the same situation, i.e. with the non-saving of the child's life. Kant, amongst others, fails at times to make this distinction between the moral value of a good disposition and that of a suitable act to a particular situation or that of a type of activity to situations conceived to be of a certain kind. When he says that an act is right only if it is done out of respect for the moral law he is
failing to make a distinction which it is necessary to make between the two aspects of a total situation, namely, the character of the agent who acts in some particular way rather than another, and the suitability of the act itself to some features of the situation which are morally relevant. It is quite possible for some one to have little respect for morality and yet do what is suitable to a situation by accident or design. However lacking in goodness the man's character may be, it does not seem possible to say that what he did was anything but right; and right in the sense of being possessed of value in so far as it is what is demanded by the situation as viewed morally.

Now the instance of saving a child's life that we have selected is simple and it would perhaps not be disputed by anyone that this action of saving the child's life was right. But it is possible to think of a situation where the question whether a child's life should be saved may cause disagreement. Suppose that the child to be saved by an intricate operation would be condemned to a life of extreme pain and suffering with very little or no possibility of pleasure and consequently of happiness (happiness is not pleasure but it can not exist without there being the possibility of pleasure). In a case like this, quite a few people might think that it would be better not to save the child's life. It would then be questioned whether the act of saving a child's life in our first instance is right because of the saving of the child's
life or because of some other thing that we consider to be of value, as it is possible for an act of saving a child's life to be considered other than right. And this question is related to the question of defining 'right'.

We no doubt use the word 'right' in connection with a particular action as when we say it was right for the man to have saved the child's life. But if we do so, we are also prepared to say that any act of saving a child's life in the same or similar circumstance (i.e. from being run over by a car) is right. There is something unreasonable about refusing to admit this general implication while accepting the particular statement. This general implication of right or legislation in respect of a type of activity rather than an action in particular -- like, it is right to save a child's life from being run over by a car -- is what we mean by a principle. By 'right' then as distinguishable from 'duty', (which deals with particular actions) is signified a principle of action which embodies the moral suitability of a type of action to a kind of situation or rather to a certain feature present in a situation. Now, if we agree that a child's life ought to be saved from being run over by a car we also accept by implication a more general principle, namely, life should be preserved rather than destroyed. To say this again, is to agree implicitly with a still more general principle 'life should be treated as possessed of value'. Now the fact that some people would not value a life which is bound to be full
of pain and suffering implies that they believe that the
value of life lies primarily (amongst other things, of
course) in the possibility of happiness that it brings.

It is possible for one, of course, to say that the
saving of a particular child's life is right without
agreeing that the saving of other children's life in
exactly the same circumstances is right too. But if
some one does so, we understand that his use of the word
'right' is a special one. Perhaps the child is his
own or he specially cares for him for some reason or other
and by calling the saving of his life right he is indicating
that this act agrees with his personal purposes. He is
entitled to do so, but nobody would say that his use of the
word 'right' is then a moral one. If we are discussing
morality, there does not seem to be any way of agreeing
about the suitability of a particular action of a certain
type in a certain situation without at the same time agree­
ing on the suitability of other particular actions of the
same type in the same (or similar) situation. The distinctive
use of the word 'right' in a moral context is then in respect
of a principle of action which is manifested in a particular
act. bound to contain an excess of pain and suffering, with

To come back to the problem we had been discussing, when
people do not question a particular act of saving a child's
life from a running car they take the action to imply the
suitability of a type of action embodied in a principle which
shows itself to be valid, namely, it is right to save a child from a running car. This principle is implicitly recognised and assented to whenever a particular action of saving a child's life is acclaimed as right. But there are actions, in some ways resembling actions that will not be questioned by any-one, which some may question while others may not, for instance, the saving of a child's life when the child would be condemned to a life of pain and suffering. This disagreement would show that people are either looking at the case in the light of different principles or that they hold opposite opinions as to whether a certain principle operates in this case or not. Those who would want to save the child's life whatever be the consequences would perhaps do so in recognition of the principle, 'life should be treated as possessed of value'. Those who would deny that the act of saving this child's life is right differ from others not through rejecting this principle as such, but through limiting the scope of this principle in this particular case. They would argue that the value of life depends upon the requirement that there should be some possibility of happiness in a life; and a life bound to contain an excess of pain and suffering, with little or no pleasure, is lacking in this possibility. If one could be absolutely sure (as is unlikely) that a particular life shows no promise of happiness whatsoever one is justified in considering that the life concerned is not
possessed of value.

The disagreement over this particular action then, although not a disagreement on principle as such, is a disagreement over the scope of a principle. This disagreement arises because some people consider the principle itself to be universally applicable, while others believe that the applicability of this principle should be judged in the light of the limit consistency with which is the characteristic of every value point of view including that of morality, and this limit is that the value of life lies in the promise of happiness that it contains.

The validity of a moral principle, if it can be called a principle at all, is self-evident. If a contention is such that it can be questioned on general grounds (as distinct from questioning its scope in a particular case) we would hardly refer to it as a principle. A principle stands for a judgment as regard the suitability of a type of action to a feature (or features) in a situation whose nature is very broadly defined. Let us take, for instance, the principle, a promise ought to be kept. It says no more than that if any one has undertaken to do something the doing of it is fitting to the situation which is constituted of the expectation that has been aroused in some one. It says nothing about the nature of the promise, the circumstances in which it has been made or has to be kept,
the gravity of the adverse consequences that might follow the keeping of a promise and so on. But if we understand morality we understand that all these might make a difference to the keeping of a specific promise that has been made. The suitability that a principle embodies is thus a suitability of a general kind which has been conceived somewhat in abstraction from specific circumstances present in specific instances of promise-keeping.

Suppose that a particular situation is such that we consider that a particular promise ought not to be kept. If we just do not want to keep a promise we are not looking at the question morally. But if we are saying that a promise ought not to be kept in this case, we are making a moral judgment. And we cannot make a moral judgment without appealing to a standard which could justify our not keeping the promise. This standard can only be another principle which we find has greater authority in this case. I wish to suggest that whenever we are justified in considering that a certain principle is inapplicable in a certain case, the other principle whose authority we are accepting instead, is a principle of a higher generality. We are justified in not keeping a promise if doing so would involve some appreciable damage to somebody or other's interests which we have no reason to think ought to be damaged, while the promise kept will not bring about a value of such a magnitude as will counter-balance the harm done. Thus our action in this particular case is in
accordance with a principle of a greater generality and scope than the principle of truth-telling, namely, 'be considerate to the needs and interests of other people.'

What then is involved in a principle being more general than another? By the degree of generality of a principle I mean the variety or types of actions that it can embrace. For instance, a highly general principle like, 'be considerate etc.' can legislate in respect of a far greater variety of actions that an agent can perform than can the principle, 'tell the truth'. Principles of action are in some way or other concerned with the satisfaction of human needs. The more general a principle the less specific is the need in respect of which the principle prescribes a suitable action. Some needs are relatively specific and concrete in nature and a relatively definite type of activity fulfils it, like the need to be told the truth fulfilled by an activity involving verbal utterances of a characteristic kind. But a need, like, need for recognition or for having one's interests respected does not appear in any particular form, nor is it that a definite type of activity fulfills or frustrates it. In fact, a need like this is a name that expresses the characteristic unity that there is between a variety of more specific needs, and so it signifies a variety of needs somehow closely related to one another. Thus the more general principles include a variety of different types of needs rather than any one specific need or type of need in particular. Further, the more general
a principle is the less we find it necessary to limit its scope. By the scope of a principle I mean something like this. The situations or features of situations with which principles deal are more or less specific. For instance, we can tell the truth only in that particular type of situation in which we are being asked for/information. But the situations in which we could be considerate are not of such a definite kind, nor do we have to do things of a particular type in order to be considerate. We can therefore think less of facts which limit the operation of a highly general principle like this than is the case with a less general principle, like the truth-telling one. Now there is a certain sense in which a more general principle is inclusive of a less general principle; for the abstract conception of a need in respect of which a highly general principle legislates constitutes an explanation of some sort of the relatively more specific types of needs in respect of which less general principles legislate. For instance, telling the truth is one way of respecting people and their interests, for the need to be told the truth is one amongst many needs which constitute a person's interest. Under normal circumstances, it happens that in respecting a principle of a lower generality we also respect a principle of a higher generality under which the former may in some ways be conceived. Only when these principles conflict, due to the complexity of prevailing circumstances, do we find it necessary to prefer a more general principle to a less general one.
A principle, of course, gains in generality and scope by being less directive of our particular actions in some sense, but to this I shall return later.

When we reflect on the highly general principles whose scope can far less be thought of as limited than is the case with the less general ones, it is easier for us to realise the limiting condition with which the conceptions of principles are found to be consistent on abstract considerations. This is the value that every human being has as an individual on his own right and Kant has expressed this in form of a law of morality (which he calls 'the moral law', in its second formulation, of course) namely, 'treat every human being as an end in himself and never as a means only'. If every human being were a perfect moral agent and if nothing but what is one's duty was ever done, a situation of conflict between principles would never arise, as principles have been conceived consistently with the limiting condition of all moral actions. Conflict arises in actual situations because not everyone acts consistently with morality all the time. However, considering that conflict does exist, we may say that if the application of a principle in a particular case appears to violate the value that an individual has as an end (presuming that this violation is avoidable as far as morals is concerned) then the principle cannot be thought to be operative in that case. The reason why we find a rigid adherence to less general principles, under all possible circumstances, morally unsatisfactory is this.
Less general principles prescribe in respect of relatively specific features of a situation. If we make it a rule to act on the relevant principle whenever such a feature is in evidence we may overlook more general features, also present in the situation, in respect of which more general principles legislate. More general features being relatively abstract, their recognition usually proceeds along with the recognition of the value that an individual has for its own sake.

We are now in a position to define the concept of 'right' as the conceptions of principles which embody suitabilities of types of actions to features of situations, when such actions are characterised by being consistent with the limit placed on our actions by the value judgment 'every man is an end in himself'. Let us first try to see what is involved in an individual's being an end in himself before we discuss how this is involved in an individual's recognition of a principle. To say that an individual is an end in himself is to say that he is possessed of a certain value for his own sake by virtue of certain characteristic differences that human beings have from everything that is non-human. Now the thing that is most valued by an individual in his life is happiness, - in the sense of a feeling of contentment or fulfilment which produces a relatively permanent satisfaction in being alive. Although such satisfaction cannot be resolved into fulfilment of needs it can come to exist only through the fulfilment of certain needs (both physical, like the need for
food and warmth, and mental, like the need for recognition or for creative activity and so on) felt by an individual and not through their frustration. In order that satisfaction may be permanent it is, of course, necessary that an individual should somewhat organise his needs in order of relative importance in his own life, and introduce a measure of harmony and integration between them; for if the needs are warring between themselves the satisfaction caused by the fulfilment of one will be cancelled by the frustration of others. To treat human beings as ends in themselves is to respect (unless there is a satisfactory reason why one should not do it in a specific instance) whatever makes possible the fulfilment of their various needs through the satisfaction of which a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction, the thing most valued in life, may be had.

Now to see what some of these principles are. Amongst the principles that are highly general are principles concerning respect and consideration for others, including respect for life, justice and self-improvement. Under the principle of respect may be classified such principles as beneficience, non-malevolence, principles related to general sympathy and friendliness, principles concerning the preservation of social forms, principles that operate in the field of special relations and truth-speaking. Under the heading of special relations come such principles as promise-keeping,
reparation, returning a benefit, filial gratitude, parental and marital obligations and so on. Under justice come such principles as are related to the rejection of all inequalities in social, economic and political relations unless the presence of such inequalities can be justified on morally tenable grounds. And under self-improvement may be classified principles relating to self-control, courage, perseverance, self-collectedness and so on. (The conceptions of these principles show what a close relation there is between good attitudes and dispositions, and right principles, even though to talk about a right principle is not to talk about a good disposition).

It is fairly obvious how these principles embody suitability of a moral nature. The requirement that we should in our actions have respect for other people and show consideration for their needs and interests is in accordance with the limiting conditions of all moral actions, namely, every man is an end in himself. If we disregard other people in our actions and show no concern for their possible needs and purposes that may be involved we treat them as if they are of no consequence. This is to violate the value that they have as individuals. The principle of justice which demands that nobody should be treated in a way that appears to be prejudicial or preferential, unless there are morally adequate reasons for doing so, is also consistent with this condition for to treat any one prejudicially is to assume that there is
no need to recognise him as an individual in the same way as there is need to recognise the other who is given preference. The principle of self-improvement is also consistent with the requirement of morality, in as much as when we want to improve ourselves - in order that we may have as worthwhile a life as possible - we recognise our personalities as ends. For, if we have the ability to modify ourselves -- as most of us believe that we have -- so as to attain as much value in our own personality as we possibly can, it becomes our duty to do so in accordance with the law that we are ends in ourselves. For how can we be ends and yet not look for the best that life can offer us? As the less general principles may be classified under these in some ways there is no need to go into each to show that it is consistent with what may be called 'the moral law'.

We have said that in circumstances where a less general principle conflicts with a more general one, the more general one has a superior claim. But the more general a principle is the more abstract it is. That is to say the less it says exactly what we should do. We may find ourselves in a situation in which we could not serve the legitimate interests of a person or of a group of people by observing the relatively concrete rules and principles that are recognised in a community. But there is no set way in which a highly abstract principle like serving the legitimate interests of people could be observed in the same manner in which the more concrete rules and
principles could be observed. In such a case it is the agent who has to find out in the light of this principle a specific way of acting that fits the situation, and there is no guarantee that the way that he finds fits the case adequately. In ordinary circumstances of life, in paying respect to the relatively concrete and the more directly regulative principles we also pay respect to the more general and less directly regulative ones. In telling a person the truth we also respect his person and his legitimate needs and interests. But we become conscious of these abstract principles only when principles of a lower level conflict with them. This is only natural, as the higher level principles are less directly regulative of our actions in the sense that they do not tell us exactly what we should do but merely give us a perspective from which we could choose. This latter point is true, of course, even of less general principles but in a lesser degree. A principle, like 'tell the truth', is more directly regulative of our actions, for although it does not tell us exactly what we should say, it determines the conditions of our choice quite rigidly, but a principle like 'be considerate' determines our choice within a wider limit.

We have said that the more general a principle the less limited is its scope. But even a principle like 'do not harm or injure anybody' or 'be considerate to people's needs' may have its scope limited. One is justified in injuring
another in self-defence, and when needs of different people conflict we have to choose some in preference to others which means that we cannot be considerate to some of the needs involved. The only maxim which is a categorical imperative in the sense that it cannot be violated without violating the point of view of morality is the law which defines the limit of moral activities, namely, 'treat every man as an end in himself and never as a means only.' (this does not mean that nobody must ever be used as a means, only nobody should be used as a means only.)

Now to say that moral principles are hypothetical imperatives and it is only the moral law that is a categorical imperative is not to say any more than this: the scope of the moral law is not limited by anything, whilst that of the principles is limited by the law itself. If I am attacked violently by someone I am justified, in self-defence, in violating the principle, 'do not harm or injure anybody', because it is necessary to maintain my status as an end which is being questioned by the attack. But I am not justified in injuring any one more than is necessary to defend my status as an end, for if I do so, I injure his status as an end. \[x\] I am justified in violating a principle then if it conflicts with the limits imposed on our actions by the moral law.

\[x\] If I am forced by circumstances to kill somebody in self-defence I injure his status as an end, and in that sense my action is morally wrong. But if I am not responsible for the circumstances being what they are I am exempt from moral blame.
so long as a principle remains consistent with the moral law its authority remains as categorical as that of the law itself.

Let us now try to see the relation between the law and the principles in a little more detail. I am afraid I can only attempt to clarify this relation by means of an analogy.

The United Kingdom called the British Isles is comprised of four different areas, namely, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The area or the country called England is again divided into smaller areas called counties, and a county in its turn is comprised of even smaller areas like boroughs and villages. A borough, say, Beckenham, comes under the county of Kent, Kent under England, and England is a part of the British Isles. The British Isles in its turn is nothing but all the villages, boroughs, towns, counties, etc. of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland taken together. Now, if we are saying something about Beckenham we are in a certain sense saying something about Kent, England and the British Isles. And anything that involved the whole of the British Isles involves England, Kent and Beckenham. But neither the British Isles nor Beckenham is a derivative of the other. Rather 'the British Isles' is the conception of an area which can be understood in greater and greater detail from some point of view as it is understood to be divided into smaller and smaller groups of local units. But a smaller group is nothing extraneous to the bigger group. To subdivide Kent into Beckenham, Bromley, etc. is not to add anything to
the area of England when it is thought of merely in terms of counties. It is to understand the area of England in greater detail. Thus the relation between England and Kent and Kent and Beckenham is a relation between the sub-divisions of the same area and not between areas which exist as distinct localities independently of one another. The areas Beckenham and Kent co-exist, one being only a smaller division of the other and neither has Kent to exist before Beckenham nor Beckenham before Kent in order that Beckenham may be grouped under Kent. And although it is true to say that Beckenham is included in Kent, it is not the case that one must know Kent before one knows Beckenham. One might know Beckenham and subsequently come to know of the bigger division Kent. Or one might know Kent first and subsequently come to know that Beckenham is a borough in Kent. In short, our knowledge of Beckenham is not derived from our knowledge of Kent, nor is our knowledge of Kent derived from our knowledge of Beckenham. But our knowledge of Kent and that of Beckenham both belong to the conception of the same area, namely, The British Isles on different levels of local groupings.

Similarly, the moral principles may be looked upon as manifestations of the same point of view, namely that of morality but representing different levels in our conceptions of human needs and suitabilities of types of actions to features of situations involving such needs. A principle
of a higher level then implies a principle of a lower level just as much as a principle of a higher level involves the principle of a lower level. To say that one principle is more general than another, which is in some ways included in it, is not to say that the less general is deduced from the more general just as to say that Peckham is a borough in Kent is not to deduce something from our knowledge of Kent. If Peckham and places like it did not exist Kent would not exist either. In a similar way, a principle like 'be considerate' could not be observed without observing lower level principles, like 'be truthful', 'keep a promise' etc. Again, if the principle 'be truthful' is properly understood as a moral principle it cannot be accepted without accepting a principle like, 'be considerate'. Thus the traffic is not one way only, the deduction of the less general from the more general but it runs both ways — the implication of the more general in the less general and of the less general in the more general. The division of principles into more or less general is on the basis of varieties of actions and types of needs that are involved just as the classification of areas into counties or boroughs depends upon the extent of the localities involved.

It is no doubt true that when a less general principle is doubted we appeal to the authority of a more general principle which seems to back it up. One who would otherwise not keep a promise may be convinced about the moral appropriateness
of promise-keeping by being told that if people in general refused to keep their promises social harmony will suffer. This might produce an impression that social harmony is the reason which justifies the keeping of a promise or that the justification of the principle of promise-keeping is deduced from that of social harmony. I am not denying that this might constitute a justification for keeping promises for somebody or other, but in what sense is this a justification? Why should the conception of social harmony appeal to one as morally authoritative when promise-keeping does not? If one would not dare disturb social harmony in fear of what might happen to one's own interests, one is acting on prudence and not on moral considerations. But if one is in such a frame of mind as to see the moral authority of the conception involved in social harmony, independently of what might happen to one's own self in case of harmony being disturbed, one would also see the moral point of promise-keeping independently of social harmony (without questioning, of course, that social harmony is morally desirable.) Whatever authority a moral principle has it must have on its own back as a relatively concrete formulation of the moral law at a certain level of understanding concerning the suitability of a type of activity to certain features present in situations in which the satisfaction of human needs are involved and in which human beings may be treated as ends. A justification of a lower level principle by a higher level principle or by the moral law is thus not a deductive justification. The justification of a
principle (if we should call it 'justification' at all, in view of the fact that the moral point of a principle - when it is evident - is self-evident) is a matter of giving it added support through clarification of its implications; it is not a process of making it acceptable through anything different from itself. If I decide not to harm somebody I was going to harm by being told that he is an end in himself, what has happened is not that additional information has justified the principle 'do not harm anybody' which I previously found to be unacceptable but that this principle has for the first time become a principle for me through a clarification of its implications. If I am bent upon harming somebody the piece of information that he is an end in himself will carry little weight, for this is what I am implicitly refusing to recognise or at least, to act on by deciding to harm him.

The term 'right' we have said may be applied to self-evident principles which are consistent with the moral law. That does not mean, however, that all the principles of a moral nature have already been formulated and that they are known to each and all. 'self-evident' means 'self-justified' and not that they are already evident or evident to each and all. It may here be asked whether this self-evidence is logical on moral self-evidence. Let us accept that the general proposition 'murder is wrong' is a self-evident proposition. This would be logically self-evident only if
we mean by 'murder' wrong killing. But then the proposition becomes a tautologous one. What the moral proposition asserts, however, is that the taking of another's life is wrong and not simply that when the taking of another's life is wrong, it is wrong. The moral self-evidence of a proposition is different from logical self-evidence when the word 'logical' is understood in a narrow sense. By the 'moral self-evidence' of a proposition is meant that the proposition is self-evident according to the logic of moral reasoning. To say that a particular reasoning is moral is to say that the reasoning in question is based on certain assumptions of the nature of standards of judgment - the assumptions being of such a nature that one feels justified in proceeding on their basis, as long as one is looking at the things concerned from a characteristic point of view. The most fundamental of these assumptions is that every individual is an end in himself in the light of which it becomes evident that it is wrong to take the life of a human being for to do so is to deny his status as an end in himself. 'It is wrong to take the life of a human being' is then a proposition that is morally self-evident (or evident according to the logic of moral reasoning) and not logically, the term 'logically' being understood in a narrow sense.

Now, a principle stands for the suitability of a type of activity to a kind of situation or feature of situations involving human needs. As our experiences involving other people grow and the extent of our activities expand new
conceptions of suitabilities dawn upon us and sometimes a principle not yet thought of gets formulated on the occasion of a practical decision. Let us consider an example that we have already used. Suppose that a man has recently been employed in an office and an occasion to make him late has not yet arisen. But he over-sleeps one morning and it is only by making the utmost hurry that he can get to the office just about in time. In order to save time he decides to leave his breakfast, even though he is hungry. His decision shows that he is acting on a principle -- the principle that one ought to do one's best to be punctual. But it is not necessarily the case that the principle must have been there in his mind before he took this decision. On the contrary it is quite likely that the principle has come to exist for him as a principle through his decision. The principle, nevertheless, is implied in his decision, that is to say, if the man was asked just before he took his decision whether one ought to do one's best to be punctual, and he said 'no', but at the same time proceeded to act as he did, we would think there is something puzzling about his behaviour. (Let us suppose that he did not act as he did out of fear or any allied motive) But his behaviour will appear nothing but natural if he says 'yes'. It is not necessary that we must be consciously aware of the considerations on which we act before we can act in accordance with them. On the contrary it sometimes happens that we behave appropriately 
to a situation — and our behaviour shows that we do not doubt its appropriateness — without having consciously figured it out that the situation demands what it does and that the way we are behaving is the appropriate way. Take, for instance, the case of a man who steps on to the street from the pavement to cross the road; the sound of a horn makes him alert and he finds himself in danger of being run over by a car. Without stopping to think, the man steps back to the pavement. His action is appropriate to the situation, but most probably he has not consciously thought either (i) that he must save his life, or (ii) that to save his life he must go out of the reach of the on-coming car. (Let us suppose that the incident has happened for the first time in the man’s life so that it cannot be explained by habit) But his behaviour leaves no doubt in our minds that he agrees with both (i) and (ii). This sort of behaviour has sometimes been referred to as an instance of the wisdom of the body in order to distinguish it from the sort of behaviour which is consciously thought out as fitting to an accepted purpose. There is, of course, a danger in our talking of the ‘wisdom of the body’ for it might be taken to mean that our mind and body are two things somehow joined together to produce a man. But those who talk about this wisdom do not necessarily imply any bifurcation in the human personality. They may only wish to point out that human understanding and response belong to different levels of awareness and only at certain levels does
this awareness become a conscious one. At levels lower than this we respond to situations in such a way that it may with justice be said that we understand the nature of the situation and the appropriateness of our behaviour to it, although we do not know consciously that we understand. Similarly it is possible that we sometimes understand the implications of a principle and the appropriateness of our behaviour to it at this lower level, which means that we are not able to formulate a principle even when we act in accordance with it. Thus it is justified to talk about a principle being implicit in our conduct even when it has not taken any definite shape in our conscious minds. Of course, our behaviour may be appropriate to a situation purely by accident. But when we consistently behave in a certain way in a certain type of situation it can fairly be said that we are acting on a principle in the sense that we are implicitly agreeing with it in our conduct. It is then not necessarily the case that all the moral principles that we may refer to by the term 'right' have definitely been formulated or that a principle to be a principle must be known to all as a verbalised formula. As human situations grow or change new suitabilities that may form the content of principles may arise which are at first recognised at a lower level and only subsequently consciously formulated.

Now, what exactly is involved in our respecting a principle? It can hardly be the case that we begin with an
abstract principle irrespective of any particular situation that we may be in and do what it says is right. We do what is suitable to a particular situation here and now without stopping to think what sort of principle is relevant to it and what follows from that principle. Rather, a principle may be read out of our actual behaviour when we continue to act in some consistent manner. There are times, of course, when an agent does not know what action in particular or sort of action suits the situation present. He might then consciously adopt a principle which somehow appears to be relevant and see what sort of action would be in accordance with it in this particular case. But the abstract and general nature of a principle gives him no more than a guidance in approaching the issue of deliberation. It does not so much deliver a definite conclusion as help the agent towards finding one by eliminating some possible courses of conduct which are definitely found to be not in accordance with it. The logical force of a general principle lies mainly in this that it can lead the agent to reject some possible or proposed actions as being unsuitable to the situation as viewed morally. How much we positively get out of a principle depends upon the complexity of the situation. But there is no doubt that a principle is a positive conception of a suitability and that it orients us in certain directions rather than in others.

Finally, does it or does it not do us any good to be
taught the general principles of morals? General principles have no more than a broad regulative function in determining what we should actually do. They might lead us to reject certain possible ways of behaving, towards which we feel impelled, as contrary to the conceptions of morally suitable actions. But they only provide a framework within which deliberations and decisions regarding what we should do may take place. It has sometimes been objected that the teaching of fixed principles makes our minds rigid, and rigidity is fatal to creative morality; and after all is said and done, the only morality that is practically important is morality that is creative. If we are taught certain fixed principles from which we are to deduce our duties we are being taught to forego our individual judgments and decisions in favour of a set pattern. Life is too complex and too much in a flux to be tied down to patterns. There is much truth in this objection but it is not fatal to principles that are highly general and abstract. If it is true that a principle like 'be considerate to others' gives a certain pattern to our behaviour, it is equally true that there is ample scope for creative moves within the limits of the pattern. Indeed, that is a certain sense in which this principle demands that we should be creative, for it is nothing but a formal statement of a suitability to which a content is given by our decisions. A general principle does not at all tell us what exactly we should do, only it
tells us (leaving extreme cases aside) whether that which we think we should do is not morally unsuitable to the situation involved. We can thus adopt certain general principles and at the same time retain our individual initiative and judgment.

There is yet another objection to the teaching of principles which I find has a great deal of truth in it. A child may be taught the abstract principles 'be considerate', but it remains an empty verbiage so long as he has not had lots of experiences in which he is in a position either to fulfil or frustrate other people's needs and interests and so long as he does not learn from actual practice the distinction between the type of action that shows consideration and the type of action that does not. A principle like 'be considerate' becomes a principle only through one's actually learning to be considerate in the practical business of life. That is to say, a child does not become considerate by hearing 'be considerate' independently of any context of action. One comes to adopt this principle, if one does, because one has learnt through the practical conflicts of life to be considerate. This I think is largely true; there is no short cut to morality, at least to morality in the world known to us. One comes to realise -- and it is a matter of realisation and not merely of knowledge in the sense of being informed -- what is right by doing what is right and perhaps doing also what is wrong and in coming to see the distinction
between the two in practical experience. It is hardly conceivable that a child could be made into a saint merely by the passing over of certain verbal information about the requirements of morality and as far as practical understanding goes it only comes through wide personal contact with both good and evil, right and wrong. In order that this practical understanding may take place a child has to be left with some room to grow as an individual and given opportunities to take personal decisions even though some of the disasters that result from it could be avoided if others decided on his behalf. And this remains the only way to learn to act morally.

In spite of all these considerations, however, principles are not reduced to useless fictions. They retain their significance as the logical implicates of certain types of conduct when these are looked at morally, -- conduct that we actually know of and conduct that we think could or should exist. Moreover, they have a certain practical significance of an important kind. Although it is true that a principle becomes a principle only when we have learnt to act in accordance with it, it is not true that our coming to learn to act in accordance with it may not be helped in some ways through a process of teaching. A child must teach himself to be considerate, but his self-teaching may be made considerably easier by his being told to be considerate on appropriate occasions.
Further, our adherence to a principle may be of different degrees, particularly to principles that are highly general. Most of us are often pulled in different directions and although we may recognise the authority of a principle in general, its demand may be too high for us to want to obey it in any particular case. The reiteration of a principle, even when it is nothing new to us, often adds to the hold that it actually has over us by bringing it to the centre of our attention.

I shall now turn to the concept of 'duty'. When understood to be distinguishable from the concept of 'right', it refers to particular acts most suitable from the point of view of morality to particular situations in which an agent is called upon to act. Particular situations of life are specific in nature and they may show the relevance of more than one principle. Moreover, if a situation is very complex, the precise features in it that are morally relevant may not be obvious. It is therefore incumbent on us to try to understand the concrete character of a situation before we can proceed to act in a manner that is prescribed by a principle. Instead of its being the case that we deduce our duties from self-evident principles of morals, normally to see that a principle is operative in a particular case is to see what is our duty. I said normally, for we are not under an obligation to do whatever a principle says is right whenever a principle is recognised to be relevant in any
particular case. What is right -- the term being used in the sense of a principle -- has been termed by Ross a 'prima facie duty or obligation'. A general conception of right stands for the suitability of a type of action $x$ to a characteristic feature $y$ found in a situation. If one is in a situation which shows feature $y$ one is, on the face of it, under an obligation to perform $x$; and this obligation stands unless the situation shows other features as well which confer on us a different obligation. It is thus not necessarily the case that we are under an obligation to perform any particular action whenever we recognise that a principle is relevant in a particular case, for the obligation may be no more than a prima facie one. The action that is actually binding on us is one that is suitable to the total situation as viewed morally and not merely to any particular feature of it, if the total situation shows more than one morally relevant aspect. It can, therefore, be said that we cannot and do not deduce our duties from general principles. As Carritt says in his 'Theory of Morals', no number of moral rules will save us from exercising intuition (a term used by Carritt himself) as regards what is to be done in a particular case. A rule (principle) can only be abstract while a particular act must have a concrete character to fit a concrete situation. So it will always be necessary to satisfy ourselves that a situation fits in completely within the conception of an abstract moral feature,
before we act on a principle and for this no rule can be given.

What function then do principles play in the determination of our duties if we do not deduce these from the principles? As I have already remarked, as far as unambiguous instances are concerned to see our duty is to recognise a principle and to recognise a principle is to see our duty, and there are not two successive steps involved from one to the other. But in ambiguous instances we do not see plainly wherein our duty lies, and it becomes necessary for us to appeal to a general principle. Here a principle is accepted as a standard (i.e. we wish to respect the conception of moral suitability that is embodied in a principle, for instance, we may wish to do justice to an individual or to a group) in the light of which the situation is approached. This orients us toward singling out those features of the situation which particularly bear upon it, and these when considered fully -- after due weight is given to other features, of course -- may lead us toward a particular action which fits these features as well as it is possible under the circumstances. A principle then acts as a standard in the light of which we approach the question of our duty, when we do not see our duty directly. Again when we wish to judge whether a particular action performed fits the situation as well as it is possible for an action to fit it morally, it is the conception of a
principle (or conceptions of principles) that acts as the standard of evaluation. Much of the controversy in ethics as regards the self-evident nature of what is right may be traced to a confusion between the concept of 'right' in its general significance and the concept of 'duty' which stands for what is right in a particular case, or to put it in another way, between 'duty' which is another name for 'right in general' and 'duty' which refers to something that is right in particular. When Kant says that we must do our duty come what may and proceeds to talk of our duties in general terms, like our duty to tell the truth and so on, a difficulty is created because of Kant's refusal to make a distinction between 'duty' which means a particular action which fits a particular situation and 'duty' which means the general suitability of a type of action to certain features in a situation. What is right in a particular case, i.e. what is one's duty, seldom has the self-evidence which what is right in general has. In fact, what is one's duty is never self-evident unless the particular case is so simple as to show no other moral relevance than that of a feature which fits in completely within the conception of a general type. But controversies about duty arise in cases which are complex (i.e. which show the relevance of more than one principle) and there it is as much important to exercise one's judgment in accepting one principle in preference to another and in determining the moral nature of the situation in accordance
with it as to pay respect to the prima facie obligations involved in the conceptions of standards. The rigorism of Kant's moral theory could be avoided if he distinguished 'right' from 'duty' and made it clear that the impossibility of questioning the rightness of what is right belongs to the plane of abstract thought about general suitabilities. Here it is useful to compare the formulation of a principle with that of a law in physics. A law in physics can only be formulated in terms that are unconditional, it cannot be expected to include all the limitations that exist in practice on its operations. Let us take for instance Snell's Law -- the ratio of the sines of the angle of incidence and refraction is constant. There are certain substances which do not behave in the way the law suggests, but these are not specifically mentioned in the body of the law itself. As Toulmin puts it, "Most transparent substances of uniform density, excluding only certain crystalline material such as Iceland spar, have been found to refract light in such and such a manner" is not what we call Snell's Law." But a law does not become invalid if it is found that it is inapplicable to certain things under certain circumstances. A principle likewise is a general statement of a suitability which cannot be questioned so long as we are talking about the conception involved in this general statement. What can be questioned is the application of a principle to a particular case. That is to say, in so far as a principle is applicable,
its applicability in relation to a characteristic approach to an issue needs no support which is another way of saying that it is self-evidently right. It is therefore a truism to say that no exception to a principle can exist, so long as we have in mind merely the character of a principle; but although a truism, it is a valid statement. But when it comes to an actual situation, it is possible to find that the scope of a principle somehow relevant to the situation is yet limited to this particular case because of such and such factors also present in the case which are not catered for in the principle. We cannot therefore agree with Kant that it is always our duty to tell the truth whenever in concrete situations of life we are asked by anybody about something or other. Yet the principle 'tell the truth' remains a general principle.

It is no doubt true that we are all apt to find good reasons for making an exception to a principle in our own case, and perhaps by referring to some principles as duties of perfect obligation Kant had it in mind that very often the justifications that are sought for violating an obligation of this kind are not acceptable from the point of view of morality. This is why the term 'prima facie obligation' suits the case so admirably. Our obligation to act in a way which is recommended by a principle (relevant to the situation) stands, unless a counter-obligation of even greater authority requires us to act contrary to it. Admittedly
it is not as easy to form an adequate decision in such matters as it sounds on paper; yet the difficulties may perhaps be unduly magnified, particularly because a moral act may make very exacting demands on some of the inclinations an agent may naturally feel. In any case, the obligation to follow a principle is 'prima facie' as suggested by Ross and not unconditional as Kant thinks.

Now, the term 'prima facie' obligation is a term that has been called by Strawson, 'a deceptively helpful notion'. The deception possibly lies in this. Suppose some one says 'I have an obligation to do x' meaning an action which actually is his duty. If questioned how he knows that he is obliged to do x the man may say that he knows it because the existence of the circumstances of the kind p (which is what the existing circumstances is) entails an obligation of the kind x, or in other words because he has a prima facie obligation to do x. Here it looks as if the man has given an explanation of how he has discerned his duty. But, says Strawson, the knowledge of particular obligations (or obligations as Strawson would put it) is a pre-condition of any knowledge of prima facie obligation (or obligation as Strawson would put it). To say, therefore, that one knows x to be one's duty because one knows that x constitutes a 'prima facie' obligation is to put the cart before the horse. One knows one's obligations (i.e. prima facie obligations) because one knows one's obligations. To suppose that one knows
one's obligations because one knows one's obligations is to be deceived by the term 'prima facie'.

Now, which do we know first obligation or obligation? I suspect there is a confusion in the very posing of the question itself. It seems to me that under ordinary circumstances, when we do not have any doubt as regards what is our duty (particular obligation or obligation), there are not two distinct processes, one of discerning a prima facie obligation and another of deducing a particular obligation from it. For to see that $x$ is one's duty in the situation $y$ is to recognise implicitly that $x$ is a type of action that fits the type of features that are morally relevant in situation $y$ - if by the word 'duty' is meant a 'moral' act and not merely an act one is personally disposed to undertake. Here there is no question, therefore, of deducing one from the other. The matter, however, becomes complicated when we do not see our duty directly. Let us suppose that the situation in which we are called upon to act is $y$ and we do not know what to do, not because we do not find any morally relevant aspect in it but because there is more than one morally relevant aspect and the actions required by these aspects oppose one another in some ways. What we have to do in such a case is to analyse the situation in order to see as clearly as possible its various morally relevant aspects. Let us suppose these aspects are $p, q, r$, when we have come to this stage we may find that $p$ is such that it
confers on us the obligation to do m, q, n and r, o. since we can only do one of these acts (suppose that this is so) it cannot be said that m, n, o are our obligations but it is perfectly sensible to say that they represent prima facie obligations (i.e. they appear to be obligations when certain features of a situation are considered). Now suppose further that we find p to be the most urgent or important moral aspect of the situation, then our prima facie obligation to do m becomes an actual obligation. The process of thinking that is involved in this deliberation is, of course, not deductive. To say 'm is my duty here and now because I have a prima facie obligation to do m whenever a feature of the sort p is the most prominent moral feature in a situation' is not to deduce anything from anything. It is to support a particular apprehension of duty - if such a support is needed - by saying that the undertaking of what one is proposing to undertake means respecting a principle (a prima facie obligation) that ought to be respected in this case, in as much as this principle recommends an action that is most fitting to the situation, under the circumstances. This sort of thinking or reasoning does not fit in with either inductive or deductive reasoning, the only two types of reasoning that are usually recognised as logical. The reason appears to me to be this. Inductive and deductive processes are processes of reasoning appropriate for the consideration of non-value facts, something more is needed for a process of reasoning which is evaluative.
For every act of evaluation proceeds in the light of a standard - implicit or explicit - and the function of thinking in evaluation consists in showing the relevance of a particular standard to a case - a standard which would either justify itself or can be shown to be ultimately backed by something which justifies itself. This sort of reasoning has a logic of its own and this logic operates once we have accepted the standard involved yet it cannot be put down to any definite logical pattern.

Although our particular duties cannot be looked upon as deduction from general principles, principles play an important regulative part in the determination of duties in so far as a man adopts the point of view of morality. To adopt the point of view of morality is to act in conformity with certain very general conceptions as to the value of human beings as individuals, and as to the sorts of human behaviour that fit in with this supposed value of individuals as persons in situations showing certain characteristic features. Of course the part these general conceptions play can only be regulative, i.e. they tell us that certain sorts of actions will be inconsistent with the point of view.

1. By this is meant the worthwhileness of some of the experiences human beings undergo as individual persons - experiences that lead to satisfaction and a sense of fulfilment.

2. These characteristic features are such as are important from the point of view of achieving satisfaction and a sense of fulfilment.
of morality in certain situations rather than directly informing us of a particular action that fits a particular situation. But in so far as a man adopts the point of view of morality he accepts the regulative authority of these conceptions, with which his own considerations as to what is his duty are required to be in accord. Also he accepts that if it becomes necessary to question one's estimation of duty, it is the conceptions of these principles which provide the standard, either implicit or explicit, of a value judgment in this respect. In as much as the point of view of morality is an impartial point of view - a point of view from which one looks at oneself and not only to others as an impartial spectator - it may be said that it is more reasonable that a human being should adopt this point of view than that he should not.

Now we have said that the concept of 'duty' applies to particular actions that are morally most suitable to particular situations. But when we apply the concept of 'duty' we also mean that some agent or other is obliged to act in that particular way which is morally most suitable to the situation. The question of duty arises in situations in which certain changes need to be effected. One has then to understand certain things about the persons and things involved in a situation, the features that need to be changed as well as the changes that need to be brought about. Moreover, one has to be reasonably certain of the consequences that will follow.
one's acting in a certain way. All these give rise to a
certain difficulty. In view of the fact that moral
situations are often complex, it cannot be expected that
everyone would have the same opinion about the moral nature
of a situation and about what is suitable to it. It is by
no means always the case that a man, however virtuous he may
be, has a full grasp of the nature of a situation or of the
consequences that will actually follow an action. In fact
nobody can visualise all the consequences that will follow
an action, except in cases which are very simple and straight-
forward. To say then that a man is obliged to do that which
is most suitable to a situation is to demand the impossible.
A man cannot be obliged to do what he cannot do and often
a man does not know beforehand that a particular action is the
most suitable to a situation. It has, therefore, been held
that obligation is subjective and not objective. That is to
say, a man is obliged to do not what the real situation really
demands but what the agent thinks is demanded by the situation
whose nature he seriously supposes to be of a certain kind.
A man cannot be obliged, says Ross, to act in relation to
situation x, supposing that x expresses the real nature of the
situation, if he sincerely believes that the situation demanding
an action from him is of the nature y. Again, a man cannot do
p which is what the situation really demands, if he seriously
believes that the situation demands q. We do not believe,
says Ross, that a man acts rightly if he acts contrary to his
convictions even if by so acting he accidentally produces the results that are desirable.  Again, we do not blame a man for doing p, if he seriously believes that the doing of p is his duty even if the consequences of doing p are not desirable.  Ross admits that the objective view is in some ways, implied in the way we use the concepts of 'duty' and 'obligation'. "It is clear that when we call an act right we sometimes mean that it suits the objective features of the situation, and sometimes that it suits the subjective features. And when people express different opinions about the rightness or wrongness of an act, the difference is often due to the fact that one of them is thinking of objective and the other of subjective rightness. But the question remains, which of the characteristics -- objective or subjective rightness -- is ethically the more important, which of the two acts is that which we ought to do". While recognising that there are various considerations which tell in favour of the objective view Ross says that it is subjective rightness that is ethically more important. And consequently one's obligation is obligation to do what one thinks one ought to do.

I think that subjective rightness is ethically important. Its recognition is based on the recognition of the personal character of the responsibility that a moral agent has in undertaking an action. A man cannot be held properly responsible for his actions unless he acts on personal conviction.

1. Foundations of Ethics. p. 146-147.
Even if the action is one that has been suggested to the agent by some one else an agent would not be an agent unless he accepted that this is what he really ought to do. Also, there is a certain sense of the term 'obligation' in which obligation can only be subjective; and this is the sense in which a man could not be obliged to do a certain thing without incurring blame, in the ordinary sense of the term, for his failure to do so. A man cannot be blamed for not doing something if he believed it to be unsuitable to the supposed situation, and if he is to be blamed in an ordinary way for not doing what he is obliged to do, then he is not obliged to do what he believes to be unsuitable to the situation. Therefore, the statement 'x ought to have done y' where y is not the thing that x thinks he ought to do, is untenable, if the acceptance of the statement on someone's part would involve him in blaming x for not doing y. But it seems to me that the statement 'x ought to have done y' even if x does not think so and even when he is not to be blamed for not thinking so, can be a significant statement. It means that x was the act which was most suitable to the circumstances and in so far as this is the case, it would have been better if this was performed by the agent, or which is the same thing, it ought to have been performed by him. And it is quite legitimate for someone to say this, although he may not wish to blame x for having failed in doing what he ought to have done, in view of the fact that x could not know it to be his obligation.
x can only act on his own knowledge of the situation and not on that of some one else, if he is to retain his character as an agent. But it is one thing to say that x is to be blamed for not doing y, and another that y and not z, which is what was done by x, was the action which was most suitable to the situation in which x acted. There is a wider sense of the term 'obligation' in which a man is obliged to do whatever is best under a certain circumstance even though he may be quite unable to keep this obligation and in so far as this is the case exempt from incurring any blame. Sometimes it happens that people disagree as to whether somebody was obliged to do something or not. The disagreement may be entirely due to the fact that one is using the term 'obligation' in a narrower and the other in a wider sense. By saying, 'x was not obliged to do y' p may not wish to say that y was not the most suitable act, he may only be saying that x was not in a position to undertake the act y. By saying 'x was obliged to do y' q may not necessarily wish to say that x was in a position to do y, he may only be saying that y was the most suitable act that x could have undertaken if...... What is involved in the objective view of obligation is this. The conception of 'duty' as the most suitable act under the circumstances is the ideal or the standard in the light of which we pronounce on the moral suitability of actions that are actually performed and it is quite proper for us to do so with or without blaming any particular agent who has failed to do what is most suitable.
I have said that we would not blame x for not doing y if x could not know y to be his duty. But a distinction has to be drawn between 'could not' and 'did not'. If the ideal of duty is the objective conception of an act as suitable as is possible for an act to be under the circumstances, the mere fact that a man did not think something to be his duty would not exempt him from all possible blame. A man may not know something to be his duty either because he did not take sufficient care to know it or because the circumstances (both external circumstances and the agent's psycho-physical states) are such that it is impossible for the man to know it. A man may still come under blame in a certain sense if we have good reasons to believe that a man either did not want to know, or did not take sufficient care to find out enough about the situation. Of course, we would not blame a man for not doing x if he did not know x to be his duty, even if he is responsible for his ignorance, in the same way as we would blame one who would not do x even though he knows it to be his duty. But if the ideal of duty is an action which is most suitable, a man is obliged to do his best to find out what is most suitable and only when we have evidence that a man could not do any more to ensure that he does what is his duty that we refrain from blaming him altogether. The concept of 'blame' itself is of different shades and degrees, but I shall discuss the question of blame more fully in another chapter. My point here is this. Obligation is subjective
in the sense that an agent must act on personal conviction, otherwise he is not an agent at all. To demand that a man must do what is objectively right whether or not he believes it to be right is an impossible demand. But it is objective in another sense. A man's personal opinion is not necessarily adequate, and quite often it leaves scope for improvement. As far as morals is concerned there is always an obligation on a man to keep before his mind the objective ideal of a most suitable action as well as to endeavour to approximate to it as far as possible. The excuse 'I did not know it to be my duty' does not always exempt a man from moral blame but it would do so if obligation is nothing but subjective. I do not, therefore, think that subjective rightness is ethically the more important. Rather, objective rightness is the ideal which an agent in his subjective approach to what is right is obliged to respect as far as it is possible for him to do so.

The objective view, says Ross, "...is fatal to the possibility of recognising particular duties incumbent on us here and now, since we can never know, for instance, that we can produce a true opinion as to our thoughts in anyone else's mind."¹ The point is that if we are to do that which the situation demands we must know what exactly the results of the intended course of action would be and this we can never know before the results have actually taken place. The plausibility

¹. Ibid. p.150.
of the argument here depends upon the ambiguity of the word 'know'. If by 'know' is meant knowing a thing in such a way as to rule out the possibility of its being otherwise then, of course, we do not know if a proposed course of action will result in whatever it is intended to result in. But we used the word 'know' in a less formidable sense as well. We say that we know something and not merely that we think it to be so when we find on careful considerations that no reasonable grounds exist to doubt what we are saying and believe that other people, when they have considered the facts we have considered, will have no reason to disagree with us, although we do not claim that it is impossible for it to be other than what we are saying it is. This latter sense of the word 'know' implies a reasonable certainty but not absolute certainty. And I think it is true to say that in some cases it is possible for us to reasonably certain that a certain course of action will bring about a certain state of affairs. There remains the possibility, of course, that fuller knowledge will show the certainty to be not so reasonable. But so long as no ground on which to doubt the reasonableness of the opinion held is known to exist by anyone the holding of the opinion cannot be said to be anything but reasonable. In any case, it is only reasonable certainty that is humanly achievable and not absolute certainty. If so, an objective view of duty is not fatal
to the recognition of our particular duties. What is true in Ross's account of obligation seems to be this. There are certain complicated situations in which it is impossible for us to know even with reasonable certainty that a certain course of action will produce a certain state of affairs. If it is insisted upon in a case like this that we must do what is objectively demanded by the situation we might be completely at a loss to know what to do. For the case is such that we cannot go beyond the stage of thinking it likely that a certain course of conduct will bring about a certain state of affairs. Here obviously the agent is obliged to do what he thinks is likely to produce that which is morally required. It should be remarked that even here it is manifestly the agent's duty to assess the situation as well as it is possible under the circumstances, and in doing so the agent pays respect to the ideal of objective duty. The point of view of morality is satisfied not merely because the agent thinks it likely but because the agent thinks it likely in view of the circumstances. I have no wish to suggest that Ross would disagree with me on this. But I thought that it is necessary to discuss the question, as a theory of subjective obligation runs a risk of mis-interpretation to the effect that one's duty is constituted by what one thinks it is.

The next question to be asked is, 'what exactly is it that we are obliged to do?' An act, says Ross, is the production of a change in a state of affairs, or, as in
comparatively few cases, maintenance of a state of affairs which also involves change in some ways, in so far as the state of affairs will not be maintained without the act. Now the only changes we can directly produce are changes in our body or mind. But these are not as such what as a rule we think it our duty to produce. An act is the production of a change in the state of affairs (if we ignore, for simplicity's sake, the comparatively few cases in which it is the maintenance of an existing state of affairs; cases, which I think, raise no special difficulty) Now the only changes we can directly produce are changes in our bodies or in our minds. But these are not, as such, what as a rule we think it our duty to produce."^ Ross takes a simple act like fulfilling the promise of returning a book to a friend. Suppose that one decided to return it by post. Between the packing and posting of the book and the receiving of the book by the friend there intervenes a series of occurrences. The utilitarian would say that our duty is to act in a certain way, e.g. pack and post the book, so as to produce a certain consequence, e.g. the receiving of the book by the friend. But, says Ross, it is not the packing and posting that is our duty. Our duty is to fulfil our promise, i.e. put the book in our friend's possession. One's act is right not qua the packing and posting of a book but qua the securing of the friend's

1. The Right and the Good p.42.
receiving the book. If the friend does not get the book because of certain intervening occurrences it still remains one's duty to secure one's friend another copy. Thus an act is right qua being an ensuring of one of the particular state of affairs of which it is an ensuring, viz, in the case we have taken, of the friend's receiving the book he has been promised. The packing and posting is right only incidentally. It is not the case that our duty is to do certain things, namely, packing and posting, which will produce a certain result, namely, receiving of the book. Our duty is to ensure the receiving of the book by the friend, i.e., to fulfil our promise.

Ross gives a somewhat different account of which we are obliged to do in 'Foundations of Ethics'. "We have hitherto assumed that an obligation is an obligation to do some action, i.e., to produce some change in something. But we must ask whether this is true."¹ He quotes with approval the following from Prof. Prichard's lectures on Duty and Ignorance of Fact. "...contrary to the implication of ordinary language and of moral rules in particular, an obligation must be an obligation, not to do something, but to perform an activity of a totally different kind, that of setting or exerting ourselves to do something i.e. to bring something about."²

Now it appears that instead of its being our duty

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to secure that our friend gets the book our duty is to set ourselves to bring the receiving about. This is not quite in keeping with what Ross says in his 'The Right and the Good'. For setting ourselves to do something is to produce some changes in our body and mind, which is not what Ross thinks to be our duty as such in that book. This modified view, as far as I can make out, comes rather near the utilitarian view, namely, our duty is to do something (in this case, to set ourselves) to bring about a certain result (the receiving of the book). There is, of course, an important difference; while according to the utilitarian view what is our duty to do -- in order that a certain result may be brought about -- may be of many different kinds, depending upon the kind of result that is to be brought about, Ross and Prichard would say that what is our duty is always the same, namely, to set ourselves to do something.

The substitution of 'setting ourselves to bring about some result' for 'bringing about some result', Ross, believes, helps one to decide in favour of the subjective view of duty. To quote from Prichard, "For once it has become common ground that the kind of activity which an obligation is an obligation to perform is one which may bring about nothing at all, viz, setting ourselves to bring about something, we are less inclined to think that for there to be an obligation to perform some particular activity, it must have certain indirect effect. To this extent the modification diminishes the force of the
objective view without in any way impairing that of its rival.\textsuperscript{1}

To this I would say: There is a certain plausibility in saying that our obligation is an obligation to set ourselves to do a certain thing. For unless we do so no action would follow. Further this is what we are directly capable of doing, while the state of affairs we intend to bring about comes about relatively indirectly. But it does not seem to me that we need conceive of our 'obligation to set ourselves to do something' and 'our obligation to bring about a certain state' as contraries, so that a substitution of one by the other is called for. Rather, these two obligations are two aspects of the same task, namely, the doing of our duty — one is the aspect of doing something to ourselves with a view to start ourselves off as agents, and the other is that of effecting a certain change in the existing state of affairs. As Ross himself says in his 'The Right and the Good', the only changes we can directly produce are changes in our bodies and minds, but these are not, as such, what we think it our duty to produce. We are surely under an obligation to set ourselves to do something, but we are under an obligation to do something as well. As Ross himself says, even if we had set ourselves to bring about that our friend gets the book we have promised to return to him by packing and posting it and our friend does

\textsuperscript{1} Ibid. p.25.
not receive it due to an accident in the post-office, we are still under an obligation to secure him another copy. The only difference that the modified view makes is this. An agent who had set himself to bring about that the friend gets the book is thereby free of blame, irrespective of whether the friend actually gets the book or not. It still remains the agent's duty to secure the receiving of the book by the friend, but he is not blameworthy for his friend's not having received it already, as he would be if he had not sent it at all. If the agent has done his duty only when the friend has actually received the book and not when the agent has carefully packed and posted it, believing his action to be the most fitting to the requirement that his friend gets the book in time, it cannot be believed that obligation is purely subjective. A man will have done his duty when he has sent a book off by post if he thinks that this is the best possible means of securing the receiving of the book by his friend, whether or not his friend actually gets it -- if we believe that a man's duty does not go beyond setting himself to do what he thinks is the most fitting to a supposed situation. If the ideal of duty be the doing of what fits the situation, there is a sense in which it must be said that the agent's obligation is rooted in the objective facts of the situation, although there are circumstances where this ideal can only be realised more or less and in which it is possible only to think that a
certain action fits the situation and not know it with any degree of certainty.

As to the dispute between Ross and the utilitarians regarding whether it is our duty to do something to bring about a certain good result or to produce a certain state of affairs. On the face of it there seems to be little difference between saying that it is our duty to pack and post a book in order to bring the result that our friend gets it and that it is our duty to secure the receiving of the book by our friend through such activities as packing and posting of the book. They appear to be two alternative ways of saying the same thing as far as a particular instance of duty is concerned. But, says Ross, there is a difference, and as far as I can see, the difference is a difference of implications. According to the utilitarian account an act is right because of the goodness of the consequences that are produced by it. It is then the action consisting in the packing and posting of the book that is right and its rightness belongs to it because of the good result that it brings about, namely, that the friend gets the book and is satisfied - or would normally be satisfied. This way of putting the thing may be quite harmless as long as the situation demanding a certain kind of action from us is comparatively simple. But as soon as the situation begins to be complex and a straightforward connection between a particular action and certain results
cannot be seen with certainty determination of our duties becomes impossible (for our duty is to do that which will bring about a certain good result). Moreover, if in a complex case we feel somewhat sure (which is different from saying that we know) that a certain course of action will bring about a certain good result we may embark on the course of action thinking only of the result that we think is going to follow and not at all of the character of the action itself. Ross's account has this advantage over the utilitarian one in such cases that an act has to be understood as right because of what it is, i.e., because of its own character as the bringing about of a state of affairs and not because of some results understood as its consequences as distinct from the act itself. In other words, when we have to decide on a particular action as the right one in a complex situation, it will not do, as far as morality is concerned, to hit upon any action which we think will give rise to certain consequences we accept as good -- this would have done if we understood the 'rightness' of an action merely in terms of good consequences -- what we have also to consider is the character of the act itself as an integral part in the bringing about of a state of affairs, the bringing about of which in a certain situation constitutes, in some ways, an obligation on the part of an agent. To take a concrete example. X has promised Y to be present in a party given by him on a certain evening. Due to an unexpected offer X
gets a free ticket in the same evening for an opera which he had wanted to see but had not been able to afford. The pleasure that he would get out of his visit to the opera is very much more than the pleasure that he himself or his friend would get out of his presence at the party. We cannot even say that the disappointment caused to the friend by his absence would be of a great magnitude. If we are to decide in terms of good consequences we shall have to say that the act of paying a visit to the opera would be the right act. But if we are to think of our duty as the bringing about of a state of affairs which ought to be brought about then clearly the act of going to the party would be the right act, in as much as by so doing he will bring about a state of affairs which he ought to bring about, namely, the fulfilment of his promise. The mere fact of a promise being made confers on one the responsibility of keeping that promise and an action is right as the fulfilling of that responsibility quite apart from any particular good result that might follow. The utilitarian might say that it is the fulfilment of the promise that is the good result to be produced in this case. But if the pleasure and over-all benefit produced by x's going to the opera is greater than those produced by his going to the party then to say that the fulfilment of the promise is the good consequence that ought to be brought about in preference to the pleasure and benefit to be derived
by x from going to the opera, is already to choose a good consequence in terms of something which involve more than a consideration of consequences. It is already to recognise the prior claim of promise-keeping as the fulfilment of an obligation that an agent has, even when it does not lead to greater happiness. It is possible for the utilitarian to say in reply that the general fulfilling of promises is essential for human happiness and although the fulfilment of this particular promise would not lead to greater happiness a failure to fulfil it will contribute to the weakening of the general practice of promise-keeping in society. But suppose that none but the friend, whose devotion to moral principles is genuine, (which means that he may reasonably be expected not to follow the example of his friend) knows of this promise being made and the fact that this promise has been broken will not be known to anyone else. In a case like this we need not fear that the breaking of this promise will lead to the weakening of the practice of promise-keeping and the utilitarian reply would not cover it.

A few more words before I close this chapter on 'duty'. The concept of 'duty is from the practical point of view the most important and the most fundamental in morals. Moral problems arise with the asking of questions like, 'what should be done about this?' or, 'should this have been done or avoided?'. It is only in course of answering these
questions that we come upon the concepts of 'right' and 'good' which we find provide us with standards in terms of which we could proceed to answer the questions asked. But these questions are also the most difficult ones to answer. The mere fact that a question is asked shows that the answer is not evident. But the nature of the conceptions that can be referred to by 'right' and 'good' in their capacity as standards is evident. But they are abstract and general conceptions which do not fully cater for the concrete nature of all particular instances of action. This confers on us the responsibility of exercising our individual judgment and discretion in our approach to individual issues, although of course in accordance with a characteristic point of view from which human beings are supposed to have a certain value for their own sakes and which requires that we should treat them in certain ways whenever certain features involving human needs are involved: (these ways are embodied in the conceptions of virtues and principles). We must then have a degree of intelligence in order to discern, if we are at all able to do so, what our duties are. A moral agent is thus responsible not only for respecting principles but also for making an intelligent approach to the question of what should be done in circumstances of a specific kind. In the last resort, it is on this that the doing of our duties hangs, provided we possess the disposition called 'conscientiousness' which orients us towards the
doing of our duties. Philosophy cannot solve the practical problems of moral behaviour, for there is no set solution to be had. It can only clarify our ideas in terms of which we approach a problem at hand and thus can contribute in a round-about way towards the finding of a solution, if and when we do find a solution to a complicated problem; or, which is equally important, if there is no 'solution' to be had, towards the realisation that the question can have no solution in the ordinary sense of the term.
"Modern research", says Maurice Cranston, "in genetics, physiology, neurology, to say nothing of the less exact sciences of anthropology, sociology and psychology has shown that a man's behaviour is largely predictable or, as some might say, 'determined by' his genetic constitution, social environment, glandular secretions and so on."\(^1\) Maurice Cranston, of course, believes that the human will is, in principle, free; and he made the above remarks in course of discussing the cogency of the determinist position. It is important, however, to consider what is meant when it is said that human behaviour is determined by genetic constitution, social environment, glandular secretions and so on, and what repercussions such determination has on the possibility of moral choice. For it is sometimes argued that human behaviour being determined, judgments of praise and blame are out of place. There are many interesting and important questions to be asked on this topic, but I shall here touch upon it as briefly as possible.

Now we know that there is some relation between a man's genetic constitution and his achievement. That is to say, given a certain genetic constitution we could perhaps say (supposing that our knowledge in such matters is sufficiently

\(^1\) freedom p. 161.
precise, which is doubtful) that there are certain things that are beyond the power of the man concerned, while certain others are not. But our knowledge of a man's genetic constitution does not allow us to say that he must act in such and such ways, or do such and such things. Moral choice is usually exercised over such issues (the issue is of this type, 'shall I or shall I not keep this promise,' or 'this man is a foreigner, and he does not know the price of this article, shall I or shall I not charge him more?') that no particular type of genetic constitution is presupposed in order that a choice may be exercised at all, and a man with a given constitution is not bound to decide one way or the other except in some restricted cases. For instance, a man who is constitutionally so weak that he could not learn to swim cannot reasonably be expected to jump into a river to rescue a drowning man. Of course moral behaviour presupposes a degree of intelligence -- and intelligence is usually recognised to be an inherited (i.e., a congenital) ability -- referred to as average or normal intelligence; and people who may be supposed to be below normal cannot be expected to make a satisfactory moral decision except when it is fully covered by habit. It is possible again that glandular over or under-secretion affects people in such a way as to make it impossible for them to exercise any control over their behaviour and such people should be recommended for medical treatment rather than for
moral condemnation. But allowance is normally made in our moral judgments for people with physiological and glandular deficiency and abnormality if such deficiency and abnormality are known to exist; and if not made it should be made. When we praise or blame people we presuppose that the people concerned are normal, and as far as these people are concerned in whatever way they may be determined by their constitution, such determination is not fatal to the possibility of all moral choice. Admittedly, it is not always easy to determine whether a person is normal in this sense or not. This shows, not that our judgments of praise or blame should all be scrapped, but that we must take care to find out whether a man's failures are due to any constitutional limitation and in case it is, we must refrain from blaming him. Further, as we cannot always be sure whether a man may not be suffering from a constitutional limitation of some degree, we should keep an open mind when we blame people and be willing to reverse our judgment if any evidence of an inherited inability may be forthcoming. It may be said to this that no such evidence may be forthcoming and yet people may be limited in this way. I would say in reply that the only reason to think that a man is limited in this way is provided by actual evidence to this effect. We have no justification for thinking that a man is limited in this way if no evidence is ever come across, although we must admit the possibility that a man may be so limited, which means that we should be
willing to change our mind about him if a reason is furnished. The onus of establishing that a man is limited or subnormal lies on the one who contests the idea that he is normal, whereas one is normally justified in believing another person to be normal, unless there are reasons one know of, to believe the contrary. There is, of course, an element of risk in this, for at no stage do we know enough about a person to be quite sure and no doubt we make mistakes about people. Even so, it is more reasonable to believe that a person is normal when we are not possessed of any reason to think that he is not than to believe that he is not without any evidence to establish our belief.

Let us now consider sociological determination. Human behaviour, particularly behaviour that is morally relevant, is certainly influenced to a great extent by sociological factors. Most of us are taught from our early childhood to do things that are usually approved of in the society we live in and not to do things that are disapproved of. As a result of such training, pro-attitudes to certain ways of behaving and aversion to certain others become almost a second nature to us and we do or avoid things without thought. It is hardly possible to deny this fact today; but the question is: if a certain habit of acting or not acting in a certain way is found -- at a certain stage of social development -- to conflict with the requirements of morality is it or is it
not possible for us, in principle, to break through the habit? If we look at the history of any human society that has progressed beyond the most primitive stage we shall find that it is possible, at least on the part of some people; otherwise social development could hardly have taken place. Perhaps it is true that only people who are exceptional in some ways can do so. But ordinary people who belong to the same society do not blame one another for behaving in ways that are socially approved of. And people who have greater vision in the same society or people belonging to other societies should not consider anyone blameworthy for behaving in a way that is approved of in the society he belongs to, (unless the person is recognisable as exceptional in a requisite way) however much they think that the way in question is morally unsatisfactory and should be changed. People in general should not be blamed for doing what is usually done even when what is generally done ought not to be done under certain changed circumstances. For the ability to see that what is generally done may yet be wrong is an exceptional ability and should not be presumed to exist equally in all. But judgments of praise and blame can still hold within the limits of sociological determination, for it is not necessarily the case that we always do what our society approves of.

Now let us consider psychological determination. Our choice of actions certainly depends to a great extent upon
the sort of persons we already are at the moment of choice, i.e., upon our existing attitudes, disposition and character. Our attitudes, dispositions, and character grow almost imperceptibly through an interplay of many different factors, some being of the nature of innate tendencies others arising from particular circumstances; they do not come to exist as a result of a plan consciously made by ourselves. Besides, we have little or no say in the matter of what natural tendencies we shall feel or what circumstances we shall be in, particularly in our formative years, after which we are more or less made. How can we then be blamed for our actions which ultimately depend on conditions that are very little or not at all under our control?

Now it is not to be denied that our actions are usually causally related to the attitudes etc. that we already possess, and that usually our attitudes develop without our knowing about them. But the important question for our purposes is, 'is it or is it not possible for us to change our hitherto existing tendencies, if we find that our tendencies are not morally satisfactory. It seems to me to be beyond doubt that at least some people can do so, in which case psychological determinism fails as a theory that can rule out the possibility of moral choice. Although we are usually unaware of the tendencies and attitudes that orient us in certain directions, it is possible for us to come to know of their presence -- we may come upon them ourselves or we may be told by other people
and subsequently recognise them -- in crucial instances of conflict of obligations or conflict of obligation with inclination. And once we recognise them it is possible for us, theoretically at any rate, to try to resist the hold they have on our choice; and if it is not guaranteed that we shall succeed neither it is guaranteed that we shall fail. Of course, people are more or less determined by their psychological past. Some people are so embedded in their existing mental habits that it is beyond their intellectual power to consider that it may be necessary to look at these habits critically. Their habitual behaviour (i.e. behaviour which is to begin with, learnt) takes on more and more the shape of impulsive or instinctive behaviour. And as this happens they become quite incapable of even of thinking of resisting it. Therefore, there is a certain plausibility in saying that these people can no longer be considered to be moral agents in respect of such behaviour and they should not therefore be blamed for what they do. No doubt this is true of some people. It is also true that most of us cannot be expected to take the initiative to find out our undesirable traits, for whatever becomes habitual with us is taken for granted and does not any longer arouse any question. But most of us are told of our undesirable traits by people who do not like us and sometimes even by those who do like us, and then it can no longer be said that we cannot change our attitudes because we are
unaware of them. Of course, some people find it hard or even impossible to believe that their attitudes may in any way need changing even when their unsatisfactory character is pointed out to them. May be in this they are determined, but I am inclined to think that one can only be determined in this by a sense of exaggerated self-importance which all of us are tempted to feel and which blinds us to any of our possible imperfections. But must we accept this importance as an accepted fact, simply because it is in some sense natural for us to feel it, or is it that normally speaking (normally, because a sense of exaggerated self-importance is a symptom of some pathological condition) it is possible for us to learn to limit this importance by the importance of whatever lies beyond us?

It must, of course, be admitted here that the task is not an easy one and that how far one is able to criticise oneself and is able to accept criticism depends to quite a considerable extent upon how one's upbringing has helped one to form appropriate pro-attitudes in this respect. Nevertheless, it does seem to me that as far as normal people are concerned -- and however thin the distinction between normality and abnormality may be, it will not do to say that there is no such distinction at all -- it is possible, in principle, for one to realise the inadequacy of one's existing attitudes and be willing to change them, however true it may, as a matter of fact, be that few people actually do question their attitudes. But a difficulty
still remains. Changing an existing attitude, however undesirable one regards this attitude to be, is no easy task, and people show more or less capacity for the sustained effort that is necessary for success in this respect. Some people, we say, have more strength of character or will-power than others. How can people remodel their attitudes if they are lacking in the will-power that is necessary to do so.

Now I do not know that it has ever been shown that there is a necessary connection between a particular physiological and neurological constitution and a certain degree of what is called will-power, although it is likely that the extent to which one could exercise this power is restricted, within wide limits, by one's constitutional make-up. People who are constitutionally strong are perhaps capable of greater effort than people who are constitutionally weak. But there is no necessary connection between the two. In fact, some constitutionally weak people do show great tenacity in the field of their interest, but perhaps they are exceptional in some ways. In any case, we could hardly say that the strength of will that is necessary to make satisfactory moral choices through redirection of attitudes under ordinary circumstances is constitutionally lacking in normal people, whether or nor they actually exercise it. But some moral choices do call for great strength of will and courage which perhaps only people of a certain type of constitutional make-up are capable of. But we do not ordinarily blame people for not
doing things that require great effort, courage, strength of sacrifice; and even if we do we should not, unless we are sure of the capabilities of the people concerned in these respects.

Thus psychology has indeed a lesson to teach us. It is not that we should cease to blame people altogether but that we must not judge different people in the same way for the same failures. We must take into account not only the pressure of existing circumstances, but also the predominant circumstances in a man's life during those years when he was not yet capable of exercising independent judgment and when important habits and attitudes took shape. If we know of a man that he had a bad upbringing, that he was helped very little or not at all in modifying his natural tendencies, that the circumstances of his early life were such as to cause much more frustration than fulfilment which is likely to give rise to a general feeling of resentment and so on, we should -- and perhaps we do -- make far greater allowances for his failures than for those of a man who was fortunate in these respects. But it does seem to me that people -- people whom we would call normal, at any rate -- do have the capacity to decide to do certain things which are not what their predominant tendencies and attitudes, that have hitherto been existing, are impelling them to do. That is to say, people are capable of changing the direction of their existing character in some ways; that is what is implied in calling a
man an agent or in saying that a man is capable of voluntary action. As it is only man amongst all created things that is capable of voluntary action perhaps it appears somewhat mysterious, and a mystery it is, in the sense that there is nothing in our experience in terms of which it could fully be explained.

There is another variety of determinism, that of psychoanalysis which differs as a doctrine in some ways from ordinary psychological determinism. Some psycho-analysts believe that the character that we shall have as adults is fully determined by the experiences that happen to us during the first five years of our lives. During these years we are led to repress or completely banish from our conscious minds those impulses, desires and tendencies (felt naturally by all of us) which are not approved of by people amongst whom we live and against which pressure is brought to bear in the form of prohibitions and punishment. These impulses, etc., however still live with us as unconscious forces determining the shape of the activities that take place in our conscious minds. Further, some desires not socially disapproved of, like the desire to be loved, are sometimes frustrated as a result of the insensitivity of people who could fulfil it. A legitimate desire, if frustrated, creates a certain twist in our personalities that we do not even know of since it lives in our unconscious mind as a form of anti-social tendency.

Now the psychoanalytical concept of 'unconscious' differs
from the same concept as ordinarily used, as in 'until that happened she was quite unconscious of the attachment she had for him'. By the use of the term 'unconscious' psycho-analysis means to convey much more than this, that there is more in our personality than we know of at any one moment; or even that we remain quite unaware of some of our tendencies and attitudes that lend colour to our approach to things, unless something happens to force them on our attention. It says that we do not and cannot know of the basic forces that determine how we would think, feel and act because these forces have been driven out of the region of our consciousness by the special technique of repression and are accessible only by another special technique, namely psycho-analysis. The belief that we can control our motives and attitudes is an illusion for we cannot even know what our important motives and attitudes are.

Even if the sweeping generalisations of this particular school of psycho-analysis is true it would not completely rule out the use of moral praise and blame. It is possible for some people at any rate, to be psycho-analysed very thoroughly -- a process which brings to the fore forces which lie buried in the unconscious -- and a psycho-analysed person is, theoretically at any rate, in a position to try to control the forces that have so long been controlling him.

But the generalisations of psycho-analysis are sweeping. The only adequate justification for postulating unconscious determining forces (in the psycho-analytical sense) is the
presence in a person of behaviour difficulties of a compulsive type. So long as a person behaves normally and is able to vary his behaviour with changes in circumstances there is at least as much reason to think that the forces that are making him decide in one way rather than in another are accessible to a normal process of reflection and self-analysis, if such a process is resorted to, as to think that they are of an 'unconscious' nature. Now, although we do not know at first glance, whether a particular piece of human behaviour represents a difficulty of a compulsive type, it is surely not impossible for us to find out, in most cases at any rate, whether a person behaves as he does out of some sort of compulsion that he is not aware of, when we have observed him behave in a number of situations. A compulsive behaviour-difficulty does bring with it traces of strain and anxiety, also it has little of that adaptability to circumstances which normal behaviour has. In any case, if we could not tell the difference we would never know whom to bring to the psycho-analysts for treatment and whom not. A psycho-analyst would no doubt reply that the mere fact that we do not think that a person ought to be psycho-analysed does not show that he is not acting under unconscious forces. I am not concerned to say that it does show this. It is likely that there are in all of us certain forces which determine some of our actions that need more than ordinary reflection and analysis for us to be aware of them. Not only so, even when these are brought to
our notice we have a strong tendency to deny even to ourselves that they form a part of us. We are thus unconscious of these forces in a sense which is quite close to the psychoanalytical sense. What I am concerned to deny is that we must always act under such forces. On the contrary I believe that we can come to know by ordinary processes of reflection some of the tendencies and motives that lead us to decide in one way rather than in another, although they may not be apparent to begin with. I do not even think that in a case of a conflict between tendencies that are at least potentially conscious and tendencies that are unconscious the unconscious tendencies must always win. Sometimes we find that we are being moved towards a certain direction by inner forces that baffle our understanding, but even though such forces have great driving power do not necessarily yield. And when we do not, it is a part of our mental make-up belonging to the potentially conscious region that withholds the pressure of a compulsive force whose nature we do not quite understand. Of course some people have more of an analytical bent of mind than others, and this one must have in order that one may delve into one's own sub-conscious and semi-conscious motives and attitudes and thereby gain an increasing understanding of one's own self. But I do not know whether this is fully determined by constitutional factors, i.e., whether we could say on the basis of our knowledge of a particular constitution that the man concerned is incapable of reflective self-analysis. In
any case, it seems to me that one could be helped to a
certain extent in this matter by suitable handling and
guidance, provided one has the requisite degree of
intelligence.

What I think psycho-analysis is justified in saying
is that when we hold people - who behave in some undesirable
way - responsible for their actions we are sometimes mistaken,
not that we always are. We are sometimes mistaken, for it
is possible and likely that unconscious motivation (i.e.,
beyond the immediate control of the individual concerned) is
present in some instances of human behaviour which are not
markedly abnormal and are therefore not obviously diagnosed
as pathological. It is impossible from the very nature of
the case to provide any criterion by which we could easily
detect our mistakes in this respect. But I think that
there is a rough common sense way of guessing -- this is
applicable only when we have observed a person behave in a
certain way on a number of occasions -- whether a person is
acting under forces of which he is not only unaware but which
he is not even able to recognise as forming a part of his own
self. This is not a very reliable guide, but it is not
thoroughly unreliable either. In any case, the difference
between the conscious and the unconscious mind is not as
radical in normal human beings as psycho-analysis says --
and this is compatible with a complete break between the two
in pathological cases (or in so far as an instance of
behaviour is an indication of a pathological condition-for it
is sometimes possible for us to recognise, without under­
going a process of psycho-analysis, that certain tendencies
and attitudes are present in us which we not only did not
know to be present but which we did not think could possibly
be present in us until evidence for their presence is forcibly
brought to our notice.

Now let us consider a theory which may be called cosmo­
logical determinism. Every event, says the cosmological
determinist, must have a cause from which it follows necessarily.
Human choice, being an event amongst events, must also have a
cause, i.e., when a man chooses in a certain way, the possible
alternatives being of a certain character, there must be a
particular state of his mind from which it has followed
necessarily, otherwise it remains a thing unexplained. Now,
it is a fact that an action proceeds from a certain state of
the mind; an action could hardly be uncaused in the sense that
it just happens without there being any history behind it of
any kind whatsoever. But the point is, how rigid is the
connection between a certain state of the mind and a particular
action. And a theory is not a theory of determinism unless
it advocates a rigid connection, that is to say, unless it
says not only that a particular action has been preceded by
a certain state of the mind but also that given a certain state
of the mind and the possible alternatives of choice, it can
accurately be predicted what action will follow. But as a
matter of fact, the connection between a given state of the
mind and a particular action is not always as rigid as
determinism would like to have it. Maurice Cranston has
argued this point with great skill in his book *Freedom*.

"Imagine I have a friend who is parsimonious. If I said
to him: 'I'm sure you won't give a Christmas box at the
club this year', he might take my words as an accusation
of meanness, and promptly, in an attempt to disprove this
allegation, hand a five pound note to the porter at the
club. Likewise a don may say to his best pupil: 'you
will get a first in the schools' and to his worst pupil:
'you will get a fourth'. The effect of the words on the
very good pupil may be to give him too much confidence, cause
him to relax in his preparation for the schools, and finally
to take a second; the effect of the prediction on the very
poor pupil may be to sting him to new efforts with the result
that he pulls off a third."¹

If we consider the past mental history of the parsimonious
friend and even his mental state at the moment of parting with
the money which is possibly one of unwillingness to do so, we
find that the action of handing over the money does not follow
from either of these with any sort of necessity. The determinist
would, of course, say in reply that the action does follow from
this mental state of the parsimonious friend that he wishes
to disprove the allegation of meanness. So it does, but the
fact that it does nothing to undermine the possibility of genuine

¹. Freedom p.164.
moral choice. It is only when the parsimonious friend is
fully determined in his behaviour by his habit of parsimony
that he is incapable of exercising of any choice, not when
he acts on the motive 'let me disprove that I am parsimonious'
which does not follow necessarily from the habit of parsimony.
When we say that we know a person to be parsimonious we mean
that he is very sparing in expending money. The conclusion
that we may arrive at deductively -- on the occasion of the
remark being made -- from the knowledge that a man is parsi­
monicous is that he will either ignore it or give only a small
sum of money but not that he will give a comparatively large
such which it is strictly not necessary for him to spend. The
deduction will be as follows:

A parsimonious man will either not give any money at
all or give as little as the circumstances permit,
whenever the question of giving arises.

This man is a parsimonious man.
This man will either not give any money at all or
give as little as the circumstances permit on this
occasion.

As five pounds is a large sum of money to give as a Christmas
box, our knowledge that a man is parsimonious could not
possibly lead us to think that the man will give five pounds
by any process that may be called 'necessary'. So long as
it is allowed that human beings can have motives which are not
just deductions from their past history, they can with justice
be praised or blamed for their actions. When we say that a person is a moral agent we surely do not mean that he can act without motives, only that he retains the capability of developing new motives if he wishes to, and not merely of acting on motives that he already finds in himself. But is he free to wish to do so, or is one still being determined whether one wishes to develop new motives or merely follow the ones already present? If by saying 'one is still determined when one wishes to act on a motive that is opposed to the ones hitherto present in him' is simply meant that there is always a reason to be found when one wishes like this then of course one is always determined. But this sort of determinism will not do the job for the determinist. Take for instance, the case of the parsimonious friend. His action of handing over the money was determined (in the sense of being occasioned) by the remark, 'I am sure that you will not give a Christmas box at the club this year.' The remark may be called the cause of his action in this sense that if the remark had not been made he would not have acted as he did. Now suppose that the same remark was made the next year. Is there any guarantee that the man will again hand over a five pound note as he did before? It is doubtful whether he will. He might have seen through the remark by now specially because the loss of those five pounds has probably caused him many an unhappy moment. Instead of thinking to himself 'let me disprove that I am parsimonious' he might think 'I am not going to be
tricked by this remark this time', and consequently he does not give the money. Now suppose again that exactly the same remark was repeated on the third year. Is he going to avoid payment as he did the year before? Again it is doubtful. He might have felt very uneasy at having acted in a way which proves the accusation of parsimony commonly brought against him and he might hold that the repetition of the remark on the second year (giving him the impression that it was made to make him pay) was responsible for his not having paid. When he hears the remark for the third time he might say to himself 'I am not going to be tricked by this remark again', and hand over the money. Here the immediate cause of his action would be the same thought that made him act as he did on the previous year, but the same effect would not follow. Now it may be said that the thought 'I am not going to be tricked by this remark' actually stood for two different things on two different occasions. It meant on the first occasion, 'I am not going to be tricked into paying' while on the second 'I am not going to be tricked into not paying'. But the determinist's case is still lost if the same remark can give rise to different thoughts on different occasions and there is no knowing which thought is going to be evoked on a certain occasion. Predictability is the touchstone of scientific determinism and as Maurice Cranston shows, the issue of freedom in morals is the issue whether or not all human behaviour is predictable, in principle. And I
think that he succeeds in showing that it is impossible to predict some human behaviour, particularly creative behaviour, although we can sometimes predict with success how some people whom we know very well are going to act in a situation of a certain sort, particularly if we keep the prediction to ourselves.

Let us see, then, how it is impossible to predict creative behaviour. To quote Cranston. "The date is not recorded, but let us suppose that the corkscrew was invented at ten p.m. on 1st March 1650. Now if it were possible for that invention to be predicted -- for it to be announced prior to ten p.m. on 1st March 1650, that a particular man would invent the corkscrew -- then the observer who made this prediction would be the first person to announce the invention of the corkscrew. But if he knows about the corkscrew before the 'inventor' has invented it then the observer must be the true inventor." A moral action which is not fully covered by established habits may in a certain sense be called a creative act, for it represents an imaginative approach to an unique situation and a sensitive solution of what is essentially complex (i.e. not clear cut) however much we may know about a person and the circumstances under which he acts, we cannot tell beforehand how he is going to act, except when we have worked out the solution ourselves and our two solutions coincide. The determinist would no doubt reply that this is because we do not know enough. If

1. Ibid p. 167.
we knew of everything that passed in the man's mind down to the point when he would just be ready to act we would also have known how he is going to act. This certainly is true. But the determinist is now saying no more than 'whatever is going to be, is going to be' and not that a certain action is going to be, for if we know all that there is to know down to the actual initiation of the action itself we also know the action that is going to be. But the point is, can we always tell what is going to be? And if we cannot, then we cannot be determinists as the term would be understood in a scientific context. We are only determinists in the innocuous sense that every occurrence has certain precedents. Is it possible for us to know everything that is going to pass through a man's mind of which his action is only a natural outcome? To say that it is possible whether or not we actually do so is to assume that all this is somehow already set down. For if these are not set down and are still in the realm of possibility down to the moment when they do actually take place, then we can never know them before they have actually taken place and to know this is to know not something that is going to be but something that already is.

In fact the formula 'whatever is going to be, is going to be' or 'whatever is, is' is all that cosmological determinism can with justification stand for, and it is quite compatible with the possibility of voluntary action which is what is presupposed in moral praise and blame. Now the formula,
(whatever is, is' does express a necessity, a sort of necessity that we express when we say 'a thing done cannot be undone'. Because of this element of necessity the formula has also been expressed by 'whatever exists, exists of necessity'. But this latter formula might be taken to involve more than the necessity of an accomplished fact, it might be interpreted as, 'whatever comes to exist, must come to exist' and suggests that the fact that is now accomplished was already preordained, or pre-formed. It suggests that whatever comes to exist can only do so by being pushed into existence by a definite set of conditions that lies behind, which in its turn is pushed into existence by something else further back and so on, so that all that is happening is happening according to a plan, at it were, which is already laid down in the very beginning of existence. This involve much more than what either of the tautologies 'whatever is, is' and 'whatever must be, must be' stand for, for it says 'whatever is, must be'. 'whatever is, must be' is not a tautology nor is it unquestionably true as an empirical statement, for we have already noticed instances of human actions which do not fit in with this formula. whatever is, must be, only if all the conditions that are actually involved in the coming into existence of a particular thing are already existing; but if we already know what these conditions are and that they are existing we know that the thing which is, is one that must be. That is to say, we have converted
Whatever is, must be; to whatever must be, must be.

And this is a tautology and as such acceptable without question. But it will not do the job that a cosmological determinist wants the formula 'whatever is, must be' to do.

Spinoza, who was a cosmological determinist, believed that all that happens in this world, including human actions, is preordained and follows of necessity from nature considered as infinite and eternal which is another name for God. Belief in free choice and decision is then an illusion and judgments of praise and blame without foundation. Most who have written on the emotions, the manner of human life, seem to have dealt not with natural things which follow the general laws of nature, but with things which are outside the sphere of nature: they seem to have conceived man in nature as a kingdom within kingdom. For they believe that man disturbs rather than follows the course of nature, and that he has absolute power in his actions, and is not determined in them by anything else than himself. They attribute the cause of human weakness and inconstancy not to the ordinary power of nature, but to some defect or other in human nature, wherefore they deplore, ridicule, despise, or, what is most common of all, abuse it: and he that can carp in the most eloquent or acute manner at the weakness of the human mind is held by his fellows as almost divine. Believing as he did that human emotions follow the general laws of nature that are

beyond human control Spinoza thought that human failures
should be looked upon as natural things like sunshine or
grey sky, and not as things that can be either praised or
blamed for being what they are. I believe that we are
sometimes blamed for certain failures which it is not
possible for us to avoid or even to choose to avoid, but
Spinoza is saying much more than that. He is saying that
we cannot in justice be blamed for anything we do, for
whatever we do, we do by way of following nature that we
must follow. This is a position which our common sense
finds unacceptable for there are instances where we have
no reason whatsoever to doubt that we could have acted
differently if we had chosen and that it is as much within
our power to choose what we have not chosen as to choose
what we have chosen. What we actually choose in such a case
depends on what we set ourselves to choose, and it is in this
power that we have of setting ourselves to choose a certain
thing that the freedom of the moral agent lies. That we
can set ourselves to choose in a certain way rather than in
another either of which is within our power to choose, cannot
be proved. It is something that has to be accepted, if it
is accepted at all, on the evidence of those who have under­
go­ne the sort of experience that is involved in one's being a
moral agent in the full sense of the term.

Do we then or do we not follow nature in choosing to
act in one way rather than in another? It depends on what
we mean by the term 'nature'. If by 'nature' we mean all that there has been, is, or will be, as Spinoza conceives nature to be by calling it infinite and eternal, then of course, we could never escape whatever we may set ourselves to choose. For it includes all our actual or possible choice by definition. And when some one thinks of nature in this way -- without beginning or end and yet existing as a totality in one's imagination -- which seems to be rather a religious than a moral way of looking at things, it does seem to confer upon him an ability to accept calmly all that may happen, and to see human follies and failures in a wide perspective. And this perhaps makes him far less angered and upset at their presence than he would otherwise be. A religious attitude does not say that there is no difference between good and evil, or that nothing can be done to stop evil or bring about good, which would be the case if both good and evil are absolutely inevitable. But it does seem to enable a person to bear with equanimity, to some degree at any rate, the presence of evil when it has come to exist and to have a certain patience towards it as long as it must unavoidably exist, for he sees it as part of a much bigger something. To a person like this, whatever is going to happen is an integral part of what may be called 'reality' and this attitude of acceptance towards what is still not there in the ordinary sense, makes what is already there somehow appear to be a part of what is past and as a result
less provocative of resentment.

But as long as we are not talking from the religious point of view we do not include in our thoughts of nature whatever that will be when it will be and conceive of it something that actually exists. Understood in this sense we do not inevitably follow our nature (which is a part of nature infinite and eternal) in whatever we do, for sometimes we alter or remodel the nature that we already have. And so long as we do not include all that is going to happen in the future in our thought of the present, it does appear that we have the power to go against our nature. From this point of view, what is called one's 'nature' is not something that is eternally accomplished but something which may yet grow, and although this growth happens within certain wide limits, these limits do not preordain how a person would actually choose in every given situation (except perhaps a few). Understood merely as the doctrine -- which is hardly a doctrine but may be a significant reminder in some ways -- that every action that is performed must have a mental state which preceded it and not that the mental state that precedes the action in question can be the only state that could possibly have preceded it, cosmological determinism is true enough, but it is determinism only in a very limited sense -- in the sense that an action, particularly an action involving choice, does not suddenly appear out of nowhere but has a history behind it. But this sort of view cannot claim that we must
act in some particular way or other.

I have so far tried to uphold the possibility, in principle, of genuine moral choice and the acceptability of judgments of praise and blame. But of all moral judgments judgments of praise and blame are the most problematic in nature. Although we sometimes take it for granted that if we are justified in saying 'y not z was the duty of x' we are also justified in blaming x for not doing y, this may not at all be the case. The judgment 'y was the duty of x' may only put forward what was the most suitable act under a certain circumstance from the point of view of morality without at all implying that x in particular was theoretically able and practically in a position to do it. No doubt it appears contradictory to say that something can be somebody's duty if the person concerned is not able to do it. That is when we use the term 'duty' to mean 'personally obliged to do'. It must be admitted that most often we do use 'duty' in this way. And when we do so we also blame the person concerned for not doing what is his duty. But sometimes it happens that we do want to say that some other act than the one done by somebody is morally the most suitable act under the circumstances, although we find that we cannot in justice hold the person responsible and therefore blameworthy for not having done it. The term 'duty' not only means 'personally obliged to do', it also means the most suitable act under
the circumstances. So it happens that we say that an act was somebody's duty meaning that it was the most suitable act he could do even though we do not believe that it is fair to expect him to choose to do it. This latter use of the word 'duty' then is different from the other use of the same word, for here it simply means the most suitable act in the circumstances without implying that the person concerned is obliged to do it. Thus it is possible to talk about duty in a certain wide sense and yet not blame a person for failing to do it. But having used the word in this wide sense we often lapse into the habit of thinking that duty must mean 'personally obliged to do', and as we do so we blame a person we should not in justice blame.

Let us see in greater detail how the complication arises.

When the word 'duty' is used in the sense of the most suitable act it still involves the idea of obligation although not the idea of personal and particular obligation which is involved in the narrower sense of duty. It involves the idea of general obligation on the part of human beings whose nature we conceive to be of a certain kind. This is the kind which we suppose belong to one whom we would call a normal human being i.e. a person who is not deficient in his abilities or diseased in their functioning or again who is not lacking in

1. When it means this we presuppose that the people we are talking about are normal human beings.
opportunities of developing himself or of social adjustment in a degree that is prejudicial to one's becoming a moral agent. And these we judge by comparing different people with one another even though we can have only more or less tenable opinions in such matters and not knowledge. When we use the word 'duty' in its narrower sense as in 'y is the duty of x' meaning x is personally obliged to do y, we also express our belief that x is a normal human being in the morally relevant sense. But we do not always take care to find out if this really is the case, as we should. Of course, we have a certain justification in assuming that a person, who does not appear to be markedly different in abilities, circumstances of life, and health both physical and mental from the majority of people we know, is able to do what is his duty in the narrower sense -- unless, of course, we have definite reasons to think otherwise and unless the duty is one which requires exceptional effort in some ways. That is to say, we are in a certain sense justified in assuming that people are normal unless we have reasons to think that they are not. Thus whenever we use the word 'duty' in its wider sense which involves only the idea of general obligation on the part of normal human beings we also tend to assume that it can at the same time be used in its narrower sense which involves the idea of personal obligation. But although I have said that we have a certain justification we are not always justified in taking it for granted that the use of
the word in the wider sense permits the use of it in the narrower sense as well. For people's inabilities which may be called 'natural' in the sense that they make a genuine moral choice of a certain kind impossible are not always apparent. And we might find on closer considerations that although a particular act is the most suitable in a certain circumstance and although it is not impossible for normal people to do it, the person actually involved could not be expected to do it because of some inability or other over which he has no control. Then we would be justified in saying 'y was the duty of x' only in the sense that y was the most suitable act which he, if he was not suffering from some inability that he cannot be expected to control, would have been obliged to do. And this makes it clear that x cannot be blamed for not doing what was his duty in this wider sense. A judgment of duty in this wider sense is a judgment on something that is of value considered on its own, a judgment that blames is a judgment on somebody or other in particular who may or may not be able to achieve what is of value because of certain factors that are beyond his control. But if we are not always justified in assuming that a person, in particular, is able to do his duty neither are we justified in assuming that he is not so able; and we should have good reasons in favour of thinking that he is not able to, if we are going to think that he is not. A judgment of blame has then only a provisional validity and is subject to correction.
in the light of any further evidence that may be forthcoming, although, even after such correction, we may continue to believe that the act, for the failure to do which the man was being blamed, is, considered by itself, morally most suitable to the situation.

It is not only that a judgment of blame has only a provisional validity; the concept of 'blame' is a concept in terms of which we hold people more or less responsible for their failures. We might find that although a particular person is not inherently incapable of doing the act which is suitable to the situation the doing of it might need a considerable amount of effort or sacrifice on the part of the agent. If a case of moral failure is a case like this, we do not feel disposed to hold the agent fully responsible for his failure. For when we hold a person fully responsible for doing what he, in a certain sense, should not have done, we feel disgust at his conduct or even contempt. But we do not feel disgust or contempt for every moral failure for which an agent is, in some ways, responsible. For we realise that some circumstances are such that it is relatively easy to do what one ought to do while others offer a great deal of temptation to a moral agent to do what he should not do. Now there may not, theoretically speaking, be any reason why one must give way to a certain temptation; but considering that human beings are not angels, whose characters are conceived in such a way that they can
only do what is good and not what is evil, we feel that it is in some sense natural for one to give way to temptation if the temptation is strong. This is why we do not show contempt or disgust for failures that are not easily avoidable as we may do for failures which can be avoided relatively easily. It is obvious that there is no set criterion by which one could in every case automatically find out what failures are easily avoidable and what are not, but this does not mean that there is no difference between the two or that it is impossible from the very nature of the case to find out which is which. It only shows that there can be no ready-made judgments of praise or blame, and that every single case ought to be thought out on its own merit. Just as our particular judgments of duty ought to be based on considerations of specific situations in which actions take place, so also our particular judgments of blame ought to be based on the specific capabilities of the agent concerned as well as the circumstances that strongly influence him. Our particular judgments of duty and blame are then not deductions from self-evident premises but they involve certain self-evident notions of value which give a perspective to such particular judgments. They involve these notions in this way. Judgments of duty and blame are evaluative judgments, and we could not evaluate anything or say that the object is worthy or unworthy of being
valued unless we had some notion of a standard or ideal in terms of which the issue concerned could be assessed. The standards or ideals in accordance with which particular moral judgments are to proceed are provided by certain self-evident notions of good attitudes or dispositions and right principles of action. To judge or evaluate something in accordance with a standard means to approach a particular issue as a particular issue having specific features of its own but in a characteristic manner. This manner consists in seeing that a general conception of value is relevant to it, and to see this is sometimes to see the particular value or disvalue that attaches to the issue in question which is expressed in a judgment. In a case which is simple, to form a particular evaluative judgment is to see the conception of value that is involved, and there are not two successive steps from one to the other. But sometimes we find that no particular evaluative judgment is apparent which shows that the situation is complex and that more than one value conception is relevant to it. In a case like this we have to look for as many features as may have a bearing on the issue to see more clearly the value conceptions in terms of which the situation may be conceived and when these are considered in relation to one another, to see what particular evaluative judgment fits in with the situation best. Moral inference then differs from a deductive inference in this that we do not in morals
start with a general proposition, find a particular instance of it and deduce a conclusion about the particular from the general proposition. Rather we start with a particular as a particular and the crucial step lies in seeing what general value conception is relevant to it, and to see this is to see the particular evaluative judgment that fits the issue except in cases where more than one conception is relevant and there we have to see the bearings of the conceptions on the issue in relation to one another, in their capacity as more or less general formulations of a characteristic point of view. If we wish to reserve the name 'inference' for either inductive or deductive inference, then, of course, there can be no such thing as an evaluative inference, this however, is only a matter of terminology. But there is certainly moral thinking -- thinking that leads to one conclusion rather than another -- in so far as it is thinking in accordance with a standard it is logical in process in a wide sense of the term 'logical'. But the nature of moral thinking makes one thing clear. Moral evaluation of particular issues is an activity that requires the exercise of personal judgment on the issue in question and it cannot be understood merely as a process of deduction from general rules.

Most of what we have said about blame applies also to praise. Just as we do not, or should not, blame all people equally for the same failures we do not praise them equally
for the same success either. If people have superior capabilities or are fortunate in the circumstances of life, some ways of behaving required by the moral point of view come relatively easily to them. Others who start at a disadvantage in some ways may have to exert great pressure on themselves for the same success. We are inclined to praise the latter people more than we praise the former, for obviously the latter type of action represents more in terms of positive achievement, although, as Kant says, anyone who does whatever his duty in preference to what is not is thereby worthy of respect. Again the same person is praised more for doing a particular duty temptation against which is strong than for one which give him positive pleasure, although the fact that it gives him pleasure does not detract from the value that the doing of one's duty has. But we do not always praise people for doing their duties as we usually incline to blame all normal people for failing to do something that is their duty. And the reason for this seems to be this.

In every society certain ways of behaving are generally established and they become, through various processes of social conditioning, a part of the habitual equipment that the members of the society in general have. People are not generally praised for doing those duties that are habitually done in a society, for to single out anyone for praise is to attribute to him personal credit and we do not think that
any one deserves personal credit for doing what is habitually done by most — although the fact that something is done habitually does not detract from the value that an action has as the doing of a duty.

Judgments of praise like judgments of blame are problematic, for we do not know for certain whether the doing of a duty by a certain man represents a personal achievement. But such judgments, although problematic, may be more or less well-grounded and here I have tried to expound the considerations on which they are, or ought to be, grounded. 'Praise' and 'blame' are concepts by means of which we ascribe more or less credit or discredit to people for doing what they do or for not doing what they do not do.
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