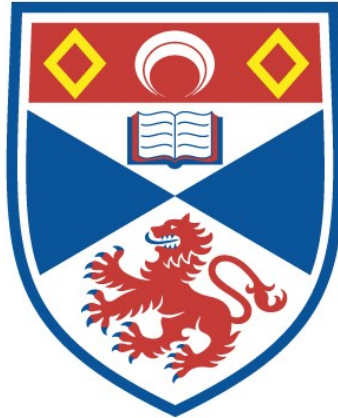


**REALISM AND IDEALISM
IN THE THEORY OF VALUE**

James Lenman

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



1995

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James Lenman

PhD thesis

submitted in

the Department of Moral Philosophy,

University of St Andrews

June 1994.

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Declarations

I, James Lenman, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 90,000 words in length has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

5th May, 1995.

James Lenman

I was admitted as a research student in October 1987. The higher study for this degree was carried out between October 1987 and June 1994.

5th May, 1995.

James Lenman

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tao pu yüan jen jen chih
wei tao erh yüan jen pu
k'o i wei tao

The Way is not far from
 men. When men follow a way
 that is far from men, it
 is not the Way.

Attributed to Confucius,
Chung Yung, XIII

tao hsing chih erh ch'eng

The Way is sustained by
 being walked upon.

Chuang Tzu, chapter 2

Abstract

This thesis defends an account of value which emphasizes the central place occupied by *experiences* among the objects of evaluation, a point that is particularly stark in the case of *aesthetic* value, to which a chapter is devoted that adumbrates the wider understanding of value subsequently defended. More generally it is argued that values do not transcend the attitudes and institutions in which they are embodied. They nonetheless enjoy in virtue of their structuring by norms of consistency, stability and deference enough in the way of *objectivity* to do justice to various phenomenological considerations often thought to favour realism. It is argued however that this level of objectivity is compatible with the rejection of any form of reductive naturalism and, more generally, of cognitivism- views which should indeed, it is argued, be rejected in favour of an expressivistic understanding of value.

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Chapter 1: The Issue of Realism and Truth

1.1. Michael Dummett has defined "realism" with respect to a given class of statements whose status is in dispute as

the belief that statements of the disputed class possess an objective truth-value, independently of our means of knowing it: they are true or false in virtue of a reality existing independently of us.¹

The notion of *evidence-transcendence*² here invoked is central to this conception of realism. This is not an unproblematic notion. For one thing, who are the "us" independence of whose epistemic resources is being invoked? My belief that another person has a mind would appear to be independent of *my* but not of *their* means of knowing that they do. Likewise my beliefs about the experiences of people whose lives fall either before or after my death. And indeed my beliefs about my own past and future experiences transcend my *present* means of verifying or falsifying them but *only* my present means.

The denial of realism as Dummett defines it is *anti-realism*. This denies the existence of the sort of evidence-transcendent truth-conditions realism espouses. Like verificationism, of which it is plausibly taken to be a version, anti-realism is a *semantic* thesis. It is a thesis in which the role in the determination of meaning played (according

¹ Dummett, 1978, p146.

² Cf. Crispin Wright, 1986b, p252, who defines "semantic realism" as the truth-conditional conception of meaning, belief in the general validity (prescinding from vagueness) of the Principle of Bivalence, and acceptance of the possibility of evidence-transcendent truth.

to, among others, Gottlob Frege, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Alfred Tarski and Donald Davidson³) by *truth-conditions* is played instead by *assertion-conditions*.⁴

Another way of formulating a realist position is *metaphysical*. It would claim that the world has objective reality independently of how it is experienced and conceived. This sort of realism is much less obviously a doctrine concerned with *truth*.⁵ Its most natural antonym is simply "idealism". What this latter typically denies is the relativity (to persons and times) involved in the strong verificationism⁶ espoused by anti-realism while accepting the weak verificationism that remains of anti-realism when this relativism is eliminated. For the idealist, claims about reality are responsible to *all* experiences, not just *present* experiences, not just *my* experiences and, on some formulations, not just *actual* experiences. This way, for example, statements about the past or about other minds come out as capable of truth, but statements about theoretical entities in science do not. For an idealist there can be such facts as that you are in pain, or that I was, or that Joan of Arc was, or, perhaps, that I would be were I to \emptyset and their truth values can diverge from what my presently available epistemic criteria happen to deliver.

For anti-realism, such facts are problematic and the possibility of their truth value diverging from their assertibility is difficult even to formulate given the absorption of

³ See Frege, 1967, pp89-90; Wittgenstein, 1961,

esp. 4.01ff. Tarski, "The Concept of Truth in Formalized Languages" in his 1956 and Davidson, 1984.

⁴ Dummett, 1976 is perhaps the *locus classicus*.

⁵ Michael Devitt, in particular, in his 1984, has been strongly critical of the Dummettian recasting of the debate on realism in semantic terms.

⁶ The term is Wright's- see his 1987, chapter 5.

the very notion of truth in that of assertibility.⁷ This is where the semantic formulation of the issue is relevant to the metaphysical, for verificationist positions have typically attacked metaphysical realism at the level of intelligibility. Dummett however has drawn attention to a way of dealing with such facts that does not deny their intelligibility outright, but raises doubts about the applicability to them of the logical principle of *bivalence*, whereby they would be deemed, though undecidable, determinately either true or false, *tertium non datum*.⁸ The relevance of this is most easily seen by noting that, when the sense of a proposition P is identified on some anti-realist theory with something along the lines of "It is verifiable that P" or "It is provable that P", it yields both an internal and an external negation, thus breaking down the applicability of the principle to such propositions.⁹ Though this issue of

⁷ A. J. Ayer, 1979, p278, puts the distinction clearly:

it is customary in this context [i.e. the philosophy of perception] to contrast realism with idealism, but a Berkeleian idealist must count for Dummett as a sophisticated realist, so long as he believes that every statement ascribing an idea to God or to the human mind has a determinate truth-value.

⁸ See "Realism" in his 1978.

⁹ The simplest example might be Protagorean relativism (see Plato's *Theaetetus*) where truth is analysed along some such lines as

P is true_{for a} if and only if BaP

bivalence has loomed large in recent debates on realism, it is not an aspect of that debate to which I shall here seek to contribute.

The British debate on anti-realism has derived very largely from the work of Dummett with its sources in Frege, L. E. J. Brouwer and the later Wittgenstein.¹⁰ In America the dominant figure has been Hilary Putnam¹¹ who since the early nineteen-eighties has been defending what he calls *internal realism* which relativizes truth to our actual beliefs and standards of rationality as distinguished from what he calls *metaphysical* or *external realism* which espouses a transcendental "absolute conception of reality".¹² Like Dummett, Putnam concentrates on semantic arguments, which he has formulated both in terms of informal philosophy of language and in terms of formal model-theory, to show that even if there were a transcendent reality of this sort, we could not refer to it, as reference cannot be seen as a relation capable of "magically" connecting our thoughts and utterances to anything so remote from the *Lebenswelt*¹³ to which those thoughts and utterances are oriented.

The right-hand side, BaP, has both an internal negation Ba¬P and an external ¬BaP and bivalence consequently seems to fail on this analysis. But note that a Dummettian anti-realist would count a Protagorean as a *reductionist* and a *realist* unless he extended his rejection of belief-transcendence, and bivalence, to propositions *about what is believed*, to BaP, Ba¬P and ¬BaP *themselves*, an extension which might raise doubts about the plausibility and coherence of just such an analysis.

¹⁰ See Dummett 1973, esp. chapter 13, 1976 and 1978, esp. chapters 1, 10, 13, 14.

¹¹ These views are developed in Putnam 1981, 1983 and 1990 among other writings. The model-theoretic argument referred to is stated in "Models and Reality" reprinted in his 1983

¹² The latter term is Bernard Williams'. See his 1978, p64-7 and 1985, chapter 8.

¹³ Here meaning "the world as we actually experience it" (Putnam, 1990, p118).

Thus much then by way of characterizing the background issues of the debate on realism. Such general issues will not be my primary concern in most of what follows. I shall rather be centrally concerned with a form of *local* realism- realism about *values*. This again does not signal a single clear cut issue- in the first place there is the question of the *mind-independence* of values. Are they or are they not features of the world independent our mental lives? Can anything other than the minds of valuers, singly or collectively, determine what is valuable? This is the issue of *platonism* which will be a central concern of chapter 3 below. It is distinct from a different sort of mind-dependence issue- that of whether anything can be valuable other than in relation to minds? To put it in terms of G. E. Moore's helpful dramatization of the issue (considered in 5.9 below), could value inhere in a beautiful, but lifeless, world?¹⁴ This is the issue of *axiological* (moral, aesthetic or whatever) *idealism* which will preoccupy me extensively in later chapters. Both these questions, the question of the *metaphysics* of value and the question of its *constituency* may be distinguished from the issue of *cognitivism*, generally understood as the issue of whether claims about what is and is not to be valued are susceptible of truth or falsity. This will be the leading concern of the present chapter as well as of chapter 8 below.

1.2. The issue of cognitivism is problematic and in formulating it, caution is at a premium. When it is framed in terms of truth and falsehood, much of the difficulty lies in simply locating its *relevance* to the debate on moral realism. The *locus classicus* for a non-cognitivist position in the twentieth century has been the writings of Charles Stevenson which are the definitive statement of *emotivism* whereby evaluative terms serve not to *describe* the world but to *express* our feelings about it, attitudes which

¹⁴ See his 1903, pp83-85.

need to be sharply distinguished from *beliefs*¹⁵ and which are *not* susceptible of truth and falsity.

But having said this much, Stevenson goes on to offer a *harmless* sense in which it *is* legitimate to speak of truth with respect to moral claims.¹⁶ The propriety or otherwise of imputing truth to a given sentence is, he claims, "a purely syntactical" matter- these notions being applicable to all and only sentences in the *indicative mood* and serving simply to express *agreement* with such sentences, that agreement continuing to be understood as an agreement in attitude not in belief. And a similar willingness to allow such a harmless sense of truth is found in more recent writers. Thus Simon Blackburn:

It is a complete mistake to think that the notion of moral truth, and the associated notions of moral attributes and propositions disappear when the realistic theory is refuted. To think that a moral proposition is true is to concur in an attitude to its subject.¹⁷

Stevenson's acknowledgement of the harmlessness of conceding cognitivism in this sense appealed to a redundancy conception of truth. Outlining a more sophisticated view, Davidson has stressed a similar harmlessness:

¹⁵ See his 1944 and 1963.

¹⁶ Stevenson, 1963, pp214-220. Alan Gibbard (1990) is the most impressive contemporary champion of such expressivism.

¹⁷ Blackburn, 1971, p124. Cf. his 1984, p196. Cf. also Neil Cooper, 1981, p150ff. Cooper disputes however the applicability to moral judgements of Dummett's correspondence principle (the same as W4 below) and bivalence.

Even if we hold that there is some important sense in which moral or evaluative sentences do not have a truth value (for example, because they cannot be verified) we ought not to boggle at "'Bardot is good" is true if and only if Bardot is good"; in a theory of truth, this consequence should follow with the rest, keeping track of the semantic location of such sentences in the language as a whole... What is special to evaluative words is simply not touched; the mystery is transferred from the word "good" in the object language to its translation in the metalanguage.¹⁸

But while non-cognitivists have acknowledged such harmless ways in which we may speak of moral judgements as true or false, the claim persists, that in some less harmless sense of "truth", statements about values lack a truth value. But what sense is this? It is not being denied by Stevenson or Blackburn, say, that evaluative statements can be true or false. And hence presumably it is not being denied that they can have truth values (for their being true or false just *is* having truth values). And it would not presumably be denied that they have truth-conditions, in the sense in which truth conditions are what sentences like "Bardot is good" is true if and only if Bardot is good" *give*. So what *is* being denied?

A plausible reading of such deflationary claims is to see the word "true" as simply a device for *endorsing* assertoric sentences. So that, in effect, there is nothing for truth, so conceived, to amount to but warranted assertibility.¹⁹ Deflationism so construed has recently been criticized by Crispin Wright on the basis that truth and warranted

¹⁸ 1984, p31.

¹⁹ See Wright, 1992, pp15-18.

assertibility must diverge, at least potentially, in extension.²⁰ For given the disquotational schema:

"P" is T iff P.

we get:

"It's not the case that P" is T iff it's not the case that P.

and:

It's not the case that P iff it's not the case that "P" is T.

whereby, by transitivity:

"It's not the case that P" is T iff it's not the case that "P" is T.

And, when "T" is read as "warrantedly assertible", this latter is, in fact, *false* in view of the possibility of *neutral* informational states with regard to at least a great many substituends for "P".

Rejecting deflationism on this basis, Wright does not however depart from its metaphysically unassuming spirit. He instead advocates what he calls *minimalism* about truth, which sees the diagnosed potential divergence in extension from warranted assertibility as effectively *exhausting* the notion of truth, at least when taken

²⁰ Ibid., chapter 1, section III.

in tandem with various *platitudes* that capture certain basic intuitions about the way the truth predicate works. The minimalism then lies in the claim that:

there is no notion of genuine- deep- assertoric content, such that a discipline which exhibits whatever degree of discipline (there are firmly acknowledged standards of proper and improper use of its assertoric sentences) and which has all the overt syntactic trappings of assertoric content (resources for- apparent- conditionalization, negation, embedding within propositional attitudes and so on)- no notion of genuine assertion such that a discourse with all this may nevertheless fail to be in the business of expressing genuine assertions. Rather, if things are in all these surface respects as if assertions are being made, then so they are.²¹

Acceptance of this minimalist view would, Wright argues, be curtains for any attempt on the part of those expressivists about values who would deny the truth-aptness of evaluative thoughts and utterances to understand this lack of truth-aptitude as a *covert* feature of such thoughts and utterances which their syntactic surfaces may serve simply to conceal. For, on this minimalist view, "surface constraints of syntax and discipline" are just *constitutive* of truth-aptitude and cannot intelligibly be taken as covering its absence.

1.3. This position is not, I suspect, altogether convincing. But, except for noting at 1.5 below just how much discipline can coexist with non-assertoric force, I will largely postpone consideration of just why until chapter 8 below. Nonetheless whether it be in

²¹ Ibid., p29.

the light of Wright's minimalist arguments or of such concessions to a deflated cognitivism as expressivists are given to making, it begins to seem unhelpful to characterize "non-cognitivism" crudely as a doctrine about the aptness of moral judgements for the characterizations, "true" and "false", for when these terms are read in the wide sense averted to by Stevenson, "non-cognitivism" comes out as a doctrine almost nobody is defending. Non-cognitivism is thus perhaps more usefully understood as the view that there is available, within the set of statements to which truth and falsity are meaningfully imputed, a subset of these that are in some sense genuinely *fact-stating* where those outside this set are not. Statements about value are then outwith this genuinely fact-stating set but within the wider set. So understood, noncognitivism is a part of what I am concerned to defend.

Cognitivist writers have, however, sought to undermine the non-cognitivist position by posing searching questions as to whether the weakest conception of truth that can, without violence to our actual thinking about values, be assigned to imputations of the latter really falls short of the strongest sense of truth that can, without violence to certain favoured epistemological insights, be assigned to *anything*; whether the non-cognitivist's proposed distinction between the general set of "true" sentences and the narrower one of "fact-stating" ones is one he is able to make out.

This line of argument, known, following J. L. Mackie, as the *argument from companions in guilt*²² receives its principle airing in the writings of David Wiggins on truth and value.²³ Wiggins, taking his cue from certain remarks by Peter Strawson and Bernard Williams, begins with a characterization of the project of arriving at a "substantive notion of truth", and proposes that the basis for this project be found in the Davidsonian suggestion, already mentioned, that we explicate the meaning (in

²² See his 1977, p39.

²³ See his 1980 and essays III and IV in his 1987.

Frege's terminology the "sense") of sentences by reference to their truth conditions. Such explication is conceived, following Davidson (and less directly Tarski), as seeking to provide a theory that yields for each sentence *s* of a given language a biconditional of the form

s is true if and only if *p*.

What, for Tarski, made this precisely a theory of *truth* was that *p* was either the very same sentence as *s* or a *translation* of that sentence into the metalanguage. But, in the context of Davidson's project of explicating *meaning*, appeal to the notion of *translation* would be question-begging. Davidson's proposed solution to this was to resort to the notion of *radical interpretation constrained by a principle of charity*, which thus becomes the key element in his attempt to give a naturalistic characterization of meaning. This notion is likewise proposed by Wiggins as a basis for philosophical inquiry into *truth* though, following Richard Grandy²⁴, he recommends enriching Davidsonian charity with a more generally anthropological understanding based on a *principle of humanity*. The idea is to conceive a theory of truth as offering a characterization of "true" in the above quoted biconditional such as to fit it, in the light of the proposed anthropological constraints on interpretation, to play its intended role in the theory of meaning. Wiggins tentatively offers a framework for such a theory by proposing five *marks* which he takes to be fundamental characteristics of truth.²⁵ These are as follows:

²⁴ See his 1973.

²⁵ See his 1980 and 1987, essay III.

W1/ Truth is the "primary dimension of assessment for sentences". For it is a fundamental constraint on interpretation that users of a language be taken as operating in terms of a norm to utter true sentences rather than false ones. Otherwise there would be no empirical basis on which to relate their utterances to their surroundings.²⁶

W2/ There should be a tendency, under favourable conditions, for speakers to *converge* on agreement about the truth-value of sentences in their language.

What seems to underlie this thought is that the criteria for appraising the truth values must be of a *public* kind to which speakers may appeal to give their communication *point* and to which (connecting the present mark to W1) the interpreter may appeal to furnish the cash-value of his interpretations. Related to this is the idea that the standard explanation for convergence on some belief that P should include appeal to P itself. It is, of course, open to dispute whether these considerations justify more than the weaker conclusion that convergence should be *possible*.

W3/ The content of a belief should be independent of the mere fact of its being believed. Its truth should be *independent of any given speaker's means of recognizing it*. These formulations are not, on the face of it, the same. Their identification is presumably motivated by some such thought as that if the criteria for appraising the truth of sentences must be public, genuine beliefs must be capable of correction by those criteria and hence their truth conditions must be independent of any given believer's attitudes to them.

²⁶ On this point, cf. Davidson's "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme" in his 1984.

W4/ True sentences are true in *virtue of something*. This is taken by Wiggins as summarizing W1-W3 above.²⁷

W5/ Truth is *agglomerative*, that is, if P is true and Q is true, (P & Q) is true. Wiggins' motivations here is that this principle is a condition for beliefs being subject to appraisal for *consistency*.

Wiggins suggests that these marks furnish the basis for the sort of substantive theory of truth he and Strawson were indicating the need for but that they are not necessarily such as to *exclude* moral judgements from the domain of statements open to appraisal in terms of truth in this substantive sense (though Wiggins recognizes that the phenomenon of *conflicting values* creates related difficulties with respect to marks W2 and W5²⁸). The challenge to the non-cognitivist is then either to build on these latter, or other, difficulties to divorce moral judgements from the domain of truth as characterized by W1-W5 or to improve on the characterization by offering some further marks that would permit both the characterization of some core of truths in a "full-blooded" sense and the exclusion from it of moral truths.

²⁷ Cf. Dummett, 1978, pp16-17.

²⁸ Williams has been the most forceful exploiter of these two openings for a distinction between a "full-blooded" sense of truth and a weaker sense applicable to value judgements. See, on conflict and agglomerativity, his "Ethical Consistency" and "Consistency and Realism" 1973 (and cf. the discussion in Susan Hurley, 1989, chapter 9, section 1) and, on convergence, his 1985, chapter 8 (and cf. the discussion in Putnam, 1990, chapter 11). I would confess myself generally sceptical about the whole idea of an ideal end to inquiry such as Williams' appeals to (see Wright's comments in his 1986a, pp197-8 and 1992, p46; Rescher, 1984, provides extensive argumentation for such scepticism).

The argument from companions in guilt has received support in the work of number of other writers²⁹, notably Putnam in his vigorous attacks on the so-called fact-value distinction³⁰, his objections to this distinction relating directly to his rejection of metaphysical realism. The argument isn't, of course, so much an argument for realism with respect to values as an argument against the supposition that anti-realism with respect to values places beliefs about them somehow on a *different footing* from other beliefs. It works more by downgrading the sorts of truth and reality that are not axiological than by upgrading those that are. Thus its main upshot, if successful, is to subvert such traditional dichotomies as fact/value, is/ought and of course cognitive/non-cognitive rather than to put in place a metaphysics or ontology of value that is necessarily less parsimonious than any the anti-realist would be inclined to accept.

The challenge thus laid down to sympathizers with Stevenson can be understood as follows: the latter had, in admitting the applicability of truth to imputations of value, favoured a highly *non-substantive* notion of truth, explicitly and approvingly citing the redundancy theory of Frank Ramsey, to put aside the suggestion that on his revised view:

ethical judgements are true or false only in atypical senses of the terms-
in senses that have little or nothing to do with those that are appropriate
to factual contexts.³¹

²⁹ See e.g., Alasdair MacIntyre, 1981, chapter 7, John McDowell, 1983 and Hurley, 1989, chapter 14, section 4.

³⁰ See his 1981, chapter 9 and his 1990, chapter 11 respectively.

³¹ 1963, p219.

But now the question is invited- how to characterize the difference between *factual* contexts and *non-factual* contexts, between sentences that state beliefs and sentences that do other things? Just this is what a substantive theory of truth was supposed to tell us, the suggested upshot being that, when just these differences are characterized, imputations of value will be most felicitously placed precisely in the cognitive, fact-stating part of the language.

1.4. One influential resource for such a distinction is Dummett's distinction between "assertions proper" and the wider set of "quasi-assertions".³² Members of the latter set are characterized by the following features:

D1/ They can be "correct" or "incorrect", "represent linguistic acts of the kind to which the notion of *assent* would be appropriate." This clearly connects with the harmless sense of truth we saw Stevenson and others as willing to impute to value judgements, as well as with W1.

D2/ Assent to them carries commitments to *action*: they "commit both speaker and hearer, if the latter accepts what is said, to a line of action, linguistic and non-linguistic."

D3/ They are open to appraisal in terms of *justification* (cf. W2).

D4/ They can be used to *deceive*.

D5/ They can appear as *constituents of complex sentences*.

Dummett further offers a characterization of the sub-set comprising "assertions proper" or assertions in the strict sense"- a member of this set being an assertion that may:

³² See his 1973, chapter 10, esp. pp352ff.

be characterized as a quasi-assertion the criterion for whose justification coincides with that for the truth of the thought which constitutes its sense.³³

Given this characterization, the issue of realism is just the issue of whether *any* quasi-assertions fall outwith the set so characterized.

In a 1986 paper, Wright takes up, *à propos* of the objectivity of logical necessity, the difficulty of furnishing an adequate characterization of the genuinely fact-stating.³⁴ His proposal is that a set of statements is genuinely fact-stating if it is such that differences about their truth-values can be explained wholly by reference to ignorance, error, or prejudice on the part of the some or all of the disputants. If it is not genuinely fact-stating, disputes of this kind will be *Humean*, that is to say will leave a certain residual space for discretion even where such error or prejudice are either absent or mutually cancelling because equivalent.

There is an initial circularity in the appeal to ignorance and error which seems to presuppose the understanding of factuality these are being invoked to explain.

Wright notes this and seeks to circumvent the difficulty by stipulating that:

the mistake is identifiable independently of any view about the disputed opinion.³⁵

³³ *Ibid.*, p359.

³⁴ Wright, 1986a.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p199.

And similarly for ignorance. So presumably if some statement S were in question, something would count as a mistake in determining its truth value if it were a mistake whose status as such could be agreed upon, in the absence of *further* error, ignorance and prejudice, by third parties themselves in disagreement over the truth-value of S.

Suppose someone thinks that it was not wrong that a certain person was executed. And suppose the reason they give for this is that they think the victim of this killing was morally depraved. There is disagreement over whether the victim really *performed* the actions allegedly constitutive of his depravity, but also, among those who agree that he did, over whether they *were* morally depraved. So some disagreement with the judgement in question will concern whether the person in question performed certain acts and some whether the acts in question were blameworthy or otherwise.

Now what a cognitivist will want to say about this sort of case is that *both* the various sorts of disagreement here adverted to are *factual* disagreements and so be disposed to count "wrong" judgements about *either* of them as being substantive cases of "ignorance" or "error". But neither one of them is, on the face of it, relevantly more "independently identifiable" as such with respect to the original disputed belief (that it was O.K. to hang him) than the other.³⁶

An alternative might be to disqualify from consideration as subjects for ignorance or error, all putative facts within the general disputed set to which the putative fact in question belongs. This does what we want in the present example, i.e., recognizes as

³⁶ The difficulty is underscored when we consider the appeal made by Wright, in characterizing error, to "any sort of perceptual, recollective or intellectual malfunctioning" for how strong are the prospects likely to be for characterizing "intellectual malfunctioning" independently of any appeal to standards of cognitive rationality whose objectivity is in question and how is perceptual or recollective malfunctioning to be explicated without invoking the liability to foster precisely error?

factual only disagreement which is non-evaluative and infers the non-factuality of the evaluative from the discretion that is left to us when all disagreement so recognized is resolved.

This is roughly the line Wright considers when the idea is developed further in *Truth and Objectivity* under the heading of *Cognitive Command*. A discourse, he suggests, exerts Cognitive Command iff:

It is *a priori* that differences of opinion formulated within the discourse, unless excusable as a result of vagueness in a disputed statement, or in the standards of acceptability, or variation in personal evidence thresholds, so to speak, will involve something which may properly be regarded as a cognitive shortcoming.³⁷

The same apparent circularity arises here, this time with the reference to "cognitive shortcoming". Wright seeks to meet this problem, taking discourse about the comic as paradigmatic of something that plausibly *fails* to exhibit Cognitive Command. Considering the opposite view, held by a realist about the comic, he distinguishes, firstly, the view which holds that:

the cognitive shortcoming whose existence is claimed by the trivializing theorist must specifically and irreducibly concern comic quality.

This option, however, is hard placed to

³⁷ Wright, 1992, p144.

avoid invoking the idea of a *sui generis* cognitive sense or faculty, sensitive to *sui generis* states of affairs?³⁸

And such invocation, he suggests, is only legitimate if

the best explanation of our practice of the discourse, and especially the phenomenon of non-collusive assent about opinions expressed therein, has to invoke the idea that such a faculty is at work.³⁹

A requirement which is not, he claims, met in this case.

The second option he considers for the realist is to see beliefs about the comic as proceeding inferentially from independently justified beliefs about other non-comic matters, matters on which disputants are assumed *arguendo* in agreement. But, if an explanation of their disagreement about the comic is to invoke some cognitive shortcoming *not* irreducibly concerned with comic qualities, then it must presumably locate it in disagreement about the principles by which such inferences proceed. But then the same dilemma arises with our beliefs about these. Either an intuitional story is told with the same requirement of explanatory adequacy and no greater prospect of meeting it or an inferential story in which case an identical dilemma resurfaces one step further down the argument.

The point seems to be roughly this: if disagreement about the comic does not point to explanation in terms of cognitive shortcoming in the same way as disagreement about the natural world might paradigmatically be held to, then a *prima facie* case exists for adopting an in some way less realist attitude to the former than the latter. If it

³⁸ Ibid., p150.

³⁹ Ibid., p153.

is maintained that it does so point then the alleged facts about the comic become *sui generis*, inferentially isolated from such paradigmatically cognitive beliefs as those about the natural world.

Am I not missing the point dragging in all this stuff about the natural world? After all, *vis à vis* the best explanation requirement, Wright insists that it should:

not be equated, for instance, with the claim that we require some *naturalistic* or scientifically reductive account of what the states of affairs in question consist in, and a causal story of the interaction with them that the operations of the alleged faculty involve.⁴⁰

He also however writes however that it would be

circular, or viciously regressive, to suppose that such inferentially justifying beliefs can themselves invariably concern comedy.⁴¹

And the reader might wonder at this point why the same difficulty fails to arise for our beliefs about the natural world, the world of physical particulars that familiarly impinge on us through our sensory media. For here the threat of circularity or regress is also notoriously present- in, for example, David Armstrong's "infinite regress of reasons".⁴² But what presumably distinguishes the natural realm from the comic is just the availability of a rich and detailed body of knowledge and theory of how that realm impinges on us and how our sensory faculties equip us as the objects of such

⁴⁰ Ibid., p154.

⁴¹ Ibid., p152.

⁴² See Armstrong, 1973, chapter 11..

impinging. In this case the claimed onus on the realist about the comic would be either a) to provide "some naturalistic or scientifically reductive account" of it, bringing truth about it within the purview of what our five senses equip us to detect; or b) to invoke some special faculty sensitive to comic states of affairs thus involving himself in the embarrassment consequent on the unavailability of any clear understanding of the working of any such faculty remotely comparable in its power and detail to our understanding of our sensory capacities; or c) to provide an account that links comic discourse to "justified beliefs about non-comic matters"⁴³ where these matters are neither natural nor comic but pertain to some *third* realm in which case we need a story about the faculty that sensitizes us to *this* realm and the same embarrassment is likely to recur.

Given this reading of the matter I am not wholly convinced by Wright's insistence⁴⁴ that the matter of cognitive command is altogether separate from another way of giving a focus to disputes about realism considered in chapter 5 of *Truth and Objectivity* viz, the issue of *best explanation*. In this context Wright makes a useful proposal as to how, in the light of difficulties raised by Wiggins and Nicholas Sturgeon⁴⁵, to fill out the notions of representation and correspondence by appeal to the best explanation of beliefs. The proposal is that, rather than simply invoking something's aptness to figure in explanations of some alleged domain of "facts", we question instead its *width of cosmological role*:

⁴³ Wright, 1992, p152.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p157.

⁴⁵ Wiggins, 1991, Sturgeon, 1985, 1986. Harman 1977, chapter 1 is the main point of reference in the literature for the invocation of best explanation.

the crucial question is not whether a class of states of affairs feature in the *best* explanation of our beliefs about them, but of what else there is, other than our beliefs, of which the citation of such states of affairs can feature in *good enough* explanations.⁴⁶

In this way we may remain unimpressed by such

kinds of explanatory citation of the states of affairs with which a discourse deals which are licensed purely and simply by that discourse's minimal truth-aptitude.⁴⁷

In this case, then, the point is the *cosmological isolation* of the moral, the comic or whatever from the wider natural order to which the anti-realist is appealing. In the earlier case, the crux was that of *inferential isolation*. Inferential isolation was held to be disturbing unless we had a story to tell about some special faculty giving us access to an isolated sphere of *sui generis* facts. Were there such a realm of *sui generis* comic or moral facts and a faculty sensitive to them and were we supplied with a rich and detailed account of the workings of that faculty and the mechanism of impingement it made possible, inferential isolation would not be such a problem. And neither presumably would cosmological isolation. And it is because there is no such account that *both* are a problem. It is *par excellence* in the context of a natural order of physical bodies, events and causes that we best understand the idea of states of affairs corresponding to and represented by our beliefs, independent of the latter but causally impinging on us so as to feature in their explanation.

⁴⁶ Wright, 1992, pp196-197.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p197.

Generalizing from these considerations, the upshot might seem to be that in seeking to articulate a contrast between a substantively factual domain and any which is not, one promising way of proceeding might be to seek to characterize the most uncontroversial, paradigmatic category of facts we know of, that is publically observable facts about causally interacting material things located in space and stress the difficulty we encounter when we try to extend the notion of a fact too far from this heartland to, say, moral categories of fact. The further we get from that heartland, the further "facts" gets from meaning "things like these", the greater our dependence on the sort of formal considerations invoked by such observations as D5 and W5 is liable to become and the greater the onus on the realist to explain what *more than* minimal truth he is entitled to claim becomes. As Alan Gibbard expresses it:

we easily agree on the layout of surrounding rocks and trees and these judgements are our prime examples of objectivity.⁴⁸

As Putnam and others have stressed, there is a problem about the objectivity even of the rocks and the trees; but for the present it suffices to note the extent to which the realist's embarrassment is consequent on the sheer causal and inferential remoteness of any putative domain of evaluative facts from this naturalistic heartland of basic sensory deliverance. In a way, all this is simply to elaborate on Hume. The gap between an "is" and "ought" may not be unbridgable but it is certainly tellingly big.

1.5. Should this much content us? In chapter 3 I will join other contemporary writers in exploiting the fertile notion of *direction of fit* and in chapter 8 I will explain why I doubt that Wright's minimal realism is as fatal to an expressivist position as he

⁴⁸ Gibbard, 1990, p249.

supposes. But for the remainder of the present chapter, I wish to confine my attention to a more particular difficulty that is often raised for the non-cognitivist.

Dummett's characterization of quasi-assertions summarized above appears in a discussion of the problem of how to take the appearance of allegedly non-assertoric sentences in indirect contexts.⁴⁹ The source of such problems, brought to bear on moral theory by Peter Geach, is the Fregean point that, if negation were taken as a distinct kind of force from assertion, the argument:

If not P, then not Q. Not P. Therefore not Q.

would look like this:

(1) $\{ \neg(-P \Rightarrow \neg Q). \{ P. \text{ Therefore: } \} Q. \}^{50}$

The argument this seeks to capture is most perspicuously represented as a case of *modus ponens*, which, so formalized, it clearly fails to be, *modus ponens* requiring that the unasserted proposition in the antecedent of the conditional *mean the same* as the second premise.

In its moral variant, this problem is observed by considering the argument form:

⁴⁹ The *loci classici* are Frege, "Negation" in his 1977 and Geach "Ascriptivism" and "Assertion" in his 1972. Notable contributions to the ensuing debate are Blackburn, 1971, 1984, chapter 6, 1988 and 1993; Dummett, 1973, chapter 10; Cooper 1981, pp159-161; G. F. Schueler, 1988; Hurley, 1989, chapter 9; Gibbard, 1990, pp94-95; Bob Hale, 1993.

⁵⁰ " $\}$ " for a rejection-sign follows Lukasiewicz- see Geach, 1972, p260.

If P is wrong, Q is wrong. P is wrong. So Q is wrong.

If this is to be a valid instance of *modus ponens* the expression "P is wrong" must mean the same throughout. A fallacy of equivocation is otherwise perpetrated.

The argument seems powerful if we take the evaluative utterance as having some special evaluative force distinct from assertoric. For, following Blackburn's use of "H!" ("hurrah") and "B!" ("boo") as rudimentary deontic operators⁵¹, this would yield something like this:

(2) (P is wrong \Rightarrow Q is wrong). B!(P).

Therefore: B!(Q)

Here the antecedent of the first premise cannot mean B!(P) for B!(P) signals the thought that P is wrong, not the supposition that it is. So the antecedent of the first premise is related to the second as an unasserted proposition is to an asserted one. It is, as it were, "unbooed". So that the argument once again eludes formalization as a valid instance of *modus ponens*.

The non-cognitivist is likely to be sceptical about this. Consider the following argument involving imperatives (to which non-cognitivist theories tend to regard moral statements as comparable):

Don't go out without locking the door. Go out. So lock the door.

There is clearly a logical relation between the premises and the conclusion. Someone disobeying the concluding imperative has failed to obey the premised imperatives. The

⁵¹ Blackburn, 1984, chapter 6.

obedience-conditions of the (internal) negation of the conclusion are inconsistent with the obedience conditions of the premises. So why not simply reconstrue the logical constants as truth-or-obedience-functional instead of simply truth-functional, so that the door-locking example comes out as of the form:

(3) $\neg(P \Rightarrow Q)$. $\neg P$. Therefore: $\neg Q$.

At a superficial glance, this resembles *modus ponens* but it is not. The explanation, we suggested, of the logical relations between sentences with imperative force was to be found in the logical relations that obtain between their *obedience-conditions*. If so, it should be possible to capture the former in terms of the latter. We can do this by means of a propositional constant "C" which is read as "All the obedience conditions of the relevant imperatives are fulfilled" where the relevant imperatives are just those whose logical relations are being appraised in a given context where C appears, but including only those that are *issued*, not those that occur in indirect "unissued" contexts (an "issual sign" would be no less and no more pointless in a logic that included imperatives than an assertion sign). Imperative forms are then replaced for purposes of logical appraisal by normal truth-functional forms by the substitution for $\neg P$ of $(C \Rightarrow P)$. The operation of this substitution on the form:

(4) $(\neg P \Rightarrow \neg Q)$. $\neg P$. Therefore: $\neg Q$.

yields

(5) $(C \Rightarrow P) \Rightarrow (C \Rightarrow Q)$. $C \Rightarrow P$. Therefore: $C \Rightarrow Q$.

which is a perfectly standard and valid instance of *modus ponens*. (3), on the other hand, turns into:

(6) $(C \Rightarrow (P \Rightarrow Q))$. $C \Rightarrow P$. Therefore $C \Rightarrow Q$.

which is *not* a standard and valid instance of *modus ponens* but which is no less valid and altogether satisfactory for that.

The motivation for the substitution is that for any imperative, !P, the set of obedience conditions of that command, or a consistent class of commands to which it belongs, will entail the satisfaction of the truth-conditions of P. On the other hand, however, asserting the realization of the obedience-conditions of !P does not, in any sense, entail !P. Acceptance of the former in no way commits one to the issuing of the latter, but if the logical relationships between imperatives are solely a matter of the logical relationships between their obedience-conditions, operation of the substitution method described to yield forms involving no imperatives, issued or unissued, should prove sufficient to capture them.

If evaluative utterances are supposed, in spite of their indicative surface grammar, to be more allied to imperative than assertoric utterances, similar considerations might be expected to apply, so that the logical relations between such utterances would be explicated in terms of the logical relations between the *realization conditions* for the evaluations they serve to express. And indeed Cooper, Blackburn and Gibbard have all offered account of this matter along roughly such lines.⁵² Here I will briefly sketch my own.

I will consider two cases- that of *purely* expressive utterances and that of *mixed* utterances. By a "purely expressive" utterance I will understand one that serves *only* to

⁵² See Cooper and Gibbard, *opera cit.*, note 49 above and Blackburn, 1988.

express an evaluative attitude to the eventuality that its propositional content be true. In the terminology I will borrow from G. E. M. Anscombe in chapter 3 below the thought expressed is one with *only* world-word direction of fit. Constructions apt for this purpose are rare in English at any rate but those involving such expressions as "hurrah for" and those involving optative constructions ("would that", etc.) would seem to fit the bill. In Blackburn's notation we might represent such thoughts simply by the forms $B!(P)$, $H!(P)$.

In the case of such pure attitudes it might not be clear that there's much to be said. For it isn't obviously true that any logical impropriety *is* involved in having such attitudes that conflict. Just this happens to G. F. Schueler, who apparently combines a healthy appetite with a concern for his weight, almost every time he passes the cookie jar.⁵³ Nonetheless, it is correct to say that a norm of consistency does *at least a great deal of the time* properly constrain our evaluative thinking. Up to a point, Schueler is logically perfectly entitled to want to have his cookies and eat them but this is not a want he can *implement*. Once we move from a state of mere wishfulness to an engagement in serious practical reasoning, we are in a position where the critical appraisal of our attitudes for consistency is indeed appropriate. That it is not always so appropriate need not prevent our seeking to elucidate the workings of such appraisal in cases where it is.⁵⁴

That done, let us consider the following piece of syllogistic reasoning:

EXAMPLE I All philosophers should be shot.

Lenman is a philosopher.

Therefore: Lenman should be shot.

Understood as *purely* evaluative, we might plausibly represent this thus:

⁵³ Schueler, 1988, p500.

⁵⁴ Compare Blackburn, 1988, pp508-509.

$$(x)H!(Px \Rightarrow Sx)^{55}$$

Pa

Therefore: H!(Sa)

And it's certainly puzzling, at first glance how to appraise this for formal logical adequacy. But, as just noted, a norm of consistency is supposed operating and we might remember to mention this. What this norm demands is the coherent possibility that any such evaluative attitudes as are currently under appraisal are realized. So let "N_C" stand for the proposition that they are so realized. Now example I can be treated along similar lines to our handling of imperatives above, representing the logical relations that interest us by substituting (N_C => P) for H!(P) throughout. Thus:

$$(x)(N_C \Rightarrow (Px \Rightarrow Sx))$$

Pa

Therefore: N_C => Sa.

This is entirely sound and exhibits the connection between realization conditions in virtue of which example I seems an acceptable piece of reasoning.

There does seem to be a problem though, perhaps best focused by stating a dilemma which Bob Hale⁵⁶ takes to place the expressive theorist in some difficulty. On *horn one* talk of "logical relations" between evaluative attitudes is unpacked, in the spirit of Blackburn's earlier *Spreading the Word* treatment, in terms of higher order attitudes expressing approval or disapproval of certain combinations of attitudes with other attitudes or with beliefs, thereby constraining our attitudes in various ways. The

⁵⁵ I take this to be a more plausible representation of the thought in question than H!(x)(Px => Sx) as the latter is consistent with the preference ranking (All philosophers are shot) > (No philosophers are shot) > (Some but not all philosophers are shot) and a natural reading would not, I suggest, be so consistent.

⁵⁶ In his 1993.

difficulty on horn one is for the expressivist to explain how this constraint *works*. And, if the expressivist is, like Blackburn, some kind of *quasi-realist*, the difficulty will also be to explain how its working succeeds in being a matter of *logic* rather than of some kind of attitudinal ethics and moreover not just a matter of logic but, in a given case, a matter of just whatever logical principle (*modus ponens* or whatever) the initial surface appearance of the argument would appear to be exhibiting. To Hale this seems an insuperable difficulty. On *horn two*, exemplified in Blackburn's later "Attitudes and Contents"⁵⁷, the logical relations that interest us are taken to be of just the familiar kind

⁵⁷ 1988. The account of these matters presented in this paper is an interesting one quite different from what follows here. Blackburn broadly follows Jaakko Hintikka's (1969) model-set-theoretic deontic logic in constructing a logic of attitudes. In this a notion of validity is invoked, following Hintikka's (1969) "deontic validity" that gains its content effectively from the idea of co-satisfiability he accords with Cooper, Gibbard and myself in appealing to. Blackburn's principle modification of Hintikka's system is one I tend to agree with Hale (1993, esp. pp349-350) in thinking an unfortunate one- the denizens of successive approximations to paradise plausibly move a great deal. At the same time, it might be said that Hintikka's original system can easily seem a little unreal in construing moral opinions as effectively characterizations of deontically perfect ideal worlds. Such world are plausibly just too remote from this frequently horrible place for such characterization to get much grip upon our actual practical reasoning (or even perhaps on most of our wishful fantasies). The notion of deontically perfect worlds also appears to rely on an unstated assumption that the deontic merit of world is a concept with an intrinsic maximum and this is by no means intuitively obvious.

valid in just the familiar way. So that the logic is all very hunky-dory but where has the expressivism gone? In particular, one way he considers horn two might be taken is simply by adopting a descriptive reading of the evaluative components of the formulae, thus both reaping its rewards and suffering its drawbacks in particularly straightforward ways. Isn't this just what I'm suggesting? For, after all, my conclusion is $N_C \Rightarrow S(a)$. And this for the expressivist is hardly the same thing as $H!(Sa)$ which is what is needed.

Well no, it isn't the same thing. But it's rather close. For N_C expresses the realization conditions of a norm of consistency to which, *ex hypothesi*, our reasoning is committed. We may thus appeal to what I will call *the N_C principle*:

that someone who is thus committed to endorsing a norm of consistency with realization conditions N_C is thereby committed, given that $N_C \Rightarrow P$, to the endorsement of $H!(P)$.⁵⁸

An obvious realist rejoinder to that is now shouting at you and I shall shortly deal with it. But I want to shelve it for a few paragraphs and explain first how my treatment

Hale notes (pp347-8) that Blackburn's account is going to have problems with iterated attitude operators. It seems worth suggesting that the best way of dealing with such iterations might simply be to rule them out completely as ill-formed. Expressive attitudes just fail intelligibly to embed inside *themselves* (on this point see Cooper, 1981, pp76-80).

⁵⁸ Here, of course, as with the N principle below, " $H!(P)$ " refers to and does not express an evaluation of that form.

extends to *mixed evaluations*. A mixed evaluative utterance, $H!(P)$ say, I take to involve the utterer in the following:

$$N \Rightarrow P; \quad H!(N); \quad H!(P)$$

where N is the statement that certain norms accepted by the speaker are realized.⁵⁹ These may well involve far more substantial matters than mere consistency. Or they may not. The exact meaning of " N " will vary greatly from context to context. Indeed in many contexts the meaning of " N " may well not be particularly *exact*. The point is simply that in saying $H!(P)$, a speaker expresses a positive valuation of P in virtue of its being consequent on the realization of some norm to which he thereby also expresses a positive valuation. Now we can deal with a case of *modus ponens*:

EXAMPLE II Courage is a good thing

If courage is a good thing, organized games
should be on school curricula.

Therefore: Organized games should be on school
curricula.

As I read it, the utterer of a mixed evaluation expresses a belief and a couple of pure evaluations, a descriptive and an evaluative ingredient. The logical relations of the latter are problematic. So let's just forget them for a bit. If we simply *leave out* the evaluative ingredients of premises and conclusion and read " C " as "Courage abounds" and " G " as "Organized games are on school curricula" we get simply:

$$N \Rightarrow C$$

$$(N \Rightarrow C) \Rightarrow (N \Rightarrow G)$$

Therefore: $N \Rightarrow G$.

⁵⁹ Here I am indebted to Gibbard, 1990.

Which is of course as straightforward a piece of *modus ponens* as anyone could wish for.

EXAMPLE III If Jones stole the money he ought to be punished.

Jones stole the money.

Therefore: Jones ought to be punished.

Given the same treatment yields:

$$S \Rightarrow (N \Rightarrow P)$$

$$S$$

Therefore: $N \Rightarrow P$.

Again just the *modus ponens* it might look like to an innocent logician's eye.

Something similar works with much "thicker" moral concepts also. Thus let N_L be the statement that the norms constitutive of some notion of loyalty are realized. We can thus extract from the following:

EXAMPLE IV It is disloyal to betray a friend.

For Freddy to tell Toby Gina's shameful secret would be to betray a friend.

Therefore: For Freddy to tell Toby Gina's shameful secret would be disloyal.

the following form:

$$N_L \Rightarrow \neg B$$

$$T \Rightarrow B$$

Therefore: $N_L \Rightarrow \neg T$.

Note that for a certain kind of externalist moral realist (along the lines of Philippa Foot or David Brink) the argument forms I have extracted from Examples II-IV would be the whole story of the reasoning involved in these examples. But for the expressivist it cannot be. So that it looks as if we are taking horn two of Hale's dilemma. Where

has the expressivism gone? Once again, it must be said, $N \Rightarrow G$ is one thing, $H!G$ quite another.

Yes indeed. But again they are rather close together. For N expresses the realization conditions of some norm or norms to which, *ex hypothesi*, the speaker is committed. And we may thus appeal to what I will call *the N principle*:

that anyone who is thus committed to endorsing a norm
with realization conditions N is thereby committed,
given that $N \Rightarrow P$, to the endorsement of $H!(P)$.⁶⁰

Of our two principles, the N_C principle and the N principle it is clear that the former is simply a special case of the latter. So that in effect we are relying upon a single principle- the N principle.

Following the N principle takes us, given commitment to an appropriate norm from $H!(N)$ and $(N \Rightarrow P)$ to $H!(P)$. This is not, naturally, a matter of our rehearsing an argument that goes as follows:

Anyone who is thus committed to endorsing a
norm with realization conditions N is thereby
committed, given that $N \Rightarrow P$, to the
endorsement of $H!(P)$.

I am committed to endorsing a norm with
realization conditions N .

$N \Rightarrow P$.

Therefore: I am committed to endorsing $H!(P)$.

⁶⁰ See note 58 above.

Rather the form of argument which we need is simply:

H!(N)

N => P

Therefore: H!(P).

The N principle is intended to *characterize* the principle followed by someone who rehearses this latter argument but it is not, plainly, itself a *premise* in this argument. Analogously it is a principle of *theoretical* reason that anyone who makes an assertion with truth conditions T is committed, given that $T \Rightarrow P$, to the assertion of P. But that is not to say that this analogous principle is represented as a *premise* in such theoretical reasoning- the conclusion of such an argument is never “I am committed to the assertion of P” but simply P.

This brings me to the realist rejoinder I left dangling earlier. It is simply- but what about the *N-principle itself*? What is *its* logic? What story do I propose to tell about the logic of the form of argument we rehearse when we follow the N principle that will steer a course between the horns of Hale's dilemma, given that I cannot appeal without circularity to N or, in particular, to N_C ? If (horn two) H!(N) is given a sufficiently realist reading to give us simple truth-preserving *modus ponens* again, then any claim to expressivism must vanish for good. And if it is not (horn one) are we to read the “therefore” in the foregoing argument as expressing a logical connection or some kind of a moral or otherwise evaluative one?

Given the need to avoid circularity, the latter option seems the more appealing. That still leaves dangling the question just how we should read the “therefore”. And here, for now, I go agnostic. I *don't know* what the best story is about the status of the N principle. The point I am concerned to make is rather just that the N-principle is

highly *economical* and immensely *plausible*. Given this plausibility, there is a strong case for simply taking it as basic, as fundamentally constitutive of attitudinal reasoning, *the whole point of which* is to direct us to the consistent realization of the norms we accept.

The analogy with simple imperative logic is clear here. For just as the N principle is needed to bridge the gap between $N \Rightarrow P$ and $H!(P)$ so we need to assume a principle, the *C principle* if you like, to take us from $C \Rightarrow P$ to $!P$. And, in the same way, the plausibility of the analysis is saved by the sheer plausibility and economy of the C-principle. The problem with imperatives is to show how “Don’t go out without locking the door. Go out. So lock the door” is good reasoning while “Don’t go out without locking the door. Lock the door. So go out” is not. The argument obtained by substitution of $(C \Rightarrow P)$ for all $!P$ shows how this is just what it appears to be, a matter of the *logical* relations between the contents of the premises. The invocation of the C principle reconciles this with respect for the *non-assertoric* character of both premises and conclusion. The latter part of the story respects the fact that it is not in virtue of *preserving truth* that the one argument is better than the other; while the former shows how that superiority is nonetheless a matter of *logic*. Invoking the C principle leaves some questions unanswered of course but we don’t need to wait for these answers to see that logic is indeed at work here. Likewise, *mutatis mutandis*, for the evaluative case.

Again an analogy suggests itself with respect to theoretical reasoning where a norm of *consistency* may be said to play a governing role. And here too there are questions for philosophers to raise about the status of any such norm. The questions are hard ones and nobody, least of all myself, is altogether clear how they may be answered, but that such questions wait for answers is not yet of course a good reason to think ourselves *wrong* to follow such a norm.

So that, though I don't here have a story to tell about the exact status of either the C principle or the N principle, I don't think, for my present purpose, I *need* to tell one. For that purpose is just to show that the Geach problem does not constitute a refutation of non-cognitivism. My main point here is effectively a strategic one, suggesting that the best account of logical arguments with evaluative components is a two step analysis working as follows.

First we get from the premises of our original arguments a set of straightforwardly factual statements- on the one hand the originally factual premises and on the other statements corresponding to the evaluative premises that state their realization to be implied by N. In general, one simply substitutes $(N \Rightarrow P)$ for all $H!(P)$ (and $(N \Rightarrow \neg P)$ for all $B!(P)$). The evaluative ingredient in the meanings of the premises is simply ignored at this point because *logically speaking it does no work here* so that there is no puzzle about how it could. In this first step I am effectively following Cooper, Gibbard and the Blackburn of "Attitudes and Contents", in taking Hale's horn two; but I avoid its pitfalls by putting the expressive aspect of the meaning of the premises to work in the *second* step which simply applies the N principle, here taken as primitive.

The point of the first step is that it shows how to explain how the working of the arguments in question can be seen as a matter of *logic*, thus removing the main sting from the first horn of Hale's dilemma. But this doesn't squeeze the expressivism out of the picture in the way Hale thinks it should. For here we need simply stress that the first step is *not the whole story*. If you want to know where the expressivism has gone, the answer is the business of the *second* step, where the N-principle is invoked. The proposal is thus in effect to take both horns of the dilemma but sharply to distinguish the parts of the story at which they are respectively grasped.

There remains a problem of explaining exactly what the status of this principle is. I don't purport to deliver this explanation but here appeal simply to the plausibility

and economy of the principle itself. But of course the philosophical problematicity of the N-principle scarcely shows that it's *mistaken*. Analogously the fact that I (like everyone) am unable to give a wholly satisfying account of the character of logical necessity does not, nor should it, undermine my confidence regarding what I commit myself to by the joint assertion of the mortality of all men and the humanity of Socrates.

The N principle is plausible but its status is unexplained. So the *second* step of the analysis is incomplete. But we don't need to wait for its completion to see how the kinds of arguments given in the examples succeed in being logical arguments. For that explanation is given by the *first* step of the analysis. Given the incompleteness of the first step the Geach problem stays with us as a problem in the philosophical interpretation of the logic of evaluative attitudes. But given the way the second step dovetails with the first it is not a convincing reason to doubt that there is *any such thing* as a logic of attitudes. So that while I wouldn't claim that the foregoing considerations constitute a solution to the problem Geach identified, I would claim that, as far as the credibility of expressivism is concerned, they put it in its place.

Chapter 2: Objectivity and Rationality: Some Naturalistic Views

2.1. The words "subjective" and "objective" are subject to a dangerous variability of meaning. Some help is given by Geoffrey Sayre-McCord who, in his study of the "conceptual cartography" of moral realism¹ characterizes subjectivism as a variety of realism, one on which moral claims do have truth conditions, but that these are *mind-dependent*, that they

are literally true, when true, but only because of the subjective states of someone (e.g., the desires, preferences and goals of the relevant person.).²

On this definition, welfarist theorists, for instance, even if they are realists, count as subjectivists. But a theorist such as Mackie who, having disavowed realism, accepts that on his view "moral values...are in some very broad sense subjective"³ would not.

We may recognize the ambiguity here by adopting the terms *positive subjectivism* and *negative subjectivism*, corresponding to the "traditional" and "positivistic" senses of the word. The first is cognitivist, seeing value judgements as in some sense offering *descriptions* of the subjective attitudes of people. The second is non-cognitivist, taking

¹ Sayre-McCord, 1986.

² *Ibid.*, p13. As examples of subjectivism so defined he cites Hobbes, Spinoza, Gauthier, Brandt, Perry. One might also mention Richard Taylor, 1984 and Lewis, 1989. See also R. M. Hare, 1989, pp18-24, who emphasizes that the subjectivist/objectivist distinction "is a division within descriptivism."

³ 1977, p18.

them as *expressions* of such states of mind. Both views espouse mind-dependence, making the activity of valuing conditional on the existence of minds and their attitudes but on nothing else. But the first is realist in a way the second is not.

Between "objectivism" and "subjectivism" is what Sayre-McCord calls "intersubjectivism". It is in the business of

spelling out the truth-conditions of moral claims in terms of the conventions or practices of groups of people.⁴

This can see moral claims as simply descriptive of, "(about and not merely reflecting) the conventions and practices" of the society in question. This I will call *positive conventionalism*. Such theories identify morality with the social morality, the shared morality of the group.

Analogous to my distinction between positive and negative subjectivism is a distinction between his intersubjectivism and a variety of what Sayre-McCord calls *instrumentalism*, that is a form of non-cognitivism whereby moral claims *reflect* (and do not merely describe) the conventions and practices of society. This position might be called "negative conventionalism".

Also intersubjectivist are theories that make moral truth "the product of convention", no mere description of thereof, that argue that:

the correctness of a moral principle...depends on its falling within the best coherent justificatory theory available (in principle) for the practices, conventions and principles we happen to embrace.⁵

⁴ 1986, p13.

⁵ Ibid., p14.

This the sort of position I will call *critical conventionalism* as opposed to what might be called *crude conventionalism* that simply takes the prevailing social values for granted. The same distinction may be drawn within *subjectivism*: we can have an account of morality couched not in terms of people's desires but of those desires *under rational constraints*- a theory which identifies the good with "the fine ordering of responses"⁶, what people would desire if their desires were so ordered, if they were fully informed, if they satisfied the demands of deliberative rationality. We could call such theories *critical subjectivist* theories of value as opposed to *crude subjectivist* theories.

About the crude variants of positive subjectivism and conventionalism, I will have little to say as they have little to recommend them. I certainly do and should not resolve puzzlement in the face of a moral problem either by introspecting my desires or by an exercise in sociological research to ascertain the received wisdom of my peers. And of course the difficulty these views face in making sense of moral disagreement, be it interpersonal or cross-cultural, are notorious. The view of values I shall myself defend in coming chapters contains elements of both negative subjectivism and negative conventionalism. I shall seek moreover to show that, given certain conditions, it recognizes much that is correct in the *critical* variants of both subjectivism and conventionalism. The main purpose of the present chapter is however to highlight some difficulties with the following views as other writers have defended them: critical positive conventionalism, of which more will be said in discussing externalism in chapter 3 below, which is represented here by the view of Susan Hurley; and some rather different forms of critical positive subjectivism, represented mainly by the work of R. B. Brandt, David Lewis and John McDowell.

⁶ I. A. Richards, 1926, p62.

2.2. The word "objective" may be just a bad word
 because it's never clear whether it's an
 epistemological or a metaphysical notion.

Putnam, like Sayre-McCord, is concerned, in these remarks⁷, to note the lack of univocality in the notion of objectivity. The sort of opposition to objectivism that is found in Mackie, for example, is opposition primarily to objectivism conceived as an *ontological* thesis⁸, a thesis about "the furniture of the universe". The views I will consider in this chapter seek to articulate conceptions of objectivity that thus avoid the metaphysical extravagances of platonism. All seek to defend the objectivity of value from a naturalistic perspective, the commonest strategy being to claim, while seeking to avoid large ontological or metaphysical assumptions, that certain evaluative principles are in some way *rationally required* of us (such requirement being presumably, in some sense, an objective matter).⁹

The problem already considered of what sort of truth is appropriate to evaluative contexts, is salient here also. By way of analogy, without accepting an extravagant platonistic ontology, I might believe myself rationally compelled to accept certain mathematical and logical truths. I may then think of these truths not as descriptions of some arcane metaphysical realm of numbers and logical necessities but as statements of rules I am rationally compelled to follow in my thinking. And likewise I might think of certain moral claims, say, as statements of rules I am rationally compelled to follow in

⁷ From a seminar given at St Andrews, 2nd November, 1990.

⁸ Cf. Mackie, 1977, p18.

⁹ The point about ontology is well made by Smith (1993) which provides a good example of the kind of rationalism I have in mind.

my *actions* (and so, presumably it is *true* that I am rationally compelled to follow them).

We should begin by noting that such a view raises deep questions about just how we should take the whole notion of rational compulsion to which it appeals and any claim thereby made to objectivity. When Lewis Carroll's tortoise proposes to refuse acceptance to a simple piece of syllogistic reasoning, Achilles feebly replies:

Then logic would take you by the throat and *force* you to do it!¹⁰

It was a central point of Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations¹¹ that logic doesn't *force* us to do anything. On Wittgenstein's view, rules such as we follow in performing mathematical or logical operations are not objective features of reality over and above the practices whereby we follow them. There are not, on the one hand, our rule-following practices and, on the other, the rules they conform to. Rather those practices are all the reality those rules have and are constitutive of them. Just what we cannot do is compare our practices to the rule, conceived as something distinct from them, to see if they agree. It is, on the contrary, the fact that we agree, in those practices, among ourselves, that makes normativity possible.

The central thought may be expressed as follows: we can only distinguish correct from incorrect ways of going on in accordance with a rule by reference to that very rule. But in order to make such a reference we need to *understand* it, to *interpret* it.

¹⁰ Carroll, 1895, p280. Cf., Wittgenstein, 1956, sections 113-117.

¹¹ See his 1956 and 1953. Detailed references are provided at the start of Wright, 1980, chapter II, which gives a useful account of the matter. Paul Boghossian's 1989 provides a general survey of the contemporary discussion.

But just what gives meaning *to the interpretation*, to "the substitution of one expression of the rule for another"?¹²

any interpretation still hangs in the air along with what it interprets, and cannot give it any support.¹³

And how could we distinguish a correct from an incorrect interpretation of it, if not by reference to the use we put it to in following it and the use to which we put the words in which we frame it, both in so framing it and elsewhere? The rules that govern our linguistic practices, that make up our *meanings*, are of a kind with any others and our ways of going on, quite generally, serve uniquely to determine what is signified by the rules we bring to bear in evaluating and describing those very ways of going on.

The precise upshot of the rule-following considerations in moral philosophy as elsewhere is a matter of great controversy. Certainly it is implausible to see them as successfully undermining the very idea of meaning and the very practice of rationality as any argument with such a conclusion would plausibly be self-refuting. Rather, I would suggest, the following four related morals may be entertained:

(1) The *immanence* of rules/meanings. These do not transcend, are not external to, the practices that embody them. Thus, in one sense of the word, they may be said to fail in point of objectivity.

(2) The possibility of rules/meanings is thus the product of *system*, of *complexity*:

What, in a complicated surrounding we call "following a rule" we should not call that if it stood in isolation.

¹² Wittgenstein, 1953, I, 201.

¹³ Ibid., I, 198.

Language, I should like to say, relates to a way of living.

In order to describe the phenomenon of language, one must describe a practice, not something that happens once, no matter of what kind.¹⁴

It is from considerations like this that Wittgenstein seems to conclude that language-use must be not only *intersubjective* (the "private language argument") but also "*extended in time*."¹⁵

(3) The central point that interpretation itself stands in need of interpretation, together with the impossibility, in principle, of meaning being intrinsic to the thought or expression that bears it, yield the Wittgensteinian moral that "interpretation comes to an end"¹⁶:

When I say "If you follow the rule, this must come out", that doesn't mean, because it always has. Rather that it comes out is one of my

¹⁴ Wittgenstein, 1956, VI, 33-34. Cf. VI, 21:

it would be nonsense to say: just once in the history of the world someone followed a rule (or a signpost, played a game, uttered a sentence, or understood one and so on).

¹⁵ 1953, section 138. Cf. the story of the "two-minute men" in 1956, VI, 34.

¹⁶ 1956, VI, 39

foundations. What *must* come out is a foundation of judgement that I do not touch.¹⁷

(4) As any principles to which we appeal in justification are themselves of the nature of rules, justification also "comes to an end."¹⁸ So the search for absolute foundations founders on the same rock as the search for absolute objectivity. This is the theme of *On Certainty*, where we may find such a passage as this:

"I cannot doubt this proposition without giving up all judgement."

But what sort of proposition is that?... It is certainly no empirical proposition. It does not belong to psychology. It has rather the character of a rule.¹⁹

Especially when (4) is borne in mind, the rule-following considerations force upon our attention what might be termed the *pervasiveness of normativity*. The considerations have brought home the extension to the whole area of meaning of the difficulties that might have been thought to confine their havoc to the field of metaethics- can the normative realm be objective, can it be captured by reduction to some non-normative realm and, if neither, can an anti-realist position be made out with respect to it?²⁰ (4) has brought it home that normativity goes, as it were, *all the way down*, that rules, that things at least closely of a kind with evaluations, underpin our

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, VI, 46.

¹⁸ Wittgenstein, 1969, section 192. Cf. 1953, section 326.

¹⁹ 1953, section 494.

²⁰ Boghossian, 1989 highlights the emergence of these problems.

most basic beliefs about the objective world to which the world of values is so often supposed to contrast. Thus Putnam's claim that:

The question: *which is the rational conception of rationality itself* is difficult in *exactly* the way that the justification of an ethical system is difficult.²¹

2.3. The latter sort of consideration gives point, for example, to the version of the argument from companions in guilt that Putnam himself urges in his efforts to subvert the fact/value distinction.²²

Putnam coins the two predicates "justified_{Carnap}" and "justified_{Newman}" (as in John Henry) and considers a possible non-cognitivist's contention that:

no value judgement is involved in stating the fact that a given statement is justified_{Carnap} or justified_{Newman}. But [he goes on] from whose standpoint is the word "*fact*" being used. If there is no conception of rationality one ought to have, then the notion of a "fact" is empty.

The non-cognitivist is able, I think, to reply to this in two ways:

(1) Messrs. Carnap and Newman differ about justification and hence about the extension of "fact" but there is at least a theoretical limit on how far such disagreement

²¹ 1981, p136

²² See Wiggins, 1980, and Putnam, 1981, chapter 6. Putnam does not here explicitly relate his observations about the pervasiveness of normativity to the rule-following considerations, but the connection is, nevertheless, there to be made.

can go without collapsing into a case of cross-purposes.²³ For example, if either or both so understands "fact" as to exclude from its extension even the sort of paradigm facts adverted to at the close of 1.4 above, the commensurability of their views with *our own* (assuming *arguendo* that "we" are Johnsonian paragons of common sense), never mind each other's, would at least require considerable explanation. But if their disagreement does have the limits imposed by commensurability it is not clear that they would disagree radically, whatever their other differences, over the extension of their respective concepts of justification, "justified_{Carnap}" and "justified_{Newman}". Each might plausibly recognize, to a great extent, just what is and is not counted as justified by the other's standards as indeed might we. And if this is so, the "fact" appealed to by Putnam's non-cognitivist is surely rather better sheltered from the winds of relativism than he supposes.

(2) The bedrock of a coherent notion of justification in epistemology may indeed be conceded to involve one's values and there may be roughly Wittgensteinian reasons precisely for non-cognitivism about that bedrock.²⁴ But, in the first place that is not yet a reason for supposing that what we build on those foundations is not so structured as to permit the making of a fact-value distinction *within it*. As noted under (2) above, objectivity may be seen as the child of complexity, an insight that seems to leave space for combining non-cognitivism about the *foundations* of the epistemological edifice with cognitivism about the higher stories. We may then be well placed to make the point Allan Gibbard makes in this connection, that:

²³ Cf. 3.1 below.

²⁴ See Wright, 1980, chapter 20 and 1986a. And cf. Lenman, 1994a, section III.

The justification of factual beliefs is a normative matter, but that does not turn factual beliefs into normative judgements.²⁵

Furthermore it may be replied that part of the very attractiveness in understanding the bedrock in non-cognitive terms is that this precisely removes the *need* for justification. A non-cognitive attitude like a desire, say "I want to go for a walk", may be *susceptible* of justification but if it has none, if I *just do* want to go for a walk and that's all there is to it, that isn't a problem in the way it is a problem if I have a wholly unsupported *belief*. For there is just not the same conceptual space for talk of a desire's being "mistaken" as there is with belief (even on an internal realist's sense of "mistaken"). Desire is perhaps *answerable* to norms of rationality just as belief is; but, unlike belief, it is not possible for it to be "wrong" in cases where there is no actual conflict with such norms.

2.4. The rule-following considerations have recently been deployed in the context of defending moral realism by Hurley²⁶, arguing against *subjectivism*, which she defines as:

the view that preferences are prior to and independent of specific values, and indeed, in some way, determine values.²⁷

²⁵ Gibbard, 1990, p34.

²⁶ See her 1989, especially chapters 2-6. Cf. McDowell, 1981, Lovibond 1983, Wiggins, 1987, pp126-30.

²⁷ 1989, p14.

Note that this characterization of "subjectivism" differs from that given above. I shall be using the word in Hurley's sense *only* for the purposes of the present discussion of her work.

Hurley seeks to underpin a complex conception of ethical theory on which

reasons stand to intentional action in general as meanings stand to linguistic action in particular.²⁸

She makes the point that Davidson's appeal to radical interpretation and Wittgenstein's to the shared practices of a community are comparable²⁹: both, as she reads them, addressed the problem of giving a naturalistic account of meaning by seeking to base that notion in the particularities of how people behave. Both reject accounts of meaning that are, as Putnam has expressed it, "magical"³⁰ - words are not intrinsically meaningful, thoughts are not self-interpreting: in Hurley's terminology, there are no *ultra-interpretations*. The upshot of this, she has it, is that the very possibility of interpretation is based on the existence of *substantive constraints on interpretation*³¹ supplied by a context of shared practices and that these constraints include precisely values. This extension of this form of constraint to the interpretation of *preferences* is taken to defeat subjectivism.

A desire does not necessarily call for justification. But it certainly calls for *interpretation*. The problem, Hurley stresses, is not merely of interpreting the preferences of other persons, but of interpreting *one's own*. Preferences are taken to be

²⁸ Ibid., p273.

²⁹ See in particular, *ibid.*, chapter 3, section 3.

³⁰ Hurley, 1989, p34; Putnam, 1981, pp3-5.

³¹ See in particular her 1989, p36.

"normatively constrained" so that, to some extent, as she quotes Lewis saying, an interpretee:

ought to believe what we would believe, or perhaps what we would have believed in his place, and he ought to desire what we desire, or perhaps would have desired in his place.³²

Of course this way of looking at things does not, in practice, seem much of a constraint in the case of the interpretation of *one's own* desires, but presumably we are intended here to suppose that one's believing and desiring much as those around one would believe and desire constitutes, in virtue of the non-solipsistic character of meaning which Hurley champions, that sufficiency of background agreement for foreground disagreement to be possible which is a condition of our even possessing a language and hence of our belief and desire contents being in any way determinate.³³ Still the supposition here must presumably be not that I *ought not* to deviate too far (as this would be, to say the least, a puzzling supposition) from the desire and beliefs of others but that somehow I *could not*.

The constraints seen by Hurley to confine interpretation operate *holistically* moreover, this being both the most that the background of semantic argument is plausibly able to deliver and a condition on the possibility of the sort of moral disagreement that we actually encounter.

³² Quoted in *ibid.*, p24, citing Lewis, 1983, p112. Lewis' thought here harmonizes with Wittgenstein (see e.g. 1956, VI, 39; 1953, I, 242) and Davidson (see e.g. 1984, p197).

³³ See Davidson, 1987, which Hurley cites (p393, n4).

The conceptual *locus* of substantive disagreement is not constant from example to example.³⁴

Given the resulting *possibility* of disagreement, there remains the problem of *diagnosing* it- given the available space for competing interpretations of evinced preferences there is always the option of *interpreting away* any appearance of divergence. Do we, for example, explain away behaviour that apparently persistently violates the axioms of decision theory by imputing to the subject desires and beliefs of a perhaps increasingly Goodmanesque character or do we revise the axioms in question in the light of such behaviour. The problem is illustrated by discussions of John Broome's reluctant but cowardice-avoiding mountaineer, of Howard Raiffa's menu of unfair gambles (both apparently transitivity-violating before moral discriminations are invoked)³⁵ and of Peter Diamond's proposed preference for one of two distribution procedures (apparently sure-thing-violating until fairness is invoked).³⁶ The proposal of Lewis is cited that we interpret the mental content of persons in the light of a distinction between "natural" and "unnatural properties" so as to undermine the imputation to them of Goodmanesque contents.³⁷ As is Broome's response to the difficulty to the effect that, in imputing background beliefs so as to reinstate the threatened conformity between theory and data, we distinguish critically between beliefs that would serve to *justify* the observed behaviour and beliefs that would not.³⁸ The moral drawn from both proposals, alongside the general Davidsonian emphasis on

³⁴ Ibid., p51.

³⁵ Ibid., p60.

³⁶ Ibid., pp102-105..

³⁷ Ibid., p87. Citing his 1983.

³⁸ Quoted in *ibid.*, p85.

charity and consensus, being the existence of *substantive* as well as *formal* constraints on eligible interpretations of preferences. Examples canvassed from the literature are taken to suggest that among the eligible background attitudes might be *moral* attitudes differentiating alternative courses of action in ways that make essential reference to such values as courage and fairness.

The same requirement of substantive, including moral, constraints on eligibility is urged in cases where it is a question of the eligibility of what John Harsanyi calls "extended preferences"- effectively preferences between combinations of circumstances and characters where in the latter are subsumed all distinguishing characteristics including preferences. This is argued in terms of a discussion of an example of Amartya Sen's in which both Prude and Lewd, whose names describe their inclinations, prefer that Prude, rather than Lewd read a certain risqué book, Prude out of an impertinent desire for Lewd's spiritual welfare, Lewd out of an equally impertinent desire to outrage Prude's sensibilities.³⁹ But that nobody read the book is ranked by Lewd below the two other alternatives, by Prude above them. Given a liberal principle whereby Lewd should read it rather than nobody and nobody rather than Prude plus the Pareto Principle whereby Prude should read it rather than Lewd, an apparent intransitivity emerges, which can, Hurley suggests be eliminated by taking as eligible an extended preference ordering constrained by some principled recognition of the value of autonomy that discounts the more meddlesome aspects of both Prude and Lewd's first order preferences.

There are a number of difficulties with Hurley's account of value to which I would wish to draw attention here. To begin with, it is unclear how much work the Davidsonian and Wittgensteinian considerations invoked by Hurley are actually doing in the case of the sort of examples she considers. For from the insight that

³⁹ Ibid., pp116-8, citing Sen, 1982, pp80-83.

disagreement is only possible against a background of agreement it follows of course that disagreement *is* possible against a background of agreement. In other words there is nothing in this insight that rules out the possibility of *local* disagreement. The move is thus indeed plausibly available of urging that disagreement might in principle quite intelligibly be *global within the domain of ethical values* (to the extent that is not ruled out by straightforward considerations of *consistency*) given sufficient agreement *outwith that domain*. That is, some might disagree with us (prescinding from the question of who *we* are) on all (or as many as consistency permits) of the questions we normally (prescinding from problems about what *that* amounts to) classify as ethical or moral questions. Obviously they could not disagree on all *normative* questions as, given the normativity of meaning and of the canons of justified belief this would be tantamount to global disagreement. Nor could we take for granted given the hypothesized disagreement that they would demarcate some region of the normative as ethical or moral in remotely the way we do, so that the locality within which global disagreement is imaginable must be defined on *our* system of categories, not *theirs*. But this still leaves what Hurley calls the "horizon of intelligibility"⁴⁰ looking rather too distant for what constrains interpretation to motivate a claim that value is objective. Certainly there may be substantive constraints on the interpretation of those who disagree with us. But, so interpreted, they may *still* disagree with us and such constraints do not suffice to motivate any claim that there is a fact of the matter about who is "right". Note too that it is one thing to say, plausibly, that, if agreement between us is to be possible, then, necessarily, there must be a core of judgements on which we agree; another again to say, less plausibly, that there must be a core of judgements on which, if agreement between us is to be possible, we necessarily agree.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p51.

The needed locus of agreement, as Hurley acknowledges, may be variable as well as local.

Hurley's argument is, in effect, that we invoke substantive norms of rationality in order to make the conceptual disagreement/substantive disagreement distinction in cases where formal norms of rationality are apparently violated by agents. However when it is a question of *which* norms of rationality we should invoke in such cases it would seem obvious that *their* norms are *prima facie* to be preferred to *our* norms where these can be seen to differ, as, in cases where the disagreement is *not* global (and in none of her examples *is* it global), there is no reason why they should *not* both differ and be seen to differ. Thus we may accept Broome's point that justifiers should be given salience in matters of interpretation while insisting that when, say, I am interpreting you and I am Carnap and you are Newman, it is justifiers_{Newman} and not justifiers_{Carnap} which it is proper to invoke. Of course I then have to make out the substantial/conceptual distinction with respect to our disagreement about what justifiers are. Certainly if I invoke in this way some values or beliefs of yours that differ from mine, the substantive/conceptual difficulty may arise *again*. The problem is met in the same way by invoking distinctions that are eligible in *your* terms. If these too aren't eligible in my terms we may have the same problem. And if the disagreement between us approaches *global* disagreement this is how things will proceed until I indeed despair of making sense of you. But in fact, as I have said, none of Hurley's examples concern such global disagreement.

With her treatment of *extended* preferences this problem is exacerbated. For the question becomes one of *whose* extended preferences are in question. Of course on the usual understanding the whole point of extended preferences, as Hurley observes⁴¹ is that they *necessarily coincide*, in virtue of the level of universalizability they are taken

⁴¹ Ibid., pp108-111.

to respect. It is precisely in virtue of this that they do the work they do in the theories of Harsanyi, Hare and others. Her criticism of this, following Charles Taylor and Michael Sandel, that this reduces the bearers of such preferences to "featureless bare egos"⁴² is convincing, but by giving them features the question arises of what features they are to be. For writers such as Harsanyi and Hare it makes sense to speak of *the* extended preference ordering for the radical deployment of the third level of universalizability or the veil of ignorance leaves nothing for them to be except an ordering of outcomes by average utility. As everyone's extended preference orderings thus coincide we may cut the whole concept loose from its psychological moorings and speak simply of *the* extended preference ordering conceived simply as a mathematical object. But if, like Hurley, we resist this extreme level of abstraction, one surely loses this form of objectivity altogether. Extended preferences are then very definitely *somebody's* higher-order preferences ranking packages of circumstances and lower order preferences. And, if our substantive values are needed to determine these, there is no reason at all to suppose they might coincide. And here it seems natural that the extended preferences imputed to Lewd and Crude, say, should be responsible to *their* values (which are perfectly intelligible and raise *no* particular problems about eligibility), not to *ours*. But not so. Hurley claims that liberal values provide "eligible distinctions" for determining an extended preference ordering even if Prude and Lewd's higher order preferences simply endorse their first-order preferences or indeed if they lack any (if they are *wantons* in Frankfurt's sense). Of course if we were trying to articulate how we think a social preference relation should be defined (which was Sen's original concern in constructing the example) our own liberal values might be an appropriate, "eligible", input. But it is another matter again when what we are trying to do is to *interpret* the extended preferences of Prude and Lewd. Here it just makes no

⁴² Ibid., p112.

sense to suggest that *their* extended preference ordering be liberal even "if they are both wantons, or...have opposed higher-order preferences"⁴³. If either of the latter is the case then *we have already done our interpreting of them* and liberal extended preferences are ruled out. Of course, *our* extended preference ordering may be liberal but *that* is not what we are supposedly trying to interpret. In fact Hurley seems to write as if it were still a question of *the* extended preference ordering but as we are no longer going all the way out to the third level of universalizability this just seems to beg the question of objectivity. What is now supposed to be determining *the* ordering? *Our own* extended preferences? And what is special about these? The answer she gives is that they are "*normal* and *natural*" but this is at least in part simply to say that they are *ours* (compare 2.5 below), which cannot be both *justificandum* and *justificans*. Of course we can simply insistently (indeed perhaps with considerable resources of argument) stick to our liberal guns rigidly valuing liberal outcomes, but this is *nothing* to do with the *interpretation* of Prude and Lewd who, as described, are far from lying beyond the "horizon of intelligibility" simply because they dissent from our liberalism.

Hurley is somewhat inexplicit as to what she take "values" to be. She is generally scrupulous to define her terms and helpfully adverts to such definitions in her index by the use of bold type. Looking up "values" we are directed to p388, n31 where we find that they "provide reasons that are substantive rather than formal, and ultimate rather than instrumental". But this is presumably intended to supply a necessary, not a sufficient criterion for value-hood. For *preferences* may be both substantive and ultimate. That is why subjectivists are so very interested in them. Indeed there seems to be nothing in part 1 of her book, which is devoted to the refutation of subjectivism that prevents one from conceding the thrust of her argument and taking values as being simply higher-order preferences constrained by considerations of eligibility where the

⁴³ Ibid., p117.

latter are indeed (we concede *arguendo*), value-laden but where the values that load them are themselves precisely preferences. But if I am right in supposing such an understanding of what values are to evade her argument there remains an obvious sense in which lower order preferences are *prior to, albeit not independent of*, higher, in that, if preferences of order $(n + 1)$ are taken to be preferences with respect to the preferring subject's preferences of order n , the latter will be prior to, in the sense of presupposed by but not presupposing, the former.

But Hurley does not take values to be higher order preferences. In chapter 14 she writes:

There are truths about such things as meanings, beliefs, numbers, values, theories and explanations; and one can perceive the meaning, the value, the number of something concrete, or grasp its explanation; but is the meaning, the value, the number, or the explanation itself concrete? It's not clear what could be meant by supposing they might be. Such things are abstract entities, which provide a rational, but nonetheless natural- as reason is itself natural- framework for natural events, including human actions, a framework that needs no pretence to supernatural underpinnings; a natural order naturalized.⁴⁴

Values exist in virtue of the fact that there are truths about values. And truths about values come down to truths about our *practices*. It is these that bestow meaning upon our specific reason-giving concepts and these in turn furnish the data for a practice of theorizing that gives meaning to our more general reason-giving concepts. This partly reflects the doctrine she calls *centralism* whereby:

⁴⁴ Ibid., p277.

the general [reason-giving] concepts, such as *right* and *ought*, are to be taken to be conceptually prior to and independent of the specific concepts such as *just* and *unkind*.⁴⁵

This is a natural doctrine for anyone who is *externalist* about values, who thinks, that is to say, that my assent to some evaluative claim is independent of my being motivated to act in accordance with it. The *internalist*, in particular what in chapter 3 below I call below the *subjective internalist*, holds that my assent to such a claim is at least partly constituted by my preferences and other pro-attitudes reflecting it. For such an internalist to speak of values is just to speak of preferences. Of course not just any old preferences are to count as, moral say, values. There are preferences and preferences as I hope later to make clear. But for the internalist the feature of the natural world that gives sense to talk of values is our emotive natures, the *psychological* fact that we *value* things. This doesn't, in fact, mean that preferences are prior to and independent of values. What it means is that values *are* effectively preferences of particular kinds—higher-order, impersonal, rigidified (see chapters 4 and 10 below).

For the externalist, on the other hand, it can look rather mysterious what we are talking about when we talk of values. This is what seems to drive Philippa Foot's⁴⁶ objection to the central claim of utilitarianism that there is such an intelligible concept of ours as that of the good conceived impersonally that is not parasitical for its meaning upon such specific values as are given in attributive uses of good or in talk of

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p11.

⁴⁶ See Foot, 1985a, 1985b.

particular virtues. Granting the sort of externalism Foot espouses this would be a plausible claim⁴⁷ but I will argue in chapter 3 below that we should *not* grant it.

Hurley's motivation of non-centralism, similar to Foot's in some respects, trades on her claim that:

A practice account denies that there could be a residual content to our concepts that transcends the use to which we put them.⁴⁸

The trouble is that an account of value that understands claims about it as claims about the content of some best theory pursuing coherence among our specific reason-giving practices is that this will only be of interest to me if my own attitude to those practices is one of wholehearted identification. Such an attitude, a corollary of what in chapter 9 below I will call *stability*₂ is certainly something that it can (and will) be argued is desirable. But it is not plausible to think it a conceptual necessity.

Hurley makes a great deal of an analogy between her non-centralism about values and Wittgenstein's non-centralism about colours, suggesting that:

colour has an abstract and theoretical status in relation to specific colours⁴⁹

But there are notoriously a number of points of disanalogy between values and secondary qualities⁵⁰ and one in particular is worth averting to here. Both are plausibly

⁴⁷ Cf. 5.2 below.

⁴⁸ Hurley, 1989, p51.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p40.

⁵⁰ See e.g. the lists given in Blackburn, 1985, and Mark Johnston, 1989.

supervenient properties, value on the non-evaluative characteristics of what is valued, colour on the physical characteristics of the coloured surface. With moral value at any rate this supervenience is a strongly conceptual matter. If I don't begin understand to supervenient character of value I don't understand the concept at all. But I can (and do) discriminate red from blue things without knowing the first thing about just what the physical basis of such coloration is. Indeed I could do this without any suspicion that supervenience holds at all. But I can't begin to distinguish right from wrong actions in ignorance of the characteristics on which these features supervene.

What follows? Well it is plausible that I learn how to use the concept of *colour* by learning the concepts *red*, *blue*, etc. And it is immensely plausible that without any understanding of specific colour concepts I could not have the concept of colour at all. But, certainly at least from an internalist perspective, this is *not* true of value. In order to come by the concept of value I must first certainly come to see certain particular types of thing as to be pursued or to be steered clear of. But it is unclear why in principle at any rate these discriminations might not all be made at the *subvenient* level, without specific evaluative concepts being invoked at all. Of course our own language does not work like this. But it does not seem inconceivable that a hypothetical language should. In other words, I am suggesting, a language might contain *only* general evaluative terms and *no* such specific terms as *just* and *unkind* (though I will suggest in chapter 8 below that this state of affairs would be unlikely to be stable). With colour, on the other hand, no such thing seems even imaginable, a contrast that is surely telling for the relative plausibility of non-centralism about these two domains.

2.5. I turn now to consider three influential versions of what I called above "critical subjectivism". I begin with Brandt's analysis of "rational".⁵¹ He takes "rational" to

⁵¹ Brandt, 1979, chapter 1.

cover "actions, desires or moral systems which survive maximal criticism and correction by facts and logic." This process of criticism Brandt calls "cognitive psychotherapy". The ideal end product of this process is one who takes account, in fully vivid way, of all relevant available information.

A problem for such this view, recently stressed by Gibbard, is that it misses the sense in which one may rationally prefer not to possess vivid awareness of all relevant information. Gibbard offers the examples of a squeamish neurotic who, given a vivid appreciation of the nature of the human interior, would become unable to eat in the society of others, thus crippling himself socially; and of an official who fears that, given a vivid appreciation of the beneficial effects of corruption upon his standard of living, he would crumble before the temptation to accept bribes. In both cases

the protagonist endorses a system of ends he thinks would not survive a vivid, repeated confrontation with the facts.⁵²

Is this objection fatal to Brandt's theory? Perhaps so, as it stands, but I am not convinced that Brandt's position cannot be adapted to meet it by generalizing his account of "rational" to cover questions of what it is rational to *know* (or seek to know). Reference would then be made in the characterization of "rational" not to all relevant available information but rather to all relevant available information saving only such information as the subject would rationally prefer not to know. For it is possible that someone might, possessing all available information *regret* possessing certain items of that information on the grounds that he regretted the manner in which that particular knowledge influenced his desires and actions. Information that one

⁵² Gibbard, 1990, p22.

would in such circumstances so regret might then be excluded from the information with which one is properly to be confronted in the course of cognitive psychotherapy.

But there are, it seems to me, other problems with Brandt's theory. I suggested above that it is a moral of the rule-following considerations that "rational" is an evaluative term. But this is not quite Brandt's view. His definition of "rational" is characterized as being a *reforming definition* and does not, he claims,

import any substantive value judgements into the concept of "rational".⁵³

And this claim has plausibility. Take the craziest, silliest, most fickle, wickedest action, course of action or progress of life you like and, as far as Brandt's theory goes, that is a rational action or way of life for someone only provided that it is the action or way of life they would choose as the end of cognitive psychotherapy. This would indeed seem to evacuate his conception of rationality of any substantive evaluative content, but at the cost of making it uninteresting.

So that when Brandt lists various "mistakes" that can be made in action and desire⁵⁴ thereby in effect rendering his account of rational more and more substantive in practice, it is plausible to doubt his right to characterize them as *mistakes* in virtue of his own definition of rationality except in such cases as "the mistake of overlooked options"⁵⁵ where the failure does seem straightforwardly cognitive.

And it should further be stressed that even this exception holds only *before* we make the sort of modification of the ideal information condition I proposed is

⁵³ Brandt, 1979, p13.

⁵⁴ Ibid., chapters 4 and 6.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp71-73.

necessitated by criticism such as Gibbard's. For, given this modification, it may become quite rational for me to overlook any number of options provided that, had I known about them I would have preferred not to- and this preference must be rational only in Brandt's sense: I don't need a good reason for preferring such ignorance. I need only prefer it.

Consider further Brandt's theory in comparison with a broadly Aristotelian view of moral and ethical education such as that which sees it as concerned to educate the passions of the moral agent so that he desires the good and shuns the bad.⁵⁶ What is rational on such a view might plausibly be taken as what is desired by a person at the end of such a process whereby their desires are educated in the light of some guiding standard of reason. On Brandt's view, however, what such a person wants at the end of this process is indeed rational. But, as this process involves far more than mere exposure to logic and the facts, so too is what they would, given merely the latter exposure, want at the *beginning* of this process. The only proviso is that their desires must survive the correction of any false beliefs they might have come to hold. And this seems unconvincingly weak.

2.6 Another sophisticated critical subjectivist account, this time of "value", has been offered by Lewis who offers the claim that:

*Something of the appropriate category is a value if and only if we would be disposed, under ideal conditions, to value it.*⁵⁷

He explicitly rejects the inclusion of a full-informedness condition on the grounds that:

⁵⁶ See my discussion of Aristotle and Confucius at 10.3 below.

⁵⁷ Lewis, 1989, p113 (italics in original).

An ideal *balancer* of values needs thorough knowledge of the terms of trade. An ideal valuer may be better off without it.⁵⁸

Lewis' ideal conditions are nonetheless characterized epistemically. Ideal conditions are defined as "conditions of the fullest possible imaginative acquaintance". Of course, were this to be taken as the fullest possible imaginative acquaintance with all relevant objects of acquaintance, then the possibility arises again that the advantages of theft or the horridness of the working digestive tract are among such objects.⁵⁹

What might seem however to remove Lewis from the line of fire of Gibbard's criticism of Brandt is the former's understanding of the concept of "valuing" as applicable to *first-order* desires only for a fully *wholehearted* agent, one who desires only what he desires to desire. For less abnormal agents he equates values with *second-order desires*: what we value is what we desire to desire.⁶⁰ So Gibbard-type examples tend to lose force.

Lewis' theory is couched in terms of what he calls an "ideal responder" and such a dispositional theory is clearly related to the sort of *ideal observer* theory whose most prominent modern protagonist has been Roderick Firth.⁶¹ There are two related difficulties for *both* sorts of theory that are perhaps best initially characterized in relation to the latter.

⁵⁸ Lewis, 1989, p124.

⁵⁹ Johnston, 1989, pp151-5 deploys arguments of this type against Lewis.

⁶⁰ The materials for this are of course taken from H. Frankfurt, 1971 and 1987.

⁶¹ See his 1952. Lewis explicitly distances himself from ideal observer theories for reasons that do not concern me here.

Firstly there is the problem that the term "ideal" appears to import into the analysis an dimension of value that vitiates its purpose as an analysis *of* value. As Gibbard's examples showed for Brandt, such things as vivid imaginative acquaintance or full possession of relevant information fail as a route to what we value if we desire not to, or desire to desire not to, act as we believe we would in the event of achieving such states. Such a desire would be coherent and cannot, without circularity, be denied some such status as putatively rational or value-conferring other desires may be held to possess.

Secondly the ideal *observer* theory invites a Euthyphro-type dilemma. In virtue of what is what the ideal observer values to be valued? If it is to be valued because it is valuable, the analysis issues in a regress. If its value just consists in the observer's valuing it, the theory is implausible. Is this all it takes to endow value? Would what the observer values be valuable *whatever it was*? Of course we could rule certain things out but when we try to do this the first problem seems inescapable.

Are things any better for the ideal responder? The problem with "ideal" remains as before. But the second problem seems less of a threat when, as on Lewis' theory the person in question is taken to be oneself or "one sufficiently like oneself in his or her dispositions", thus respecting internalism. But in fact the indexicality on its own does not guarantee the respecting of internalism. Suppose the ideal conditions were conditions of having been successfully brainwashed by the ideal observer for whom the second problem arose. This would of course be deemed an unsuitable specification of ideal conditions. But what, if not our values, do we appeal to in judging such a specification unsuitable? Appeal to conditions of full imaginative acquaintance has little to recommend it if we in fact desire to desire not to act on the values such conditions would invoke in us.

2.7. A little more might be said here about the much discussed analogy between values and secondary qualities. This analogy has been siezed upon by McDowell as casting light on how we might suppose at once that values are

there to be experienced, as opposed to being a mere figment of the subjective state that purports to be an experience of it⁶²

there independently of any particular apparent experience of them

while at the same time they

stand in an internal relation to some exercize of human sensibility⁶³

The aspect of secondary qualities that on which the analogy bears is described as follows:

An object's being such as to look red is

independent of its actually looking red to anyone on any particular occasion; so, notwithstanding the conceptual connection between being red being experienced as red, an experience of something as red can count as a case of

⁶² MacDowell, 1985, p114.

⁶³ This and the preceding both *ibid.*, p120.

being presented with a property that is there anyway-
there independently of the experience itself.⁶⁴

The analogy being presented involves a dispositional analysis of secondary qualities roughly to the effect that something has some secondary quality S if and only if it is such as to appear S to a normal observer and a similar analysis of value roughly to the effect that something has some evaluative quality V if and only if it is such as to appear to have V to a normal observer. The natural parallel suggests that values, while being "subjective" in the way secondary qualities are, i.e., by being dependent on some distinctively human sensibility are at the same time "objective" in the same way, i.e., in so far as it is possible for a particular person at a particular time to be mistaken about them.

The most serious problem faced by this analysis, noted by Wright,⁶⁵ is a result of an equivocation involved in "normal". This is open to a difficulty similar to that Lewis was seen to face over "ideal". In one sense "normal" is a more or less straightforwardly statistical concept, roughly equivalent to "typical" or "standard" and this sense is adequate for the analysis of secondary qualities in a way that it is not for that of values. In the case of values, the analysis requires us to take "normal" in a sense which is itself directly evaluative. The statistical sense is inadequate in so far as the extension yielded for evaluative concepts will vary *enormously* depending upon the population over which it is defined and the only prospect for selecting an appropriate population is by the critical application of evaluative criteria, by moving from a crude to a critical conventionalism and incurring difficulties already noted. A critical conventionalism

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p112.

⁶⁵ See his 1988. The same general line of counter-argument is found in Gibbard, 1990, p183-8 and Johnston, 1989.

faces exactly the same problems as critical subjectivism in providing a non-question-begging account of what is supposed to drive the criticism. So that an analysis of value that invokes "normality" in this way in the *analaysans* is as ultimately unhelpful as one that invokes an ideal observer or responder.

The adequacy of the statistic sense of "normal" in the case of colour concepts is a consequence primarily of the far greater *consensus* that obtains about the extension of secondary quality concepts, itself perhaps to be related to what Wright terms the *rawness* of such concepts.⁶⁶ There is no reason to doubt that ancient Egyptians, infants and the Ik are, in principle, on a level *vis à vis* the capacity to distinguish, say, colours. Obviously there are some who have defective vision, etc. but on the whole they recognize themselves as so defective and in the few cases where they fail we would incline to suppose them further defective in some additional respect. There is no analogue for secondary qualities of Mackie's "argument from relativity". Of course there might in principle be such divergence but in that case we would plausibly simply relativize our colour concepts with a nonchalance hard to imagine where values are concerned.

With values relativity seems to pose a more serious problem for such secondary-quality-type realism.⁶⁷ Subjectivism is rejected as failing to explain the apparent possibility of a particular person being in error, only to espouse what amounts to a form of conventionalism that fails to explain the apparent possibility of a society being in error. David Wiggins has noted this problem and suggested it might be sidestepped by an indexicalizing move whereby what is valuable is identified with our *actual* values. This is an attractive device and in chapter 10 I will exploit it myself to the same end. It is however best viewed as motivated by a second-order evaluative commitment to the

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp11-13.

⁶⁷ See e.g. Blackburn, 1985, p14.

values in question and hence is rather harder to motivate for the positive subjectivist who is offering a form of *reductive* naturalism about values.

Another recent move that seems to fail is Michael Smith's suggestion that instead of *normality*, we invoke *rationality*.⁶⁸ For this is itself an evaluative concept (Smith's *analysandum* is Brandt's and Gibbard's *analysans*) as we have already extensively observed.⁶⁹ We return to the Wittgensteinian point about the *pervasiveness of normativity* made at the outset of this chapter. As Smith and Lewis's coseminarist Mark Johnston puts it:

The concepts of value and of substantive practical reasoning take in each other's washing.⁷⁰

Johnston's own account seeks to avoid this problem by explicitly *not* claiming to be seeking a *reductive* account of values, an objective which, like myself and for related reasons, he thinks chimerical. Once this claim is dropped then the project of examining the conceptual connections between the two concepts in question indeed takes on a more promising aspect. But the project of purchasing some kind of objectivity for values with the currency of practical reason is likely to remain forlorn at least until the independent objectivity of the latter has also been paid for.

2.8. The form of objectivity espoused by reductive naturalism seems untenable. Statements about values do not reduce to naturalistic statements about things of other

⁶⁸ See his 1993.

⁶⁹ Cf. Gibbard, 1990, Putnam, 1981.

⁷⁰ Johnston, 1989, p162.

kinds, a conclusion which will be seen to cohere with my arguments of chapters 1, 7 and 8 especially.

A related form of objectivism contrasts with a subjectivism whereby, as Galen Strawson puts it:

while the true account of why we believe that moral judgements are or can be true or false leads back to all sorts of things, both to feelings and attitudes and other, non-mental things in the world, its does not lead back to moral facts (nor to non-moral facts that are held to amount to moral facts, given some variety of naturalism). So that *if* there is any sense in which morality generally considered is a real phenomenon in the everyday world, this is essentially partly because we believe that this is so.⁷¹

In chapter 3 especially, I shall argue that an objectivism that denies *this* is also mistaken. There and elsewhere, I will be concerned to criticize the view that value is mind-independent. This is false and seeing that it is is again part of what is involved in taking the point about *immanence* noted above.

There is however a *yet further* sense to talk of objectivity where it is a matter of the sort of considerations marshalled by Wiggins and Dummett in their respective characterizations of the marks of truth and quasi-assertion cited in chapter 1. Such objectivity involves the availability and applicability of notions of correctness and defeasibility and of the varied apparatus of logical discipline. In later chapters, I'll be concerned to show how such objectivity *is* enjoyed by evaluative discourse but also how that is no comfort to the realist who seeks to make no distinction between such

⁷¹ Galen Strawson, 1986, p15.

quasi-assertions and assertions in a stronger sense, a distinction whose availability I shall seek to demonstrate.

Chapter 3: Platonism and Internalism

3.1. To reflect about values is, effectively, to inquire after the good. And to inquire after the good is to face a problem first raised by the author (be he Plato or Socrates) of a classic argument found in Plato's *Meno*.¹

An inquiry into what goodness or anything else is would have little interest unless it were something we did not *already* know about. But if we do not know what goodness is, then how can we inquire into the matter, for in that case, it would seem the object of our inquiry remains completely undetermined?

There are obvious things to which we can appeal in dealing with this, the Paradox of Inquiry, in its general form. In some cases, for a start, we can appeal to what Putnam calls the division of linguistic labour.² If I have no very clear conception what an elm is, I can still make sense of an inquiry into the matter simply because language is a public thing and because I have reason to suppose that there are people somewhere who do.

But it is only inquiries motivated by purely *personal* ignorance that are accounted for in this way. Where no such supposition is warranted, we might give a different account. The question "What is X?" might be asking any one of various things- what is it for, what is it made of, what is it called, what that is more familiar can it be described in terms of, what is its causal role, where is it located? We can ask for some such information about something so long as we already know something *else* about it that enables us to individuate it. If, for example, we ask "What is the thing in the box?", we already know the last of these things about the object of our question, which thus satisfactorily individuates that object and gives our inquiry the necessary cognitive

¹ See Plato, *Meno*, 80, D-E.

² See pp227-9 of Putnam, 1975.

purchase. The object of an inquiry then can be identified by one or more of many possible identifying descriptions of it and the inquiry is then directed at further, as yet unfamiliar, aspects of that object. What the Paradox of Inquiry teaches us is that a question of the form "What is x?" is always a request for *further* information.

In the present case the object of our inquiry is goodness. And what do we know about goodness that might give us a conceptual toehold on this inquiry? If we are *platonists* about goodness the question might indeed baffle us. There seems to be little that we could claim precisely to *know* about goodness realistically conceived, little that we cannot plausibly greet with scepticism. Some have claimed that it is what we approve and commend to the approval of others, some that it is a simple and unanalysable non-natural property, others that it is whatever conduces to happiness. But what stable conception of the *analysandum* links these competing analyses effectively enough that they may be said genuinely to compete?

Consider an analogy. Suppose we want very much to know what burglars are. Because "burgles" is a nonsense word the question is foolish. We do not know what we are asking. No one does. Suppose this confusion persists. We remain baffled. As a solution to our bafflement the Walrus offers the theory that burglars are simply cabbages, that talk of burglars is reducible to talk of cabbages. The Carpenter, on the other hand, claims that, far from being cabbages, burglars are in fact kings. The disagreement between them is obviously quite empty, for all we know is that the one claims of things he takes to be cabbages that they are cabbages, the other of things he takes to be kings that they are kings. We may sometimes feel baffled by our inquiry into goodness, but it is important not to set the problem up in such a way as to be *too* baffling or nothing will remain to be baffled by.

If things were this bad, inquiry would be futile. Some forms of *relativism* might seem to leave things this bad in virtue of involving us in problems of *incommensurability*. But it also seems to be a problem for *realism*. Platonistic forms of

realism seem to leave things this bad in virtue of what amounts to a problem of *vacuity*.

3.2. Another way of pointing up this threat to the platonist is analogous to the *Benacerraf Problem*, a well-known problem in the philosophy of mathematics.³ The problem is simply that if platonism about numbers were true, how is our knowledge of them to be *explained*? What possible epistemic connection, causal or otherwise, could there be between the abstract entities numbers are held to be by platonists and our own thoughts and beliefs about them? The problem is clearly formulable in terms of reference as well as knowledge in so far as we suppose the former to demand causal interaction with its object and the profession of such an accomplishment to demand explanation of how that interaction is secured.

This sort of difficulty is applicable to realism in general. Wright has expressed the difficulty by drawing a distinction between "gloomy" and "optimistic" forms of realism⁴, the gloomy realist being one who

denies that there is any cause to believe that the pursuit of "best method" enhances the likelihood of truth.⁵

The result, he points out, is "a realism that has no bearing on scientific practice". Indeed it has no bearing on *any* kind of practice.

³ The name alludes to Benacerraf, 1973. For a more recent deployment see Field, 1990.

⁴ See his 1986b.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p257.

Such realism is indeed "a bankrupt philosophy". But Wright goes on to suggest that even the *optimistic* realist's position leaves *absolute* truth and falsity with "no regulative role to play."

our practice is rationalized by the "absolute" objectives only in so far as, and for precisely the same reason as, it is rationalized by the objective of avoiding empirical inadequacy.⁶

After all, if, as the absolute (or "external") realist and the radical sceptic tend to agree, reality is characterized in terms of some noumenal realm with no essential link to our experience it is unclear not only how we would succeed in *knowing* about it but also how we could succeed in speaking or thinking about it at all.

In the specifically moral realm, such difficulties for the realist are familiar. Thus Mackie writes:

When we ask the awkward question, how we can be aware of this authoritative prescriptivity, of the truth of these distinctively ethical premises or of the cogency of this distinctively ethical pattern of reasoning, none of our ordinary accounts of sensory perception or introspection or the framing of explanatory hypotheses or inference or logical construction or conceptual analysis, or any combination of these will provide a satisfactory answer.⁷

And Smith, discussing intuitionism, writes that:

⁶ Ibid., p258.

⁷ Mackie, 1977, pp38-39.

we have independent reasons to believe the intuitionist's epistemology only if he can explain how the alleged faculty of moral intuition is supposed to work. But, unsurprisingly, since all we know about the faculty is that it is apt for detecting self-evident moral truths, the intuitionist is unable to provide such an explanation.⁸

This epistemological line of attack on moral platonism points up the vacuity I suggested threatened it in the previous section. For the epistemological argument does semantic as well as epistemological work. If we say of values that they are possible objects of knowledge but have no story to tell about how such knowledge is possible, then not only the truth but the intelligibility of our moral theory is called into question. A theory about a realm we can only know about in a mysterious and unspecified way leaves it mysterious and unspecified what realm that is. The platonist might of course suppose that we are related to the realm in question in virtue of our everyday engagement in evaluative feeling and response but then the question is acutely felt, what on earth provides a basis for any such supposition? And should the platonist wax gloomy about our being appropriately related to such a realm at all, then he risks losing the cognitive purchase on the notion of value discussion of the Paradox of Inquiry showed us to require.

3.3. The Paradox of Inquiry invites comparison with the line of argument used by Moore in advancing his view that good is indefinable and attacking what he calls "naturalism". He developed it by formulating what has come to be known as the "open question argument". This has it that any reductive definition of the form, goodness is F,

⁸ Smith, 1986, p205.

is open to the criticism that, given that some A if F, it is always an open question whether that A is also good.⁹

It has been emphasized that this is, in a rather specific form, basically the same thought as is involved in the Paradox of Analysis.¹⁰ This paradox may be stated in terms of a dilemma whereby any analytical equivalence between expressions would either be a trivial and uninteresting identity-statement or be false¹¹.

It is worth giving a brief account of how this paradox may be resolved in terms of the project of philosophical analysis that has preoccupied philosophers since Moore's day. This is the project of providing "analyses" of concepts and propositions that would exhibit their logical structures and smooth out philosophical difficulties which seem to come in their wake. Classic examples of analysis would be such analytic projects as: reducing all statements about material objects to statements about sense data; reducing all statements about "theoretical" entities in science to statements about observable entities; reducing all statements about psychological states to statements about observable behaviour. Such analyses of familiar concepts doubtless came as a surprise to many people who were perhaps reluctant to accept them as accounts of what they had meant all along.

But of course these do not need to be taken as accounts of what the concepts involved *mean*. They are far more satisfactorily taken as accounts of what these *had better mean*. All the cases just cited were proposed by philosophers with a strong commitment to empiricism, for whom reference to the likes of material objects, theoretical entities, mental states was for familiar empiricist reasons, highly problematic. The analyses of such concepts could stand or fall on two tests-

⁹ See Moore, 1903, chapter 1, esp sections 10-13.

¹⁰ See Smith, 1986, p295.

¹¹ See Langford, 1942, pp322-3 and Moore's reply in the same volume.

- 1/ Did they avoid the philosophical problematicity of the original sentences?
- 2/ Did they do justice to the original sentences? That is, could they be expected to do service for all the legitimate uses to which the original sentences could be put?¹²

Question 2 is not on the face of it at all the same as the question: did the *analysantes* mean the same as the *analysanda*? This is simply not the issue. The issue is: could we dispense with the *analysanda* in favour of the *analysantes* without losing out on such ability to make sensible, intelligible assertions as the former conferred. This much could convincingly be claimed for *analysantes* whose fidelity to their *analysanda* was far from trivial and obvious.¹³

If this account of the matter is along the right lines, then Moore's open question argument looks less impressive.¹⁴ Nothing it says rules out the possibility of someone claiming that goodness is F on the grounds that whatever else we may suppose it to

¹² Cf. Lewis, 1989, p131:

If the dispositional theory is only unobviously and equivocally analytic, why think that it's analytic at all? Because that hypothesis fits our practice.

¹³ Cf. the last three paragraphs of *ibid.*

¹⁴ Cf. Harman (1977, Chapter 2, section 4) who argues that the argument is a) question-begging (certainly the question is open if ethical naturalism is false) and b) invalid (That it is an open question whether water is H₂O is beside the point in determining whether it is).

mean, F is all that it *can* mean. Early emotivist accounts of value, such as Ayer's can be read in this way. Clearly they were driven by the same empiricist convictions as the other paradigms of philosophical analysis alluded to above.

Moore's argument however is close to a much sounder kind of point which serves perhaps to explain such plausibility as it may possess. This is the kind of point, classically stated by R. M. Hare¹⁵, that no reductive analysis of good that is merely *descriptive* is adequate, that such analyses fail to pass the second of the two tests cited for analytic projects above. So that if it is claimed that goodness is F where "F" is a purely *descriptive* term and some A is F, then it will indeed be a further question whether *A is good* given that good is *not* a descriptive term.¹⁶ Such open question arguments are best read as suggesting that some proposed analysis fails test 2 above.

¹⁵ Hare, 1952, chapter 5. Hare's reconstruction stresses *commendation* while in 4.5 below I stress *motivation*, but of course, for Hare, the connection between the two latter is an intimate one- see especially his 1963, chapter 5.

¹⁶ The relatedness of this sounder point to the open question argument may perhaps go some way to explain why, although Stevenson in "The Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms" gives an account of the difficulties with the question "What is goodness" that is close to my own (1963, pp10-11) he then goes on to employ the open question argument against naturalistic reductionism (p15) where we might expect him to know better.

The historical significance of the open question argument for twentieth century moral anti-realism is considerable. For it was not simply positivism that motivated philosophers like Ayer (1971) in holding an emotivist position but the conjunction of positivism, which rules out Moorean non-naturalist intuitionism, with an acceptance of Moore's argument, which was taken to rule out naturalistic accounts of value of the kind some positivists, such as Schlick (1939), in fact adopted.

3.4 We can begin to see why this is so by returning to our consideration of the Paradox of Inquiry. This led to the conclusion that some cognitive purchase on the object of inquiry is needed in order for any inquiry to get off the ground. There remains the issue of where, in the case of goodness, this is to be found.

There is a natural place for us to begin. "Good" is a word in our language. It is in all the dictionaries. This is the most salient thing about goodness that distinguishes it from burglehood. Surely we can learn what it is by examining the occasions of its use.

The result of this examination is of central importance to understanding the difficulties of moral theory. For anyone observing the employment of "good" by English speakers will be able to make two observations about it.

First he will notice that:

O1: certain things are and others are not in fact deemed to be good by his peers. He will learn to make the sort of observations that always so infuriated Socrates:

In the first place if what you're interested in is the virtue of a man, then that's a simple matter, such virtue being just this: to be competent to manage the affairs of a *polis* and, treating one's friends well and one's enemies ill, to be circumspect over not receiving the latter treatment oneself. And then if you want a woman's virtue, that's not difficult to deal with: it's that she manage her household well, looking after what it contains and obeying her husband. And a child's virtue is different again

(depending on the sex of the child) and an old man's, free or slave, as you will.¹⁷

In addition to this kind of rather piecemeal information about the extension of the word he will *secondly* notice something rather more general about its use:

O2: that the word "goodness" is used to commend things, to express approval, to back up wishes and commands, in general, to guide action.

These two basic kinds of data from which all examinations of goodness must begin are in tension, and the tension between them is of central significance.

The first kind of data gives us a picture of how for a particular given culture the goodness of a thing, situation, person or whatever consists in a variety of specific features of that thing, situation, person or whatever- that it is useful, just, trustworthy or whatever. These specific features appear to be perfectly objective, to be proper objects of belief and knowledge. The concepts by which we attempt to capture them may then be taken as determining the application of more general concepts such as good, thereby leading to an account of value that will be non-centralist and cognitivist.¹⁸

The second observation does not allude to our specific evaluative concepts but rather to the use to which evaluative concepts in general are put, that is in commendation, prescription, expression of approval and the grounding of imperatives.

¹⁷ Plato, *Meno* 71E-72A. My translation.

¹⁸ See Murdoch, "The Sovereignty of Good over Other Concepts" in her 1970; Foot, "Moral Arguments" in her 1978 and her 1985a and 1985b; McDowell, 1978, 1979, 1981; Hurley, 1989, especially chapters 1-6.

The usual course provoked by this is an underlining of the contrast between such activity and non-evaluative assertion, description of how things are taken actually to be rather than of how they should be. The position taken as an outcome of such underlining has tended to be centralist and frequently non-cognitivist.¹⁹

The most immediate objection²⁰ to the first approach is to note the problem with the phrase "for a particular given culture". For it is a commonplace that there are many cultures (and subcultures) and the specific values prevalent in them vary widely.²¹ So that the meaning of "good"²² seems to be different at this specific level for different cultures. But if it were different there would, it might seem, be no disagreement between them for the reasons rehearsed at 3.1 above. What we needed was a *common* conception of goodness. What we get from the first observation is very precisely not that.

The existence of such divergent cultures is not in fact necessary for such a problem to arise, merely their possibility. So that the problem could still be formulated if we lived in a world where nobody differed on any questions of values. In such a world

¹⁹ Prominent examples of such positions are found in Hare, 1952 and 1963 and Gibbard, 1990.

²⁰ This objection is well put by Hare who sees in it a "*Reductio Ad Absurdum* of Descriptivism". See his 1989, Essay Eight.

²¹ For documentation of these variations presented as evidence for egocentric relativism, see Westermarck, 1932, chapter VII.

²² Not to mention the meaning of terms such as *agathos* conventionally translated by English evaluative terms such as "good". But it is simpler for the sake of argument to ignore these for now as there is quite enough variation in values in the anglophone world to carry the points in question.

moral dissidents would be like solipsists, objects of philosophical fantasy of interest only to philosophers. But they *would* nonetheless interest us.

This sort of consideration can encourage the claim that the more fundamental of the two observations is the second, which might be seen to pinpoint the common denominator of what is understood by "good" in all cultures, this being the *action-guiding force* of evaluative language.²³

This again is very much the position of Hare in *The Language of Morals*²⁴ who distinguished the descriptive and evaluative meaning of the word "good", these being just those aspects of its meaning identified by the first and second observations above and then claims that the latter is primary for two reasons:

- 1/ It is common to every class of objects for which the word is used.
- 2/ We use the evaluative force to change the descriptive force.

He notes however that, while for general words like "good" the evaluative meaning is primary, for specific words like "tidy" and "industrious" the descriptive meaning is primary. This latter fact he explains as "a sign that the standard to which the word applies has become conventional."²⁵

²³ See e.g. Hare, 1952, p1; Mackie, 1977, pp40-41; Blackburn, 1984, p180; Smith, 1986, pp295ff.

²⁴ 1952, 7.4 and 7.5.

²⁵ But of course this takes us to part of the reason for saying above that the tension between the two observations was central. For it has become a familiar claim among moral realists precisely that the specific evaluative concepts we use are conceptually prior to the more general ones. As Hare contemptuously put it,

3.5. It was suggested above that there is a better argument that Moore's open question argument gains much of its plausibility from resembling. This kind of argument is directed against *naturalism* by Moore and *descriptivism* by Hare. My own objections to descriptivism will come mainly in chapter 8 below. But my more immediate target is rather *externalism*, an understanding of values that does not relate it essentially to what motivates us, to what we care about. It has already become clear at 2.4 above that the position we take on externalism is crucial to the plausibility of the sort of non-centralism that sees O1 as more basic than O2.

The trouble with externalism is that it readily secures the *objectivity* of value but leaves its *prescriptivity* unaccountable. For the externalist, as Richard Garner writes:

Learning that something is wrong would be like learning what time it is—its relevance would depend on other commitments.²⁶

It is precisely the presence or absence of such other commitments that externalism leaves "open" and in so doing it deprives imputations of rightness or wrongness of any force or interest to us. So the question that is left open by externalist theories of value

The object of this common descriptivist ploy is to suck the greatest possible advantage from the fact that the descriptive meaning of the first sort of words [the specific evaluative words] is entrenched. (1989, p116)

²⁶ Garner 1990, p139.

is not so much Moore's "But is it good?" as it is simply "So what?" which may follow even an affirmative answer to the former question.²⁷

Philippa Foot's progress as a moral philosopher is perhaps illustrative of the present point. In her earlier work, most notably the papers "Moral Arguments" and "Moral Beliefs"²⁸ she adopted a descriptivist strategy along conventionalist lines concentrating on the more specific moral concepts and insisting that their meaning is as determinate and as involving of descriptive content as any more typically "factual" concepts are. In the later "Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives" she is brought to an intense moral scepticism by virtue of the lack of authority this view seems to confer on morality. Morality, understood externally, in the sense of whatever moral norms enjoy recognition in a given culture, is something about which we can make claims that are true, factual and objective as well as naturalistic in content. But morality so understood is something we can coherently choose to disregard. Told not to tell lies because it is immoral I retain the option of replying that, while being moral is not what interests or motivates me, telling lies is. The problem is only overcome when I myself am a *participant* in the recognition of the norms in question, when "morality" is taken in its *internal* sense²⁹ in which it refers to whatever norms enjoy recognition or endorsement from myself (or whoever it is whose morality is in question).³⁰ Value,

²⁷ Cf. Mark Johnston, 1989, pp157-8.

²⁸ Both in her 1978.

²⁹ My terminology here follows H. L. A, Hart, 1961, pp55ff and Neil Cooper, 1981, pp51ff, q.v. Cf. the distinction between *embracing* a norm and *recognizing* it made by Railton, 1986, section II and Smith 1989, p97.

³⁰ It is the failure of such coincidence that is perhaps at the heart of Aristotle's understanding of *akrasia* in *Nicomachean Ethics*, VII. See Burnyeat, 1980 on the links between this and Aristotle's account of moral education.

understood externally, is dead when we merely know its content without additional emotional commitment.

The problem is made vivid when we consider externalist theories that take a conventionalist form. These may perhaps be made more plausible when their externalism is weakened in some way. But if this is *not* done, it would seem to follow, as already noted in chapter 2 above, that the proper understanding of the project of determining what, in a particular instance, is good or right or rational or ought to be done is simply as a research project in sociology. But this naturally invites both the phenomenological objection that this is not even remotely what we do when confronted with ground for perplexity about such matters and the logical objection that someone faced with such perplexity and furnished by some sympathetic and expert friend with the results of just the appropriate such research project might properly be puzzled as to just how this information succeeded in being, *vis à vis* their difficulties, either here or there. Of course, it *will* be relevant if the person in question *embraces* a norm of deference to the values of their community and, in chapter 10, I will make out a case for such a norm. But, crucially, conventionalism of this sort has ceased to be *externalist*.

Given these points the externalist seems to face a dilemma. Either he adopts a positive conventionalist theory of value, thus making the kind of observation instantiated by O1 fundamental, and must then confront the difficulties just raised. Or he adopts a form of externalism which takes value to be something prior to and independent of the conventions of particular societies, in which case he has to explain how he avoids the difficulties raised for the platonist above, given that, neither having adopted such a conventionalist theory nor conceded the internalist's case, he seems to have blocked for himself the pathways to a cognitive purchase on what values are taken to be offered by O1 and O2.

A related merit of internalism is the very straightforward way in which it evades a form of scepticism about the significance of evaluative claims that we have seen to threaten the platonistically inclined externalist. This is felicitously dramatized by the story Hare tells us in his well-known paper "Nothing Matters".³¹ In this Hare describes a young man who had been persuaded to adopt an extreme form of value nihilism, summed up in the paper's title, by a reading (perhaps a misreading) of certain modern European writers. Hare goes on to claim that he helped the young man in question back to sanity by bringing him to realize that, prescindng from the existence of large metaphysical truths about what he ought to care about, there were a great many (very normal and human) things that he *did* care about. That many things did in fact matter *to him* and that in virtue of just such facts sense could be made of claims about things mattering *tout court*- claims that are simply mysterious when supposed to be independent of the cares and concerns that we in fact have. Internalism then secures a link between *values* and *what we care about* in virtue of which we can the better make sense of the former.

"Internalism" has a number of senses nowadays. We should here distinguish:

1/ What I'll call *subjective internalism* - the broadly subjectivist variety whereby things that are said to have value for us matter to us (where mattering involves, but is perhaps not exhausted by, motivating) because so mattering is constitutive of what we mean by value.

from

³¹ In his 1972.

2/ The broadly realist kind (*objective internalism*, to give it a name) whereby things that have value matter for us, or motivate us, because such mattering, or motivating, is a necessary concomitant of our perceiving (or otherwise coming to know) objective values themselves prior to such mattering.

This latter form of internalism, which, stressing as it does the intrinsic prescriptivity of objective values, is the target of Mackie's argument from queerness.³² This may be read as stressing the action-guidingness of moral judgements, thereby at once dramatizing the untenability of externalism and underscoring the peculiarity of objective internalism. This approach is certainly, I think, fatal to the objective internalist if he is a *platonist* for then once again he is implicated in the epistemic difficulties noted above. His position *vis à vis* the externalist platonist is really rather analogous to that of the optimistic *vis à vis* the gloomy realist as Wright characterizes these. For it is surely *only in virtue of mattering to us* that the objective values in question have any role to play in the ordering and regulation of our moral (and prudential, aesthetic, etc.) practice. The platonistic objective internalist must then characterize what it is that gives *content* to his notion of value *in addition to* this very mattering and hence what *distinguishes* his position from the subjective internalist. Insofar as his platonism is incompatible with conventionalism, O1 is unavailable to him as a resource for such characterization. While if the objective internalist is, rather than a platonist, some kind of positive conventionalist we revert to the kind of phenomenological objection to that position already levelled against the externalist- it is surely simply *false* that knowledge of the evaluative norms prevailing in the society I live in is necessarily motivating, necessarily guarantees that these norms will matter to

³² See Mackie, 1977, pp38-42 and Garner 1990.

me. Reflection about what values to endorse is not, once again, a research project into the moral sociology of one's own, or any, society.

3.6. There is a yet further ambiguity in the term "internalism."³³ It is not universally accepted that whenever somebody ϕ s (intentionally, that is- their ϕ ing must be an *action*) then there is present a desire on their part to ϕ . It can also be alleged that certain sorts of *belief*, perceptual experience or other cognitive state can suffice for motivation without the participation of *desires*, an allegation whose denial constitutes *Humean internalism*.³⁴ Such Humean internalism undermines objective internalism insofar as difficulties are thereby raised for the very idea that perceiving or otherwise coming to know objective values, *qua* purely *cognitive* state, could ever have motivating force.

The most influential contemporary argument for Humean internalism is what Jay Wallace has dubbed the "teleological argument".³⁵ This may be reconstructed as follows. Intentional action is goal-directed- seeks the realization of some state of the world conceived not as actual but as sought after. In this respect to act intentionally, or indeed to hold an intention with or without acting on it, is to be in a state of mind

³³ "Internalism" is also ambiguous insofar as it is sometimes used to indicate a claim about *reasons (for action)* and at other times of *values*. That this distinction is comparatively unimportant for my purposes will be unsurprising when chapter 2 is recalled in which rationalistic approaches to objectivity were criticized on the grounds that reason and value are insufficiently categorially distinct for the explication of the latter in terms of the former to be much help to us.

³⁴ Note that "Humean" in what remains of this chapter refers to the position here characterized prescinding from controversy about the interpretation of Hume.

³⁵ Wallace, 1990, p359ff.

having world-word *direction of fit*³⁶, where a state of mind has such a direction of fit if the *onus of match* between the content of the thought involved and the world lies on the world and not the thought. So that if I find a thought of mine with world-word direction of fit (a belief) failing to match the world, the *thought* is subject to revision. But if a thought with world-word direction of fit fails to match the world, it is, as it were, *the world* that is subject to revision. So if I wish to be driving towards Cambridge (Dummett's example³⁷) but find I am not, I change not my attitude but my direction of travel and match is attained, *à la* Marx, by improving the world and not my understanding of it. As (roughly) Humberstone has it, in the most detailed attempt known to me to cash out the distinction, the intention constitutively involved in a thought with world-word direction of fit is that the thought not be had in the event that its content be false; while that so involved in a thought with world-word direction of fit is that the world become such as to match the content.³⁸ Because intentional action and desire have a common direction of fit (world-word) that beliefs do not share, it follows that not all the psychological antecedents of action are strictly cognitive states. And if, as is plausible³⁹, world-word direction of fit is taken as characteristic of the broad class

³⁶ The notion of direction of fit has its source in Austin's "How to Talk" (in his 1970) and Anscombe's 1957, p52. Searle, 1983, gives it a prominent role in his philosophy of mind and language. Its most influential invocation in the cause of Humean internalism is by Smith (1987 and 1988) but note his anticipation by Cooper (1981, chapter 3).

³⁷ Dummett, 1973, p299.

³⁸ See Humberstone, 1992.

³⁹ Cf. the passage from Wallace quoted below.

of thoughts made up by desires or wants, it follows that anyone who intentionally \varnothing s necessarily wants or desires to \varnothing (under some description).⁴⁰

There are now two moves that the Humean's opponent may make⁴¹, the first⁴² is to suggest that it is possible for a single thought to be at once both a belief and a desire, in John Altham's terminology a "besire"⁴³, having thereby both world-word *and* word-world direction of fit. The immediate objection is that this is incoherent given that beliefs and desires, word-world and world-word thoughts, are by definition responsive in different ways to additional cognitive (or affective) input.⁴⁴ But the response to this is to suppose that the content of the belief *qua* belief might differ from its content *qua* desire. However, perhaps the coherence of this supposition might be called in doubt by asking in what sense the belief and desire in this instance are held to be *the same-* to

⁴⁰ Cf. Davidson's "Intending" in his 1980 and Audi, 1986, pp20-27. Note that Audi makes a distinction between wanting and desiring in which I do not follow him. We may here note the sort of objection to Humean internalism (which Audi's distinction seems partly intended to deflect), made e.g. by Staude (1986) which stresses cases where through duress or kindness or simple lack of choice we act in ways we do not want to. This seems to me to focus with misleading exclusivity on one's *pro tanto* initial wants as opposed to what one prefers (most wants) from the (perceived) available alternatives all things considered. For a more extensive response to this sort of objection see Marks, 1986a. See also Smith, 1987, pp45-50.

⁴¹ Cf. Pettit 1987, p531.

⁴² See McNaughton, 1988, pp108-110.

⁴³ See Altham 1986.

⁴⁴ See Smith 1987, p56.

what principle for the individuation of thoughts appeal is to be made that does not invoke precisely their content in a way fatal to such a move.⁴⁵

Here the anti-Humean might bring in some piece of philosophical psychology designed to supply a suitable such principle. But for now let us rather concentrate on his other possible course which is to retreat to the second of the two main anti-Humean tactics alluded to above. This is the tactic, most influentially practised by Nagel⁴⁶, of conceding that desire plays a part in all motivation but of suggesting that the motivation of that desire in turn (where it is motivated at all) may be purely cognitive.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ It is worth pointing out that my own *mixed evaluations* of chapters 1 and 8 are not desires in the appropriate sense as they *decompose* into *distinct* descriptive and evaluative ingredients

⁴⁶ In his 1970, chapter V. Cf. Bond, 1983, pp67-68.

⁴⁷ Here we might note the position discussed by Lewis (1988, p326) whereby in some cases an agent

desires things just to the extent that he believes that they would be good.

the upshot of which in formal terms is to assign the same value to the agents credence (i.e. subjective probability) function for the said belief as to his value (utility) function for the said desire, a result that might be associated either, in terms of the first tactic, with an identification of the belief and the desire, however justified, or, in terms of the second, with the rational adequacy of the said belief in motivating the said desire. Lewis takes this to lead to incoherence but see Huw Price, 1989 for criticism of his argument.

This second tactic is made vivid in an example I draw from Stephen Darwall.⁴⁸ A certain young woman, Roberta, watches a documentary film about the plight of certain exploited workers and as a result is motivated to perform a certain class of political actions of which \emptyset , say, is one. It is conceded that her motivation for \emptyset ing includes at least one desire- the desire to \emptyset . The question then is whether the motivation *of that desire* is similarly inclusive of at least some non-cognitive element. Darwall's claim is that:

Roberta may have no desire prior to viewing the film that explains her decision to join the boycott. And whatever desire she does have after the film seems itself to be the result of her becoming aware, in a particularly vivid way, of considerations that motivate her desire and that she takes as reasons for her decision: the unjustifiable suffering of the workers.

The explanation might invoke some prior "abstract desire to relieve suffering" but *need not* do so.

For her to come to a general *desire* to relieve suffering she would have to become actively concerned about the fact of suffering itself, conceived independently of who suffers, and she may never have done that.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ See his 1983, pp39ff.

⁴⁹ These quotations from *ibid.*, p40.

What considerations might the Humean invoke to suggest that pure cognitivism is as implausible in an account of the motivation of desire as it is in the motivation of action?

An initial thought is that the same considerations that led to the conclusion that some desire is involved in the motivation of any action can simply be redeployed further down the chain of motivation. But there is a problem here. Consider the following passage in which the teleological argument is elegantly deployed by Wallace (not a Humean) against Richard Warner:

Warner describes a thought-experiment in which we are to imagine a creature which takes thoughts as inputs and produces behaviour as output; the coherence of the description is then taken to show that a rationalist account is at least possible. But the description is coherent only if we interpret the creature's behaviour as mere bodily movement rather than as intentional action. The point of the teleological argument is that it is *not* coherent to suppose that intentional action could take place in the absence of a state of desire.⁵⁰

Why argument of this sort cannot simply be *reproduced* against the second tactic is fairly clear- we do not speak of arriving at desires as a result of *intentions* so to arrive in the same way as we speak of performing actions as a result of *intentions* so to perform.

What the Humean needs to do to produce an analogue of the original argument to work at this level is appeal to the notion of *rational* (as opposed to *non-rational*) desire formation. If it is inappropriate to speak of forming desires intentionally, it is not

⁵⁰ Wallace, 1990, p361, note 14.

always so to speak of forming them *deliberately*, that is, as a result of rational deliberation. And a plausible supposition is that this is not what happens in the Darwall's example. For Roberta, we may suggest, is, in spite of the noted disanalogy, like the creature described by Warner- beliefs about working conditions are the inputs and a desire to alleviate them the output. Nothing, it is true, prevents there being just such a causal linkage between them but the difficulty is with supposing the former to constitute *reasons* for the latter. For my coming to believe that P is the case only begins to provide a rational explanation of my wishing that it cease to be the case on the further assumption that I don't like what I learn. In Darwall's example, this assumption is slipped over partly because such a response would be almost universal (nobody is pleased by brown lungs, low wages and the other things Darwall mentions). So consider an example where this is not so. I learn that there is no parsley on the moon and so come to desire that some be taken there.⁵¹ The "so" here may well indicate a supposition about causality, but it seems to make little sense as insinuating that *an explanation in terms of reasons* has been given.

To bring the point out further, it may help to consider a simpler example than Darwall's. Someone visiting a gallery comes face to face with a painting and forms a desire to buy it. Suppose the person is not a collector and did not have any such prior desire as that he should buy some painting. Suppose moreover that he has no antecedent interest in art- he's simply escaping from a downpour. The reason for the desire, the anti-Humean will urge, is just that the painting has, as he perceives it to have, just the aesthetic properties it does. The anti-Humean's representation of the persons thought-process might go as follows:

a) This painting has the properties it does. So I want to buy it.

⁵¹ Cf. Nagel, 1970, p45; Parfit, 1984, p123.

Against this the Humean would be foolish, surely, to oppose this with the suggestion that the person actually thinks anything like:

(b) I want to buy a painting with such and such properties. Here is one. So I want to buy it.

No such antecedent desire is needed, nor in this case is it at all plausible. What the Humean *should* propose is simply, dropping the "so" from (a), giving:

(c) This painting has the properties it does. I want to buy it.

Now if the painting is by, say, Leonardo, then the desire to buy it⁵² will make enough sense in terms of what are likely to be *our own* tastes for the "so" to have a *justificatory* force it would lack were it by, say, myself. But as far as *explanatory* force is concerned, the cases are much the same. For this person, unlike ourselves, has no antecedent views about aesthetic merit that inform the formation of his desire.

But though he brings no such antecedent views with him to the encounter with the painting, he may well *take them away* from it. For it is, at least sometimes, by discovering what we are disposed to value in *particular* cases that we arrive at more general views about the *sorts* of things we value. And this is very much the process of which both Roberta and our artistic neophyte finds themselves at the *beginning*. Were they further from that beginning, then the Humean could indeed invoke general and antecedent wants to explain the genesis of the particular wants in question. but as they *are* at the beginning, it can simply be said that they are such as to respond to certain

⁵² It is beside the point that the desire may be unrealistic- "wants" does not imply "can".

experiences by discovering in themselves certain desires. These particular responses may indeed come to occupy a place in a *wider* pattern, come to be seen as particular manifestations of more general impulses. And when this happens, there may be another way in which the "so" is restored, as it were, retrospectively. Suppose Roberta, subsequently to her initial politicization by the film, is disposed to respond similarly to *other* comparable instances of exploitation. It then does start to make sense to say of her in these cases that she dislikes exploitation. So that when she encountered this instance of it, she opposed it. The understanding of her character and dispositions thus deployed can also be deployed retrospectively to the initial case when those dispositions first made themselves known, this aspect of her character being taken to antedate its first clear manifestations, just as glass is brittle before it ever breaks. But this is *only* true in virtue of *later* developments. If Roberta's response to the film is a *one-off*, if there is no consistent pattern of response into which it is subsequently seen to fit, then it does seem no more or less inappropriate to say- she saw the film so she joined the boycott, than it is to introduce a similar "so" into an account of an eventuality she might describe in the words "Watching that documentary gave me a craving for cherry trifle", an eventuality which, while it may be a genuine instance of *causal engagement* between experiences, does not, at least *prima facie* instantiate the formation of want on the basis of a *reason*.

An insight to which I am appealing here is that to acting, or to deciding to act, or to coming to have a desire, on the basis of a reason, the same strictures seem to apply as Wittgenstein applied to rule-following in a remark already quoted in chapter 2:

it would be nonsense to say: just once in the history of the world someone followed a rule (or a signpost, played a game, uttered a sentence, or understood one and so on).⁵³

Of course in discussing Humean internalism, the reasons that interest us are those invoked in the *explanation* rather than the *justification* of action⁵⁴ and reasons that explain may fail to justify. As when we say:

Pierre dislikes his Jewish landlord so he supports Le Pen.

But though the forgoing does not *justify* Pierre's support, it resembles a justification in that it at least *makes sense* of it. It makes sense of it in a way that saying:

Pierre dislikes cherry trifle so he supports Le Pen.

fails to make sense of it and hence fails to get of the ground as a reason-invoking explanation of Pierre's support. Were it the case that our language or our culture recognized some connection between cherry trifle and the *Front National* sense would emerge just as it does when Roberta sees poor working conditions as a reason for political activism. But for that sense to have *explanatory* value, we would have to suppose that connection *internal* to Pierre's deliberative processes and this can only come about when, again as we saw with Roberta's political commitments, those processes come to exhibit a larger pattern which that sense fits. Explanation that proceeds by the invocation of reasons is, like rationality itself, the child of *structure* (and we shall see in later chapters how the same is true of morality).

⁵³ 1956, VI, 21.

⁵⁴ On this distinction see e.g. Bond 1983, chapter 2, Darwall, 1983, chapter 2.

3.7. Cases like Roberta and my aesthetic neophyte recall the discussion of these matters by McDowell in his paper "Are Moral Requirements Hypothetical Imperatives?"⁵⁵, written in response to Foot's claim that the answer to that question is effectively, "Yes." To accept that one *should* do something, McDowell claims, is *ipso facto* to accept that one has *reason* to do it, a reason that may be constituted by one's conception of one's circumstances, a conception that does not weigh with one only conditionally on possession of appropriate desires. McDowell follows Nagel in suggesting that the ascription of a desire to someone acting for such a reason is "simply consequential on our taking him to act as he does for the reasons we cite."⁵⁶ The possibility that someone might share one's conception of one's circumstances but see no reason is, he claims, imaginary:

It is not clear that we can really make sense of the idea of someone who is otherwise rational but cannot see how facts about his future can, by themselves, constitute reasons for him to act in various ways.⁵⁷

Thus we say such things as "You don't know what it means that someone is shy and sensitive" and, he asserts:

Conveying what a circumstance means, in this loaded sense, is getting someone to see it in the special way in which a virtuous person would see it.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ McDowell, 1978

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p15.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p17.

The question "Why should I conform to the dictates of morality?" is, we are told:

most naturally understood as asking for an extra-moral motivation
which will be gratified by virtuous behaviour.⁵⁹

and it is this which makes the question improper and redundant- for the virtuous person requires no such extra motivation.

Now suppose a virtuous person is presented with a set of circumstances, forms a conception of what those circumstances are and then acts in the way dictated by virtue. McDowell is conceding that the antecedents of the action incorporate a desire so to act but takes it that this desire is simply consequential on "the fact that the reasons weigh as they do" where the reasons are construed along cognitivist lines. McDowell's then seeks to improve upon what he takes to be a simplistic view of the antecedents of virtuous action, whereby they comprise:

- 1/ an understanding of the situation,
- 2/ an understanding of the requirements of morality with respect to the situation and
- 3/ a desire to act on those requirements

with a view which sets them out as follows

- 1/ an understanding of the situation,

⁵⁸ Ibid., p21.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p22.

2/ a desire to act as that understanding determines one to act.

The insight here is that a virtuous person's understanding of his circumstances may differ widely from that of a person of a different kind precisely because he is virtuous and the associated claim is that that difference in his understanding suffices to explain the difference in his behaviour without having to invoke a different set of desires which the virtuous person brings with him to the situation (as opposed to forming in response to it). My worry here is that we might also reasonably demand some explanation of why the virtuous person's understanding of his situation differs as it does. To say it does so in virtue of his being virtuous is to invoke a *virtus dormitiva* unless we can give a characterization of virtue other than as a disposition to understand circumstances in a particular way. And the natural point to make about a virtuous person is that he is someone who *values* virtuous actions and desires to perform them. Indeed this is just how Aristotle (whom McDowell claims as an ally) characterizes the temperate man, who is distinguished from the merely *enkratic* precisely by the conformity of his desires with the requirements of virtue.⁶⁰ Such a consideration invites the non-cognitivist to characterize the antecedents of virtuous action rather as follows:

- 1/ an understanding of the situation and
- 2/ a desire to act as a virtuous person would in that situation which is determined both by 1/ and by
- 3/ an antecedent set of more general desires to act in the ways in which a virtuous person does- these desires not only collaborating with 1/ to produces
- 2/ but themselves colouring 1/.

⁶⁰ *Nicomachean Ethics*, VII, 9.

Here we accept the sort of explanation we rejected for Roberta and the aesthetic neophyte that appeals to antecedent desires. And this simply because such explanation failed for them precisely because they were at the *beginning* of the educative process of character-formation *vis-à-vis* respectively political and aesthetic deliberation and reflection, whereas the virtuous person, again following Aristotle⁶¹, is naturally taken to be the *outcome* of such an educative process. And it is often indeed to such antecedent feelings that we may look for the explanation of the behaviour and attitudes of those whose opinions are more settled than Roberta's are. Thus George Eliot's Dorothea is attracted to Casaubon because of what she (falsely) understands him to be a brilliant and accomplished man of letters. But this only provides a reason for her attraction given the way in which all her desires and aspirations were, antecedent to meeting him, so very determinedly highbrow and intellectual. Or again the man who was "Thursday", in Chesterton's story, fears and has an aversion to "Monday" and the others because he (again falsely) takes them to be insane and murderous political and moral fanatics but *this* only explains his attitudes given our understanding that, as a good policeman, he has an antecedent aversion to people of that kind.

We also accommodate McDowell's insight that the way a virtuous person sees and understands his circumstances may be decisively different from the perception and understanding of a different kind of person. But we accommodate it by simply remarking that the way we see and understand the world is itself coloured and structured not only by our theoretical beliefs but also by our desires:

⁶¹ Ibid., II.

Murphy, all life is figure and ground: the face or system of faces against the big blooming buzzing confusion. I think of Miss Dwyer.⁶²

The insight is real, but, as far as the Humean is concerned the threat is illusory.

3.8. I hope two things at least have emerged from this chapter. The first is at least a *prima facie* motivation for subjective *internalism*, given the extent to which the plausibility of the alternative offered by externalism and objective internalism have been undermined by the foregoing argument. This should further set the stage for the arguments marshalled more generally against descriptivism in chapter 8 below.

The second thing I hope has emerged is the untenability of *platonism* in the sphere of value. Value is *immanent* or it is nothing.⁶³ It is a moral that is perhaps helpfully

⁶² The words are Neary's from Beckett, 1973, p6.

⁶³ The rather Hegelian choice of diction does not seem wholly infelicitous for Hegel indeed stresses just such immanence:

The identity of the good with the subjective will, an identity which therefore is concrete and the truth of them both, is Ethical Life. [1942, para. 141.]

And cf. Knox's note to para 142 :

Hegel...is denying that the ethical order is purely transcendent;...it is a substance which has risen to self-consciousness in those very individuals and has become actualized only for that reason. [*ibid*, p346]

pointed *via* consideration of the interesting metaethical argument of Michael Walzer's Tanner Lectures.⁶⁴ Echoing the subtitle of Mackie's influential book, Walzer considers what he calls "the path of invention" and "the path of discovery". About the *discovery* he is sceptical because, he notes, the moral principles presented to us by objectivists who follow such a path have a habit of proving to be:

already in our possession, incorporated, as it were, long ago, familiar and well-thumbed by now...They are, so to speak, *there*, waiting to be enforced. But they are only there because they are really here, features of ordinary life.⁶⁵

Where the results fail to show such familiarity, something is taken to be wrong:

Bentham obviously believed that he had discovered objective truth, and the applications of this truth are, very often, not recognizable at all as features of ordinary life. Frightened by the strangeness of their own arguments, most utilitarian philosophers fiddle with the felicific calculus so that it yields results closer to what we all think. So they pull the exception back to the rule without confidence in revelation, we can only discover what we know.⁶⁶

Invention, on the other hand, can proceed in two ways. It can proceed *de novo*, along constructive lines, but that raises a problem. For, should the results have that

⁶⁴ Walzer, 1988.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp6-7.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p8.

unfamiliarity so unwelcome in the outcome of what purports to be discovery, on what basis are the inventors to impute to those same results the authority over us without which they would fail to be interesting. The principles that emerge from considering, *à la* Rawls, what rational beings would agree to when

[d]eprived of all knowledge of their standing in the social world, of their interests, virtues, talents and relationships.⁶⁷

might prove to be such as we, knowing ourselves so situated, would repudiate. To meet this difficulty, Walzer suggests, all that the path of invention can hope to offer is some degree of codification of the principles we hold as we are, in all our messy particularity.

He concludes this stage of his argument by suggesting that the claims made by the followers of both paths are illusory:

Philosophical discovery and invention (I leave aside divine revelation) are disguised interpretations: there is really only one path in moral philosophy.⁶⁸

We don't have to discover the moral world because we have always lived there. We don't have to invent it because it has already been invented- though not in accordance with any philosophical method.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Ibid., p11.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p20.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p19.

Notice here the aptness of Walzer's use of the first person plural- the value of internalism and the stress it leads us to place on O2 is that *vis à vis* the conventionalist it keeps us mindful of the question- what is the authority *for me* of the values prevalent in my social milieu. Walzer's discussion, among other things, points up a similar significance for O1 by offering to our consideration the way *we* as a *society* might question the authority of external and alien norms. Just as *I* cannot begin to deliberate without beginning from the evaluative attitudes I already hold, so *we* cannot begin to reflect together without beginning from the values we hold in common. Insofar as *both* sorts of reflection concern us, our acceptance of internalism had better not result in the dismissal as irrelevant of the kind of considerations provided by O1 and I shall later seek to show how it does not.

Suffice it to say at present that if we had no shared norms, we could not function as social creatures. And if we had no passions in our soul we could scarcely function as agents. And if we did not have both there could be no question of there being any such thing as morality. To stress, as the champions of emotivism did when non-cognitivism enjoyed what we might think of as its age of innocence, the first-person approbational aspect of moral evaluation at the expense of the wider interpersonal normative context is to caricature it by disregarding its essentially social location. To stress the norms and rules of cultures at the expense of the emotive engagement therein of particular persons, as cognitivists have tended to do, is equally to caricature it by leaving it with little to differentiate it in status from a moribund set of rules of etiquette⁷⁰ which, however anthropologically interesting as a cultural artefact, is not something that you or I need have much reason to concern ourselves with.

⁷⁰ See Foot, "Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives" in her 1978. But see also chapter 10 below.

In these remarks, I am looking, to some extent, ahead. Looking back however, it must be recognized that, whatever the pitfalls of focusing too exclusively of the desires and pro-attitudes of the individual subject or on the shared and established norms of a wider culture, it is on *just these things* that we must focus. Independently of talk of *my* values and *our* values no sense attaches simply to talk of values as such. Platonism is a non-starter. The Way is not distant.

Chapter 4: Principled Desires

4.1. Alastair MacIntyre, in *After Virtue*, presents a sustained critique of what he rather loosely calls *emotivist* theories of value which he believes should be rejected on *moral* as well as on metaethical grounds. He includes within emotivism all theories that regard evaluative judgements as ultimately expressive of preferences and desires, an understanding that he takes to include not just such unquestioned exemplars of emotivism as Charles Stevenson but also such diverse figures as Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean Paul Sartre and R. M. Hare, this understanding of "emotivism" being based on his view that these positions are effectively united by just such a shared assumption, viz that:

The utterance of any universal principle is in the end an expression of the preferences of an individual will.

In this chapter, which has MacIntyre as its point of departure, but *only* in this chapter, my use of "emotivism" follows the somewhat extended sense he gives it.¹

¹ See MacIntyre, 1981, chapter 1 (The quoted passage is from p20). His synecdochal use of "emotivism" recalls Murdoch's (1970, title essay) "existentialism" and Anscombe's (1958) "utilitarianism" (in the mouths of these respective writers these three terms are virtually synonymous), just as his desire to reject something he takes to be common to all post Kantian, and perhaps especially post-Nietzschean, moral philosophy can be seen as a development of Murdoch and Anscombe's earlier essays. More recent comparably generalized criticisms of modern moral thinking on similar grounds to MacIntyre's are given by Stephen Clark, 1989, chapters 1 and 2.

At the centre of MacIntyre's objection to emotivism is not so much its logical inadequacies as its *moral poverty*. Emotivism, he writes:

entails the obliteration of any genuine distinction between manipulative and non-manipulative social relations.²

And if it is true:

evaluative utterance can in the end have no point or use but the expression of my own feelings or attitudes and the transformation of the feelings or attitudes of others. I cannot genuinely appeal to impersonal criteria, for there are no impersonal criteria. I may think that I so appeal and others may think that I so appeal, but these thoughts will always be mistaken. The sole reality of distinctively moral discourse is the attempt of one will to align the attitudes, feelings, preferences and choices of another with its own. Others are always means, never ends.³

It will be a central pre-occupation of the remaining chapters of this thesis to show that this kind of characterization does not describe the poverty of emotivism but merely the poverty of an unnecessarily *impoverished* emotivism, to show how an account of value can be emotivist in its treatment of the fundamentals of the subject and at the same time capture all the complexity and richness of the sort of moral life and moral conception of life MacIntyre feels it betrays. To this end I will elaborate in coming chapters on what the invocation of "attitudes, feelings, preferences and choices"

² Ibid., p22.

³ Ibid., p23.

amounts to. In this chapter, however, I want to develop a preliminary response more particularly directed to MacIntyre's objections.

4.2. Emotivism, as a theory of the meaning of evaluative utterance, fails, MacIntyre argues, primarily for the reason that it is unable to make out the distinction between *moral* expressions of pro-attitudes and other sorts. Emotivism:

is dedicated to characterizing as equivalent in meaning two kinds of expression which...derive their distinctive function in our language in key part from the contrast and difference between them. I have already suggested that there are good reasons for distinguishing between what I called expressions of personal preference and evaluative (including moral) expressions, citing the way in which utterances of the first kind depend upon who utters them to whom for any reason-giving force that they may have, while utterances of the second kind are not similarly dependent for their reason-giving force on the context of utterance.⁴

The problem then is to describe how moral desires, pro-attitudes or whatever are distinguished from non-moral desires. In contemporary moral theory there are of course standard responses to this problem, notably those that invoke the notions of *universalizability* and of *higher-order desires*⁵, but at present I want to consider a rather different way of drawing the distinction that differs from these and draws on the notion invoked by MacIntyre of *impersonality*.

⁴ Ibid., pp12-13.

⁵ On the former see Hare 1952, 1963. On the latter see Frankfurt, 1971, 1987 (and compare Charles Taylor's (1985, 1989) "strong evaluations" on which see below).

When it is a question of distinguishing specifically moral from non-moral attitudes, an important caveat is necessary. For the distinction we are making is not an unambiguous one. There is, in the *first* place, the distinction we want to make in demarcating those considerations on which I ought always, all things considered, to act from those that are not so overriding. An understanding of "morality" informed by this distinction would lead us to suppose that, if I believe that, while moral considerations favour doing σ_1 over σ_2 , I ought to do σ_2 rather than σ_1 , I must be using either "moral" or "ought" in what Hare calls an *inverted commas sense*⁶ or else do not understand one or other of these two terms. Thus, if we consider an advocate of first-person dictatorship who believes that everyone should serve that same person's own interests⁷, the considerations this person views as overriding may be said to lack impersonality and *vice versa*. Someone presenting such a view as a moral theory will not then be stressing overridingness in their demarcation of the moral. Considerations such as overridingness demarcate the moral in a formal sense in virtue of the sort of questions (How to live? What to do?) to which moral thinking purports to supply answers. Hence Hare's truism that:

the function of moral principles is to guide conduct.⁸

And hence the moral theorist's interest precisely in which principles can be properly described as overriding. This is the sense in which "moral" is taken as what Neil Cooper calls a *universe of discourse word*, the sort of word

⁶ Hare, 1952, p124.

⁷ My terminology here follows Rawls, 1972, p124. Q.v.

⁸ Hare, 1952, p1.

used to classify statements according to their topic or subject-matter.⁹

But which principles are overriding depends on *which* substantive moral positions we adopt- on the *answers* we give to the moral thinker's questions. *Interestingly specific* criteria for demarcating the moral realm become available as and only as we become committed to substantive moral positions such as are involved in Hare's universalization-based utilitarianism or Thomas Nagel's impartial rationalism.

"Moral" may *then* come to signal a *second* sort of distinction understood in what by Cooper terms a *restrictivist* manner which confines its sense in just such substantive ways.¹⁰ Thus Bernard Williams, for example, takes a restrictivist line in writing:

I take altruism... to be a necessary feature of a morality. It follows that a principle to the effect that everyone ought exclusively to pursue his own interests... would not constitute a morality or be a moral principle.¹¹

⁹ Cooper, 1981, p26.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp27ff.

¹¹ Williams, 1973, p250. Note however, MacIntyre's historical claim (1981, pp212-213) that the terms in which Williams here (and elsewhere) conceives "morality" are essentially modern ones, that it was only in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that (p212):

morality came generally to be understood as offering a solution to the problems posed by human egoism and that the content of morality came to be largely equated with altruism.

I am not primarily concerned in this chapter to explicate the sense of "moral" as a universe of discourse word. Nor yet to exemplify:

the attempt of restrictivists to foist on the world of thought a restricted concept of a morality to the exclusion of all others.¹²

But rather simply to show how the distinction between considerations that are, in a sense, impersonal and those that are not may be given importance without retreating from the sort of position MacIntyre calls "emotivist". This is related indeed to the job that Hare seeks to do by distinguishing desires that are universalizable from those that are not¹³ and Nagel seeks to do by singling out those considerations that lack what he calls a "free-agent variable"¹⁴, but it is a job that may, in principle, be carried out without our having to *endorse* desires of the more impersonal kind. So that it need not be restrictivist in character, though of course much of the interest will be conditional on an assumption that desires characterized as impersonal, in the manner to be filled in, are of particular moral significance. The immediate concern of this chapter is to show that how such a distinction is *available* to a moral theory without insisting on whether or how it be *deployed*.

4.3. Such availability is nonetheless important. For the phenomenological difficulties raised for the kind of position described as "emotivist" by MacIntyre would seem to demand it. Thus when Milton Friedman characterizes the racist as simply possessing a

¹² Cooper, 1981, p31.

¹³ Hare, 1952, pp158-9.

¹⁴ Nagel, 1970, p90.

"taste...that one does not share"¹⁵ the claim strikes us as grotesque. Moral claims, we wish to say, are very different from expression of taste. And so they are. In this chapter we will begin the process of seeing how.¹⁶

I dislike liquorice- a clear instance of an expression of taste. Faced with some, I would prefer not to eat it. If anything is a purely personal desire, this is. For the consumption, or not, of liquorice by anyone else is a matter of no interest to me. I also dislike torture and this is a pretty clear cut case of a paradigmatically evaluative, and specifically, moral desire: not only would I rather not be subjected to torture myself but I object to *anybody's* being tortured. I object indeed (however impotently) to the torture of those who (it is depressingly certain) will be subject to torture in the distant future when I am dead and forgotten.

Although the latter desire is *personal* in the sense of being *my* desire it is completely *impersonal* with respect to its *content*. Desire is of course construable as an intentional state involving both a proposition and an attitude to it. Or, in John Searle's formulation, a representative content and a psychological mode.¹⁷ In a case like that of my aversion to liquorice, the state of affairs intended in the representational *content* is simply a state of the desiring subject- myself. While, in the case of my desire that nobody be tortured in the distant future, the *content* of my preference is as free from egocentricity as it could be.

¹⁵ Friedman, 1962, p110.

¹⁶ Gibbard, 1990, pp164-6 likewise takes it as crucial to his expressivistic account of reason to distinguish rational requirements from mere matters of taste. He focuses here on the independence of validity and acceptance and on the question of normative authority (on both of which see further chapter 10 below).

¹⁷ Searle, 1983, p6.

The point I want to press against MacIntyre, then, lies in the distinction Williams makes in his paper "Egoism and Altruism" that:

the trouble for the egoist is not that it is desires that he expresses, nor that they are his desires- the trouble is that all his desires are for things *for him*.¹⁸

Williams goes on to distinguish between what he calls *I-desires* and *non-I desires*, the two being distinguished by the fact that the specification of I-desires

requires "I" or related expressions ("my" etc.)

while in non-I desires it does not. But because both sorts of desire are always *somebody's* desire there is nothing in the distinction that leaves it unavailable to the emotivist in MacIntyre's sense. The impersonality is in the *content* of the preference, not in its location, or lack of location, at a person.¹⁹

It must be admitted that Williams' characterization of I-desires is rather imprecise given the difficulties raised by "or related expressions". For there may well be an embarrassingly large number of these, given such claims as that of Steven Schiffer that all ostensibly *de re* thoughts are implicitly indexical, to say nothing of related views such as Tylor Burge's understanding of the semantics of proper names as having an

¹⁸ Williams, 1973. p260. Compare Gibbard's distinction (1988, p63) between universal and self-pertinent preferences, Nagel's contrast between the personal and the impersonal standpoints (1970, pp100ff) and Dworkin's notion of external preferences (p234 of "Reverse Discrimination" in his 1977).

¹⁹ Cf., Darwall, 1983, pp135-136.

indexical element necessary for determination of reference; David Lewis's ingenious, but I think implausible, view that "actual" is an indexical expression and hence all reference to the actual world, as opposed to non-actual but merely possible worlds, involves an implicit reference to the speaker; or Roderick Chisholm's claim that all reference is effected by way of self-reference.²⁰ Even on the less extreme views there is a danger that the definition of "I-desires" as those whose content involves reference to oneself (specified by the first-person) is going to cast its net debilitatingly widely.

What we must do is seek to distinguish between desires of mine (say) the contents of which are *about me* and those whose contents are about things other than me which *can only be individuated with respect to their relation to myself*. Thus my desire that *I* win the foot-race is *about me* whereas my desire that *the best man* win is not, although it may well be that I must be alluded to in any specification of the contextual circumstances sufficiently rich to determine, in both cases, exactly *which foot-race* it is that I am thinking about.

Suppose a full specification of the contents of two desires were:

(1) that the foot-race I intend to enter tomorrow be won by me.

and

(2) that the foot-race I intend to enter tomorrow be won by the best man.

Both of these count as I-desires in Williams' sense but we want to make the distinction in such a way that only (1) is so counted. And this seems possible. For the contents of

²⁰ See Schiffer, 1978, Burge, 1977, Lewis, "Attitudes *De Se* and *De Dicto*" in his 1983, Chisholm, 1981.

both desires are about who wins the footrace- the desires are satisfied if the person referred to wins, frustrated if he loses. What happens to *me* is however, in the case of (2), neither here nor there and makes *no* difference to *whether the desire is satisfied or not*. My only role is in the contribution I make to *fixing the satisfaction conditions* of the desire, not in any respect in which I might contribute constitutively to *fulfilling* them.

Where would this leave a desire such as this:

(3) that *my brother* win the footrace?

For, after all, *I* do not feature in the content of my desire. The person who does so feature is singled out by reference to me but the preference is still, in Dworkin's sense, an *external* one.²¹ Yet in this case we might wish, intuitively to count the desire as an I-desire for the first-person does seem to indicate a sense in which such a desire- the sort that characterizes what Mackie calls *first-person altruism*²²- is egoistic- less egoistic perhaps than (1) but *more* so than (2).

The difference between (2) and (3) is a significantly hard one to make precise. For it is a matter of what sort of relations between myself and other things are most salient in my evaluative thought. To see this, we can imagine a situation in which this difference would be extinguished. Suppose that it were a point of the greatest importance to me that the foot-races *I* entered (or even merely intended to enter) were won by the best man, that I was disposed to regard it as a great dishonour if anyone implied that I might consider entering a foot-race whose outcome was not assured of absolute fairness. Then in (2) the reference to myself would not simply serve to *fix the*

²¹ For reference see note 18 above.

²² See Mackie, 1977, pp84-5.

reference of my thought about the footrace but to indicate the *motive* for my concern about, in particular, *this* foot-race- as if, were it some foot-race I was *not* to enter, I might be quite indifferent to the fairness of its outcome. Or I might desire the victory of the best man and hence, believing him that, of my brother. That he is *my brother* might be neither here nor there, only of importance as a handy means of determining who it is I am thinking about.

So that the relevant difference between (2) and (3) is an *extrinsic* difference- both are equally "I"-involving in the way their conditions of satisfaction are fixed, equally non-I-involving in the way their conditions of satisfaction are fulfilled. In practice whether the imputation of egoism to the desirer makes sense to us depends on *other* things he or she may value. Provisionally then let us classify desires such as (3) as non-I-desires though we will see shortly how they may be otherwise differentiated.

4.4. Let us, calling this non-"I"-involving characteristic of non-I-desires their *impersonality*, note that impersonality, so understood is quite distinct from other kinds of impartiality that might be admired. Thus we would not be disposed to characterize as impartial a desire that people with auburn hair be given special privileges unless they live in Portugal or Anstruther or that people above 5'10" tall be flogged daily unless they were born in 1950. Yet, of course, in a sense such desires are impartial- they are desires that people so characterized be so treated *whatever else they are*. Their supposed partiality is not in the fact that they discriminate (for the most Solomonic of wisdom *discriminates*) but in the fact that the *lines along which* they discriminate are so strange.

That is, they are better described as *arbitrary* rather than *partial*, and their arbitrariness consists, I would suggest, in their failure to relate to a whole *background* of the sort of discriminations we regard as, to echo Susan Hurley's terminology, *normal and natural*. Giving prizes to the fastest runner is a form of discrimination that

fits in rather nicely with a whole complex of widespread and shared conceptions of what justice is and what athletics is in the light of which it is a straightforward matter for us to, as Alan Gibbard likes to say, "make sense" of such a policy.²³ Whereas desires of the kind described in the last paragraph are comparable to G. E. M. Anscombe's now proverbial example of a desire for a saucer of mud or MacIntyre's example of a stranger at a bus stop remarking that the common wild duck is called *histrionicus histrionicus histrionicus*.²⁴ Desires and actions of this kind are not literally *unintelligible*, nor necessarily *ineligible* at the level of interpretation (see chapter 2 above). Nor are they necessarily *irrational* (as opposed to *non-rational*)- they simply *fail to fit together* with the rest of what a normal person would desire.

Though not, of course, necessarily with the rest of what an *abnormal* person might desire, so long as the abnormality was not too nearly *global* in which case, firstly, the constraints on interpretation discussed in chapter 2 might well start to limit our ability to make much sense of such a person and, secondly and relatedly, we would become unable to apply a notion of *fitting together* commensurable with our own to the way in which that person him or herself organized his or her desires, beliefs etc.²⁵

The point to grasp in considering examples like MacIntyre's is close to what was said above *vis à vis* Hurley. MacIntyre is concerned here to identify a sense of "intelligible" that is appropriate to *semantics* with a sense indicative of the availability of psychological or social *explanation* of the kind associated with Max Weber. Such an identification can be defended²⁶ by appealing firstly to the difficulties in principle of

²³ See Gibbard, 1990, pp36ff.

²⁴ See Anscombe, 1957, p70, MacIntyre, 1981, pp195-6.

²⁵ Cf. 3.6 above.

²⁶ See e.g. Winch, 1958, MacIntyre, 1981, chapter 8, Taylor, 1985, esp. chapter 1, and Hurley's (1989) treatment of *meanings* as a special case of *reasons*.

framing explanations in the human sciences in terms of strict and extensionalistic covering laws and secondly to the Wittgensteinian point that it is only because linguistic expressions are used to organize the psychological and social world that imputations of meaning to them makes much sense- meaning is not *intrinsic* to them and demands a background in human action. But these considerations do not seem to suffice for, say, MacIntyre's example to work as he intends- for there *is* a background in human action for the linguistic behaviour of our friend at the bus-stop that makes what he says intelligible. He says that the name of the common wild duck is *histrionicus histrionicus histrionicus* thus asserting an English sentence that is true if and only if the Latin name for the common wild duck is *histrionicus histrionicus histrionicus*. We don't *need* to know what on earth he is *playing at* in saying this to understand the semantics of his utterance. Which is not to deny the point, applicable at a far more *global* level, that we need to understand what speakers of English *on the whole* are up to in order to have any semantic grasp of that language. But when we *do* understand this, we can *then* find no particular difficulty in understanding, at least in a semantic sense, the behaviour of eccentric young ornithologists at bus stops.

Such arbitrariness falling short of unintelligibility might seem to characterize a possible kind of desire superficially very similar to more strictly personal I-desires. Such would be, for example, a desire of mine

(4) that persons called "James Lenman" be given large government pensions and other useful privileges.²⁷

²⁷ There is also of course the possibility of desires relating to persons who are not just called "James Lenman" but *are* James Lenman (cf. Williams, 1973, p254). Perhaps supporters of Kripkean views on reference might find the contrast significant. Those, like myself, who are persuaded by the arguments of descriptivists (e.g. Dummett,

Such a desire, although, if I held it, it would doubtless be egocentric in its *motivation*, is not egocentric in its content. A person otherwise named might conceivably hold it for some highly eccentric but nonetheless principled reason- say that the name in question is thought to be that of a deity and that those who share it are thereby set apart. And so indeed might *I*- though my avowals of such motivation would ordinarily be less than convincing. Desires like (4), when held by me, do not then fail to qualify as impersonal for their content makes no reference to me-as-such²⁸, involves no first-person indexical element of the sort that is irreducible to any such purely descriptive characterization as reference to persons by means of what they are called.²⁹

4.5. As Williams notes in his discussion of I and non-I desires:

1973, chapter 5, appendix; Searle, 1983, chapter 9; Bach, 1987, chapters 7 and 8); Katz, 1990, will not.

²⁸ Cf. Nagel, 1970, p91.

²⁹ The irreducibility of the first person is the subject of a large literature- e.g., Anscombe, 1975; Perry, 1977 and 1979; Schiffer, 1978, section 5; Chisholm, 1981; Lewis, 1983; Nagel, 1986; Mellor, "I and Now" in his 1991. I sympathize with much of Mellor's impatience with the attempts of some of these writers (notably Nagel) to make metaphysical heavy weather of the matter and with the line taken by Mellor and Perry that the central significance of irreducibly "I" and "now"-involving thoughts is of the *pragmatic* kind dramatized famously by Perry's messy shopper example. It is, at any rate, given my present subject matter, their pragmatic significance that most interests me here.

Just as there are non-I desires which depend on I desires, so there are non-I desires which depend on I desires³⁰

This adds a significant dimension to the distinction as so far characterized allowing us to introduce a further distinction between desires according to whether the *direction of motivation* is personal-impersonal or impersonal-personal. In so doing we acquire the ability to make within emotivism a distinction that may be deployed in an attempt to condemn it. Thus we have the following from a former Bishop of Birmingham:

Here in Britain we have privatized religion, and we choose our moral and spiritual values like brands in a over-stocked super-market. "Facts" are public, and either true or false, but values are neither true nor false, merely a personal choice.³¹

One element in the anxiety expressed here is that we are perceived as lacking the resources to speak of there being a place in our thought about values for an idea of an authority outwith our personal attitudes. This sort of anxiety, shared by MacIntyre³², will be addressed in chapter 10 below. But there is also present the idea that moral attitudes are selected from the "available range" on the basis of their potential for personal gratification, that when we lose the belief that values have objective, descriptive meaning, we become committed to an outlook that is tainted with what one might call *moral consumerism* whereby there is nothing for it but to "shop" for the values that best accomodate our desire for such gratification..

³⁰ Williams, 1973, p261.

³¹ Hugh Montefiore in the *Guardian*, 2nd June, 1988.

³² 1981, p177.

Suppose nonetheless that values are taken to be a form of desire. There remains the question of how we determine what values to hold which will be a special case of the question of how we determine generally what we are to desire. Here there is firstly a broad distinction to be made between desires that are *grounding* and desires that are *grounded in them*. To borrow from Hume, one desires exercise because one desires health because one desires a long life with a little pain as possible.³³ Desires like the latter are *grounding*, like the former *grounded*.

Talk of *choosing* ultimately grounding desires can easily sound odd, like talk of what Charles Taylor describes as a "pure leap into the void".³⁴ And in fact our desires do not generally spring into being *ex nihilo*. As noted above they relate to a whole background of other beliefs and desires. We generally come to deliberation, not as "featureless bare egos"³⁵, but with too many prior desires for those we newly form to be wholly free from their influence. Which is not to deny that some desires are formed unreflectively, without anything it is meaningful to call "deliberation". A man who walks past a restaurant kitchen with an empty stomach, encounters an attractive woman or comes face to face with a large, aggressive and unchained dog will quite unreflectively form desires which are not obviously grounded in any prior desires, the sort of desires in describing whose genesis the word "onslaught" comes naturally to mind.³⁶ But in cases like this, it seems inappropriate to speak of *choice*. Where talk of choice *is* appropriate the background of prior desire is bound to play its part.

³³ Cf. Hume, 1975, p293.

³⁴ Taylor, 1985, p35.

³⁵ Hurley, 1989, p103.

³⁶ Of course such desires are related to our biological natures and generally indeed conform to enduring dispositions. But that is not to say that they are motivated by reasoning from prior desires- although they may well fit into a pattern of prior desires

The grounding/grounded distinction still bites in at least two ways, the more important of which I will consider in 4.6 below. But for now it is enough to note that when we look at related groups of our desires some can be seen as grounded, some as grounding, with *respect to others*. I want to go to the shops because I want to buy some food and not *vice versa*. The former desire is *not* of course ultimate in the sense of arising arbitrarily from *nowhere* but *is* grounding *with respect to the latter desire*. This of course means that a given desire may be both grounding and grounded but only with respect to different other desires. Thus the desire for health grounds that for exercise but is grounded by that for long and painless life.³⁷

We may call *consumerist* a structuring of desire whereby impersonal desires are grounded by their personal desires. We might recall Mr Bulstrode who:

was not a hypocrite- he was simply a man whose desires were stronger than his theoretic beliefs and who always rationalized the latter into theoretic agreement with the former.³⁸

that is not our reason for acquiring them. Compare Nagel's category of "unmotivated desires" as he explains it in his 1970, p29.

³⁷ Note that the grounding/grounded distinction incorporates but is wider than the ultimate/instrumental. If I desire the happiness of all mankind, that grounds a desire for the happiness of various remote persons in the far east; if I regret all my follies (wish they had never occurred) that may ground a regret for my follies of 1975. The relationship is logical not instrumental and because the desires are remote from my future actions the invocation of means involved in talk of instrumentality is simply inappropriate.

³⁸ George Eliot, 1965, p667 (the language is cognitivist of course but the illustration, for my purposes, none the worse)

Consumerist patterns of desire would be exemplified by one who based a repudiation of vegetarianism on their love for meat or of temperance principles on their passion for drink, by one whose pacificism was a rationalization of personal cowardice or by one whose adherence to a political movement was the product of fashion (talk in the seventies of "trendy lefties"), greed or envious sour grapes. The examples almost inevitably illustrate how almost any impersonal desire can be denigrated by imputing consumerist motivation patterns to its bearer. Such denigration is akin to what MacIntyre characterizes as "unmasking" but it is not a fair characterization of emotivism to see it as a global unmasking.³⁹

The opposite pattern of motivation might be called *principled*. It is exemplified whenever anyone with an impersonal desire puts it into action as if I were to vote for party X because the principles they espouse appear to me just.⁴⁰ Indeed the issuing in

³⁹ 1981, p69

⁴⁰ The effect of adopting a principled outlook is comparable to the effect of adopting what Rawls calls (1972, p18) the "standpoint of justice":

if a man knew he was wealthy, he might find it useful to advance the principle that various taxes for welfare measures be counted unjust; if he knew that he was poor, he would most likely propose the contrary principle. (ibid, pp18-19).

But note that the choices made from this standpoint are not, or not necessarily, expressions of impersonal preferences. I choose certain principles because I would rather be a member a society where they are adopted than of one where they are not,

action of impersonal desires requires just such mediation by personal desires to act grounded upon them just insofar as a personal first-person desire is an ingredient in any intention.⁴¹ So even our most high-minded actions are the immediate upshot of personal desire, albeit personal desire with a complex motivation in desire of a different kind.

Given what has already been said, it comes as no surprise that the patterns are not mutually exclusive: I may want to vote for party X because I want them to win (principled) and want them to win because I want to be better off, believing this a likely consequence (consumerist).

In the light of this distinction it will prove interesting to recall again desires (2), (3) and (4) above. (3) was classed as impersonal because nothing could be seen to intrinsically differentiate it from (2) with respect to the proposed test. But the distinction now available can differentiate self-referentially altruistic desires from those in which the self-reference is of that different kind that merely fixes reference. (2) might, we noted, be motivated, by a desire that I only enter fair foot-races, (3) by a desire that I be the brother of the victor. In such a case, we may now say, they are indeed impersonal desires, but their *motivation* is consumeristic so our feeling that the presence of egoism has been glossed is avoided by distinguishing such consumeristic desires from the same desires when otherwise motivated- where the self-reference simply fixes reference to another. Likewise the apparent egoism of (4) is more fully characterized by saying that either it is arbitrary and fails to fit in with anything but an abnormal background of desire or it is consumerist- the only convincing, non-

granting that I do not know *which* such member I would be. I'm still thinking egocentrically, albeit in ignorance of where the centre is.

⁴¹ See Castañeda, 1975, p150; Davidson, "Intending" in his 1980; Audi, 1986.

eccentric, explanation for it would be that an explicitly personal desire served it as a ground.

4.6. Given this possible diversity of direction of motivation and what was said above about the oddity of imputing any particular ultimately grounding desires, it may be wondered what sense attaches to the representing of a person's *character* as consumerist (as George Eliot implicitly does of Bulstrode) or to so characterizing a culture (as Hugh Montefiore implicitly does of Britain).

The answer, I suggest, is to look at the matter in terms of what *gives way first* when desires *conflict*. This is, I think, the most important place at which the distinction between principled and consumerist patterns of desire takes effect. I might desire, impersonally, the welfare of animals *and*, personally, a tasty bit of steak; impersonally, the furthering of social justice *and* personally, the election of a government from whose corruption I will benefit; impersonally, the defeat of an aggressive power in a distant region *and*, personally, my own safety. Clearly there are principled and consumeristic ways in which such conflicts can be resolved and it might also be a settled trait of someone's *character* or a settled norm of a *culture* that they should be resolved in one way or the other. And this quite independently of any consideration of the complex genesis of the conflicting desires against a dense background of prior inclination.

4.7. It is one thing of course to draw these distinctions, another thing, as noted above, to put them to work in moral thinking. My concern at this point is been simply to note that they are *there to be drawn* and to stress that the *emotivist* can draw them. *If* the priority of impersonal criteria *is* the essence of morality, then the emotivist can recognize it. If consumerism as a cultural norm should be condemned then the emotivist can condemn it. The emotivist is not committed to obliterating the distinction

between manipulative and non-manipulative social relations and viewing other persons as means to his or her own ends- to suggest this is to make the confusion adverted to above between desires that are personal with respect to their *content* and those that are personal simply in virtue of being *somebody's desires*. All emotivism is guilty of is failing to incorporate the *demand* for impersonal and/or principled thought in its recommended *metaethics*. The principled person does not seek to gratify his taste and personal desires in the selection of a moral outlook but reverses this process in a way that makes such talk of *gratification* (notice its deployment by McDowell as quoted at 3.7 above) simply misleading and rhetorical.

4.8. Just as focusing on the role of I-desires seems to illuminate the sort of impersonality that may be thought to characterize principled moral thinking, it may be useful to note a parallel point about *temporally* indexical thoughts. Thus there are many desires (and other kinds of pro-attitudes) whose propositional content requires "now" or related expressions just as that of personal desires requires "I" or related expressions- we might call these *immediate* desires. I may want a cool drink *now*- an immediate desire. Or I may be reluctant to live a life from which the pleasure derived from cool drinks is wholly absent- a non-immediate desire.

It is worth noting that the sort of "onslaught" desires characterized above are typically immediate desires, as, more generally are physical appetites- notably those for food, drink, sleep and rest, sex, cigarettes, alcohol and other drugs- the sort of desires in fact to which the *akrates* typically yields and which the continent person typically resists. Non-immediate desires, on the other hand, typically include the sort of desires that concern the sort of lives we would wish to lead and the things we wish to do with them- the sort of desires the weak and imprudent typically fail to fulfil while moralists and educators typically aim to instil them. Divergent directions of motivation between

such desires set up a temporal analogue of the principled/consumerist distinction drawn above.

Consider the character of the *procrastinator* as exemplified in the Augustinian prayer for reform- *da mihi castitatem et continentiam sed noli modo*- or by Dr Johnson who wrote, fairly characteristically, in his diary one birthday:

I have now spent fifty-five years in resolving; having, from the earliest time I can remember, been forming schemes of a better life. I have done nothing.⁴²

Such an agent may have a non-immediate, and in fact undated desire, to \emptyset (or not \emptyset) at the same time as an immediate desire now to not- \emptyset (or now to \emptyset). What operates is the immediate desire. A desire to \emptyset at some time or other does not of itself issue in action. I have wanted for years to read *The Magic Mountain* "some time", "when I get round to it". But, as I have never wanted (all things considered) to embark upon it *now* (i.e. at the time of wanting indexically conceived), I never have and, until I do so want, never will. This isn't *by itself* a problem or a defect of character. Life is notoriously too short for most of us to satisfy all such vague and dateless desires. But it is a problem when the non-immediate desire in question is an urgent and important one. Another form of procrastination occurs when the desire in question is dated in the future but when that date is revised forward when, or before, it arrives. Again there might be no problem- there are plenty of occasions when such procrastination makes every sense. Plans that lack urgency or importance are naturally put off when relatively more pressing considerations intervene.

⁴² Augustine, *Confessions*, VIII, vii; Boswell, 1960, p341.

Importance cannot here be straightforwardly correlated to strength understood as a disposition to issue directly in action. For it is precisely immediate (all things considered) desires that so issue and only these. Dateless desires do not so issue except when they ground immediate desires, just as the impersonal desires of the principled agent so issue by grounding his personal ones. Nor, directly, do dated but non-immediate desires. My present desire to send a gift to some friend on their (now quite distant) birthday doesn't even begin to motivate an immediate move to the shops. For this to come about it is necessary that the date be *now*, that it be *known* so to be and that the knowledge issue in an appropriate (all things considered) immediate desire. The ascetic's desire to take a cold shower at 6 a.m. on the morning of January 1st, 2000 A.D., must, at that time, if he realizes that that is the time, issue in a desire to take a cold shower *now*.

Another way of reading "importance" is in terms of the role a desire plays in the wider economy of one's projects and life-hopes (to say nothing of one's impersonal desires). The fate of the large-scale procrastinator is to be systematically thwarted in such global, non-immediate desires by the strength of his more immediate inclinations. The consequence, a thoroughgoing lack of whole-heartedness in his or her actions and a life ending in disappointment, is where to look for what we might wish to call the "irrationality" involved- Johnson and St Augustine being cases in point. So that much (though not all) of the group of phenomena we are considering when we speak of moral weakness may be characterized as doing what we *immediately* prefer, all things considered, though, *non-immediately* we would prefer something else. Preferences relating to the sort of life we wish to lead or the sort of person we wish to be are of just this non-immediate kind- and it is preferences such as these that are at stake in

what MacIntyre characterizes as the "narrative order" of a human life taken as a whole.⁴³

Acknowledging this it remains to note that an emotivist, as MacIntyre characterizes that position most broadly, is not left with nothing to be but a Kierkegaardian aesthete or an existentialist à la Sartre/Roquentin.⁴⁴ He need not conceive human life as

dissolved into a series of separate present moments, in which the unity of a human life disappears from view.⁴⁵

and need not be conceptually alienated from some such thought as that:

a completed and fulfilled life is an achievement and death is the point at which someone can be judged happy or unhappy.

or from a

conception of a whole human life as the primary subject of objective and impersonal evaluation, of a type of evaluation which provides the content for judgement upon the particular actions or projects of a particular individual.

⁴³ See his 1981, chapter 15.

⁴⁴ See MacIntyre's discussions of *Enten-Eller* in *ibid.*, pp38-42 and p225 and of *La Nausée* in *ibid.*, pp199-200.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p225.

When, as "emotivism" suggests, values are understood as grounded in the pro-attitudes, typically the desires⁴⁶, of valuing subjects, such a conception does not become, as MacIntyre puts it, "something that ceases to be generally available"⁴⁷. Rather there are pro-attitudes and pro-attitudes. The emotivist moral subject may inhabit a richer or poorer evaluative landscape depending on the depth and complexity of attitude his valuations express.

4.9. The point might still be urged that, while a principled approach to life is *available* to the emotivist, it is entirely arbitrary, from his perspective, whether it is adopted or not. Thus my way of distinguishing between the principled and unprincipled character recalls the Kierkegaardian opposition between the ethical and the aesthetic way of life as it is presented in the course of MacIntyre's argument, whereby, prior to one's choosing between such ways of life, there can be no rational leverage whatever to sway that choice in one way or another. The trouble, for MacIntyre, with this Kierkegaardian outlook lies in the fact that:

The ethical is presented as that realm in which principles have *authority* over us, independently of our attitudes, preferences and feelings.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ I will question this emphasis on desire in chapter 7 below, but such questioning is not yet relevant to my argument which at this point is more conveniently focused on this traditionally paradigmatic type of pro-attitude.

⁴⁷ This and the preceding two quotes, *ibid.*, p32. Cf. Taylor, 1989, pp49-52.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p40. Emphasis mine. I stress that my discussion here is of Kierkegaard as MacIntyre represents him and prescind from questions (acknowledged by MacIntyre on p40) about the adequacy of that representation.

This leads to trouble because

the doctrine of *Enten-Eller* is plainly to the effect that the principles which depict the ethical way of life are to be adopted *for no reason*, but for a choice that lies beyond reasons, just because it is the choice of what is to count for us as a reason. yet the ethical is to have authority over us. But how can that which we adopt for no reason have authority over us?⁴⁹

A possible short answer is that what we so adopt has authority in virtue simply of the fact that we have in fact sincerely adopted it. But to this it might be replied, following MacIntyre himself, that this is a poor sort of authority. For the decision so to adopt a way of life remains arbitrary, a choice between values made by a consumer in Montefiore's supermarket.

Another answer might be that consumerist pattern of motivation undermines happiness, most obviously in the temporal case, as it undermined Johnson's. But Johnson was not at all like a Kierkegaardian aesthete. In particular his yielding to his immediate desires was never a wholehearted affair but always involved departure from non-immediate desires which the pure Kierkegaardian aesthete simply lacks. It is precisely because Johnson *had* ethical standards of which he fell short and not because he *lacked* them that his happiness was so compromised.

A more promising line is to simply to reject the Kierkegaardian notion that the issue between aestheticism and ethics or, for the purposes of my argument, between principled or consumerist patterns of motivation is something that gets settled by an

⁴⁹ Ibid., p41.

act of ultimate and radical choice, for, as I noted above, this is a pretty doubtful model of how we actually operate. As Walzer puts it:

We have to start from where we are.⁵⁰

and that, wherever it is, is unlikely to be a point altogether prior to any such choice. So that, while for a "featureless bare ego" nothing would count as a reason to adopt an ethical rather than an aesthetic way of living, *we* are certainly not featureless bare egos but creatures of a particular kind with particular histories.

Such an insistence is helpful, but it leaves open the question of whether a principled, or, returning to the larger question, a moral approach to life has any claim on our allegiance other than that which follows trivially from our possible predisposition thereto. The process of choice may not in fact be an arbitrary affair, but the issue it addresses may be in a way that leaves our final commitments, if not altogether a matter of undirected willing, nonetheless subject to a perhaps disquieting contingency. In short the question urged by MacIntyre, of the *authority* of our principles remains with us.

I think it is possible from a broadly emotivist perspective (in MacIntyre's enlarged sense of the word) for this question to be addressed, as in chapter 10 it will be. First it will be necessary however to make more precise the sort of meta-ethics I am defending and just how it takes the desires (or rather, as will be seen, the broader category of pro-attitudes) of valuing subjects as fundamental to the theory of value and then to show how such a theory can be enriched both to address such issues as that of the

⁵⁰ 1988, p16. Cf. Clark, 1975, p14; Taylor, "What is Human Agency?" in his 1985; Sandel, 1982, esp. pp179-183; Hurley, 1989, chapter 15, section 1.

authority of certain values and to enable us to live with such contingency as remains. But this too is the work of later chapters than this.

4.10. It may be recalled that Hurley characterizes *subjectivism* as the view that preferences are prior to and independent of specific values and, indeed, in some way, determine values.⁵¹

It will be recalled that I criticized her above for failing to make adequately clear just what, on her view values were. And what I am more generally concerned to argue here is that values are indeed constitutively related to pro-attitudes which are at least of a kind with preferences. It has been my aim in this chapter to show how the sort of impersonal flavour we associate with *values* rather than with *desires* can in fact be accounted for as a feature of what is in effect *a species of desire*.

MacIntyre's view of the relationship between values and desires recalls Hurley's rejection of subjectivism. Thus he writes in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*⁵² that:

Wants, satisfactions and preferences never appear in human life as merely psychological, premoral items to which we can appeal as providing data that are neutral between rival moral claims.

The reason he here gives for this claim is simply that:

⁵¹ 1989, p273.

⁵² MacIntyre, 1988,, p76

to exhibit a particular pattern of emotions and desires, to treat them as appropriate or inappropriate in one type of situation rather than another, is always to reveal a commitment to one set of justifying norms rather than another. but such a commitment is always to one distinctive evaluative and moral position rather than another.

The possibility this point fails to address is simply that to make the latter commitment is precisely "to exhibit a particular pattern of emotions and desires" in which case what is at issue is not the precise relation between emotions and desires on the one hand and something quite distinct from these called "values" on the other but rather the way in which those same emotions and desires are so structured as to give point to our talk of "values" in the first place. Thus, when MacIntyre makes the point that "emotions and desires are norm governed" then it is open to the exponent of the sort of subjectivism/emotivism I am defending to see this fact as simply an special instance of the often remarked upon fact that we have *second-order* emotions and desires.

It cannot be stressed too much that the subjectivist position I am seeking to arrive at is not properly characterized by saying that we have certain quite innocent emotions and desires that have nothing to do with our values and which serve to determine them. Like MacIntyre, Taylor and Hurley I take this to be false. While I see much of our talk of values as referring to emotions and desires of particular kinds, I in no way wish it to be supposed that between emotions and desires of these special kinds and other emotions and desires, there is any uniquely privileged order of priority. The traffic on this street can go both ways.

4.11. I have focused in this chapter on MacIntyre's objections to emotivism arguing that they are at best objections to an *impoverished* kind of emotivism very far from what I would wish to defend. Another writer about whom similar points might be

made is Charles Taylor who argues in his recent *Sources of the Self* that the character of our evaluative experience undermines such non-realist positions as those of Mackie, Williams and Blackburn. Our evaluative thought, Taylor argues, is structured by frameworks of what he calls *strong evaluations*, which provide standards independent of our tastes and desires in terms of which the latter stand to be judged.⁵³ Such strong evaluations and the *hypergoods* they commit us to, goods which we take as of a higher order than others and invoke in their appraisal⁵⁴, are inextricably involved in the very manner in which we define ourselves. Who we take ourselves to be is determined to a great extent by how we orient ourselves, to where we "take a stand" with respect to a "moral space" constituted by inescapable questions about the good.⁵⁵ This inability of ours to do without strong evaluation constitutes the first phase of Taylor's argument against the non-realist. The second phase goes like this:

What is real is what you have to deal with, what won't go away just because it doesn't fit your prejudices. By this token, what you can't help having recourse to in life is real, or as near to reality as you can get a grasp of at present.⁵⁶

But, granting the first phase, the second is surely just too quick. Given Taylor's strategy we could presumably secure realism about the external world, theoretical entities in science, numbers, intentional states, meaning, the past, counterfactuals, *possibilia* and so forth in a manner that would be similarly rapid and leave the sceptic

⁵³ Taylor, 1989, chapter 1. On strong evaluation see also his 1985, chapter 1.

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp63ff.

⁵⁵ Ibid., chapter 2.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p59.

with a similar sense that a point had somewhere been missed. We need to ask: what is the precise sense of "real" here. Taylor isn't all that clear about this though he's clear that it *isn't* simply a matter of reducibility to the ontological categories of physical science. If Taylor is claiming that what we have to deal with is, in some non-tautologous sense, *real*, then that sense hasn't been made out. If, on the other hand, Taylor simply *means* by real "what you have to deal with" then the second phase of the argument doesn't take us any further than we were left by the first. And this isn't all that far. For the expressions of attitude the typical non-realist takes evaluative utterances to be may well be complex, rich and highly structured, may well be inclusive of higher-order attitudes that set a standard for others, may well perform a role of orienting us in a space of moral questions and yet fail to describe a moral domain independent of those attitudes and that structure. There may be a sense in which that structure confers a sort of objectivity upon evaluation but it will do this simply because it *is* a structure and not because it mirrors some independent realm.

It is worth noting that when Taylor describes the frameworks we think by as "inescapable" he is himself engaged in strong evaluation. It's not that it would be impossible to do without such frameworks. One *could* perfectly conceivably become what Frankfurt has called a *wanton*⁵⁷, Taylor a *simple weigher*.⁵⁸ It is not that this would be *impossible*. Rather it would be *dreadful* (or *contemptible* to anticipate my own argument of chapter 10 below). One who had dispensed with strong evaluation would appear "pathological", would have "gone beyond the fringes of what we think of simply as shallowness."⁵⁹ We can't help making strong evaluations because the strong evaluations we do make demand that we go on making them.

⁵⁷ See his 1971

⁵⁸ 1985, pp23ff.

⁵⁹ Taylor, 1989, p31.

To say all this is to summarize Taylor's argument. It is also to anticipate my own. So where is the disagreement? Arguably there isn't much. As with MacIntyre, I think Taylor has refuted a non-realist position of a crude and impoverished kind and inferred that something called "realism" is true. If I don't altogether agree it's not because I think his refutation fails. Michael Rosen has expressed a similar scepticism:

Many non-realists may indeed, as Taylor alleges, be reductive about the nature of the good, concentrate excessively on questions of obligation and ignore the issue of how far our choices can be integrated into a life which is seen to be valuable as a whole. But this is certainly not true of all non-realists, so why should we regard these characteristics as essentially connected to non-realism?⁶⁰

Taylor's published response to Rosen's paper further serves to weaken the sense that there is much disagreement here. As he conceives it:

ethics tries to define the shape of the human moral predicament. But there could be no such thing unless human beings existed.⁶¹

I don't have any quarrel with either of these claims.

⁶⁰ Rosen, 1991, p188.

⁶¹ Taylor, 1991, p245. cf., his 1989, p68.

Chapter 5: Finding Beauty

5.1. The kinds of values that interest the moralist, those that concerned us in the previous chapter, are not of course the only values we recognize. In the present chapter I wish to shift the focus of attention to the central value of *aesthetics*¹, namely *beauty*. My larger purpose in the discussion that follows will be to foreshadow points I will be making at later stages about *goodness* by advancing parallel points about beauty. For, with beauty, the same points, for reasons that will become apparent, are somewhat clearer to view.

It should be stressed that in discussing beauty I am not at all exclusively concerned with aesthetic merit in *art* but rather with beauty quite generally, a concept we perhaps apply at least as often to the products of nature as to those of art and most often of all perhaps to those peculiar collusions between the two, our fellow human beings. I want to begin by pointing to certain broad contrasts between beauty and goodness and then make some suggestions as to how these contrasts may be explained. It will emerge subsequently that, to a large extent, the contrasts drawn depend not so much on radical differences between the way the concepts work as on the greater complexity involved in applying a similar model to goodness as is here applied to beauty. The details of this extension will be, in large part, the concern of the chapters that remain.

We may note, for a start, that both beauty and goodness have both a high degree of *generality*. Just about *anything* can be described as "good". And just about *anything* can be described as "beautiful".² By "can be described as" I mean of course that such a

¹ This centrality has been recently defended by Mothersill in her 1984.

² Cf. Mothersill, 1984, pp265ff, 411.

description would make sense, would be coherent, not that most of us could plausibly be supposed as making or assenting to it.

Given this common generality, this "thinness"³ shared by the two concepts, the simple question, "How do they fail to be synonymous?" invites a no less simple response: although both are indeed thin evaluative concepts, there are situations where the use of one rather than the other is sanctioned by convention, if not exclusively, then to a greater degree. Things are *typically* and *centrally* (but by no means *always*) beautiful in virtue of the responses they elicit from us in virtue of what they look or sound like or some other sensory quality. A fact, that such and such is the case, *can* be characterized as beautiful- as when we say "a beautiful coincidence". But this is rather a peripheral application of the concept. On the other hand, things are *typically* and *centrally* (but by no means *always*) good in virtue of responses elicited from us in virtue of how they function or behave. And these specific *paradigm* uses and contexts of use, it might reasonably be claimed, suffice to distinguish the meanings of the two concepts.

This explains how it is that many applications of the concepts are somewhat distant from the more paradigmatic applications without being in any obvious sense metaphorical. But it also explains the non-synonymy of the concepts- the fact that there are some applications of them that would jar on the ears. It is good that someone is beautiful and we may find someone the more beautiful in virtue of their goodness but there are still *two* evaluative concepts here that may indeed conflict in certain situations.

³ Williams, 1985. In fact Williams speaks only of "thick" evaluative concepts (for references see his index) but both this and its natural antonym have entered a wider philosophical usage from this source.

5.2. That said, the contrast between goodness and beauty has further dimensions, consideration of some of which will serve to bring them both into sharper focus.

We may begin with a difference likely to be urged by the sympathetic reader of Kant, recalling his claim that:

To deem something good, I must always know what sort of thing the object is intended to be, i.e. I must have a concept of it. That is not necessary to enable me to see beauty in a thing.⁴

The reader of more recent material⁵ will be tempted to reformulate this as a claim that "good" is attributive, "beautiful" predicative. But this formulation can be misleading unless we elaborate somewhat on what is correct about it.

It is wrong to say that "good" is attributive if by that it is meant that it *always* is, but right if we merely mean that it *sometimes* is. We see that it *sometimes* is by considering a sentence like:

(1) The use of mobile gas chambers is a good means of mass execution.

This is *not* equivalent to:

(2) The use of mobile gas chambers is (a) a means of mass execution and (b) good.

⁴ Kant, 1911, p46.

⁵ Notably Geach, 1956..

That it is not obvious because, whether or not we assent to (1), most of us are quite unwilling to assent to (2). Granting (1) *arguendo* as a comment on how to solve the logistical and engineering problems of mass extermination, we consistently insist upon:

(3) The use of mobile gas chambers is *not* good.

In (3) however, as in (2), "good" is used predicatively. So that in the very course of illustrating how "good" can *sometimes* be attributive we rely on our ability to understand its predicative uses.

That "beautiful" is predicative is surely true. Certainly no counter-example to this claim along the lines of (1) seems possible. To see something as a beautiful X is to see it as beautiful. *Simpliciter*.

But to assent to the latter paragraph is *not* to agree with Kant. For it does *not* follow that one need not have a concept of an X to find it beautiful. One's appreciation of a work of architecture as beautiful may, and should, be bound up with some understanding of its purpose as a home, a workplace or whatever:

the conveniency of a house, the fertility of a field, the strength of a horse, the capacity, security and swift sailing of a vessel, form the principle beauty of these several objects.⁶

And one could hardly begin to see the beauty of a mathematical proof, say, without having some conception of what a mathematical proof is and what it is for. One needs, in other words to know what a *good* proof or a *good* pudding would be like, the

⁶ Hume, 1978, p576. Cf. p299.

"good" being attributive, in order to know what a *beautiful* proof, pudding or whatever would be like, "beautiful" being understood predicatively.

To call something a good X, using "good" attributively is to evaluate it with respect to some (often very) specific and (implicitly) specified interest or purpose which one may or not share. To call it good *simpliciter*, using "good" predicatively is not but is rather to evaluate it with respect to unspecified interests and purposes, interests and purposes which, if "good" is used in an internal sense (see chapter 3 above) such that to call something good is to *identify* with the values thus invoked, will be purposes and values of one's own. And this will leave it unclear how there could be *any* difference between the senses of good in (1) and (3) beyond a certain, regrettably vague, generality in the latter. This is not to conflate being *good qua something* and being *good from some point of view* but relies on the fact that in both cases the evaluation goes on *with respect to something*. And, just because it is unclear how an evaluation that was both predicative and external could be *with respect to anything very much*, it is unclear how such an evaluation could have very much in the way of *content*.⁷ And it is because we could hardly hope to *make sense* of such an evaluation that to use "good" predicatively is not to evaluate something relative to *no* specific interest or purpose whatsoever.

To call something a beautiful X is to call it beautiful *simpliciter*. To call something a good X need not be to call it good *simpliciter*. The approbative force of "beautiful" is thus, in a way, *more direct*, so that it is not possible to use "beautiful" in the same way as the attributive "good" where the force is primarily *descriptive*.⁸ For, in attributive uses of "good", something is evaluated relative to a given end which is *not*

⁷ Cf. Foot's [1985a](#) and [1985b](#) and 2.4 above.

⁸ Though there are *other* ways for "beauty" to have descriptive force. See, in particular, 5.6 below.

itself evaluated- so that, unlike "beauty", "good" can be used in this way with *no* evaluative force (remember that a civilized person could quite well *agree* with (1) above).

What seems to *explain* this difference is that "beauty" is never so straightforwardly *instrumental* in import as "goodness" sometimes is. The distinction we draw between intrinsic and instrumental goodness lacks a parallel in the case of the beautiful. If art colleges promote the production of good painting then they are (*pro tanto*) a good thing. But that they promote the production of beautiful painting would not in any way license the supposition that they are (*pro tanto*) beautiful. As noted above, a feeling that an X is a beautiful X may properly be *informed* by an understanding of what an X is *for* and how well that function is executed by *this* X. But while such instrumental value may *contribute* to the beauty of a beautiful X it is never exhaustively constitutive of it. A beautiful X may owe some of its beauty to its effectiveness as a means to beautiful Ys but we only impute beauty to it if we take it to be beautiful *in its own right* and not *merely* derivatively. We do *not* use "beautiful" not only of things we find, or think we would find, beautiful, but also of things that promote, more or less indirectly, such responses on our part.⁹

⁹ We are here, as elsewhere, close to the view of Santayana (1936, p22):

...whereas, in the perception of beauty, our judgement is necessarily intrinsic and based on the character of the immediate experience, and never consciously on the idea of an eventual utility in the object, judgements about moral worth, on the contrary are always based, when they are positive, upon the consciousness of benefits probably involved.

5.3. That the furthering of beauty elsewhere does not, of itself, make a thing *pro tanto* beautiful should come as no surprise, given another salient point of contrast between goodness and beauty, namely that it is *never*, I would suggest, appropriate to talk of *anything's* being *pro tanto* beautiful.¹⁰

This claim is easily misunderstood. Aesthetic theorists commonly discuss ways in which various general features of works of art may contribute to their aesthetic merit, and thus to their beauty, without necessarily being all such merit amounts to. This might easily be misread as suggesting that, in virtue of being characterized by some such feature, such a work may be *pro tanto* beautiful.

Taking something to be beautiful, in this respect, resembles taking it to be *pleasurable*. There are certain features a kind of experience may possess that often *make for* pleasure. Thus what is sexually arousing is typically pleasurable. But not always.¹¹ We do not thereby say that what is sexually arousing is *pro tanto* pleasurable. On the contrary, either it is pleasurable or it is not. Being sexually arousing, we might say, *makes for* pleasure. but that is quite different from being *pro tanto* pleasurable. Being brilliantly articulate, after all, *makes for* success in interviews but that is not to say that a brilliantly articulate candidate is thereby *pro tanto* successful. Nothing can be pleasurable in some respects but not in others. And the same applies to beauty.

And cf. Kant, 1911, Pt. I, Bk. I, 1st Moment. Note how, for Kant, the disinterestedness of an aesthetic response is conflated (I think unhelpfully) with its lack of (mind-independent) ontological commitment (on which see 5.5 below), for what he takes us to be *disinterested in* is precisely the "real existence" of the object.

¹⁰ Cf. Mothersill, 1984, ch. IV.

¹¹ By "sexually arousing" I do not of course mean contributing to sexual *pleasure* but simply contributing to the usual physiological corollaries of sexual pleasure.

One should not be misled by the common expression "beautiful in parts". To be such is quite different from being beautiful in some respects in the sense under consideration. What is beautiful in parts is such that parts of it are beautiful.

Simpliciter.

We might plausibly relate the points of contrast brought out in this and the preceding section. *Pleasurableness*, we may note, *also* resembles beauty in terms of its more consistent predicative status. Something pleasurable, say a swim, is not simply pleasurable *qua* swim. Either it is pleasurable *simpliciter* or it is not. Likewise pleasure is never merely instrumental. *Maybe* I enjoy training for the footrace in virtue of my anticipation of the pleasures of victory that may be the fruit of such training. But maybe not. The goodness of the end transmits *pro tanto* goodness to the means automatically, but only *pro tanto* goodness. *Pro tanto* beauty or pleasure is not similarly transmitted because there is really no such thing.¹²

The explanation that most immediately offers itself is that to impute beauty to a thing is typically to *respond* to it, to recognize it as directly affecting one in a particular fashion. To take something to be beautiful or pleasurable is typically to *find* it beautiful or pleasurable through direct exposure to it, through experiencing it. We can talk of *finding* things good in a similar fashion but in fact what finding something good seems usually to involve is just something like finding it pleasurable or beautiful and it is the

¹² Cf. Kant, 1911, pp46-7:

with the good the question always is whether it is mediately or immediately good, i.e. useful or good in itself; whereas with the agreeable this point can never arise, since the word always means what pleases immediately- and it is just the same with what I call beautiful.

case neither that what is so found is necessarily deemed good *simpliciter* nor that there are not many circumstances in which something may be deemed good that we do not, and would never expect to, find good.

5.4. Pleasure will be discussed at greater length in chapter 6 below. but one question invites more immediate attention. Something has been said about the relative *differentia* of goodness and beauty and in saying it I have drawn parallels between beauty and pleasure- but this is to invite examination of what differentiates *these*. That there are connections between pleasure and beauty is a commonplace in aesthetics.¹³ But, in view of this and the parallels just noted, how, if at all do these two differ?

A number of observations might seem to drive a wedge between the concepts. In the first place I may find pleasure in something without it making much sense to say I find it beautiful. Thus I enjoy a game of backgammon over a pint of beer but would hardly describe my appreciation of this activity as *aesthetic*. Secondly, the converse of this is true: Edward Bullough's example of a jealous husband at a performance of Othello¹⁴ is a useful one- such a person may well have a thoroughly miserable time as the play scratches the raw nerve of his anxiety but may nevertheless recognize the beauty of the play.

Thirdly if I am imagined standing in a room full of Vermeers listening to a recording of Queen's "We are the Champions" I might plausibly be supposed to recognize at one and the same time the beauty of the former and the crassness of the latter. But to say that I experience both pleasure and displeasure seems forced. The paintings may make for pleasure for me and the music have the reverse effect, but it

¹³ See e.g. Hume, 1978, 2.I.8, Kant, 1911, Pt I, Bk I., *passim*.

¹⁴ Bullough, 1913.

will usually seem unnatural to say, in an unqualified sense that I am, at one and the same time, experiencing both pleasure and its opposite.

Fourthly and relatedly, the experiences we most *typically* describe as beautiful are experiences of *things*. This observation is explanatory with regard to the backgammon example for it leaves it unsurprising that beauty is not normally imputed to pleasurable *activities*. Of course some activities, such as gymnastics, may be beautiful *qua* things to which we may be *spectators*. But to enjoy *engaging* in them is not *typically* to find them beautiful (recall section 5.1 however, for locutions which impute beauty to activities *are* at times to be heard- "typically" above is emphasized advisedly).

Fifthly, Kant's claim will be recalled that:

Every one must allow that a judgement on the beautiful which is tinged with the slightest interest, is very partial and not a pure judgement of taste.¹⁵

as will the manner in which Kant contrasts the judgement of taste in this respect with "delight in the agreeable" which, he take it, is "coupled with interest" in a way aesthetic pleasure is not:

that a judgement on an object by which its agreeableness is affirmed, expresses an interest in it, is evident from the fact that through sensation it provokes a desire for similar objects, consequently the delight presupposes, not the simple judgement about it, but the bearing

¹⁵ 1911, p43.

its real existence has upon my state so far as affected by such an object.¹⁶

Every one must allow that a judgement on the beautiful which is tinged with the slightest interest is very partial and not a pure judgement of taste.¹⁷

This seems an unsatisfactory way of understanding the point. It is not, for example, always and obviously true that my enjoyment of this chocolate bar provokes a desire for similar chocolate bars.¹⁸ It would be natural if it did but it would be equally natural if my enjoyment of a good poem provoked a desire to read other good poems.

Note too the tension between what Kant says here and the concession in 5.2 above that a things *aptness for its purpose* is indeed of relevance to the appraisal of its beauty. Note further the enormous tension between the frankly utilitarian view of Hume there cited and this Kantian emphasis on disinterestedness. Noticing this difference, it is not unnatural to see it as simply a reflection of a wider change in aesthetic attitudes associated with the rise of the Romantic movement which differs from the preceding period, *inter alia*, precisely by such a distancing of aesthetic from utilitarian concerns- as witness the sea change in prevailing attitudes to such paradigmatically useless objects as ruined buildings and mountains.

It remains true that we would tend to disqualify from the category of the aesthetic interest or pleasure which is too directly *personal*. To reverse Bullough's example, if

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1911, p45. Cf. Bullough, 1913, Urmson, 1957. A number of writers on this point are summarized and criticized in Mothersill, chapter 2, section 6.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p43.

¹⁸ See further chapter 6 below.

someone normally unresponsive to Shakespeare enjoys an indifferent performance of Othello because the hero's anxiety gives him a certain smug delight by its contrast to his own complacency on the same score, we would not say his enjoyment was aesthetic. It would not be *beauty* he was recognizing in the play.

Here we may notice the connection between this point about disinterestedness and a sixth, also Kantian, point about the *prescriptivity* of aesthetic response:

where any one is conscious that his delight in an object is with him independent of interest, it is inevitable that he should look on the object as one containing a ground of delight for all men.¹⁹

So that if anyone:

puts a thing on a pedestal and calls it beautiful, he demands the same delight from others.²⁰

So that if my pleasure is an outcome of my idiosyncratic concerns as in the Othello example, it fails to count as aesthetic. If, however, I enjoy the play for reasons others may be expected to share, I may be said to find it beautiful.

Note of course that I enjoy *chocolate* for reasons others may be expected to share but this is not what we would normally call an aesthetic response. Of course the difference here, for Kant, lies in the prescriptive nature of my expectation in the aesthetic case. If you don't share my taste for chocolate, then I recognize that you differ from me and don't see a problem in that. But if you do not and cannot be

¹⁹ Kant, 1911, p50.

²⁰ Ibid., p52.

brought to share my taste for Bach then I might want to say you are not merely *different* but somehow *deficient*.²¹

Perhaps this can be brought out as a form of wholeheartedness to which we are apt in aesthetic response. If I learn that tomorrow I will lose my taste for chocolate I will react with some indifference. I like chocolate, but that I like it is of no importance to me. With Bach this indifference would be absent. I not only enjoy Bach but I value my enjoyment of it- I value, one might say, being the sort of creature that can find beauty in this music.²²

Another, final source of difference, also helps to make sense of the intuitions to which talk of "disinterestedness" appeals- this is seen when we contrast the *defeasibility* of our attitudes when we find things beautiful or pleasurable. I may find pleasure in the experience of listening to a piece of music which I also find beautiful only, later on, when my taste has matured, to find it laboured and unbeautiful and draw no pleasure from it. That it was pleasurable on the earlier occasions I continue to grant, but, although I then found what I heard beautiful, it was, I now incline to say, nothing of the kind.

In this last observation, we seem to be bringing out a phenomenological point that would seem to invite a cognitivist treatment of what we are up to in finding something beautiful. To find an experience pleasurable, we might be inclined to say, is just to like it. Whereas when we find it beautiful we indeed like the experience we have of it but that liking is bound up in the making of a *judgement* about its worth, a judgement we

²¹ Cf. 4.11, 5.8, 10.2.

²² Of course I value being the sort of creature that enjoys *food*- hence my formulation of my fourth point of difference- what is found beautiful is a *particular* object (in the attributive sense of that term- a poem is not, in the metaphysical sense, a *particular*, but it is a *particular poem*).

revise in withdrawing an imputation of beauty we have previously made. This line of argument fails to convince me. A better explanation of what we are about in such retrospective withdrawals of imputations of beauty is by reference to the wholeheartedness such imputations were noticed to enjoy in the preceding paragraph. When I express my enjoyment of some chocolate, I do just that and no more. But when I say "I find this music beautiful" I not only express my pleasure in the hearing of it but strongly evaluate that pleasure- and it is the latter, strong evaluation that I am withdrawing when, the next day, I withdraw my imputation of beauty. This sort of second-order evaluation implicated in the imputation of beauty will concern me again at the close of 5.8 below.

5.5. It was suggested in 5.3 above that something is beautiful or pleasurable in virtue of having a tendency to elicit from us responses of certain kinds. And we might likewise say that an action, for example, was good in virtue of its tendency to elicit from us a particular kind of response.

But in fact we think things good when they elicit *nothing* from us. When they are in no position to elicit *anything* or to have any other kind of causal efficacy in virtue simply of not existing. Thus to desire something is, in some respect, to think it good (*nihil appetimus, nisi sub ratione boni; nihil aversamus, nisi sub ratione mali*²³). But the object of desire may be a *non-actual* state of affairs or a *non-existent* object. Of course when the desire is one that *will be* satisfied the object/state of affairs will be, from a timeless perspective, *existent/actual*, but not all desires *are* realized and even when this happens the thought of the object of desire is often *de dicto* rather than *de re*. Similarly, moral evaluations need not be responses to anything *actual*- think of our

²³ "Old formula of the schools", apud Kant, 1956, p61.

Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094^a1-3.

moral responses to works of fiction or the science fiction thought-experiments that riddle recent philosophical literature. No one is prevented from feeling the wrongness of O'Brien's scaring of Winston Smith with rats by the fact that no such person ever did any such thing.

This does not seem to be the case where beauty is concerned. It would be an odd supposition that we could think of things *de dicto* and find them beautiful. Mothersill makes the same observation:

Nothing exists that may not prove beautiful; nothing that exists (or might exist) is such that, on the basis of mere description, we can infer that it is beautiful or not beautiful. There are, in contrast, situations which on the basis of description we recognize as bad and actions or action-types which on the basis of description we recognize as wrong.²⁴

It is possible for me to take a *moral* view of the actions of Dorian Gray, say, in the light of Oscar Wilde's account of them. But the *picture* of Dorian Gray is not something to which I can respond as beautiful or ugly. Nor would anything *count* as my so responding, given the painting's status as a fictitious object. I could have a *moral* response to Gray's actions without knowing very much about them, perhaps by simply reading a review of the novel that gave a gist of the plot- of course such a response would not be worth much, but that is beside the present point. Whereas, even if Wilde devoted the whole space of the work to describing the painting in meticulous detail, I would still not be a position to find it *beautiful*. So we may be tempted to draw a further contrast here between aesthetic and moral evaluation: the imputation of beauty, unlike that of goodness, is always referential, always *de re*.

²⁴ Mothersill, 1984, p411. Cf. *ibid.*, pp171-2.

We will see below how this is not quite the right diagnosis, but we should first note a more immediate difficulty. This is the problem of *referential failure*. If someone takes \hat{A} to be beautiful and we insist that that is a *de re* thought, what, we may be asked, of the cases where " \hat{A} " fails to refer?

The claim that imputations of beauty are *de re* is, however, plausibly held to be more supported than undermined by this problem precisely because such imputations seem to lack vulnerability to it in a peculiar way and because that lack of vulnerability can be *explained*.

Suppose in my dreams I sometimes visit a strange range of mountains, the Mei Shan, which I find intensely beautiful. The Mei Shan, I then have it, are beautiful. But the Mei Shan have no existence outwith my dream. They are not, in this (mind-independence-invoking) sense, *real* mountains.

But this is not to say that the question of their beauty does not arise. "Reality", in the sense just deployed, is not a necessary condition for the imputation of aesthetic quality.²⁵ Beauty can be imputed to quite imaginary landscapes or to people found in paintings not from life. And the beauty of, say, a person in a painting is a quite separate issue from the beauty of the painting itself.

Explanation is approached when we ask: in virtue of what is something beautiful? A mountain say. The answer that may be proposed is that it is beautiful in virtue precisely of features *shared* by real and illusory mountain: in virtue of those states of mind that constitute one's experience of it. These will often (as with mountains or paintings) be sensory experiences but need not be (as with poetry). In short, the answer to the problem of referential failure in the case of imputations of beauty is that the *res, de* which imputations of beauty may be characterized as being, is an experienced *res*, a mental *res*, a *res* that we are, in a Russellian sense, *acquainted* with. And as such it is

²⁵ Cf. Kant, 1911, pp42-3.

necessarily a real *res*, inseparable from the experiences in virtue of which such imputations are sincere. So that our account of the objects of aesthetic response will be an *idealist* one.

5.6. I put this boldly but it must be qualified. First there *is* a sense in which imputations of beauty *can* suffer from referential failure. This happens when, for instance, I think that Helen of Troy was beautiful, not because I have seen her but simply because that is what I have heard others say.

By way of analogy, consider imputations of *funminess*. When I *find* a joke funny, my thought that it is funny is generally *de re* in the sense I am concerned with and cannot fail to refer.²⁶ That the voice telling me the joke was dreamt or hallucinated is neither here nor there. But I may *think* a joke funny in a way that is not thus *de re*, if, for instance, I so describe it on the grounds that it is widely reported to be funny although I myself have not heard it.

Here one of two interpretations may be put on what I think. First that I think the joke is funny in what Hare would call an "inverted commas sense",²⁷ simply believing the sociological claim that the joke is or would be *found* funny by others. Secondly I

²⁶ Note that if *anything* has the same referent in all possible worlds, that is, if *anything* is a *rigid designator*, then "Why did the Kerryman win the Nobel Prize? Because he was out standing in his field." is. "The joke Rachael told Jimmy" is not. It is misleading to express the difference by saying that the former refers necessarily to itself. The words in question do not *refer* to a joke but are *constitutive* of it. To find a joke funny is only possible if it is thought of (or read or heard) in this transparent mode of description. Similarly we find works of *literature* beautiful only when they are presented to the mind, in thought or sensation, in this transparent way.

²⁷ See Hare, 1952, II. 7. 5.

may be said to have a conditional belief that, were I to hear the joke, I would *find it funny*. In both cases the content of my current *de dicto* imputation is unpacked by reference to other imputations which *are de re* (and not *vice versa*), the latter kind of imputation thus enjoying conceptual priority over the former. If there were no such thing as finding something funny there could be no such thing as thinking something funny.

The distinction to be stressed is that between *thinking* funny and *finding* funny. It is a necessary condition for our *finding* something funny that it dispose us to some such expression of amusement as laughter.²⁸ If a joke makes us laugh because we *find* it funny, then our attitude is *de re*. If we *think* it funny but do not *find* it funny in the sense we are concerned with, it is *de dicto*.

And likewise for imputations of beauty. We should not say that we may not think of things *de dicto* and *think* them beautiful, merely that we may not think of things *de dicto* and *find* them beautiful. *Thinking* things beautiful is generally to have beliefs about what we would *find* beautiful if we had appropriate experiences. *Finding* them beautiful is not to have *beliefs* at all but *attitudes*.

An understanding of what it is to *find* something beautiful is clearly presupposed by any adequate understanding of what it is to *think* something beautiful. To someone who *found* nothing beautiful the concept of beauty would make no sense. A blurring of this *finding/thinking* distinction may be a crucial step in making the case for cognitivism about aesthetic value look stronger than it actually is.

We thus concede that *some* imputations of beauty are not *de re* and can suffer from referential failure. But, noting the conceptual priority of *de re* imputations of beauty, of *finding* beautiful, the idealistic conclusion of 5.5 above is left undamaged by this

²⁸ Not a sufficient one however. We do not find nitrous oxide funny.

qualification, for all imputations of beauty that are not *themselves de re* are effectively characterizations of *other* such imputations (actual and possible) that *are*.

5.7. What *is* damaged is the contrast there suggested between beauty and goodness. For I suspect that the *finding/thinking* distinction may be applied equally to the case of *goodness* in such a way that the cash value of the beliefs we have in *thinking* things good is to be sought in the attitudes we, or others, have in *finding* them good. Where there *is* a contrast in this respect, a contrast which the Dorian Gray example above dramatized, is in the greater *complexity*, in the case of goodness, of the relationship between these two kinds of thought. This complexity will a central concern of following chapters.

5.8. I have tried here to make a case for a form of idealism about the objects of aesthetic response. The claim is that, in finding, say, a painting beautiful, what is *found* beautiful is something *found in experience*: we might say an *experienced aspect of the painting* rather than something altogether distinct from the experience such as the painting itself (at least as a representative realist would understand that phrase). To speak of what is found beautiful *is*, strictly understood, to speak of our experience.

Some care is in order here. What happens, in the first place, when I find Leonardo's *Adoration of the Magi* beautiful is that I respond with aesthetic pleasure to a particular token-experience of it and that token-experience of *The Adoration of the Magi* is not identical to *The Adoration of the Magi*, the painting itself. The question thus presents itself- what is the object of my response- the painting itself or the token-experience.

The answer I want to give is that the *primary object* as I shall call it of my response is the token-experience. It is in virtue of *this* that I cannot be mistaken about the existence of the object of my response, that my imputation of beauty to it is *de re*.

Rather counter-intuitive conclusions may seem to follow for the ontology of works of art. Thus in the words of the idealistically inclined film-maker Andrei Tarkovsky:

A book read by a thousand different people is a thousand different books.²⁹

And so, *mutatis mutandis*, for paintings, sculptures, works of music, etc. Indeed it is worse than that. A book read by *one* person a thousand times is also a thousand different books.

We might here stress, following Collingwood, the extent to which the business of art is *communication*³⁰ and the extent also to which communication presupposes *community of language*³¹ which in turn does not so much presuppose as it is constituted by community of *feeling* and *understanding*.³² And we might, through an appreciation of these points, come to see to the extent to which the work of art (or anything else) *qua* something found beautiful retains its unity as a "public" object.

It is just in virtue of our community of feeling and understanding, aesthetic and otherwise, of and about the world, that we may speak of the painting (or whatever)

²⁹ Tarkovsky, 1989, pp177-8. The problem is also recognized by Collingwood, 1938, chapter XIV, section 4.

³⁰ Cf. Tarkovsky, 1989, pp39-40 and Collingwood, 1938, chapters XI (esp. section 5) and XII.

³¹ Collingwood, 1938, pp249ff.

³² *Ibid.*

itself as the *secondary object* of our aesthetic response.³³ It is in virtue of this same community of understanding that we may speak of such token-experience-transcendent objects.³⁴ And it is virtue of our community of feeling and the concomitant *stability* of aesthetic response that we may describe them, not just as being found beautiful on this, that or the other occasion but as *beautiful* where by calling something "beautiful" we impute to it a disposition to invoke aesthetic appreciation to those who experience it, to be the cause of token-experiences that are the *primary objects* of such appreciation. To say of an object that it *is beautiful* is to impute such a disposition, to say of a token-experience that it is *found beautiful* is not. And it is only in virtue of a degree of such *stability of response* that we have any right to speak of such a disposition at all. Recall the stress placed by Hume on "uniformity of sentiment among men"³⁵ and by Kant on "subjective universal validity".³⁶ It was not misplaced. When I look at *The Adoration of the Magi* and say of it that it is beautiful I refer to the primary object insofar as the existence of "it", of what I find beautiful, is guaranteed. If there is no such painting and what I take for one is merely, say, a fragment of underdone potato (as Scrooge characterized Marley's ghost) it is nonetheless not the case that I respond to *nothing*, that I find *nothing* beautiful (even less that I find a fragment of underdone potato beautiful). But, in virtue both of the intra-subjective stability of my responses across time and their inter-subjective normality, I am able to refer to the *secondary* object, the painting, as beautiful and this reference becomes central as it is what makes

³³ Exactly what the secondary object of our appreciation of poem or piece of music is is a matter of some controversy that need not concern me here. All that matters is that it is taken to be something both public and durable.

³⁴ I mean they transcend *any given* token-experience. Not *every* such experience.

³⁵ P272 of "On the Standard of Taste" in his 1907, Vol I.

³⁶ 1911, p55.

it possible, for example, that when you and I talk together about our responses we are both speaking of the *same* object.

Recalling the distinction developed in 5.6 above, we can, in virtue of this stability of response, *think* something beautiful *because* we *find* it beautiful. Our finding it beautiful can furnish grounds for thinking we might find it beautiful on other occasions or for thinking others would so find it. And we may well suppose that it is in virtue of features it (uniquely) has both that we find it beautiful on this occasion and that we, and others, would on others. So to the extent that there is consistency of taste across times and/or across persons there is indeed sense in saying, as we do say, "because it's beautiful" in *accounting for* a given aesthetic response of ours.³⁷

If we confine our attention to the primary object of response, we are forced to accept that, in a sense, a play, say, read or seen by a single person many times is many different plays. In practice, usually, it is not- it is, in many if not all ways, the same play each time one sees or reads it. I find *As You Like It* beautiful in virtue of a diversity of episodes of finding beauty in certain particular experiences of it. Because of this stability, because the *found* beauty of the play *runs through* my several token-experiences of it, I impute beauty to the play itself rather than to those experiences.³⁸ But conceivably I might fail to find any such stability- such a failure, such fickleness of response would be *unfortunate* (*finding* things beautiful is a more conveniently accessible experience if I know in advance where I am likely to find beautiful things). It might be foolish not to seek, if possible, to prevent such a misfortune, but, at least insofar as this was *not* possible, such fickleness would not make me *irrational* but simply, as it were, subject to variation.

³⁷ Cf. Mothersill, 1984, p151 and ch. VI generally.

³⁸ Cf. Santayana on "objectification", 1936, pp37-40.

It is just that community of thought and feeling between you and me as is presupposed by any sort of communication between us that makes the similarity between the book or painting *you* find beautiful and the book or painting *I* find beautiful more or less close. A fruitful theory of *critical* communication on this view would then be that it is the business of building on and extending this similarity by the various means at our disposal. So that the similarity that unites my experiences of *As You Like It* serves as a model for a similarity between my experiences of it and yours that in critical conversation or writing I might *seek to bring about*. If the play leaves you indifferent, I could, by articulating vividly the character and the background of my experience of it, bring you to see what is missing, or unhelpfully present, in your own, a process likely to involve much appeal to imagination as to reason and to demand eloquence as much as any more logical skills.³⁹

The stability of response to objects in a public world of which we have a shared understanding thus, when all goes smoothly, anchors aesthetic discussion to a common object whose effects on us may then be articulated, compared, disputed about and, not infrequently, modified. In this complex interaction may be seen adumbrated a resolution to the so-called antinomy of taste- Kant's problem of reconciling the

³⁹ A similar point to this is well made, *à propos* of morality, by Williams in his "Egoism and Altruism" (in his 1973 and see also chapter 4 above) where he remarks of the egoist (p259):

...considerations designed to make him wake up to what he is missing... will be more like arousing him or turning him round to a new idea of what might be worthwhile...and are not likely to be much like arguments.

irresponsibility of aesthetic responses to general principles with the fact that disputation *de gustibus* in fact can, and does, go on.⁴⁰

In calling something beautiful, we express an *attitude*, a *response*, and not a *judgement*, so that there can be no question here of falsity. But in *thinking* something beautiful in the sense of 5.6 we make not a response but *a judgement about responses*. And in virtue of the stability of response I have been stressing, aesthetic thought is rarely *purely* of one of these kinds. In finding something beautiful, as has been noted, I am also inclined to make the sort of judgement involved in *thinking* it beautiful. But such judgements, in a pure form, about one's own and other people's dispositions to respond to something in certain ways are, in Harean terminology, entirely *descriptive*. Purely to *think* something beautiful is not to make any kind of valuation of it but merely to hold beliefs about valuations that would be made. But stability of response undermines just this purity of such merely cognitive attitudes and imports an evaluative element into them insofar as, in making them, I *identify with* the other persons (or temporal parts of myself) concerned in my judgements. So that I may express, in making them, a favourable attitude to the object of response also so concerned. Blurring the distinction in principle between *thinking* and *finding* is, I noted in 5.6, liable to mislead us into cognitivism. But I want to stress that, in practice, it *is* blurred. Thinking and finding are not the same but because I am a person with a stable character and a member of what may be called a community of taste they are not rigidly compartmentalized activities but rather constitute deeply inter-woven aspects of our aesthetic thought.

This stability also contributes to understanding the normative aspect of aesthetic judgement, stressed by Kant and commented on above.⁴¹ For such uniformity is not

⁴⁰ See Kant, 1911, p205-6.

merely something that happens to obtain- it is a *desideratum*. It matters to most of us that we show some stability and constancy in our aesthetic responses to the world as in other things.⁴² And it also matters that we live in a community of shared values and that that be inclusive of aesthetic values, that we inhabit, that is, a community of taste. It is helpful, to say the least, that the management of the National Gallery has ways of deciding what to hang there that are neither entirely random or hopelessly idiosyncratic. More significantly, if I have a passion for Mozart and a few close friends then it is likely that, by bringing them to share my enthusiasm I will get rather more than I otherwise would both from their friendship and from Mozart. This is to some extent what we may take to motivate much of that pursuit of agreement that I have recognized in critical communication. Though again it must be stressed that we are not necessarily *irrational* if such agreement is lacking but merely *unfortunate*.

I called the example that connected music with friendship more significant because it shows up the way in which our capacity to find things beautiful is something we value. As I noted in 5.1 we commonly take beauty to be *a good thing* and as I noted in 5.4 our imputations of beauty are distinguished from the likes of my pleasure in chocolate-eating in part by a certain *wholeheartedness*. And we may connect these observations- saying, in Charles Taylor's terminology, that, to some degree, our

⁴¹ Kant, 1911, pp50ff. Notice how Kant explicitly relates this prescriptivity to "the universal capacity for being communicated incident to the mental state in the given representation" (p57). But, in taking the latter to be "fundamental, with the pleasure in the object as its consequent", he surely puts the cart before the horse. Though perhaps he compares favourably here with Santayana (1936) who rather fails to notice that the horse has a cart behind it at all.

⁴² Cf MacIntyre, 1981, esp chapter 15 and pp 225f and sections 4.8 above and 9.1 below.

imputations of beauty are *strong evaluations*. This strongly evaluative character of aesthetic response, again as noted in 5.4, connects with their prescriptivity. To say that something, some possible secondary object of an imputation of beauty, is beautiful is not merely to impute to it a *disposition* to invoke aesthetic appreciation. It is to say that it *ought* to invoke it. To say this is partly to express a certain wholeheartedness in our finding certain things beautiful: the pleasures are so rich that we would not be without them; it is a good thing that there be such experiences. And partly it is to express our desire for integration both as temporal parts of people within a unified life and character and as people within a unified culture- it is good for persons and things to have a certain overall coherence and unity. To say this is to locate this prescriptivity of aesthetic valuation within a wider realm of valuation- it is because we value beauty that we think and feel this way. And to say this is to disarm the question that lurks on the realist's tongue: isn't it a *fact* about aesthetic value that a beautiful object *ought* to invoke an appreciative response? It is his last card. For in (purely) finding something good we exhibit an attitude and not a belief. And in (purely) thinking something good we are engaged in a purely descriptive enterprise. And, we can now suggest, in thinking of people that they *ought* to find certain things beautiful we indeed make an evaluative claim, but it is not, strictly, an *aesthetic* claim. Recall Wittgenstein's claim that:

Appreciating music is a manifestation of the life of mankind⁴³

We are claiming that if certain things were found beautiful then that would be a good in a way that is more than aesthetic. But, although it is a claim that may indeed be implicated in calling the things in question beautiful, we are not claiming that what we

⁴³ Wittgenstein, 1980, p70.

are favouring, their being found beautiful, would *itself* be *beautiful*. It is a claim consideration of which invites us to leave the particular domain of aesthetics and look at value at a more general level. It invites us to return to the consideration of goodness and in the following chapters this is what we shall do.

5.9. By way of an afterthought to the present chapter, recall a famous thought-experiment of G. E. Moore's⁴⁴ in which we are invited to consider a beautiful but lifeless world. Moore holds that such a world would be preferable to a world equally lifeless but profoundly ugly. But, we may note, if a world were lifeless, nothing would count as *finding* it beautiful and, if I am right in the claim defended above that to *think* something beautiful is in effect to think of it as being *found* beautiful, then the view that value is mind-dependent (as stated by Sidgwick), which it was Moore's concern to attack, is not vulnerable to such considerations. For it now becomes hard to see how we could imagine a world both lifeless and beautiful just insofar as, in thinking it beautiful, we people it in thought.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ See his 1903, pp83-5.

⁴⁵ A slightly different version of the material in this chapter is Lenman, 1994b.

Chapter 6: Finding Good

6.1. It was proposed in the preceding chapter that my account of beauty might serve to adumbrate a more general account of value, finding and thinking good being related in a way not dissimilar to, though more complex than, finding and thinking beautiful.

The sort of position to which this might most naturally be thought to lead is to be found very clearly expressed in the final part of C. I. Lewis's *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*. Lewis distinguishes between "direct findings of value-quality in experience" on the one hand and both "predictions of goodness or badness which will be disclosed in experience" and "evaluations of things; appraisals of their potentialities for good or ill" on the other. The latter two have the status of judgements, subject to verification, and take as their subject matter the former which lack this status.¹ The parallel with the finding/thinking distinction of chapter 5 is obvious and striking.

Lewis distinguishes between things that are *intrinsically* valuable: the values of which

are realized, or realizable, in experience through presentation of the thing to which they are attributed

and those whose values

are realized through presentation of something else.

Values ascribable to objects are always, he contends, *extrinsic* insofar as

¹ Lewis, 1946, p365.

the ruling test of goodness in an object is some goodness findable in experience.²

Lewis theory then is idealist roughly in the way the view of beauty set out in chapter 5 is. Value is such that:

Its esse is percepti. There can be no illusion of present enjoyment or present pain, for example, though the supposition that an enjoyable or a painful state of affairs environs us may be, in any instance, illusory.³

And, to this extent we may say that value-judgements are *in a sense* subjective. But it is not a sense for which Lewis has much use. For, in this sense, *all* judgements are subjective- Lewis is a verificationist. He prefers a conception of objectivity and subjectivity whereby these are contrasted in terms of the *possibility of error*.⁴ And this *is* true of value-*judgements* though not true of the direct *findings* of value he distinguishes from these.

With the characterization of the immediately valuable, what is *found*, as opposed to *judged* valuable, Lewis rather flounders, settling in the end for the vague and less than lucid characterization:

² Ibid., pp386, 389.

³ Ibid., p407. Note that this doesn't quite match up with the idealist view of beauty given in chapter 5 and, to that extent, isn't quite right. We *can* plausibly be mistaken about the existence of our hedonic states (see Smith, 1987, pp45ff) but *not* about the existence of the experiences that are their objects.

⁴ Ibid, pp180, 410-412. Compare D1 at 1.4 above

that value-disvalue is a general *mode* of presentation; that it is subject to degree in the sense that for any specific modality- the value-characteristic of a given content- there will be other such modalities related to it as better or worse.⁵

Identification of the immediately valuable with *pleasure* is discouraged by Lewis on the grounds that the latter term's meaning in ordinary speech is too narrow to express the full range of what is immediately valued, preferring to say that:

the variety of our adjectives of prizing is better taken as indicative than would be any one of them; which might well be too narrow.⁶

The immediately good is what you like and what you want in the way of experience: the immediately bad is what you dislike and do not want.⁷

But what *unites* such adjectives (and verbs) of prizing still demands elucidation. For, after all, surely one need neither *like* what one *wants* nor *want* what one *likes*. Greater clarity about how these attitudes of wanting and liking, desiring and enjoying are best characterized and related would seem to be needed.

6.2. As a preliminary move in characterizing the key notions of pleasure and desire we may recall chapter 3 where, in discussing internalism, desires were distinguished from

⁵ Ibid., p403.

⁶ Ibid., p405.

⁷ Ibid., p404.

beliefs in terms of their *direction of fit's* being world-word rather than vice versa. But the category of thoughts whose direction of fit is thus world-word is rather wider than the extension of the English word "desire" as normally understood and it will be helpful to have a term at our disposal covering the former category as a whole. For this purpose we might adopt the term "pro-attitudes" first brought into currency by Nowell-Smith.⁸

As noted, "pro-attitudes" is a rather wider term than desires. We do not normally speak of desiring what we already possess. What we desire is typically what we lack: what we want, in the normal modern sense, is something which, in an older sense, we *want*. This restriction was noticed and stressed by Plato:

Consider then, said Socrates, if it be no mere possibility but a necessity that someone who desires desires ~~(ἐπιθυμῶν)~~ what he lacks and where he is not lacking does not desire. At least, Agathon, it's wonderfully clear to me that this is necessarily the case.⁹

The object desired is, we might say, an object not possessed, the state of affairs desired not an actual one. But this is too quick. When Edmund Hillary was young he wanted to climb Everest. And so he did. The state of affairs he desired is, and (*pace* Aristotle) was, actual and none the less so for its then futurity. Indeed we can have desires about the past- the examination candidate awaiting his results, the wife of the

⁸ See his 1954, esp. chapter 8. My usage shall differ from Nowell-Smith's insofar as I shall not distinguish within this category between *pro-attitudes* (paradigmatically desires) and *anti-attitudes* (paradigmatically aversions) but shall use "pro-attitude" to cover both of these, distinguishing "positive" and "negative" where appropriate.

⁹ *Symposium*, 200a8-b2 (my translation).

missing soldier, the general waiting for news of a battle all have desires about what has *already* occurred. If these desires are satisfied, the desired states of affairs are not only actual but obtain at the time of the desires' being held. The object of desire is not so much what we *lack* as what we *do not know ourselves do have*, a point well made by Kenny:

One can want to meet Professor X when Professor X is in fact the bore from whom one is trying at this moment to escape.¹⁰

When our desires are satisfied, when we get what we want, we are normally *pleased*. A tempting thought is then that pleasure is of a kind with desire, differing only in the fact that the state of affairs valued is typically one known to obtain.¹¹ This thought is not beyond controversy as is seen from the way in which E. J. Bond takes Jan Narveson to task for the "lumping together" of desire, pleasure, valuing etc., under the heading "pro-attitudes" (though Bond does not discuss the view considered in chapter 3 above, whereby the motivation for such "lumping" can be placed in the world-word direction of fit that distinguishes such pro-attitudes).¹²

¹⁰ Kenny, 1963, p120.

¹¹ Cf. Hobbes (1968, p119):

So that Desire and Love are the same thing; save that by Desire we
always signifie the Absence of the Object; by Love, most commonly,
the Presence of the Same.

¹² Bond, 1983, pp111-112.

The states of affairs that occasion pleasure are, as noted, typically states of affairs that obtain. But, as with desire a more accurate delineation of appropriate objects of pleasure will have an *epistemic* twist. The pleasure of a bridegroom or of a schoolboy at the start of his summer holidays have as their objects the felicity they take to await them and I am no less pleased by good news because the messenger is, unknown to me, lying through his teeth.

What gives us pleasure (or displeasure) is then, or at least *is taken to be*, a *fait accompli*, albeit in that wide sense in which a future fact may be, to all intents and purposes, a *fait accompli*.

6.3. Another and related aspect of pleasure is that it is typically *de re*. In particular the central case of *enjoyment*, on which for the present, I will concentrate, is invariably *de re*. The primary objects of enjoyment can only be ingredients of one's experience, as Gosling notes:

I may enjoy a meal but not if I neither eat it nor smell it and I may enjoy a picture but not if I never look at it...it becomes clear that what I enjoy is doing or experiencing something, and, of course, doing or experiencing it myself.¹³

The threat of referential failure may be evaded just as it was with finding beauty by observing that we cannot be mistaken about the existence of the object of our *de re* enjoyment- that is, the experience that is the primary object of our enjoyment (though as was the case with beauty the *stability* of our experience will frequently incline us to

¹³ Gosling, 1969, p69. Cf the passage from Lewis "Its *esse*..." quoted above.

identify the object of enjoyment with a secondary object about which error *is* possible- of which more below).

Some care is in order here. Richard Jeffrey is surely right to take it that the object of desire is best specified as a *proposition*.¹⁴ This does not mean that it is wrong to speak of a desire's having a *nominal* object- heaps of money- *as well as* a *propositional* object- that I possess heaps of money. We can represent desires in various ways. The thought is rather that the propositional way of representing them is fundamental insofar as something is *amiss* when we *cannot* represent a desire in this way.

The reasoning involved is simply that desires are surely best *individuated* by their *satisfaction-conditions*¹⁵ (cf. 1.5 above) just as beliefs are by their truth-conditions and both may be conveniently conceived as propositional contents. Desires not so expressed are usually easy to rephrase appropriately. Thus a desire of mine to \emptyset is typically a desire *that I \emptyset* . And my desire for an X is typically a desire *that I have an X* (or perhaps *that an X be present* or *that an X occur*). When such paraphrase is *not* a straightforward matter, it would seem to be a sign that we have a problem making sense of the desire at all. It is in the rather indeterminate nature of their satisfaction-conditions that much of the difficulty over saucers of mud etc. gets generated:

To say "I merely want this" without any characterization is to deprive the word of sense; if he insists on having the thing, we want to know what "having" amounts to.¹⁶

¹⁴ Jeffrey, 1965, p59-69.

¹⁵ For the notion of satisfaction-conditions see further Searle, 1983, pp10f.

¹⁶ Anscombe, 1957, p71. Cf. Kenny, 1963, pp112ff.

All this is not to say that desire cannot be *de re*. Thus my desire may be that I possess *that* bicycle, where the thought of the bicycle is *de re*, though, insofar as the object of the desire is taken to be given by the proposition and not by any of its terms, the desire remains *de dicto*.

Enjoyment is rather more complex. In the simplest case we might say that what is valenced, what pleases me is, strictly, not merely my experience, but *that* I experience it, *that* it occurs. Sometimes, however, such a construction of my attitude may seem unduly artificial. Nonetheless, *some* propositional attitudes must surely always be *bound up with* enjoyment as a condition of its imputation making much sense.¹⁷

It is important not to over-state this difference between desire and enjoyment. *Both* can demand representation as *de re* demonstrative thoughts. However, note that the (primary) objects of enjoyment are *always experiences* thought of in just this *de re* manner, while the only things we can *want* in this way are things *other than* experiences- a woman, a bicycle, a work of art etc.- things perhaps given in experience but in experiences necessarily not identical with the further desired experiences of the object in question. That is to say, in the sense in which it is legitimate to treat noun phrases as giving the object of a pro-attitude (and it is so legitimate providing only paraphrase into propositional form is also *possible*) the (primary) object of enjoyment is *always a token experience*, while the object of desire, where it is an experience, is always a *type*.

6.4. Is pleasure and, in particular, enjoyment a pro-attitude in the sense characterized in terms of direction of fit? Well, it seems, in the first place, implausible to regard pleasure or enjoyment as purely *cognitive* (word-world) in direction of fit. For how *are* we representing the world when some experience is enjoyed- what is the *content* of our

¹⁷ Cf. Searle, 1983, pp32-35.

representation? The most natural answer might be to say that the experiences enjoyed possess some peculiar uniform characteristic, that of pleasurableness; and that finding an experience enjoyable is just perceiving this characteristic component of it.

But this line of thought has been widely attacked. Thus Nowell-Smith writes:

When a man feels "discomfort" or "is uncomfortable" he does not have two sensations, an itch (or whatever it might be) and a special sensation of discomfort; he has only one sensation which is an uncomfortable one.¹⁸

Aristotle has an interesting argument in this regard¹⁹, his thought being roughly as follows: pleasure in the performance of an activity intensifies it, enhancing that performance. Thus I do mathematics better or listen to music with more understanding if I am enjoying these activities. But I do not get this result simply by the addition of some uniform thing, pleasure, to my doing mathematics- only pleasure *in* doing mathematics will serve. If I am doing mathematics without pleasure and badly, I may come to do it less badly if I start enjoying it, but simply to import some pleasure into the situation by simultaneously listening to music will be liable to make matters worse rather than better. Because it thus makes a difference what kind of pleasure is in question there must indeed, thinks Aristotle, be diverse kinds of pleasure.

More generally the *kinds* of things that are enjoyable are immensely *heterogeneous*. Dozing in the sun after a bottle of good wine, driving rapidly in a post chaise, playing

¹⁸ Nowell-Smith, 1954, p96. Cf. Kenny, 1963, pp127-135.

¹⁹ Nicomachean Ethics, X, 5.

chess with concentration and intent and shooting a waterfall are as phenomenologically diverse as experiences can be yet all may and do provide enjoyment.²⁰

Granting this heterogeneity of kinds of enjoyment, might enjoyment nonetheless be, if not a uniform intrinsic quality of feeling, then a *group* of differing such qualities of a single *type*? It might, but it is then incumbent on us to specify what the type in question is, what its common denominator is and how it is identified. But meeting this demand for any purely *descriptive* account of enjoyment raises a difficulty indicated by Kenny:

...an internal impression can never be a reason for action whereas pleasure is always a reason for action. Pleasure, in the nature of things, is desirable; but no internal impression could be shown *a priori* to be desirable.²¹

It will become clear just how complex is the relation between pleasure, and particularly enjoyment, and desire. But the point to be made here is simply that if enjoyment is taken to be some intrinsic feature or features of experiences we enjoy, it becomes unclear what prevents that feature or features from being present in some experience that we *fail* to enjoy. Kenny's argument is effectively an open question-type argument that brings home to us the irreducibly *evaluative* character of the concept of pleasure.

Enjoying an experience it might then be urged is *finding it good*- we have an experience and we *like* having that experience. We are not dealing with some qualitative sensory or quasi-sensory aspect of experience but with the *attitude* we have

²⁰ Cf. Gosling, 1969, pp34-43.

²¹ Kenny, 1963, p134.

to it.²² Aristotle's point may now be met by stressing that the performance of an activity is only enhanced by enjoyment when the enjoyment is directed *at that activity* and not some other. To *enjoy* an experience is not simply to have an attitude to it but, crucially, to have an attitude that is contemporaneous with it- *now-for-now*, to adapt Hare's terminology²³ (as well as *me-for me*).

A line of thought that might now suggest itself however would urge that having such an attitude *feels like* something and then identify pleasure with the feeling in question. But this, it might be replied, is to assume, that we are necessarily *aware* of having an attitude which isn't *necessarily* so. Indeed, notoriously in the case of enjoyment we are always aware of the object of our enjoyment (as noted in the above quote from Gosling) but may not always be aware of our enjoyment itself. Such awareness may even undermine the enjoyment we feel. Indeed it may plausibly be alleged, as it is by Gosling, that:

there are cases where it is a *condition* of the enjoyment that one should not recognize its existence.²⁴

Nonetheless, although enjoyment need not be something we are aware of it is surely something that we *might* be aware of. And the plausibility of this is increased by

²² It should be noted for the record that Kenny himself rejects the view that "enjoyment" is a "pro-word". This view, defended by Nowell-Smith, 1954, pp115-6, was mooted earlier by Broad in his 1930, pp237-8.

²³ See Hare, 1981, section 5.6. In the interests of brevity I shall use "now-for-now" as an abbreviation for what Hare would call "now-for-now and/or then-for-then". I use "me-for me" with a similar generality.

²⁴ 1969, p45, q.v. for a characteristically good example. See also Smith, 1987, pp45ff.

reflection on the possibility of *second order* pleasure whose object- first order enjoyment- is necessarily an ingredient of conscious experience.

There is then a phenomenological aspect to enjoyment but it is not a *necessary* corollary of enjoying something that such an aspect be present. Nor does it seem helpful to concentrate on that aspect in starting a search for the defining characteristics of enjoyment. Compare believing. This too has a phenomenological aspect just in this same sense that belief states are potential objects of higher order attitudes. I *need* not be aware of believing something (were this necessary a regress would threaten) but I *can* be and it is plausible that belief is necessarily *available* to consciousness. This is not of course to say that believing has a *qualitative character* in anything like the way that visual experience has- not much seems to be involved in being conscious *of* believing something over and above being conscious *that* one believes it.

We are left with the thought that enjoyment is to be understood in terms of having some experience such that at the time of the experience the experience is made the object of a positive pro-attitude (or at least the *primary* object- see 5.8 above). In the crude language of section 1.5 one thinks "hurrah!". In the language of psychology one "valences" it.²⁵ In everyday language one likes or values it. Adapting the "finding" idiom of chapter 5, one might be said to *find it good*.

This concept of finding good can, it seems to me, capture the whole range of things we speak of ourselves as enjoying- the heterogeneity of such things is not the problem it is for quasi-sensory understandings of enjoyment. Finding good, though not too *narrow* a notion to capture what we ordinarily speak of in terms of enjoyment, is however perhaps too *wide*. From the perspective of Lewis's view with which this chapter began, that is all to the good given his strictures about the excessive *narrowness* of the notion of pleasure to capture what he meant in speaking of

²⁵ See Brandt, 1979, p28ff, Railton, 1986, p173.

immediate value. A form of hedonism, if we may still call it that, based on finding good is thus more plausible than one based on a narrower understanding of pleasure or enjoyment. Thus, to employ John Skorupski's examples, the experiences of visiting a parent's grave or of reading Kafka, are not, in the ordinary sense, *enjoyable* but may be, in my sense, *found good*.²⁶ That said, the notion of finding good seems crucial in seeking an explication of enjoyment, as the unifying essential feature of all that we understand by the latter. Cases where the valencing of the experience is positive at the level of second or higher order valencing (and perhaps only there) may fall outside the range of what would normally be deemed enjoyable for that reason and Skorupski's examples are plausibly of this kind. In what follows, I will be using "enjoyment" in an artificially wide sense synonymous with "finding good".

Naturally I want to tell a similar story about experiences we dislike. Though people sometimes write as if "pain" were the precise opposite of "pleasure" this is hardly precise- "displeasure" is preferable. "Enjoyment" lacks an exact antonym. Painful experiences nonetheless form a part of the range of experiences we may be said to *find bad* along with such experiences as exposure to music or company not to one's taste, which though also found bad, are not properly to be called *painful*. As is well known, some empirical evidence exists to back up the view that it is not a necessary feature of experiences with the "feel" of painful experiences that they be found bad- a matter I will return to at 6.8 below.²⁷

6.5. Understanding pleasure in general and enjoyment in particular as pro-attitudes might seem to present a problem. Searle, for example, goes in for just such "lumping-

²⁶ Skorupski, 1989, p301. Cf. Nowell-Smith, 1954, p121.

²⁷ Further references are given and the case for an attitudinal understanding of pain is ably made out in Hall, 1989.

together", construing desire and belief rather broadly under the names "Des" and "Bel" and proposing the entailment:

Being pleased that $(p) \rightarrow \text{Bel}(p) \ \& \ \text{Des}(p)$ ²⁸

The trouble with this is that the most familiar ways of characterizing pro-attitudes tend to relate them to our *dispositions*. Accounts of *desire*, after all, naturally begin from our dispositions:

The primitive sign of wanting is *trying to get*.²⁹

But the object of pleasure, we saw, is a (putative) *fait accompli*. And it is in the nature of a *fait accompli* that it is beyond our power to change- it is not something we can sensibly try to get (or to avert). You can't *try to get* what you believe yourself *already to have*. This can invite the thought that desire is in some way the more fundamental of these two species of pro-attitude, that enjoyment is open to some form of reductive analysis in terms of desire.

Plato's *Symposium* is again a source:

when someone says, "I, being healthy, wish (βούλωμαι) to be healthy and, being rich, wish to be rich, and desire (ἐπιθυμῶ) the very things I possess", we shall say to him, "You, sir, being in

²⁸ Searle 1983, pp29, 33. Note Searle's wisely refraining from making the entailment biconditional so that the Bel & Des analysis is not taken to *exhaust* the meaning of pleasure. Cf. on this matter 6.8 below.

²⁹ Anscombe, 1957, p68.

possession of health and wealth and strength, wish to possess these things in the future, since at present you have them whether you wish it or not.³⁰

Similar views are commonly expressed: for example by Brandt.³¹ To *enjoy* something, such writers claim, is just to *desire its continuation*.

An immediate objection to this sort of view may be drawn from everyday experience. There are numerous pleasures which I do *not* in fact wish to prolong. Thus perhaps I am enjoying eating ice-cream but wish nonetheless shortly to desist as I know satiety to bring diminishing returns and ultimately to sicken. But so far this objection does not seem very threatening- the obvious reply is simply to add a *ceteris paribus* clause. To enjoy eating ice cream is simply to desire to continue to do so, *other things being equal*, a condition which the onset of satiety violates.

There are kinds of enjoyment which are less amenable to this move however. Good examples are provided by J. C. B. Gosling.³² Firstly there are kinds of enjoyment where it is plausibly held to be essential to the enjoyableness of what is enjoyed that it be fleeting and ephemeral as when we enjoy some passing whiff of scent. And secondly there are enjoyments which *cannot* be prolonged.

I may enjoy breaking a certain piece of good news to someone; but it is hard to believe that because I enjoy it I must want to go on breaking it. After all, I know as well as anyone else that I cannot go on breaking the same piece of news to the same person.

³⁰ *Symposium*, 200c5-d3 (my trans.).

³¹ Brandt, 1979, pp40-41.

³² See his 1969, pp64-66. Cf Kenny, 1963, p135.

And of course the impossibility here is of a conceptual variety- it is not like the impossibility of having superhuman powers which may indeed, however inadvisedly, be coherently wanted, but rather like the impossibility of at once having and not having such powers, which may not.

Such counter-examples may seem not to settle the matter. The first sort invites us to press for an elaboration of what it is to be essential to something's enjoyableness and furnishing this would certainly be a complex matter. The second might be claimed to depend for its effectiveness on just how *finely* the object of pleasure is *individuated*.

Thus suppose I am enjoying breaking not news but plates. The reductionist here takes this as amounting to a wish to continue breaking plates and such a wish is indeed a plausible enough concomitant of my enjoyment. At a given point in my plate-breaking session I will, however, not merely be breaking plates but breaking some *particular* plate and it would be odd to impute to me, in virtue of my enjoyment, a desire to continue breaking *that very plate* again and again.³³ But this does not tell against my wanting to continue breaking *plates* rather than some *given* plate. And the same distinction can be made *mutatis mutandis* in the case of breaking news. When the object of pleasure is identified in an appropriate way, it could be claimed, the proposed analysis is restored to credibility.

Here the anti-reductionist might accept this point but claim that such fine-tuning of the object of enjoyment may play into his hands. For he might now show up the weakness of the reductionist case in such simpler instances as my ice-cream example. Suppose we were to represent my enjoyment of eating ice-cream at t_1 thus:

³³ Not here impossible supposing a plate might be broken many times, being repaired beetween times, but it remains highly odd to suppose that, in virtue of my enjoyment, I want precisely *this*.

Hi! (I eat ice-cream at t_1)

and some desire to be eating ice cream at some succeeding time t_2 such as the reductionist view would imply thus:

Hi! (I eat ice-cream at t_2)

The point for the anti-reductionist to make here is simply that these thoughts are clearly *distinct* thoughts, that they have *distinct* objects and that hence presumably there is nothing incoherent in supposing either to be tenable in the absence of the other. So, in other words, if we're going to fine-tune the specification of the object *thoroughly* the tenability of this form of reductionism appears to collapse.

Of course the object of my thought in enjoying the ice-cream might not very plausibly be taken to be (My eating ice-cream at t_1) where " t_1 " stands in for some such designation as "2p.m., G. M. T. on January 5th 1993" for I may very well not think of my action in this way. I may well not *know* what time it is. But we might, instead of " t_1 " and " t_2 " write "now" and "some moments hence", or some such locution. For such distinctions are plausibly present simply in virtue of my thoughts being tensed.

Alternatively, individuating the object without reference to time, the anti-reductionist might urge that the pleasure is a pro-attitude to the particular quantity of ice cream being eaten at the time of the pleasure and the allegedly equivalent desire is a desire for some *distinct* such quantity.

More generally, the reductionist analysis is involved in some difficulty over the matter discussed in 6.3 above- the primary nominal object of the desire being a *type* ice-cream eating experience conceived *de dicto*, that of the enjoyment a *token* such

experience thought of *de re*- this is hardly helpful to anyone who seeks to somehow identify the two.

6.6. One might be tempted to reverse the direction of the proposed reduction, analysing desire in terms of enjoyment. On such a view it might be supposed that to *desire* to ϕ is simply to *expect* that ϕ ing *will be enjoyable*. Or that ϕ ing considered together with its expected consequences will be at least less displeasurable than its alternatives- thus immediately weakening the more obvious sort of counter-example in which people desire things they don't in the least expect to enjoy- such as visits to the dentist and other similarly advisable sources of pain.

This would seem to have been the view of Mill who notoriously wrote that:

to desire anything, except in proportion as the idea of it is pleasant, is a physical and metaphysical impossibility.³⁴

This sort of analysis can seem tempting when we consider the two ways in which a desirer might be disappointed-

(A) by the desire's being frustrated

and

(B) by no satisfaction ensuing from its realization.

³⁴ Mill, 1962, p293..

We might speak of the latter kind of case in the language of *falsification*, saying such things as "I always thought I wanted such and such but now I see I was wrong"³⁵ The following line of thought might then develop. One might have reasoned:

What I want is the best bicycle money can buy; the Boneshaker Mark VIII is the best bicycle money can buy- so the Boneshaker Mark VIII is what I want.

One might then find that the Boneshaker Mark VIII was in fact a wreck and hence that it was *not what one wanted*. Anything one wants one wants for the sake of the enjoyment one believes it will yield and one's want is conditional on the truth of that belief, just as one's want for a Boneshaker was conditional upon the truth of a different belief about it. So that what the desire for a Boneshaker is to the desire for the best bicycle money can buy, *all* desires are to the desire for enjoyment.

We must be more careful however. I may indeed falsify a *belief* that the Boneshaker Mark VIII is what, *under some other description*, I want but I may not falsify a *want* for it. If I don't get what I hoped from getting what I wanted it remains nonetheless true that I wanted it. Believing something is what I want and wanting it need not be the same. I may want the best bicycle on the market and believe the most expensive bicycle on the market is the best bicycle on the market without it being true that I want the most expensive bicycle on the market.

I am, it might be urged, *irrational* if I do not, at least *pro tanto* have the latter want given the antecedent want and belief. If I believe X is Y and I want Y, I ought

³⁵ Cf. Bond, 1983, pp44-45 and Gosling 1969, pp106-107 on "really wanting". An interesting variant on the psychological hedonism here under consideration is Russell's view (1921, chapter 3) that we only, in effect, *really* want whatever turns out to extinguish the "discomfort" associated with that wanting.

then, at least *pro tanto*, to want X. Or at least, I ought so to want it *conditionally on the truth of my belief*. The psychological hedonist may now rest his claim on just this seeming conditionality of a want on a belief. But the point to stress is that this is not such that the want can be *written out of my history* if the belief is false. It is not the case that (if X is Y) then I want X; but rather that I want (X if X is Y) where the condition lies within the scope of the verb and the want is no less actual for the failure of the belief. But if such conditional status is assumed then all the disappointments we had originally been inclined to class as of kind B turn out rather to be of kind A. So that imputing such conditionality, as psychological hedonism seems to demand, leads to the conclusion that our real wants are *never* disappointing in this former way. And this is most implausible. If I want to go windsurfing expecting that it will be fun and my want is construed as conditional upon the truth of that expectation then it will be satisfied if and only if I go windsurfing and enjoy it. If windsurfing disappoints, it is not then the case that the satisfaction of *my want* has failed to satisfy *me*³⁶ for the former satisfaction has not in fact come about.³⁷

Aside from any questions about the plausibility of any assumption that all our desires for ends other than enjoyment are, for all our innocence of the fact, conditional on our ultimate satisfaction in this way, the trouble with such psychological hedonism is simply that there are, besides the easily evaded sorts of counter-examples already mentioned, others much less easy to evade, notoriously desires relating to the aftermath of one's own death (held by disbelievers in their own immortality) whose fulfilment or otherwise we can hardly expect to enjoy. So that the story offered is rather less plausible with regard to certain desires than to others.

³⁶ See Bond, 1983, p45, for the distinction between these sorts of satisfaction.

³⁷ Cf. Bond, 1983, p51.

To a great extent however, this sort of counter-example relates only to the *egoistic* variety of psychological hedonism according to which for me to desire something is just for me to believe that it will be enjoyed *by me*. But the psychological hedonist need not be an egoist³⁸: he is equally at liberty to consider the view that to want something is to conceive of it as a source of enjoyment *to anybody*. This view is not as absurd as might often be supposed and not, as far as I can see, incoherent but depends on the assumption that any want we may have is conditional upon the satisfaction (in the sense of realization) of that want giving satisfaction (in the sense of enjoyment) to *someone*. But such an assumption though not incoherent is very plausibly *false* and certainly not a *conceptual* truth about what desire *is*.³⁹ There is indeed something oddly fanatical⁴⁰ about a desire on my or anybody's part to go windsurfing whether or not I or anybody derive any satisfaction from it, an oddity I will be particularly concerned to diagnose in chapter 9 below. But to reproach with fanaticism such unconditional first order desires is an ethical hedonism quite distinct from any sort of psychological hedonism (logical or empirical) which denies their occurrence.

6.7. Such attempts to make enjoyment and desire co-relative as we have been considering derive much appeal from their relevance to the problem of making more precise our characterization of these very things. To this end yet another and related form of co-relativity has been claimed for desire and enjoyment. This seeks to base an understanding of our concept of enjoyment on its role in the *explanation of* desire and thus of action. As Gosling puts it:

³⁸ Cf. Skorupski, 1989, p296.

³⁹ Cf. Bond, 1983, pp104-106; Skorupski, 1989, pp300-303.

⁴⁰ I don't have Hare's technical sense of the word primarily in mind here but what I say would perhaps be true enough if it were so read.

If I claim to play it [golf] because I enjoy it, that serves to assert that there is no further reason, that I want to play golf for its own sake, and not for the sake of something else. If a person plays golf because he enjoys it, this amounts to saying that it is his desire to play golf that explains his activities: no further goal is required.⁴¹

This is very much the line taken by Nowell-Smith who claims that:

"Enjoyment"... is primarily a pro-word the function of which is to block the question "Why did you do that?"⁴²

He later elaborates:

it makes sense to ask whether a mountain climber climbs for the sake of climbing or for the sake of getting a view from the top; but it makes no sense to ask whether he climbs for the sake of climbing or for the sake of the pleasure of climbing.⁴³

"Because he enjoys it" does not mean the same as "because he is enjoying it". As Gosling observes⁴⁴, the golfer playing golf because he enjoys it may very well *not* be enjoying it at all at the time in question. It means rather that the person in question

⁴¹ Gosling, 1969, p69.

⁴² Nowell-Smith, 1954, p115.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p122.

⁴⁴ Gosling, 1969, p72. Cf. Kenny, 1963, p145.

shows a stable tendency to enjoy the activity in question on most, but not necessarily all, of the occasions when he engages in it.

Noting this brings out a point of some importance about explanations of behaviour that proceed in terms of enjoyment. This is that such explanations presuppose some *consistency* in what is enjoyed. In the language of chapter 5, such explanations only begin to make sense where there is adequate *stability of response and attitude*. Given a person utterly fickle in what they enjoyed, we might talk of what they *were enjoying* or what *was pleasing* them but hardly of what they enjoyed or what gave them pleasure, given that the latter locutions are taken to express settled tendencies. So, where such a person was concerned, it would hardly help us to explain either their *enjoying* or their desire to *enjoy* by alluding to the fact that they enjoyed *enjoying*.

We might seek such an explanation in terms of their *expectation* that they would enjoy *enjoying* on this particular occasion however fickle they might be generally. But what, in the context of such instability of response and attitude, could possibly give rise to any such expectation? For without stability of response and attitude nothing could be intelligibly characterized as enjoyable except *token experiences*- of which simply "enjoyed" would then be a better description than "enjoyable". Objects and activities associated with *types* of experience could not be so characterized.

This is of considerable significance. For if nothing but token experiences were enjoyable then it would indeed be the case that we could speak of nothing but experiences as enjoyable. But when some stability is supposed it starts making sense to speak of chocolate and country walks as enjoyable, over and above token-experiences involving these. And until we do this, it remains wholly obscure how we could fine-tune the objects of our enjoyment in the way we in fact do. Thus suppose I am enjoying myself at a concert. What I am enjoying is just the experience I am having. But I want to say that what *in particular* I am enjoying is the music being played rather than the feel of my trouser leg against my knee or the distant noise of traffic (assuming

the program is not Cage's "4.33" where the distant noise of traffic *is* the music (not being played). When stability of response and attitude obtains I may start to say not merely that some token experience is enjoyed but that it is enjoyed *qua* token of some type. It is thereby possible to say *under what description* the experience is enjoyed- to say not simply that I am enjoying this experience but that I am enjoying listening to this music. And it is *only* when some such stability characterizes my hedonic life that such crucial experience-organizing discriminations can get off the ground.⁴⁵

I am relying here on a distinction already introduced in the case of aesthetic response: that between the *primary* and *secondary* objects of such response. Where we are concerned with the objects of hedonic responses considered nominally (as opposed to propositionally) a similar distinction is necessary.⁴⁶ For although what is enjoyed is necessarily an experience, it is natural to conceptualize that experience in terms of "our common-sense talk of physical things"⁴⁷ and not via some experiential protocol-language of doubtful possibility.

To blur this distinction is to invite the sort of confusion found in the following edifying metaethical exchange:

"I don't make myself disagreeable; it is you who find me so.

"Disagreeable" is a word that describes your feelings and not my actions."

⁴⁵ I am here rather less sanguine than Kenny (1963, pp128-131) who rather seems to suppose this problem goes away as soon as we stop viewing pleasure as a kind of feeling or sensation.

⁴⁶ Cf. Broad's helpful distinction between *causal* and *non-causal* senses of pleasant in his 1930, pp87-89.

⁴⁷ Quine, 1960, p1.

"I think it describes the smell of grilled bone"

"Not at all. It describes a sensation in your little nose associated with certain finicky notions which are the classics of Miss Lemon's school."⁴⁸

But that there is space for such a distinction is, again as we saw in 5.8, a child of stability of response. "Disagreeable", without such stability could indeed describe nothing but Rosamund's feelings. But the fact of such stability enables it to attach itself to just such reliable occasions for such feelings as the smell of grilled bone and Fred's behaviour.

Enjoyment requires a primary object- in this sense we can only enjoy experiences. But at the same time the experience is typically enjoyed *under a description* that goes *beyond* what is given in experience. This may be simply a matter of the description of the primary object proceeding in ways that transcend, as they must, the immediately given.⁴⁹ Or it may be a matter of the enjoyment being dependent on beliefs about the secondary object that may be false. Thus James Rachels⁵⁰ describes for us one Womag, a dupe, who gets much pleasure throughout his life from the apparent love, respect and admiration of others who are, unknown to him, staging the whole thing. There is then an experience Womag enjoys on some occasion- the experience, say, of being praised to the skies in his Nobel citation. What he is more apt to cite as the object of his enjoyment is, however, something like "all this admiration". About this later, secondary object one may be, as Womag is, mistaken. But there remains something that one enjoys- the experience in which the secondary object is, necessarily, mediated.

⁴⁸ George Eliot, 1965, p127.

⁴⁹ See e.g. A. J. Ayer, 1976, chapters 4 and 5..

⁵⁰ Rachels, 1986, pp46-47.

6.8. Stability of response and attitude is crucial in another way to the very intelligibility of our ways of speaking of pro-attitudes. For it is only *via* stability of response and attitude that we secure a *link* between enjoyment and desire. And this is most necessary. We characterized positive now-for-now pro-attitudes and in particular enjoyment above in terms of "liking", "valencing", "valuing" "thinking "hurrah"", "finding good". But the matter, it might still be felt, remained unclear. Somebody who demanded to be told what exactly the difference was between having a given kind of experience and liking it and having the same kind of experience and not liking it might well feel that they are still waiting for an answer. It was for this reason that we turned to consider the possibility of understanding enjoyment in terms of desire which has a far clearer conceptual connection to its behavioural manifestation than enjoyment- the connection with striving emphasized by Anscombe. But the connections between enjoying something and desiring its continuance and between desire and anticipated satisfaction I examined above seemed to fall short of being at any rate conceptual truths about these concepts.

We can now see why this is so. For stability of response and attitude is far from *total*. I *may* very well *at times* enjoy ϕ ing and yet have no desire to continue ϕ ing; or desire to ϕ without supposing it enjoyable or even conducive to enjoyment. But these cases will be *exceptional*. *On the whole* the sort of things I enjoy *must* also be the sorts of things I want. It is only for this reason that enjoyment is clearly linked to a behavioural manifestation (other than the mere avowal of enjoyment and the bewilderingly heterogeneous physiological and phenomenological corollaries of pleasure). Conversely it is only its conceptual link with such hedonic notions as discomfort, frustration and satisfaction that keeps desire from being characterizable merely in dispositional terms as the sort of thing a thermostat might be said to have. Disconnected from desire, pleasure is unintelligible. Disconnected from pleasure, desire is bloodless. But the connection *need* not be *total*. A background of stability renders

intelligible pleasures that float free from any surrounding desires and renders rich and full-blooded desires that are similarly free-floating. Such local failure of stability becomes possible against such a general background of stability but, *given* such a background, they *are* possible. Hence we can understand more clearly the status of the connections between enjoying something and desiring its continuance and between desire and anticipated satisfaction. To suppose these connections, as a matter of conceptual truth, exceptionless would be a fallacy. But it is also a fallacy the ready plausibility of which is readily explained. For the connections in question do indeed obtain *on the whole, for the most part*. And this necessarily so if "enjoyment" and "desire" are to have the meanings they do. But it does not follow from their having those meanings that either connection holds without exception.

Proper consideration of stability of response and attitude enables us adequately to deal with another respect in which the account given of enjoyment as finding good might seem unsatisfactory. I noted above a line of thought that having an attitude must feel like something and that hence we should construe enjoyment as a kind of feeling. I then noted that in fact we may well, as is notorious, fail even to be aware that we are enjoying something. This dealt with the objection but a residual implausibility perhaps remains. Surely there is a characteristic *phenomenology* of enjoyment to which justice needs be done. In fact supposing *no* stability of response and attitude it is unclear, prescinding from the other problems this supposition involves, how there could be such a characteristic phenomenology. But *given* such stability it turns out that there are a certain, admittedly and now unproblematically heterogeneous, range of kinds of experience that are *typically* enjoyable and a similar such range that are *typically* unpleasant. It now becomes possible to say what is right in the view that enjoyment is a kind of feeling, namely that it is indeed plausible that enjoyment is to be seen as typically bound up with what we may properly call *feelings of enjoyment* or *pleasant feelings* and that being typically so bound up is essential to what we understand by

enjoyment.⁵¹ But that such feelings are distinguished from other sorts not in virtue some qualitative feel that is common to them all but in virtue of their typical association with enjoyment attitudinally characterized.⁵²

In the case of *painful* experiences this is particularly clear. Certain sensations are so consistently found bad, any deviation from this attitude to them being so extremely rare, that their unpleasantness can *seem* to attach to them as a matter of necessity. Further confusion is invited by that ambiguity of "pain" which may denote such sensations just insofar as they are disliked (as they usually are)- *pain_α* call this- or may simply denote such sensations whether the response they usually excite is activated or not- *pain_β*. So that the simplest, and I think right (see 6.4 above), answer to the much discussed question whether pain is necessarily unpleasant is, I think, *yes* for *pain_α* and *no* for *pain_β*. In speaking of pleasures we may likewise ordinarily mean pleasure_β- such experiences or associated activities as are *typically* found good, *even when they aren't*, as when I might say "All pleasures have now lost their savour and leave me

⁵¹ Cf. Searle, 1983, p35:

Joy and Sorrow are feelings that don't reduce to Bel and Des but... they have no Intentionality in addition to Bel and Des.

⁵² Cf. Kenny, 1963, p147:

There must be some criterion of pleasantness for an experience independent of whether it is *here and now* found pleasant. But there need not be any criterion independent of what most, or some specially qualified people, *in general*, find pleasant.

cold"; or pleasure_α- such experiences as are enjoyed *only insofar as* they are enjoyed. The considerable stability of response and attitude that actually obtains for most of us most of the time makes these pairs of concepts in practice appear mutually co-extensive, and this serves, I would suggest, to explain much of the attraction of views that identify pleasure and pain with sensations or some such qualitative features of experience without making the appropriate distinctions. What is called for is just the old-fashioned distinction between *descriptive* and *evaluative* meaning⁵³, where the pervasiveness of attitudinal stability accounts both for the evaluative charge of our descriptions and the descriptive commitments we make in our evaluations: an entanglement that opponents of the distinction in question may well, of course, exploit.

We may also, in this regard, note the likelihood, that though we may not always be aware of a now-for-now attitude to an experience it is highly likely that such enjoyment or displeasure will colour the qualitative character of that experience in ways of which we may well not be aware, that experience is value-laden even where the valuations are not themselves experienced. Qualitative character and attitude we may take to be likewise highly entangled.⁵⁴

This being noted we may observe again the comparison made at 6.4 above between enjoyment and belief, both being *available* to consciousness though not necessarily always *present* to it. Likewise it was noted there that the phenomenology of believing may be the rather formal and thin-blooded matter of merely being conscious *that* one has a belief. In spite of this anaemic phenomenology, nonetheless, believing is something that can be *found good*. Thus it might be the case that I enjoy believing that the horse I backed has won the Derby. Unsurprisingly so. For, although *believing* in general has an anaemic phenomenology, believing one's horse has won the Derby does

⁵³ Cf. Nowell-Smith, 1954, pp115-116. Cf. Hare, 1952, chapter 7.

⁵⁴ Cf. Blanshard, 1961, pp298-299.

not. The experience in virtue of which my enjoyment arises may thus involve not merely my awareness of the belief but also my awareness of the pleasant (pleasant₃ that is) feelings that accompany it. Similarly with second order *enjoyment*, I find it good that I enjoy something, aware not just that I am enjoying it but of more phenomenologically full-blooded feelings whose presence, in virtue of stability of response, I may explain by reference to my enjoyment, the latter thus being rendered the more intelligibly the object of my second-order attitude.

6.9. It is thus when stability of response and attitude obtains *and only then* that it becomes possible to give qualified assent to Anscombe's insistence that:

If a man wants something, he can always be asked what for, or in what aspect it is desirable; until he gives a desirability characterization.⁵⁵

The assent is qualified because while very dramatic⁵⁶ instability of response and attitude is not conceivable (see below), merely *local* instability is. Wanting saucers of mud, for, instance, *is* intelligible.⁵⁷ And generally, the claim that:

⁵⁵ Anscombe, 1957, pviii.

⁵⁶ One is tempted to write "total instability". But, of course, "stability of response and attitude" like "the uniformity of nature" (see Ayer, 1972, pp20-22) is a complex matter of degree. There could never be *no* such stability, though the predicates needed to characterize it might be ever so *ad hoc* and Goodmanesque.

⁵⁷ See 4.4 and 6.3.above.

anything can be an object of desire; so there can be no need for me to characterize these objects as somehow desirable; it merely happens that I want them⁵⁸

is not, *pace* Anscombe, nonsense. The point is of some significance to my discussion of whimsical attitudes in chapter 9 below.

Practical rationality is thus the child of stability. To act for a reason is to perform an act because it possesses some feature that makes it worth performing. This need not always be anything so full-blooded as what Anscombe appears to mean by a desirability characteristic. I may stand on one leg and count to seven simply because standing on one leg and counting to seven is an action I happen to want to perform. And the latter is a feature of the action that makes it worth performing. This very thin-blooded sort of rationality attaches necessarily to any *action*, and the attitude that motivates it need not be a stable one. But a *background* of such stability must exist. If, *per impossibile*, dramatic instability prevailed, the claim that what I was doing was intentionally standing on one leg because I had a desire to do so would, as urged above, say no more than that I was standing on one leg because I had a disposition to do so, and *this* much can be said of the chair I am now sitting on which scarcely has *desires*. But *given* such a background of stability, eccentric and abnormal behaviour may be intelligible and perhaps indeed rational.

Most rational behaviour involves reasons more full-blooded than this. In a typical case, Parfit writes:

⁵⁸ Anscombe, 1957, p71.

my reason is not my desire but the respect in which what I am doing is worth doing, or the respect in which my aim is desirable, worth desiring.⁵⁹

Here there is clearly a question of desirability characteristics in Anscombe's sense and the need for stability is clear.

To recapitulate:

- (1) It is only given stability of response and attitude that anything can be characterized as *desirable* as opposed merely to *desired*, as *enjoyable* as opposed merely to *enjoyed*.
- (2) It is only given such stability that things get to be valued- typically desired or enjoyed- *in virtue of* falling under some description rather than another.

Hence:

- (3) It is only thus that imputations of value acquire *descriptive* as well as *evaluative* meaning. And hence:
- (4) It comes to be *because* a thing has some descriptive characteristic (perhaps just because it is pleasant _{β}) that it is valued- enjoyed, desired or whatever; and thus that such characteristics become available for citation in the giving of *reasons* for what we value. And indeed:
- (5) It only now becomes possible even to discuss the question of the *universalizability* of such reasons⁶⁰; or that. closely related, question of the *supervenience* of the evaluative on the natural. Furthermore:

⁵⁹ Parfit, 1984, p121,

⁶⁰ See Hare, 1963, p15:

(6) The connections between enjoying something and desiring its continuance and between desire and anticipated satisfaction, that might tempt us to the reductive accounts of pleasure and desire respectively considered above, in fact reflect and are explicable in terms of stability of response and attitude. And indeed:

(7) Such stability is a precondition for the concepts of pleasure and desire making sense at all.

6.10. *En route* to a better characterization of the good, I have been seeking a better characterization of pleasure and enjoyment. This is scarcely a matter of disposing of a simple question as a means to making progress with a harder one. "What is pleasure, exactly?" is a question as intractable as it is crucial and I don't here pretend to give a full and satisfactory answer to it. Reaching one would involve a long excursus through problems in the philosophy (and sciences) of mind whose answers are highly uncertain, at least to me. What I hope has emerged from the discussion of the present chapter is at least a preliminary characterization sufficiently clear to permit us to proceed with the larger question. That characterization is roughly as follows.

There are states of the world, some presently or hitherto realized, some not, that we value. Where they are *not* (believed to be) so realized our valuation of them will constitutively involve an intention that, where possible, they come to be realized. Where they *are* (believed) so realized any such intention is absent- what replaces it is *pleasure*, including the special now-for-now, me-for-me, experience-directed case of

the feature of value-judgements which I call universalizability is simply that which they share with descriptive judgements; namely the fact that they both carry descriptive meaning.

enjoyment or *finding good*. Understood descriptively this term indicates at once that heterogeneous range of ways of feeling to which empirical accounts of it draw attention and a cluster, again heterogeneous, of ways of behaving on which adverbial theories are apt to focus. But what *unites* these is their shared involvement and continuity, given an adequate level of stability of response and attitude, with our wider range of valuations, the fact that the things we enjoy and the things more generally that please us are, to a great extent but not wholly, the same things as (*type-identical* with) the things towards which we strive, the objects of our manifestly world-emending intentions. To have world-word direction of fit, then, is, we may say, for a thought to involve just such valuation.⁶¹

The features of pleasure on which empirical and adverbial theories concentrate are not merely *incidental* to it. They are a part of what we mean by "enjoyment" in particular and without such behavioural and phenomenological concomitants the notion would make little sense. But they do not *exhaust* what is understood by enjoyment. It is *also* something which is found good, which is liked, and it is as concomitants to *this* that these heterogeneous things are bound together under a single concept and *only* thus. We might try to make the concomitants out to be the whole concept, allowing that they give rise to the valuation here stressed but seeing this as something extra and inessential. And in fact there is no objection to saying that things that are pleasant_β and painful_β respectively cause our pro-attitudinal responses to them. This is indeed highly probable though this causal role is perhaps enjoyed *in virtue* of other properties than their being pleasant_β or painful_β. What *is* objectionable is if it is supposed that such features bring about such responses by a *rational process*, that they give us, *by themselves*, a *reason* to like or dislike them (see further 7.3 below). The untenability of such claims was precisely the upshot of 3.6 above. The

⁶¹ I here modify the account of Humberstone, 1992- see 3.6 above.

evaluative nature of pleasure is only captured if it is taken as pleasure_α. The order of *causation* may indeed go from pleasure_β to pleasure_α but the order of *conceptual priority* does not. It is *in virtue of* the fact that things are (*usually*) pleasurable_α that they are apt for description as pleasurable_β. That things are pleasurable_β moreover *does* provide a *reason* to desire and pursue them, given and *only given* stability of response and attitude, but, *as such*, only given the expectation that they will be pleasurable_α. The *reason-furnishing, action-guiding* role of pleasure without which its very intelligibility would be undermined *depends* on some things being pleasurable_β and on the stability this presupposes. Pleasurableness_β is not, to reiterate, a detachable part of the meaning of "pleasure". But this role does not require that *any particular things* be pleasurable_β. The extension of *pleasurable_β* might, intelligibly enough, be imagined, in some world, differing massively from what it is in this. In such a world the pleasurable_β things would be the things typically found good, the typically pleasurable_α things, *in that world*. The things which are pleasurable_β *in this world* would not be pleasurable in *that*, not even pleasurable_β. So we could say that, in such a world, *different things* were pleasurable, not that pleasurable things affected us in a *different way*. The evaluative force is primary. And, to look ahead to the larger question, the similarity of the issue to that raised at 3.4 by juxtaposing O1 and O2 is striking though it will be suggested in chapter 10 below that "good" has a *rigidity* in this respect that pleasure is here alleged to lack.

Chapter 7: Found Goodness I: Some Naturalistic Fallacies

7.1. I began the last chapter with an exposition of the view of C. I. Lewis which offered a model for the development of the view of aesthetics given in chapter six to a wider picture of value. Lewis, I noted, had a problem with his characterization of what he called the *immediately* valuable and that chapter was taken up with an attempt to supply that defect. From that attempt there has emerged a picture of what I have called *finding good*, characterized as a now-for-now, me-for-me pro-attitude of a person to some concurrent experience of that person.

But Lewis's naturalism, like other similar naturalisms, has another problem, which is clearest if we consider not the sort of value he characterizes as directly found in experience but the sort of valuation which he takes to be straightforwardly judgmental—"predictions of goodness or badness which will be disclosed in experience" and "evaluations of things". In a case like the latter where it is a question of the ascription of value to "objects and other existents", "valuable" is to be understood as meaning "capable of conducing to satisfaction in some possible experience."¹

The obvious objection is that this *definiens* is without evaluative force. We may again invoke an open question-type argument. I can coherently acknowledge that X is capable of conducing to satisfaction and deny that X is good. But recall here my rejection of that argument in its classical formulation and reconstruction of it in an argument for *internalism*, a position which need not be incompatible with *naturalism*. The favoured internalism, or precisely *subjective internalism*, was characterized as relating value essentially to what motivates us, what matters to us. I noted that what is understood by mattering need not be exhausted by motivating. This is important

¹ Lewis, 1946, pp365, 414. In chapter XVII Lewis seeks to make this more precise but not in a way that is motivated by the problem raised here.

because the best known versions of internalism tend to unpack the concept of value in terms of *desires* and I did not want to restrict myself to this sort of formulation which is very plausibly wrong-headed.² Lewis's theory in particular is *not* desire-based.

The difficulty could be captured in terms of the reconstructed version of the open question argument by alleging that it is entirely possible, and not at all incoherent, that I should simply *not care in the least* that something is conducive to satisfaction, indeed that nobody should care. It likewise needs to be clarified what relation holds between the descriptive and evaluative elements of the immediately valuable. It is one thing to evaluate what is immediate and another to characterize it as so valued.

What the argument highlights is just that inferential isolation of the evaluative I stressed in chapter 1 above. Anticipating the argument of chapter 8, we may say that what is wrong with Lewis's position is not just its *externalism* but also its *descriptivism*. To be capable of conducing to satisfaction is a descriptive predicate. Imputations thereof are irreducibly assertoric.

Does this show Lewis to be straightforwardly wrong? Not quite. For there may indeed be a close connection between what is capable of conducing to satisfaction and what is valuable. What it shows is that any such connection is not going to be a purely metaethical matter: is going to obtain only in virtue of the norms of appropriateness for evaluation we happen to have, is not going to furnish the basis for any *reductive* account of value.

This is akin to the problems I diagnosed for various forms of reductive naturalism in chapter 2 above. That something is such as to be valued by an ideal responder or that it is such as to appear valuable to a normal observer is one thing, that it is good is another. Nonetheless the possibility remains open of a *non-reductive* naturalism: that a

² For the case against desire-based conceptions of value see Bond, 1983, esp chapters 2 and 3; Skorupski, 1989, pp292, 298.

view such as Lewis's while it may be a poor account of what valuable *means* may be more impressive as an account of what *is*, though not as a matter of *definition*, valuable.

The remainder of this thesis will have the following structure. First, after setting up some definitions at 7.2, I will, in the rest of the present chapter, discuss critically what I take to be a *wrong way* of establishing the primacy of the immediately valuable, of found goodness. Then, in chapter 8, I will develop the point that not only the strategy just discussed but any account of value that is similarly *descriptivist* must be rejected. Thirdly, in chapter 9, I will explain why I think it is that a certain primacy *does* attach to cases of found goodness. What seems to result is a rather modest form of hedonism. How modest will become clear in the chapter 10, where I will give reasons why any *less modest hedonism fails* as a theory of value.

7.2. It will help first to distinguish some descriptive notions that are involved with the concept of goodness.

1/ Good₀

Let us say of anything that is found good that it is *good₀*. This is a predicate that is immediately applicable only to token experiences, though, given enough stability of response, it may be also applicable at least to temporal parts of other particulars.

"Bad₀" may be similarly defined, something I will take for granted in the other sort of goodness I will here distinguish.

2/ Good₁

Let us earmark the expression "good₁" such that something is good₁ if and only if it is *such as to be, apt to be*³, found good. Here we *must* assume some stability of response as without this, we have seen, *nothing* could be good₁.⁴ "Good₁" will thus describe a disposition to be so found and not merely the achievement of being so found on some occasion.

If I taste some chocolate and enjoy the experience I am at least entitled at least to describe it as good₀. But, in fact, an English-speaking chocolate-eater saying "That is good" almost certainly means more than this. He almost certainly means at least to characterize the chocolate as good₁. This isn't surprising, the fact that we describe experiences in language that commits us to more than is strictly given by the experience being a highly general point of some notoriety.⁵

As Lewis stresses, we may also use "good" to predict that something will be or would be found good, or to surmise that it was or would have been. Such predictions

³ This choice of diction is guided by Nowell-Smith's useful demarcation of "A-words" ("A" for "aptness"):

that indicate that an object has certain properties which are apt to arouse a certain emotion or range of emotions. [1954, p64]

⁴ Not only *evaluative* concepts depend in this way on a certain stability:

If variations in the temperature of the room were sufficiently localized, it would make no sense to speak of the room temperature. [Wright, 1980, p24]

⁵ see e.g. Ayer, 1976, chapters 4 and 5.

of found goodness must presumably refer to at least a minimally settled disposition in something to be found good- i.e. to goodness₁- in order even to be possible.⁶ So again we have that dependence on stability so much stressed above.

"Good" in English has even a descriptive meaning too complex to be captured by the concepts good₀ and good₁ as I have defined them. But note that "pleasant" does not. If what is found pleasant is roughly identified, as is plausible, with what is found good, then we may speak of what is *thought* pleasant in much the way we spoke in chapter 5 of what is *thought* beautiful, that is to say we may identify what is thought pleasant with what is thought good, in the sense of being believed to be good₁ or believed or predicted to be good₀. Finding pleasant and finding good come to very nearly the same thing, as we saw in chapter 6. But what, in a wider sense, we think good, seems quite a different matter to what we think pleasant.

3/ Good₂

One point of contrast is a comparatively straightforward matter. At 5.2 above we stressed a contrast between goodness and *beauty* whereby the latter but not the former has an *instrumental* sense. In this respect pleasurable resembles beauty rather than goodness. To think something pleasurable is then to believe it would be or is found pleasant without necessarily, concurrently and oneself, so finding it. But to think something good will require this further dimension of goodness' being *pro tanto* transmissible to its potential causal antecedents. Thus if X is good and Y is conducive to X then Y is itself *pro tanto* good. Something, we may say, is good₂ if it conduces to experiences of finding things good- taking goodness₁ as a trivial case of goodness₂.

⁶ Compare Nowell-Smith's (1954, pp76-77) distinction of what he calls the "predictive" and "generalizing" elements implicit (contextually- see his p72ff) in the use of A words.

4/ Good₃

I will eat some chocolate tomorrow, say, or did so yesterday. I may now entertain thoughts about the value of that experience in two rather different ways. I may make predictions, *à la* Lewis, about whether I will find it good, that is, I may reflect on whether it will be good₀ or not. But I may also make my chocolate-eating the object of a *distance* pro-attitude. I may now have the thought that my chocolate-eating is good, valuing this at a time *other than* that of my eating it. I may value at one time something that happens at another. And this is quite distinct from thinking from such a distance that it was/will be good₀. For a hedonist, of course, there is something funny about holding something good that it is known will be or was in fact bad₀. But such things do of course happen:

"By Jove!" says John Smith. "It was magnificent!"

Of course, on the mountain he had not eaten for ten hours, had not felt his feet for three, had been soaked to the skin and then frozen solid, and for half the day had wished heartily that he were dead. But he does not think of these things. John Smith is warm again.⁷

We may then have pro-attitudes to things more distant from us than our present experiences, most notably our past and future experiences and the experiences of others. Such attitudes may be represented, albeit somewhat crudely, in a figure such as figure 1 below where the vertical lines represent the careers of distinct persons and the arrows attitudes starting from the time of the holding of the attitude and the holder and

⁷ Borthwick, 1983, p142.

ending at the time of the experience that is the object of the attitude and the person whose experience it is.

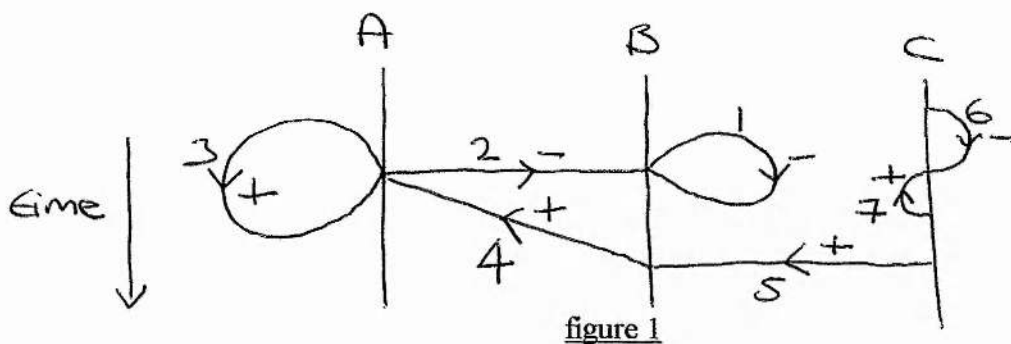


figure 1

Finding good is where the arrows loop back on their starting points- now-for-now, me-for-me attitudes. The other arrows show distance attitudes. So attitude (1) shows B pretty unhappy about the way things are with him at a certain time, this being a matter of regret for A (2), who is himself having a rather better time (3) as B in turn is later pleased to hear (4). This generous sentiment in turn pleases C (5), who has rather earlier had some experience which he anticipated with dread (6) but remembered with satisfaction (7).

Let us then initially characterize as "good₃" whatever is the object of such intra- and inter-personal distance attitudes to experiences (though not necessarily only to these) at some distance from one's own present experiences. Clearly goodness₃ will be relative both to persons and times.

Where such distance pro-attitudes are concerned, one can *believe* that a given experience is good₀, is found good (now-for-now, me-for-me), but *fail*, from a distance, to value it. Indeed, in a sense, this might also be true of a now-for-now, me-for-me attitude: imagine a vice squad detective troubled by the enjoyment he catches himself feeling in some material his profession requires him to examine. He has a negative pro-attitude to his present enjoyment. This, on the view of enjoyment here adopted, is a *second order* pro-attitude, the first-order enjoyment being a valencing of

the sensory experiences in question. With a distance attitude, on the other hand, one can cognize that an experience is enjoyed and fail, *at any level*, to value it.

With distance attitudes the more general pro-attitudes we characterize by use of the word "good" again come apart from those involved in enjoyment and in aesthetic response. Such valencing at a distance of the experiences of other times and other people, or perhaps even of things that have no connection with experience (but see chapter 9) can hardly be characterized as *finding* good. And as I've drawn the finding/thinking distinction in such a way as to stress the cognitive aspect of thinking beautiful, enjoyable or good, I shall not call it "thinking good". I will speak instead of *holding good* to describe all the kinds of pro-attitude shown in figure 1 above, distinguishing the cases of *finding* good (now-for-now, me-for-me) and *distantly holding* good.

We can distantly hold good both past and future experiences. Some such distance attitudes, typically but not invariably, future-directed will be *desires* as characterized in chapter 7, desires that the world will be (or is or was) in the valued state, where this is uncertain. Others will take the form of being pleased *at* things. Now-for-now, me-for-me pleasure is what we have hitherto been considering under the name of "enjoyment". But one can be pleased, at a distance, *at* things remote from one's present experience, elections results in South Africa and so forth. Here we are glad the world is in the valenced state where this is believed to be the case. Typically, but not invariably, such pleasure at a distance is past-directed and *de re*.

And it is not just experiences we can hold good. We can hold good objects and types of objects as when they are the secondary objects of enjoyment or desire. Or when we value them for their goodness₂, holding them good because they conduce to what is found good. Indeed we can hold such things, or any others, good *for any reason we like*. Or for none.

5/ Good₄

Among distant holdings good we want to make the same distinction as was made among findings good between good₀ and good₁. Among things we distantly hold good there are some which it will make sense to say we hold good in *virtue of something*, that they are in some way apt to be, such as to be, held good. One set of ways in which this might be so, though *not the only* such ways, is for them to be thought to be or to be likely to be good₀, good₁ or good₂. Such things, which are *such as to be held* good, we will say, are good₄, which will be taken as standing to good₃ as good₁ does to good₀.

Good₀, good₁, good₂, good₃ and good₄ are all *descriptive* terms such that anything that is held good will have at least one of them applicable to it. If I sincerely say of something that it is good, then it may be inferred that it is either good₀, good₁, good₂, good₃ or good₄. Moreover, on a certain version of *descriptivism*, more particularly of what in chapter 2 above, I called *positive subjectivism*, it may be understood that this is indeed all I am saying. But it is not. To find or hold something good is very different from thinking it to be either good₀, good₁, good₂, good₃ or good₄.

7.3. Thomas Nagel and Irwin Goldstein have both recently urged the view that pleasure and pain are *objective intrinsic values*.⁸ Indeed they have both treated the plausibility of this thesis as strong enough to make it the key counter-example to the claim that there are *no* objective intrinsic values.

They formulate this claim in importantly different ways. Nagel glosses pleasure as "sensations we immediately and strongly like" (and similarly *mutatis mutandis* for

⁸ See Nagel, 1986, 156-162, Goldstein, 1990.

pain)⁹ thus rendering what he says consistent with the attitudinal account of pain and pleasure espoused in chapter 6 above. For Goldstein, on the other hand, such an account is very much part of what is being rejected. For Goldstein, pain is intrinsically bad even where the subject of the pain *doesn't mind it in the least* and pleasure is intrinsically good even where the subject is *indifferent* to it. Clearly it is only because he doesn't hold an attitudinal theory that Goldstein finds these possibilities even intelligible. In other words, by "pain" he means the pain_β I distinguished above (6.8) and similarly pleasure_β by "pleasure". His perplexing claim, then, is that these are necessarily bad and good things respectively, that they are such even where the standard responses are *wholly missing*. Those who omit these responses have nonetheless a *reason* to make them in virtue of the intrinsic character of the experiences in question.

Given this, the claim, *contra* Mackie, that "pleasure's goodness as I describe it is not queer"¹⁰ seems frankly incredible. At any rate, far more argument would be needed than Goldstein provides to establish such a view of pleasure and pain. What his own argument amounts to is largely, as he concedes¹¹ a clearing-up of counter-examples by means of such unexceptionable but, in the context, hardly sufficient, points as that the pains of just punishment, albeit good *qua* just, must nonetheless also be bad *in some respect* to qualify as punishment at all. He does offer the following however:

Suppose a person has a lobotomy or some other brain adjustment that leaves him indifferent to *everything*. Is he beyond good and evil?

Ethicists who hinge badness upon current disfavour must answer "yes".

⁹ Nagel, 1986, p158.

¹⁰ Goldstein, 1990, p263, note 7.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p257.

Their position generates absurdities: we do nothing bad to this person, if, to show medical students a person's insides we wheel him into a classroom and dissect him; or to clear his room we slit his throat and dump him into a river; or to help non-lobotomized people appease aggressive impulses we bind him and use him as a punching bag.¹²

The trouble with this is that it's unclear how someone who was indifferent to everything would qualify as a *person* at all. Were the condition irreversible we might justifiably treat them as, to all practical intents and purposes, *dead*. Of course we do not treat even the dead as "beyond good and evil". We don't use them as punch-bags, eat them or place them at the disposal of necrophiliacs. And there is an interesting philosophical question how best to make sense of such respect for the deceased. But it need not detain us. For *whatever* the rationalization, if any, that might satisfy us, it is *nothing* to do with sparing them *pain*. Likewise, the merely unconscious or comatose may have stronger rights, for instance not to be mutilated, but this too is not because it would *hurt*. So that the thought-experiment he offers seems scarcely to advance Goldstein's case.

Consider next the more plausible Nagelian view that pain_α is intrinsically, objectively bad, pleasure_α similarly good. Bringing to bear the distinctions that have been made out, it is necessarily true that pain_α is bad₀, and that pleasure_α is good₀. This much simply follows from the way these terms were defined above. And *when there is adequate stability of response* it will also *tend to* turn out that pain_α is bad₁ and, from many perspectives, bad₃ and bad₄, and that pleasure_α is good₁ and, from any perspective, good₃ and good₄. But while there is in fact considerable stability of response in matters of pleasure and pain, it is not necessarily *complete*. So that the co-

¹² Ibid., p261.

extension of painful_α, bad₁ and bad₃ and bad₄ (from all temporal and personal perspectives) and of pleasant_α, good₁, good₃ and good₄ (again from all such perspectives) cannot be depended on and is *by no means* either a necessary truth or a condition of rationality.

The conclusion to which we are entitled- that the pleasant_α is necessarily good₀- is very weak. It means that if at some time I am enjoying øing then *at that time* my then øing is necessarily something *I then* value. This much tautologically, given my readings of the terms employed. But it is not incumbent on *others* to value it. Nor is it incumbent on myself at any *other time*. Indeed, I myself may *at the time* in question feel rather bad about my enjoyment of øing (remember the vice-squad detective above). My second order pro-attitudes may oppose their first-order objects. In fact, as defined, "good₀" is not an evaluative term.

But there is an evaluative term that is akin to it. Let's write this "good₀!". To say something is good₀! is a) to characterize it to be good₀ and b) to *express* one's holding good of such things as this that are good₀. One then *holds good* just such *findings* of goodness. "Good₀!" then is what Nowell-Smith call a "Janus-word"¹³, having both descriptive and evaluative force- in our terms having both directions of fit.¹⁴ In the terminology of chapter 1, it is a *mixed* evaluative term.

One *need* not thus consider good₀! all that one finds good. There might be findings of goodness one failed to hold good. And there *are* such cases. The pleasures of malice, for example, are the object of general disapprobation, a classic counter-

¹³ Nowell-Smith, 1954, pp89, 95-6.

¹⁴ Cf. Cooper on talified "ought"-sentences in 1981, p76. The caveat given at chapter 3, note 45 is of some pertinence should ward off a misunderstanding that is very possible at this point.

example to hedonism.¹⁵ The same applies, generalizing, and anticipating chapter 10 below, to any pleasures we might find *contemptible*.

One need not hold good all findings of goodness. And Nagel's claim is not established by the fact that, to a considerable but not total extent, one *tends* to. One *need not* and sometimes *does not* hold bad one's findings of badness or hold good one's findings of goodness. One *believes* that what is found good is good₀ and often also good₁. But that belief in no way commits one to *distantly hold* good what one acknowledges to be so found by other persons or by oneself at other times. Indeed it does not commit one to find good (second order) one's own current finding good (first order) of some experience. Distantly believing something good (good₀), I am saying, does *not*, for anything Nagel has shown, commit one to distantly holding it good.

Others are involved in a similar difficulty. Parfit, like Nagel, wants to say it is intrinsically irrational to desire pain.¹⁶ And E. J. Bond, in his *Reason and Value*, constructs an elaborate theory of value that depends crucially on supposing distance attitudes thus responsible to now-for-now attitudes. Like Lewis, Bond has a particular interest in the sort of cases I have characterized as *finding good*, where value is, as he sees it, *sampled* or *discovered* in experience.¹⁷ Like Nagel and Goldstein, moreover, he takes pleasure to be inherently good and pain inherently bad¹⁸, the view I have just given reasons for rejecting. He claims that distance-attitudes must conform to the immediate findings of value on which he concentrates. What is good₀ at t₁ must, if

¹⁵ See e.g. Broad, 1930, pp233-4.

¹⁶ See Parfit, 1984, section 46.

¹⁷ Bond, 1983, pp35-6, 39, 43-4, 46-7, 61-2, 72-3, 86-7, 93-5, 97-8, 120.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp98, 102-3, 127-8.

known to be such, be good₃ at t₂. Recognition that something has value- is such as to be found good- simply *creates* or *generates* a desire for it¹⁹:

If the agent has a *present* desire for his future well-being, that is *because* reflection reveals it to him as a value worth pursuing. The reason which is a reason because it relates to the agent's future well-being is a reason not because it relates to the agent's present desires...but because of its relation to what the agent *intellectually grasps* as a value for him. And this cognition *generates* the relevant desire.²⁰

It is not the case that the latter desire is generated *via* some antecedent desire of the agent's for his future well-being. Nothing of the sort is necessary. The cognition is supposed to generate the desire without any such assistance, a supposition whereby Bond depends on the second of the two anti-Humean tactics I discussed and gave reasons for rejecting at 3.6 above.

For Bond then, as for Lewis, Nagel, Hare²¹ and others, there is something especially fundamental about now-for-now me-for-me desires. Cases like this:

¹⁹ Ibid., pp14-5, 19, 36, 44, 59-61, 66-7, 72-3, 94.

²⁰ Ibid., p67.

²¹ For Hare see his 1981, pp103-106.

→ time



figure 2

are possible. But they are possible only if the person concerned is *ignorant* of the fact that what he is averse to will be found good. Once such ignorance is removed, something has to give and we get:

→ time



figure 3

That is, it is the distance attitude that gives way. What we *don't* end up with after the dispelling of ignorance is:

→ time



figure 4

where the enjoyment is turned to its opposite on account of its conflict with what was antecedently desired. This is because it is only in the now-for-now case that value is *discovered* and because the cognition of such value generates the sort of conformity shown in figure 3.

The weakness of Bond's case I take to have been already shown in the relevant passages of 3.6 above and in the foregoing discussion of Nagel. But the similarity between his view and Lewis's is significant. Both impute a similarly fundamental place to finding good, to attitudes which are me-for-me and now-for-now. In chapter 9 we will see how some such imputation might be better motivated.

7.4. The preceding argument is in harmony with what I say elsewhere about the untenability of various forms of reductive naturalism, externalism and descriptivism. But we may now recall how it was argued in chapter 3 that there is ultimately *only* our approbation and disapprobation. What value comes down to is a matter of our having pro-attitudes, of the fact that we value things and there is no standpoint that transcends our values in terms of which they may be judged. There are things that I enjoy. I find them good. Yes, we say, in our suspicion of such naturalism, but *are* they good? And yet the denial of an external, transcendent standpoint prevents us from taking such a question *too far* (though how surprisingly far we *can* take it will concern us further in chapter 10). If I was, *per impossibile*, the globally indifferent creature imagined by Goldstein, there would be no sense in putting myself questions about what was good. Observing humanity from Mars, I might notice that certain things were good₀, good₁, etc. but not be moved thereby to consider them good. As Brand Blandshard puts it:

a man incapable of any glow of admiration or sympathy, or any warmth of moral indignation, who viewed the human scene as if it were nothing but a set of elaborate intersections of circles and triangles, would remain blind to what moral judgements are about.²²

²² Blanshard, 1961, p79.

But I am *not* like this. Rather I am like Hare's existentialist hero *manqué* (3.5 above) who found himself incapable of defection from the game of evaluation in virtue of the stubborn fact that he cared a lot about all kinds of things. That, on the one hand something is held good (be it so found or distantly so held) by someone at some time does not yield the conclusion that it *is* good. But, on the other hand, *I* am someone at some time, and what I now hold good necessarily, *for me, now, is* good.

What was insisted upon in chapter 3, what I claimed was the upshot of what could be salvaged from the open question argument was internalism- an understanding of value that related it essentially to what we care about, to what motivates us. But what was exposed there as unsatisfactory, when the open question argument had been criticized and revised, was not *naturalism* but *externalism* (see especially 3.5 above). Externalism may come in numerous varieties. But one that is of particular interest is the descriptivist conception of value held by an observer of the values prevalent in a given society to whom that society and its values are alien. That person can well ask of what passes for good in that society whether it really is, insofar as he may well question whether he should share their evaluations. But he cannot ask that if he is wondering if it is *really* good in some platonistic, subject-independent sense. For there is no such sense.

When he is a *participant* in the society things are rather different. As an outsider he can coherently recognize that Tom, Dick and Harry all value X and not himself hold X good. As an insider he cannot of course recognize that Tom, Dick, Harry *and himself* all value X and not himself value X. In the present tense and the first person the thought

I (wholeheartedly) find X good and X is not (*pro tanto*) good.

though not formally self-contradictory is not a coherent or possible one. Though this is *not* to say one may not *doubt* one's evaluations, that there is no room for acknowledging the possibility of *error*. This no more follows from these considerations than Moore's paradox rules out someone's thinking

I believe that P but possibly P is false.

The analogous

I find X good though X may be bad

is possible if such talk of error is possible in this context at all. The present point is that, for a given person at a given time, reflections about what is good only make sense when they connect at some point with the their subjective pro-attitudinal set (to adapt a phrase of Williams) at that time.²³ So that in asking of the things the naturalist wants us to value, "But *are* they indeed good?" I can only be requesting that such a connection be made out.

7.5. It is a merit of countless naturalistic theories that they relate value very clearly to what motivates us, to what we care about- Epicurus, Hume, Bentham, Mill, Sidgwick, Schlick, Blanshard, Hare, Williams, Brandt, Sprigge, Railton, Richard Taylor, Harsanyi, David Lewis, among numerous others, all keep C.I. Lewis company here. The over-simplification of which the latter Lewis, again among others, seems guilty is that he fails to recognize that I can only understand goodness in this naturalist way when I speak from *within* this pattern of concern. A Martian observer of humanity

²³ See "Internal and External Reasons" in his 1981.

might acknowledge the correctness, insofar as it goes of Lewis reading of "good" as what is found good or tends to promote such finding. But from an external perspective we can thus arrive at an understanding of good in at best an "inverted commas sense".

Luckily, as I have been stressing, we do not occupy such an external perspective. We find ourselves in the thick of our own evaluative activities. And typically, if we are happy and well-integrated souls, we find ourselves largely identifying with these activities well beyond the horizon of our own ephemeral and personal concerns.²⁴ One tends to want one's experiences and those of others to be found good at the time, and distantly held good at others (and by others), to want one's life as a whole, and those of others, to be found good overall. And when such wants find themselves satisfied, one tends to hold it good that they are.

It was argued in the last chapter that the sort of naturalism under consideration needs to assume a certain *stability of response and attitude* in order to get off the ground. The present contention is that this stability must involve a certain *wholeheartedness* about one's pro-attitudes, a certain *identification* with the attitudes of others *and* that this identification must characterize not only the community whose values the theorist is theorizing about (typically his own) but also the *theorist himself*. The species of naturalism under consideration is involved in a substantial evaluative claim and is not simply engaged in matters of metaethics. We might thus distinguish the descriptive and external good₀, good₁, good₂, good₃ and good₄ from good₀!, good₁!, good₂!, good₃! and good₄! as I will term them. In saying that something is good₀!, I not only, as we have already seen, *say that* it is found good, but *identify* with whoever so finds it by valuing it myself. In saying something is good₁!, I not only *say*

²⁴ In stressing the importance of such identification and wholeheartedness I am drawing on Frankfurt, 1971 and 1987.

that it is apt to arouse enjoyment but also *show that I* myself value it. And likewise good₂! and good₄! are the evaluatively charged counter-parts of good₂ and good₄.²⁵

The thought entertained by the earlier emotivists may be expressed as the claim that "goodness" means what is approved of. This is ambiguous. If it is claimed that "goodness" means what is approved of in a purely descriptive sense then that is a meta-ethical falsehood. In calling something good I do not merely *assert* that it is approved but *express* approval of it. In saying that something is good₀!, good₁! *aut cetera*, I indeed identify with whoever finds it good, but I am again not *asserting that* I so identify. The problem is not just with externalism as chapter 3 argued. it is also with *descriptivism*. Much argument relevant to this claim has come above but there is more to be said and the next chapter will be concerned to say it.

²⁵ Compare the transition made in Nowell-Smith's analysis from A-words to G-words ("G" for "gerundive"):

that imply not merely that the relevant person is likely to have a certain reaction but that he ought to have it. [1954, p132]

Chapter 8: Expressivism

8.1. In chapter four an open question-type argument was applied to externalist moral theory. Such arguments were read as effectively pointing up the failure of some proposed *analysans* fully to do justice to some philosophical *analysandum*. In particular, it was claimed, the prescriptivity of value cannot be adequately accommodated on an externalist theory. The objections made to reductive naturalism in chapter 2 may well be read as making a similar point. I now want to complete my critique of evaluative realism by arguing that any understanding of evaluative language that reads it in a *purely descriptive* way is likewise untenable, that evaluative utterances are best read as *expressing* states of mind that are not, or not wholly, *cognitive*, that are not *beliefs*. At 1.5 I have already tried to show how objections to non-cognitivism based on the possibilities of embedding evaluative sentences in indirect contexts and exhibiting logical relations between them are not fatal. At 3.6 I argued that evaluations are world-word in *direction of fit*, a claim that contradicts a descriptive reading of them. And I have generally in chapters 2 and 3 sought to undermine the credibility of various forms of platonism and reductive naturalism whose collective exclusion seems to leave the descriptive naturalist with very little ground to occupy. In arguing for an expressivist understanding of value in the present chapter I am then seeking to finish a job that is already well in hand. Here I shall focus mainly on two major objections to expressivism prominent in recent literature. The first appeals to the assertoric surface syntax of evaluative utterance. The second is that expressivism cannot give an adequate account of our more specific evaluative language, of what I have called *mixed evaluations*.

8.2. I urged in chapters 3 and 7 that where value is concerned there is ultimately only our approbation and disapprobation, our having of pro-attitudes, our valuing things

and that there is no standpoint external to such attitudes from which to judge them. Saying this much need not however rule out all forms of descriptivism about goodness. In particular it does not rule out forms of positive subjectivism of the sort described at the close of 7.2 where in saying something is good, I am in effect *saying that* it is valued, or apt to be valued, by me or by others sufficiently like me. In chapter 2 I critically considered such views but let us look more closely at one of the difficulties. Clearly there is a very close connection between the *analysandum* "X is good" and such an *analysans*. For me to say that X is good and deny the truth of the *analysans* would strongly indicate a failure to grasp the usual meaning of the word. But in fact the *analysantes* fail to capture what the *analysandum* conveys. To invoke Moore's paradox again, "X is good" is related to "I value X" and "X is valued (by me)" as "P is true" is to "I believe P" or "P is believed (by me)". In saying "P is true" one *expresses* a belief that P, one does not *say that* one has it.¹ Likewise saying "X is good", one *expresses* but does not explicitly *profess* some evaluative attitude. And, as in the case of belief, the temptation to identify profession and expression vanishes when we move away from first-person present-tense thoughts. There is nothing logically odd about "P is true but you don't believe it" or "I didn't formerly value X but X is good".

Consider what at 1.5 above I called *pure evaluations*. These, it will be recalled simply had the form

(1) H!(P)

serving to express a positive pro-attitude to some proposition P. Such boo-hurrah notation, following Blackburn, has the merit of lacking *even the surface syntax* of assertion and hence fails even as a candidate for what Crispin Wright terms "minimal

¹ Cf. Gibbard, 1990, p84.

truth". Its deployment is subject to a certain amount of logical discipline as was seen at 1.5 but no more, we also saw, than might apply equally, for example, to *imperatives*. There are locutions in natural languages of which the same might be said, such as constructions involving the English "boo" and "hurrah". But such locutions are rather marginal partly because, I suspect, pure evaluation, strictly speaking, isn't something we do much of. *Most* evaluations are mixed. But one way we might express a pure evaluation that had a nominal rather than a propositional object (and a propositional object can be converted to a nominal object by emending the verb to a participle construction) is as follows:

(2) X is good.

And this *does* have the surface syntax of assertion. But it is still by no means clear that that's what it is.

Again take an analogy with imperatives. In English, these have, typically, the general form:

(3) \emptyset !

which, more or less uncontroversially², doesn't mean at all the same as:

(4) \emptyset ing is now commanded by me.

or as

² Though such reductionist views of imperatives have been espoused. References and criticisms may be found in Hamblin, 1987, chapter 3.

(5) I command you to \emptyset .

Of course, (4) and (5) *may* be used to convey an imperative but the mere assertion of what they assert falls short of an issue of the imperative in question. For

(6) \emptyset ing is now commanded by Lenman

said by *someone else* asserts everything that is asserted by me in saying (4) or (5) but issues *no imperative at all*.³ It seems impossible, in English, to find an indicative sentence that is anything like equivalent to an imperative such as (3).

But this is surely just a *contingent* fact about English. Nothing stops us from *stipulating* a new locution of the form:

(7) \emptyset ing is !!.

which we will say means precisely the same as does (3). (7) unlike (3) *does* have the surface syntax of an assertion. It will also be subject to a considerable amount of logical discipline, this being simply parasitic on the logical discipline appropriate to imperatives as more ordinarily expressed. Indeed, given the observations about imperative logic at 1.5 above, nothing seems to prevent our embedding expressions of this form in the antecedents of conditionals that may serve as premises in arguments with the form of *modus ponens*. And indeed there would be a clear but deflationary sense in which such expressions are intelligibly characterized as true or false. But such

³ Though of course it *might* be put to this use, for instance if said by a loyal subordinate of mine to a subordinate of us both.

expressions are *not assertions*. For they are, by stipulation, identical in meaning to expressions of form (3) and these are *certainly* not assertions.

It seems clear that "is !!" is not a descriptive predicate. It is certainly true that the descriptive predicate "is now commanded by me" is true of whatever is !! and vice versa. But we've seen that these predicates are not equivalent. If they entail each other, it is only in the pragmatic sense in which

I believe that P

and

P

entail each other. For a second party (or myself at another time) might acknowledge the truth of (4), (5) and (6) and yet *not* endorse the imperative utterances (3) and (7).

8.3. This leads us to a second point that seems to threaten the admittedly unambitious form of cognitivism about expressions like (2) that seems to arise from a minimalist view of truth such as Wright's discussed in chapter 1 above. For one of the conditions for assertion conceded even for a minimalist picture is characterized as follows:

It is a basic feature of assertion that it transmits justification; specifically if another makes an assertion which I am entitled to regard as justified in her situation, and if I have no other information bearing on the proposition asserted, then I acquire justification for that proposition.

This condition of transmissibility plausibly fails for (7) and seems to fail also for, at any rate, purely evaluative utterance. For it seems that I may perfectly legitimately say something is good while you may with equal legitimacy both recognize that legitimacy of my utterance and differ from it.

Wright, considering this point apropos of comic discourse, making much of the fact that such discourse is disciplined by norms of appropriateness guaranteed by a background of "community of comic response". This is true but it doesn't seem to suffice for the minimal truth-aptness of such a discourse, in any sense whereby such aptness is construed, as it is by Wright,⁴ as *incompatible* with an expressivist understanding of a discourse that exemplifies it. After all, the issual of *imperatives* is a practice governed by norms of appropriateness operating against a background of community *vis à vis* our dispositions to such issuals. To the extent that this is so any such issual is likely to involve the issuer in an implicit commitment to the claim that the norms in question are satisfied. But of course this does not mean that in issuing an imperative one is to be understood as simply *saying that* they are satisfied. The issual is warranted if and only if they are but the issuer is doing something different from claiming such warrant. In the case of comedy Wright recognizes this:

this presupposition of community does not involve that claims about comedy are answerable to a community of response as part of their content. The presupposition enters not at the level of a correctness condition for the objectified claims but at the level of the constitution of the norm...at whose satisfaction comic discourse aims at an optimum.⁵

⁴ Wright, 1992, pp10-11, 35-37.

⁵ Ibid., p105.

In uttering (7) I do not describe *ø*ing either as commanded or as satisfying the norms of appropriateness for commands. I simply command its performance. What I say *is* minimally truth-apt insofar as it "has all the overt syntactic trappings of assertoric content".⁶ It is *not* however minimally truth apt insofar as that is taken to be incompatible with expressivism. In a language in which the invented idiom embodied in (7) existed there might be a school of descriptivists about !!ness, alleging that to be !! was to be commanded or to satisfy the norms of appropriateness for commands or to possess some strange non-natural property and a school of expressivists saying that in spite of its assertoric surface syntax, imputations of !!ness served simply to express imperatives; that no descriptive paraphrase would do justice to the import of sentences like (7) but that imperative paraphrases might do so. The former would be mistaken, the latter correct.

8.4. But, it might be objected, isn't minimal truth-aptness *just* a matter of having the surface syntax of an assertion and being thereby, in a weak sense, apt for imputations of truth and falsity and that the expressivist's supposition that assertoric content is a "potentially covert" characteristic of a discourse is empty. Of the *surface* feature of assertoric content, this much is plausibly correct and indeed is in the spirit of the concessions to cognitivism of Stevenson, Blackburn and others cited at 1.2 above. But Wright wishes also, as I noted there, to insist that the surface syntax of assertion is *all there is to the matter*, and that expressivism about e.g. values is thus forlorn because there is no "deeper" notion of assertoric content for the expressivist to appeal to.

I think this is wrong. To see this look at what happens when we try to *reverse the direction* of the sort of stipulative manoeuvre that took us from (3) to (7). Let's stipulate that the locution

⁶ Ibid., p29.

(8) Let "X is square" be AA.

mean exactly the same as

(9) X is square.

(9) has the surface syntax of an assertion, (8) of an imperative. But clearly (8) is *not* an imperative. Nothing is commanded by (8). Thus it no more expresses the command "Believe that X is square than (9) does."⁷ (8) is an assertion just as (9) is. Indeed (8) is truth-apt. And it is logically (albeit not grammatically) perfectly apt for conditionalization, negation, embedding within propositional attitudes and so on.⁸ (8) is not an imperative. It is an assertion. It has the surface syntax of an imperative but is not; is, one might say, *pseudo-imperative*.

I was attempting a reversal of my earlier manoeuvre, beginning with an assertion and stipulating an imperative locution to be equivalent to that assertion. But just because the assertion *was* so equivalent the reverse manoeuvre failed to yield a genuine imperative. But though this was impossible with (9) it is not impossible with *all* assertions. In particular it is not impossible with (7). (7) is, by stipulation, equivalent to a genuinely imperative sentence, namely (3). While (9) is not seemingly equivalent to any sentence that is not an assertion. So that when assertoric content is conceived minimally, as Wright proposes, there are, it seems, going to be assertions and assertions. Some, like (9), will be *irreducibly assertoric*. Others, like (7), will not. And, I would suggest, this enables the expressivist to point up a "well-conceived

⁷ *Pace* Russell- see Hamblin 1987, chapter 3.

⁸ Wright, 1992, p129.

deeper notion of assertoric content"⁹ than minimal truth-aptness supplies. Pure evaluations, then, when expressed in the form of assertions, are nonetheless, like (7), not irreducibly assertoric.

The required deep notion of assertion is thus to be identified with the proposed notion of irreducible assertion. If the question is then raised of what accounts for the status in this respect of some syntactically assertoric sentence, the best notion to which to appeal seems to be that already in place from chapter 3, namely the notion of *direction of fit*. So that, it may be suggested, what makes (9) irreducibly assertoric is just its word-world direction of fit, while what makes (7) reducibly assertoric is its world-word direction of fit. This explains the fruitfulness of using an analogy with imperatives to bring out the non-irreducibly assertoric status of evaluations. For imperatives resemble evaluations precisely in this contrast with *irreducible assertions*. They *share* a direction of fit. To note this is not however to identify the two or overstate the similarity. After all imperatives also share a direction of fit with, but are by no means the same as, optatives.¹⁰ I take the relation between evaluations and imperatives to a matter of some subtlety and do not propose to examine it here.

It is worth noting here that if we do characterize irreducibly assertoric sentences as those whose direction of fit is world-word, this characterization seems to dovetail rather well with Dummett's of "assertions proper" (cited at 1.4 above) given that "P" is taken as giving the *sense* of both "!P" and "H!(P)". So we might cautiously but

⁹ Ibid., p36.

¹⁰ It is likely that were analytic philosophy written in a language, like classical Greek, with an optative mood, we would hear at least as much about it in discussions of the logic of evaluative discourse as about the imperative. And it is entertaining to speculate what the literature on assertion, expression and prescription would have looked like if our language, like classical Chinese, had *no grammatical moods at all*.

plausibly identify my own reducibly assertoric sentences with Dummett's quasi-assertions.

8.5. The inferential isolation of evaluations from beliefs about the wider natural order discussed at 1.4 above perhaps makes rather greater sense now that evaluations are read as expressing thoughts whose direction of fit is, at least in part, world-word and which are hence not irreducibly assertoric in content. For pure evaluations, at any rate, would never seem to be entailed by purely descriptive premises. They may be of course when the premises are *strengthened* by including norms that govern the appropriateness of evaluations. But as such norms are *themselves* evaluations this does not lessen the *sui generis*, inferentially isolated character of the evaluative. There is no need to explain this *sui generis* character in the way Wright, I think rightly, outlaws by appeal to a realm of *sui generis* states of affairs. Rather it may be explained in the way he, I think wrongly, outlaws, by adopting an *expressive* understanding of evaluation.

Expressivism is subject to the objection that it can seem to represent evaluative disagreement as nothing but the clash of arbitrary and divergent wills. In a sense this is right. Where you have nothing but a clash of arbitrary and wholly divergent wills you have nothing but a clash of arbitrary and wholly divergent wills, in which case such a common caricature of a simple moral subjectivism would indeed be the best theory. It isn't the best theory because we do *not* have this. Our wills just do not diverge *that much*. There is enough stability of response and attitude to allow the possibility of, at least *ad hominem*, rational means to the resolution of such evaluative disagreement as stands out against this background of agreement. There is then at least a possibility of convergence (Wiggins' second mark of truth it will be recalled) in matters of evaluation, providing only that enough convergence is *already* in place. I'll be saying more about this in my last chapter.

How much convergence may be hoped for is clearly a function of how much stability of response and attitude there is. That is to say, of how *strong* is the discipline imposed upon evaluation by the norms of appropriateness we have. This is only in part a metaethical matter, so that if points about convergence are taken as relevant to the issues of realism and objectivity we may expect a metaethical input from our thinking about what are often considered *first-order* evaluative questions.

When our norms of appropriateness are very strong and widely shared, enough so not merely to *constrain* but to *determine* what we may value, then we will not only have full *convergence*. We will also have full *transmissibility*. This gives us a lot of *objectivity* but it doesn't give us *descriptivism*. For again we may note that a similar point can be made, *mutatis mutandis*, for imperatives.¹¹ If the norms that govern imperatives were tight enough the same form of objectivity would be enjoyed by *them*. But a descriptive reading of them would still fail. They would still be at best *reducibly* assertoric.

With a descriptive utterance, P, one doesn't just say *that* the assertions conditions of P obtain. One also says *that* P. At least this is true if one is not a Dummettian anti-realist about such descriptive utterances.

With expression too, however, it is a error to read one as saying *that* one's utterance is warranted. But here it is a natural error if only because one is saying *that* nothing else. But it is still an error.

¹¹ A disanalogy, harmless for my purposes, is the fact that a third party might, in a sense, endorse an imperative but not be in a position to issue it for themselves. Thus a private might be *in agreement* with the command of a field marshal to a general. This point qualifies any transmissability attaching to imperatives but seems irrelevant to pure evaluations.

(10) The evaluation "H!(P)" is warranted

and

(11) The imperative "ø!" is warranted.

and not equivalent to and do not entail (1) and (3) respectively, even though they may successfully mandate (1) and (3) respectively when *conjoined* with the norms of evaluation or command to which they allude.¹² Indeed the latter can do this on their own without (10) or (11)'s help.

Evaluations, like imperatives, may enjoy a form of objectivity but this objectivity does *not* transcend the norms that warrant them. Indeed, if these norms are strong enough, evaluations will enjoy (subject to a qualification given at 8.8 below) *all* of Wiggins' marks of truth and *all* of Dummett's for quasi-assertions. The truth aptness thus conferred on them fails however to transcend the warranting norms. *In this sense* anti-realism *about evaluation* is correct.

The point may be developed by considering again Wright's argument against deflationism described at 1.2 above *vis à vis* evaluations and imperatives. Wright acknowledges that the argument will not work if we grant the biconditional:

(12) "P" is T if and only if "P" is warrantably assertible.

For that would rule out the sort of neutrality his argument invokes. He concludes:

¹² I write "mandate" rather than "entail" in the interests of my avowed neutrality about the status of the N-principle (and an analogous principle for commands stated at 1.5 above.

the DS [deflationary schema], coupled with the principle that every statement has a negation, enforces a denial of the biconditional (iv) [i.e. my (12)] for all substituends for "P" allowing of neutral states of information.¹³

This is perhaps a little fast as it is compatible with (12) for there to be states of information where we are neutral *vis à vis* whether a given assertion is *warranted*. Or at least this is true unless warrant is strongly relativized to the states of information and epistemic competency of particular subjects at particular times, a relativization that would appear to undermine the objectivity- (and hence contentfulness-) securing role Wright conceives norms of warrant as providing.¹⁴

Rather than entangle ourselves in this complex point however, we may note that the issue of neutral states of information has a rather different shape when we are concerned with quasi-assertions than when we are concerned with irreducibly assertoric utterances. If our norms of warrant are strong enough, as noted above, they may in fact leave no space for such neutrality, for they may fully determine which quasi-assertions we are warranted in making. So much is also true for the norms governing irreducible assertions and Wright's argument depends on supposing that in fact it is false.

But it's falsity comes to something different in the case of quasi-assertions than in the case of assertions. For where our norms of evaluation, say, or command, leave it *open* what to say, then, in effect you can *say what you like*. For over and above satisfying such norms there is nothing for the *rightness* of what you say to come to.

¹³ Wright, 1992, p21.

¹⁴ See *ibid.*, p17.

For, with quasi-assertions, once we know all the facts about what is warranted we know *all* the relevant facts and our residual ignorance is not a *factual* matter. But where norms of irreducible assertion are concerned, by saying what you like in such circumstances, you still risk being *wrong* in a way that is not possible with mere quasi-assertions. Where the norms *underdetermine* whether you irreducibly assert P, you're in a position of *not knowing* whether P. Where they underdetermine whether you quasi-assert P, you're in a position of not having *decided* whether P.

To put it another way, irreducible assertions exert *cognitive command*. Quasi-assertions do not. I have already, at 1.4 above, argued that the point about cognitive command is, in effect, a sophisticated restatement of old and familiar Humean points about "is", "ought" and the fact-value distinction. Because there is this extra *slack* in the case of quasi-assertions, it is to be expected that the condition of *transmissibility* cited above will be weakened, that there will be *just as much* transmissibility as there is norm-dependent stability and objectivity and no more.

8.6. Should we accept the deflationary schema when we are concerned with quasi-assertions? And, in particular, with evaluations? Well, two points may be made.

1/ Consider evaluative quasi-assertions. By analogy with (7) let's stipulate that

(13) "P" is H!!

be equivalent in meaning to (1) above (i.e. to "H!(P)"). Substituting an evaluative quasi-assertion into the disquotational schema yields:

(14) "'P" is H!!" is T if and only if "P" is H!!.

This is a puzzling looking statement. For the left hand side seems to be an irreducibly assertoric statement, which the right hand side is not. Hence any equivalence appears problematic. But this isn't obviously right. For if we follow Blackburn in identifying an imputation of truth to a quasi-assertion as expressing concurrence in it, then the *left hand side* is going to be just as reducibly assertoric as the *right hand side*. This perhaps leaves the predicate "is T" looking rather strange. For it now looks as if this is a descriptive predicate if and only if it is predicated of a descriptive sentence. Predicated of "øing is !!", it is no more a descriptive predicate than is "is !!". But this is exactly what Davidson's observation quoted at 1.2 above would lead us to expect.

What is special to evaluative words is simply not touched; the mystery is transferred from the word "good" in the object language to its translation in the metalanguage.

2/ Should we then accept:

(15) "P" is T if and only if P.

for an evaluative P? Well, there is no problem either with this or with the related (12) where P is straightforwardly mandated by the norms I endorse. There *is* a problem in cases where P is not so mandated and this possibility seems just to be that of neutrality already considered. Which seems to be the end of the matter.

It isn't. For P is an evaluative utterance. And if I sincerely assert it, it is an evaluative utterance I endorse. So a comprehensive characterization of the norms I endorse will, in that case, *include* P. And if the class of norms I endorse is taken in this *inclusive* sense, then neither (15) nor (12) will fail in the case of evaluations and

deflationism will *not* inflate. The possibility of neutrality only arises when the norms to which P is answerable do not themselves include P. This is legitimate with quasi assertions for, if neutrality is not ruled out *vis à vis* P by the norms I endorse, excluding P itself, there is *nothing more* for "P is T" to amount to, for me, than my endorsement of P.

This is not the case with irreducible assertions. My endorsement of some such assertion about which neutrality is likewise a possibility can be mistaken in a way that is not available for a quasi-assertion. It may fail to be true in a substantive sense of "truth" that is not so available. And this possibility does not arise with (12) and (15) where quasi-assertions are concerned. For if by "is T" is intended this *substantive* sense of "truth", then an evaluative P can *never* be T. In *this* sense of truth, there are no evaluative truths. But this is not the *only* sense. We certainly, in English, speak of evaluation as being truth-apt. And, given, the *objectivity* that does attach to evaluation in virtue of its norm-governed character it is useful and proper so to speak. But we may consistently keep in mind that there is a more substantial sense of truth than this, the sense that attaches only to the irreducibly assertoric. But the harmless and deflationary Stevenson/Blackburn sense of "truth" attaches to *any* discourse enjoying such objectivity as is consequent upon a degree of norm governance.

8.7. (7) and (13) are reducible to non-assertoric sentences *without remainder*. But things need not always be so simple. Imagine that a culture has norms of appropriateness for imperatives and that the predicates "is N1", "is N2", "is N3", etc. are used for stating, of actions, that they satisfy the various norms in question. In the language spoken by members of this culture at least two kinds of things might get themselves said:

1/ pure imperatives or assertions reducible without remainder thereto such as "øing is !!".

2/ irreducible assertions, quite lacking in imperative content, of the form "øing is N_n ".

But where utterances of type 1/ are generally governed by the norms alluded to in utterances of type 2/ and utterances of type 2/ are generally forthcoming from persons who subscribe to those same norms, the purity involved is unlikely to be very stable. Utterances of type 1/ will acquire descriptive force, utterances of type 2/ imperative force. This is what I had in mind above in suggesting that pure evaluation wasn't something we went in for very much.

This is analogous to the situation where mixed evaluations are concerned. These have, in Harean language, both descriptive and evaluative meaning. At a descriptive level they assert of some action (say) that it satisfies a certain norm or norms. At an evaluative level that norm and hence that action is positively held, at least *pro tanto*, good. What is said at an *evaluative* level is not irreducibly assertoric, while the *descriptive ingredient* of what is said is.

To dramatize the point, imagine a community, call it "Atlantis" in whose language there are only two evaluative words, "boo" and "hurrah", so that all pro-attitudes, all expressions of thoughts whose direction of fit is world-word, are captured without recourse to the indicative mood. Atlantan moral realists are plausibly thin on the ground, while Atlantan admirers of Mackie congratulate themselves and their fellows on their wholesale avoidance of the objectifying "error" that writer diagnosed in our own evaluative thought and language.

The point to note is that this situation is likely to be stable *only if nothing else is*. For suppose Atlantan habits of approval and disapproval, of liking and disliking, possess a reasonable degree of stability. To extent that this is true then Atlantan

evaluations are likely to come to be disciplined by norms of appropriateness just as our own are. This is likely to have two consequences. Firstly, that a whole range of previously descriptive concepts start to take on additional evaluative force: if "D" is an Atlantian word denoting some purely descriptive property of which Atlantians have a settled tendency to approve, the statement that X is D is likely to become infected with that same approval. Suppose, for instance, the Atlantians have a strong tendency to dislike habitual and unhesitant tellers of falsehoods. Given this tendency, their word for such people, like "liar" in English will come to bear a pejorative tone. Secondly in so far as evaluative utterances in the simple "boo"/"hurrah" locution are governed by such norms anyone making one will thereby often be taken to convey that the utterance in question is warranted by the norms in question. So where before the language comprised only pure irreducible assertions and pure evaluations, it now comprises a variety of mixed evaluations with a surface syntax that is sometimes assertoric, sometimes not. But it is hard to imagine that any kind of evaluative *realism* where that is understood in some way that make it a substantive metaphysical position would possibly be rendered more plausible as an account of Atlantian evaluative thought as a result of such a change. Someone uttering a mixed evaluation is saying of some norm (specified or otherwise) that it mandates (or licenses) some evaluation. But they are not *just* saying that. They are also implicitly avowing their own endorsement of that norm (and hence at least *pro tanto*) of that evaluation. But they are not just doing *that* either. Whatever else they may be doing, they are *expressing* their endorsement of the norm and that is not the same as simply *professing* it.

The arrival in the Atlantian language of "Janus-words" with double direction of fit might seem to yield candidates for the status of just those "besires" about which, in chapter 3 I expressed some scepticism. But not obviously. The thought expressed by whatever is the Atlantian for "Fred is a liar" might be supposed of that complex sort a relatively simple form of expressivism might read as a conjunction of the descriptive

thought "Fred is a falsehood-teller" and the *distinct* evaluative thought "Boo to Fred's being a falsehood-teller!".

But this form of expressivism may plausibly seem *too* simple when we come to consider what has become a classic difficulty for it.¹⁵ This is that the way such descriptive concepts are applied may well not be expected to remain unchanged after their evaluative charging. Once so charged, for instance, the old Atlantan word for "falsehood-teller" might come to be applied only reluctantly or in ironic oxymoron to special cases of the *splendide mendax*. Such subtle shifts in the extension of a concept in virtue of its evaluative charge clearly threaten the simple analysis.

Since this point is usually developed by means of resources taken from Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, it is as well to remind ourselves here of a basic point of the same provenance, viz. the essentially social character of language. This reminder will allow us quickly to rule out the sort of amendment of a simple analysis of some Atlantan's use of the Atlantan for "Fred is a liar" that reads it as saying something like "Fred is the sort of falsehood-telling person that *I* disapprove of and boo to that" where "sort of" is only to be unpacked by reference to an inside understanding of the speaker's evaluative idiolect.

We may prefer some such reading as "Fred is the sort of falsehood-telling person we Atlantans disapprove of and boo to that". Now certainly only someone who understands Atlantan and is hence to some extent cognizant of the patterns of approval and disapproval prevalent among Atlantans can be in a position to understand adequately just how the extension of the Atlantan for "liar" is fixed and hence how "sort of" should be unpacked. But it remains the case that Fred's falling or failing to fall within that extension is plausibly a *factual* matter in the sense that the claim that he does so, or fails to, has purely word-world direction of fit and can quite plausibly be

¹⁵ See e.g. McDowell, 1981, Williams, 1985, chapter 8.

understood and made by, say, the sort of alienated Atlantan who perhaps is rather fond of liars.¹⁶ The additional component of the complex thought expressed by the non-alienated Atlantan who calls Fred a liar may then plausibly be seen as purely evaluative, again in the sense of having world-word direction of fit.

8.8. Finally I will return briefly to a matter touched on already at 1.4 above. Wiggins' third mark of truth demanded not just convergence on a given candidate for truth, P, but also the implication of P itself in the *explanation* of that convergence. When this is true, the explanation of will be of the kind Wiggins has, in a more recent publication, called *vindictory*.¹⁷ Gilbert Harman has argued that the unavailability of such explanation in the case of moral beliefs is a powerful consideration in favour of non-cognitivism.¹⁸ His critics, most notably Nicholas Sturgeon¹⁹, have opposed this with the suggestion that moral facts can and do feature in explanation in familiar and straightforward ways. I think Hitler was depraved because Hitler was depraved. There was a revolution because social conditions were unjust. And so on.

On the expressivist view I am defending, my sincere utterance that Hitler's actions were bad is not stating a fact about those actions. Rather I am expressing the fact that I hold them bad. Given that I sincerely express this, there is a fact about Hitler's actions that is immediately known- the fact that they are now held bad by me, that they are bad₃. This is a fact, a psychological and not a moral one, but not one that is of any interest in explaining my opinion of Hitler.

¹⁶ Cf. Gibbard, 1990, pp112-117.

¹⁷ Wiggins, 1991, p86.

¹⁸ Harman, 1977, chapters 1 and 2 and 1986.

¹⁹ Sturgeon, 1985, 1986.

However if my attitudes enjoy the right sort of stability, it will be possible to say more than simply that Hitler's actions were bad₃. We can say not only that they are thought bad but that they are *such as to be* thought bad, *apt to be* thought bad. That, in other words they are not just bad₃ but bad₄. And "bad₄" is indeed explanatory *vis à vis* my lack of approbation for Hitler. The point then to be made against Sturgeon is that when someone says

Lenman thinks Hitler's actions were bad because Hitler's actions were bad.

he plausibly tells us *nothing of any explanatory interest* that is not equally communicated by

Lenman thinks Hitler's actions were bad because Hitler's actions were bad₄.

"Bad₄" is a wholly descriptive term. "Bad", I have argued, is not. And, in explanations like the foregoing it is plausibly badness₄ that is doing *all* the explanatory work. So that the availability of such explanations does not appear to undermine the expressivism I have been defending.²⁰

²⁰ The same point is made by Harman, 1986, pp63-4 and Wright, 1992, pp195-6.

Chapter 9: Found Goodness II: The Primacy of Found Goodness

9.1. Logic won't take me by the throat and force me to be consistent or stable in my thought. Mere consistency moreover is one thing, stability another. It hardly suffices for Bond to write:

The recognition of it [prudential value] comes with the recognition that every moment of one's present and future life is as important as any other; that the time at which one is or will be engaging in activity or having experience, is not, in and of itself, relevant to its value.¹

In fact, the avoidance of such fickleness or inconstancy is something for which we have a number of reasons which we may pause to consider. Imagine: in January Bobby wants to be a concert pianist when he grows up, so day in day out he practices... Until February when he decides he wants to be an athlete so he goes training day in day out... Until March...Every month Bobby's ambitions in life change and every month he turns to a new project for fulfilling them. Clearly, while things go on like this, Bobby is not going to make much of a musician or an athlete or anything else. Chesterton makes this point with some charm:

let us suppose a man wanted a particular kind of world; say, a blue world...If he altered a blade of grass to his favourite colour every day, he would get on slowly. But if he altered his favourite colour every day, he would not get on at all. If, after reading a fresh philosopher, he

¹ Bond, 1983, p88.

started to paint everything red or yellow, his work would be thrown away.²

Such people are guilty of a form of self-delusion, diagnosis of which has been imputed (rather speculatively I suspect) to the Buddha by John S. Dunne, characterizing the insight in question as "the discovery that the will to live all one's possible lives is the basic root of unhappiness."³ Certainly Buddha's near-contemporary Confucius did have such an insight:

to love someone and wish for his life, then to hate him and wish for his death, so that having wished for his life, you go on to wish for his death, this is inconstancy.⁴

² Chesterton, 1909, pp193-194. the same point is made by Blanshard (1961, p410), citing in illustration Plato's characterization of the democratic man in Book VIII of the *Republic*.

³ Dunne, 1974, p126. Dunne refers to the *Dhammakakkappavattana Sutta*. However, unless Dunne knows something about the original I don't, all Buddha is making here is his notorious claim to the simpler effect that desire is the root of unhappiness. But the idea is of interest whoever its author may be.

⁴ *Analects*, XII, 10 (my translation). "Inconstancy" translates *huo* on which see further 10.6 below. Cf. Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, VII, 6, 1240b12-17 (my translation):

In men of low worth, such as the *akrates*, there is discordance. Whence it is held to be possible for a man to be hateful to himself. But, insofar as he is one and undivided he is as he would wish himself to be. Such is the good man who is a friend in accordance with virtue; since the bad

This is partly just the simple, but by no means irrelevant, insight that inconsistent desires aren't jointly satisfiable. But there is a depth to this insight that brings it into line with Williams observation in his illuminating discussion of relativism that our desires and values have a *constituency*⁵ which reaches beyond their *source*:

the ethical thought of a given culture can always stretch beyond its boundaries...Each outlook may still be making claims it intends to apply to the whole world, not just to that part of it which is its "own" world.⁶

C. I. Lewis was indeed beforehand in seeing the significance of this for the motivation of a certain constancy:

Consistency of thought and action is for the sake of and is aimed at consistency in action; and consistency in action is derivative from consistency of willing- of purposing, of setting a value on. *If it were not that present valuing and doing may later be a matter of regret, then there would be no point and no imperative to consistency of any kind.* No act would then be affected by relation to any principle, and no thinking by any consideration of validity. Life in general would be free

man is not single but many and on the same day will be found inconstant and wavering.

⁵ My use of "constituency" here is also due to Williams- 1985, p75.

⁶ Williams, 1985, p159.

of any concern; and there would be no distinction of what is rational from what is perverse or silly.⁷

At the inter-personal level in any case such source-transcendence of the constituency of our value is a fairly contingent affair. We are social animals but might not have been. A world might contain some ten or twenty immortal but otherwise fairly human-being-like creatures living thousands of miles apart, each minding their own business, never interacting, not caring about the fate of the others. In an analogous way, there might be a creature with temporal parts that were mutually indifferent. Thus imagine a simple creature that only has two kinds of want relating to eating and scratching. Imagine it inhabits a time that falls neatly into discrete units. At any given time unit it wants or does not want to eat and wants or does not want to scratch for what remains of that time unit. It doesn't sit around planning its future meals or resolving that in future it will scratch less than it has in a past it remembers with neither relish nor regret.

Our simple creature at a given time has desires that relate only to itself at that time. Because it is like this, it is *unable* to be fickle or inconstant. But we are not. Most of our desires have, even on a personal level, a far broader *constituency* than this. I have desires about the sort of day I want to have, the way I want to spend the summer, the sort of life I want to lead, the sort of person I want to be. The wider the constituency of my desires, the more their possible fulfilment is undermined if I am fickle. The narrower that constituency the more like the simple creature I become a creature the poverty of whose life requires no comment beyond noting that in one sense it is only by courtesy that we can even describe it as a *life* or what leads it as a *person* at all.

⁷ Lewis, 1946, pp480-1. Emphasis mine.

By not resembling the simple creature I acquire a strong pragmatic reason to develop a kind of politics of the self whereby my fluctuating desires at given times are brought to an order that enables their mutual accommodation. The task is a difficult one- sometimes seditious desires fail to fit the pattern I seek to impose on them or are stronger than my higher order desires for personal unity and the order is broken: much of what we mean by moral weakness is like this. But the task is also worthwhile insofar as leading a life (while the simple creature has only a given moment of frustration or satisfaction) and being a person (while the simple creature is more like a succession of appetitive monads) are things to which I aspire.

At the interpersonal, social level, a similar coherence is sought to avoid a similar impoverishment:

In ancient times when the people originated, in the period before there was punishment and administration, the saying went: "Everyone in the world has a different morality". Hence for one man there was one morality, for two men two, for ten men ten; with the multiplication of men what they called morality multiplied too. Consequently a man judged his own morality to be morality and other men's not, so they all judged each other immoral. Hence within the family father and son, elder brother and younger, fell into resentment and hatred, became alienated and incapable of co-operating harmoniously.⁸

What we are being told (here by Mo Tzu) is an immensely familiar story. It is the beginning of the edifying tale that has come to be called *contractualism* which goes on to tell how one day all the animals in the forest held a meeting...

⁸ *Mo Tzu*, chapter 11, tr. A. C. Graham- quoted in his 1989, p46.

For our ten or twenty lonely immortals of a few paragraphs back no such story could be told. None of them has a set of values which "it intends to apply to the whole world, not just to that part of it which is its "own" world." But there are in fact no such anchorites. Just as our desires extend in time beyond the immediate times at which we have them, so they extend beyond ourselves. People who are not myself feature heavily in the ways I, like others, would like the world to be. And, insofar as the same is true of them and their desires about how things should be with us differ from mine and from each other, there is again a problem of *co-ordination*, an accommodation to be reached.

In both the temporal and the interpersonal cases we see the same thing, that we start to have a problem when the constituency of the set of pro-attitudes held from a given perspective overlaps with that held from another. For then there is the possibility of conflicting, not jointly satisfiable, attitudes arising. And, as was urged at the start of this section such conflict is apt rather to undermine the prospects of satisfaction for the pro-attitudes in question. There is thus a basis for a higher-order pro-attitude whereby *unity and consistency* of pro-attitudes across time and among persons is valued as reducing such conflict. And in its turn such a higher-order attitude will set up a general norm of wholeheartedness, that our pro-attitudes be brought into such conformity.

These reflections then motivate such a norm of wholeheartedness. They do not however show that adherence to it is rationally required. Believing myself to have a desire that conflicts with what I will later want, I may seek their mutual accommodation for the reasons given, identifying with my future desiring self. Or I may not. All the foregoing argument can do is make sense of a norm of wholeheartedness. It cannot render simple bloody-mindedness incoherent.

9.2. Demands of minimal rationality, of simple coherence, fail to stipulate that my habits of evaluation be at all that such naturalists as C. I. Lewis suppose they should. I

appear, at least up to a point, logically free⁹ not to care how much value quality is found in experience by my fellow humans and indeed by myself. Nor am I constrained to care much about the extent to which my desires at other times than now, let alone the desires of others are satisfied. I need not, that is, *identify* in my present pro-attitudes with either my pro-attitudes at other times or the pro-attitudes of others.

Such imprudence and egoism may not be refuted by the usual manoeuvres concerning the alleged irrelevance of numerical difference. Suppose I don't care about any pro-attitudes except my own current ones. I am asked, what is so special about *me* and *now* that makes these attitudes so significant? But this question is easily answered. What is special about my own current pro-attitudes is that it is a necessary truth that I, at present, *cannot but* care about their objects; whereas it is not a necessary truth- is in fact a falsehood- that I, at present, *cannot but* care about more distant pro-attitudes.

While it is *possible* for someone to be so alienated from the pro-attitudes of others and even from their own at other times, it is not perhaps possible for such disharmony to be *normal*. It is plausible that such affective isolationism on a *global* scale would represent a level of instability of response and attitude high enough to undermine our capacity to make sense of ourselves. Though once again the distinction must be stressed between the global and local cases- even if all the people cannot be so alienated all the time, some of them can some of the time.

9.3. There are two kinds of stability it is important to distinguish. Firstly then there is *stability*₁: stability of *first order* response and attitude. This obtains if, say, at t_1 I want to \emptyset at t_2 , at t_2 I enjoy \emptyset ing and at t_3 I'm glad I \emptyset ed at t_2 . Likewise I will tend to enjoy \emptyset ing not just at t_2 but, at least for the most part, whenever I \emptyset . Nothing second order is involved in such stability₁, for it is not supposed that my positive pro-attitude at a

⁹ To borrow a turn of phrase from Cooper- 1981, chapter 7.

given time to my ϕ ing at t_2 is *motivated* by my belief that I have (or will have) entertained a similarly positive pro-attitude at some other time or times. And of course, when any such motivation is subtracted, what remains is rather odd. For we are left with a certain consistency among our first-order attitudes but with a vastly reduced connection between them. It is no longer true that I want to ϕ *because* I take it I will enjoy it and I want to do things I'll enjoy. Or that I enjoy ϕ ing in part because I always wanted to and it's rather nice getting to do things you always wanted to do. Or that I don't enjoy it because I know I'll regret it. The stability in question is present all right but all the "because"s in the preceding sentences vanish to be replaced by mere "and"s. And this leaves stability₁ looking, to say the least, rather *fortuitous*.

This is not a problem with *stability*₂: here my findings and distance holdings of good are in agreement *because of* my identification at any given time with myself and others at other times. I now value the things I value at times other than the present not fortuitously but in virtue of my then valuing them. I don't just hold good (relative to one time) what I *happen to* hold good relative to another. Rather *things held good by me (at t_2)* is the *description under which* I hold them good (at t_1). Stability₂ then involves a kind of *presumption of wholeheartedness*. If at t_1 I hold X good, I will tend, given stability₂, at t_2 , to hold good my holding good of X at t_1 - and thereby to hold X itself good at t_2 . Stability₂, in effect, institutes a *norm of stability*₁.

Given an adequate level of stability₂, it becomes natural for whatever is good in a descriptive sense (as with the good₀, good₁, good₂, good₃ and good₄ of chapter 7 above) to be held good in virtue of that fact. Thus it becomes natural for the things which are good₀ to be good₃ from various temporal or personal perspectives; and for the things which are good₃ from a given temporal or personal perspective to be good₃ from others. We come to value our valuations. I argued above that it is hard to make sense of a general lack of wholeheartedness, of stability₂. And in fact it is plausible that

a fairly high degree of stability₂ is in fact prevalent in most of our evaluative thought most of the time.

Although we do not, as argued in chapter 7, *inevitably* distantly hold good what we find good (or bad what we find bad) and hence the failure of the Nagel/Goldstein claim about the intrinsic value (or disvalue) of these things fails, it should nonetheless be clear that given such prevalence of wholeheartedness, this claim will be true, neither necessarily nor totally, but *for the most part*. What is good₀, good₁, good₂, good₃ or good₄ will *tend*, for those reasons, to be held good.

This will help C. I. Lewis towards meeting the difficulties I made for him above. For given such stability, we will indeed expect terms such as "immediately valuable" or "conducting to satisfaction in some possible experience" or "likely to be found good" to acquire evaluative charge in the way described in chapter 8. Given stability₂ we will tend to value things with just such properties and for those whose thought is so characterized a theory like that of Lewis is that much the more plausible as an account of what is in fact of value to them.

9.4. We *need* stability in large part because of that source-transcendence of our pro-attitudes noted above. This was just how the simple creature differed from the inconstantly ambitious Bobby and from Chesterton's lover of the blues. The problem with the latter was that their desires, taken over time, had inconsistent satisfaction conditions. This was no problem for the simple creature and could not be. But note how impossibly simple he was. He had desires about what to do now, but they failed to fit a wider pattern of other pro-attitudes, an omission which leaves the simple creature's "desires" with rather a Pickwickian look about them.¹⁰

¹⁰ See chapter 6 above.

The sorts of attitudes to which such source-transcendency in particular applies are *distance attitudes*. Now these are something of an embarrassment to a theory like Lewis's for they are *not* immediate findings of value in experience. Nor are they predictions of such value or imputations of a tendency to conduce to such value. They are rather, as explained, valuations at a distance. A theorist who wants to make finding good come out as fundamental in much the way it does for Lewis and in which, on my account, finding *beautiful* does, will want to insist that distant holdings of goodness are somehow answerable, or secondary, to findings of goodness- that the latter are fundamental.

The problem with this insistence will be the possibility noted of having distance pro-attitudes that are not concerned in the slightest to accommodate themselves to the attitudes of other persons and times. I may want to be in intense pain tomorrow. I may want you to be in intense pain. I may want the back of Fred's head to touch his heels quite regardless of how much this will hurt him. Cases like the latter shade into those of attitudes that are not in any way even about anybody's experience, not even indirectly about experience as when we hold things good₂!. Thus in the best known example I might desire the presence of parsley on the moon. All such distance pro-attitudes as these that are not responsive to whether their objects are good₀, good₁, good₂ or, from a different perspective, good₃ or good₄, I will call, following Parfit's characterization of the last example, *whimsical*¹¹ pro-attitudes..

Appeal might be made to a norm of wholeheartedness to motivate bringing distance attitudes into conformity with now-for-now attitudes. But, as was noted above, in discussing the view of Bond, the *direction of accommodation* might equally be the opposite to this, for all that has so far been said to the contrary.

¹¹ Parfit, 1985, p123. The example is taken from Nagel, 1970, p45. Cf. Hare, 1963, p32.

Lewis wants, in effect, to say about goodness, what I have already said about beauty- that any sense we make of the idea of thinking something good is parasitical on the sense we make of finding it good, that "good" means either found good or likely to be found good or such as to be found good or conducive to such findings- that is to say that the possible descriptive meaning for "good" is exhausted by good₀, good₁ and good₂ and that good₀ is hence central- for it is in terms of good₀ that good₁ and good₂ are defined. I argued in chapter 8 that such descriptive naturalism can never take us from these to good₀!, good₁! and good₂!. That still leaves the possibility of seeing the immediately found good as central in a way that respects the expressivist tendency of that and the following chapter. But any such claimed centrality is under threat from good₃.

There would be no threat if we always held something good₃! just *in virtue* of thinking it good₀, good₁ or good₂ and plausibly many of our distance attitudes *are* like this. I want to go windsurfing because I think I'll enjoy it and I want future pleasure, i.e. I think it good₀. I want there to be more wind-surfing boards because I think it is fun and I want there to be plenty of fun around, i.e. I think wind-surfing is good₁ and the boards are good₂. But not all distance attitudes are like this. Some of them, as we have seen, are whimsical.

Like Parfit, we need to begin by recognizing that we'd better not be too hard on whims if we're to be at all convincing. As such, they are neither wicked nor irrational. Some of them may even have a certain aesthetic charm, such as Parfit finds in the lunar parsley whim. But surely whims must be *exceptional*. One could hardly be interested in *everything but* the character of one's own and others' experience, simply because, as we saw in chapter 6, we wouldn't know how to make sense of "interest" here. Once again, what is harmless enough at a local level, is nonsense at a global level.

What would be a plausible claim however is that distance attitudes are, on the whole, less fundamental, in some sense, than now-for-now, me-for-me attitudes. So

that while free-floating, whimsical distance pro-attitudes are possible and not, in moderation, objectionable, they are an exception, not the rule. And hence that findings of goodness or badness are more fundamental than distance attitudes in a way that makes most distance attitudes properly responsive to our beliefs about such findings. So that it might be argued, as a substantive ethical position, that findings of value are something to which distance attitudes should *defer*. That the normal, though not invariable, direction of accommodation should be such as to demand the modification to distance attitudes to conformity with immediate ones- figure 3 of chapter 7 rather than figure 4.

This position involves a weak form of hedonism. Weak because it is first supposed only to hold *for the most part* and is not taken to *exhaust*, or to begin to exhaust the content of ethics or morals. Weak hedonism recognizes found goodness as *a* value and a central one but leaves space for those qualitative and distributive considerations that embarrass monistic hedonism. Moreover we can and do have whimsical desires, but a certain priority on the part of the now-for-now and me-for-me renders these somehow odd and motivates a claim that there is a certain perversity in desires and other distance pro-attitudes being, if not quite, as a matter of their content, conditional upon what is found good, nonetheless properly responsive to the latter and not the other way round.

Let's first note a strong intuitive plausibility that attaches to this weakly hedonistic claim. This can be brought out in various ways. The thing that seems to have impressed many writers is the point made by E. J. Bond:

hedonic value, and seemingly only hedonic value, is experienced as valuable, so that no question of its value can be raised...We can find out

if a thing is pleasant (or unpleasant or neutral) by sampling it. But this seems to be true of no other kind of value.¹²

We may further note how desires and values that are wholly whimsical, in the sense of being not just unrelated to what is found good in experience but not related to experience *at all* would indeed seem somewhat perverse. The desire that the number of mountains above a certain height on some dead and distant planet be an odd number would be, to put it mildly, an odd desire. And there is a similar feeling of perversity to whims whose remoteness from experience is perhaps less extreme (examples were given above).

Some explanation of the point stressed by Broad is forthcoming when we note that my present experiences are things to which I cannot very intelligibly be imagined wholly indifferent, and differ in this respect from my experiences at other times. Of course I might have a *neutral* attitude to my present experience but that is not at all the same as not caring what it is. Such indifference to the past or future, on the other hand, does seem possible. The simple creature I described above was an extreme case, globally so indifferent. Odd though the simple creature is, odder still might be a creature interested only in its own, or, worse, some things else's, state *at other times*. The sheer *centrifugality* of such a pattern of concern is apt to strike us as crazy.

What my pro-attitudes are is something I have some but *not total* freedom to determine for myself. There is in fact considerable ineluctability, considerable recalcitrance about many of my attitudes and this is *particularly* true of *immediate* findings of good and bad. *This time I'm going to enjoy the pain*, is not a resolution that usually has much chance of success, though if pain_p is intended it is not a senseless one. What we value is constrained by our natures, our upbringings, the kinds of

¹² Bond, 1983, p120.

creatures we are. This recalcitrance recalls that of sense-perception. When an explorer moves through a virgin landscape it is not up to him what he sees there. And it is not *altogether* up to him what he thinks of what he sees there. We should remember this recalcitrance in what follows. Like it or not, I tend to bring my pro-attitudes into harmony in the way shown in figure 3 rather than figure 4 of chapter 7 above. I am going to be offering philosophical considerations to try to make sense of this fact. But remember firstly that it *is* a fact. I cannot, in fact, control my now-for-now, me-for-me attitudes to the point necessary to force them into conformity with my distance attitudes even if some philosophical considerations urged that I should. The first reason, then, for the centrality of the now-for-now is just the wholly contingent one that that is the sort of creature I am. And, I presume to suppose, you also. It might be disputed that considerations like these don't amount to much as moral arguments. But in chapter 10, I will be arguing that this is a mistake.

9.5. There are other reasons. Given stability₂, the presumption of wholeheartedness, we tend to think the things we dislike *pro tanto* bad, the things we wholeheartedly dislike bad *simpliciter*, the things we like *pro tanto* good, the things we wholeheartedly like good *simpliciter*. Because we value these things in these ways, we similarly value the *types* of things that we associate with such immediate likings: the *types* of experience we like; the types of things that are typically secondary objects of liked experiences; the types of things that are typically causally implicated in such likings. We value these *types* of things because of their connection, causal, constitutive or whatever, with immediate findings of value. In such findings we value (primarily) not *types* of things but *tokens*- token experiences.¹³ The valuing of types is what emerges

¹³ 6.3 above.

from such token-valuings, given a degree of stability. And it is *in virtue of* these connections with valued *token* experiences that such *types* are valued.

The valuing of token experiences is fundamental in the above account. Of course, given stability of response, such experiences are typically valued under descriptions which subsume them under some type. But what is so valued and described is nonetheless a token experience, and the type is a valued one just *in virtue of* its (stability-established) connection with just such valued token experiences.

Desires, when their objects are experiences or actions are always for *types*, never for *tokens* of these. Desires that fit the hedonistic scheme just presented will be for such things valued *in virtue of* their connection, of whatever kind, with valued *token*-experiences. Thus I may value ice-cream *in virtue of* its connection with token findings of gastronomic goodness and so on.

Whimsical desires are not like this. In whimsically desiring something, that all the boys in the class die their hair green, say, I desire some type-occurrence *in virtue of*...what? In virtue, presumably, of nothing in particular. I just do. Of course my desire *might be* in virtue of something. I might have a whole lot of whimsical desires *systematically* interrelated. But, the present form of hedonism urges, the whole system retains an arbitrary, as it were mechanical, feel in virtue of just this radical disconnection from immediate valuations.

9.6. This intuitive plausibility of imputing centrality to me-for-me, now-for-now attitudes is particularly clear in the *interpersonal* case, where what is involved is just our intuitive valuing of *autonomy*, that make me-for-me attitudes *pro tanto* over-riding with respect to distance attitudes. Thus Harsanyi writes:

the interests of each individual must be determined in terms of his own personal preferences and not in terms of what someone else thinks is good for him.¹⁴

Appealing to the commonly exploited analogy between the interpersonal and intra-personal levels of organization of our desires and values we might urge a similar priority to what somebody at a given time thinks is then good for him over what he, *at some other time*, thinks good for him at the former time.¹⁵

Consider two imaginary people whom we will call M. Herzog and Herr Bühl. The governing ambition of Herzog's life is that *Bühl* should reach the summit of Nanga Parbat. The governing ambition of Bühl's life is for *Herzog* to reach the summit of Annapurna. Their wants thus rather resemble those of their historical namesakes but are rather more "altruistically" distributed. But there is something unsatisfying about this altruism quite apart from the fact that, when their wants are "external" in this way, they are far less likely ever to be satisfied. In fact we're supposing it a rather funny sort of altruism. Herzog doesn't want to see Bühl on Nanga Parbat because Bühl wants this *for himself* and he likes the man. He wants this *without reference to Bühl's* wants. In other words, the want is *whimsical* just as much as a want to get *Bühl's rucksack*, say, up Nanga Parbat. And the same we may suppose applies to Bühl's desire to get Herzog up Annapurna.

It might seem obvious what these two men should do. They should make a pact, each climbing their respective mountain. Then, presumably, they will both be happy. Only we may presume *no such thing*. For such a presumption *restores* the centrality of the immediately valuable which I am trying to exclude from the case in question. A

¹⁴ Harsanyi, 1977, p51. Cf Dworkin, 1977, p234.

¹⁵ Compare Hare's "autofanaticism" in his 1981, p105.

certain amount of sense is restored is we suppose that each of them will *enjoy* having his desires satisfied and that they aim for this enjoyment. But to desire something whimsically is not to desire it *qua* source of satisfaction but rather to desire it *whether or not* its realization brings any such satisfaction. When this is underscored the dramatization of the oddity of such desires is complete. It makes little sense to identify anyone's interests with the satisfaction of such desires unless they are merely whims, of marginal status in their total economy of attitudes. In the case of someone for whom such desires were the norm, any talk of their having interests at all would start to look increasingly strained.¹⁶

9.7. Not all pleasure is as immediate as enjoyment as characterized in chapter 6. I may be *pleased that* something is the case that is quite distant from my immediate experience. Plausibly such pleasure may be described as differing from desire in having a *fait accompli* for its object but differing from ordinary *enjoyment* in being a distance attitude. I can be pleased at your success in climbing Everest or regret my own failure, years ago, to get up Arthur's Seat.

Pleasure generally, like enjoyment in particular, is an obviously normative concept well in advance of any theorizing we do about it. That you will be pleased if I do something can give me a reason to do it. That I will regret an action is a reason to avoid it. Typically then (and generalizing slightly), we hold good what is good₃ and hold bad what is bad₃. Some stability of response- stability₂ is presupposed in this but without *this much* stability₂ it's difficult to see what sense attaches to regarding distance attitudes as *evaluative at all*- hard, in effect, to make sense of them, period.

Given such stability, the gap between enjoyment and more distanced forms of pleasure narrows. For it will now be the case that we *enjoy* being pleased by things:

¹⁶ Cf. Williams' "Persons, Character and Morality" in his 1981.

that the state of mind I am put in by your success on Everest is a state of mind I *like* being in, that I *dislike* the way I feel about my failure on Arthur's Seat. Varying the example, Conrad's *Lord Jim* is a novel about a man's life being shaped wholly by his overwhelming regret and remorse on account of a single youthful and cowardly action. Now this regret of Jim's presumably looks like this:

~~→time~~

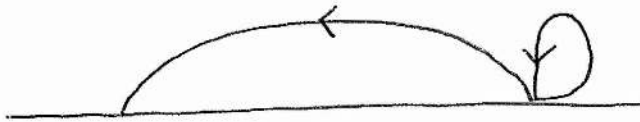


figure 5

and not merely like this:

~~→time~~



figure 6

That is to say not only does he hold bad something about his past but he is made miserable by so holding it. For surely the whole point of Jim's regret is the pain it occasioned him. And this it surely does as a constitutive matter, *in virtue* simply of being regret. Regret isn't something we can feel and at the same time be (now-for-now) indifferent to feeling it.

Similar considerations attach to desire. Suppose none of my desires is ever satisfied and this causes me no distress, even though I *am* around to experience their shipwreck. These desires, we would incline to say, just fail to *matter* in the usual way. I noted in chapter 6 how the concept of desire draws its life-blood from its involvement with

more immediate hedonic valuations and here need only repeat the point. Desire, supposed no longer bound up with the found values and disvalues of satisfaction and frustration- the pleasure typical of the former, the discomfort typical of the latter- fades to a bare disposition such as might be enjoyed by, say, a compass needle. It ceases, that is, save in a Pickwickian sense, to be desire at all.

These points may be amplified in relation to some remarks of Bernard Williams discussing the utilitarian "project of bringing about maximally desirable outcomes".

These outcomes

do not just consist of agents carrying out *that* project; there must be other more basic or lower-order projects which he and other agents have, and the desirable outcomes are going to consist, in part, of the maximally harmonious realization of these projects...Unless there were first-order projects the general utilitarian projects would have nothing to work on, would be vacuous.¹⁷

What I am suggesting here is that there is a sense in which my concern now for my own present well-being is the *most basic, lowest order* of projects. For without such now-for-now, me-for-me pro-attitudes, our non-whimsical distance attitudes would likewise have nothing to work on, would enjoy a similar vacuity. It make sense for me to care about your well-being and not that of a piece of rock because *you* care about *your own* well-being. And this is not, surely, altogether a separate point from the one we make in saying that there is *such a thing* as your, as opposed to the rock's, well-being. And the same applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to my concern for distant temporal parts of myself. This is not, I hope it is obvious, any kind of argument either for egoism

¹⁷ Smart and Williams, 1973, p110.

or for imprudence. It is rather the point that it is only in virtue of our having some degree of self-interest that altruism makes much sense.

9.8. On the basis of description, I could respond to the fictitious actions of Dorian Gray, holding them bad. Of the beauty of his picture I could, on the basis of description, have no idea. But if I was right in chapter 5 to suggest that the contrast between beauty and goodness was not as great as might at first have appeared, why this difference? Well, there are two aspects of the concept of goodness as so far delineated that break the analogy between it and pleasure and both might be checked out for explanatory value here. The first is good₂- instrumental good. Dorian's acts are bad because they are connected to the suffering of persons and the thwarting of their happiness, things which, as participants in lives and communities characterized by a degree of stability₂, both as a fact and as a norm, we hold to be bad. But, and this secondly, we have also noted that we distantly hold things good- those things that are thereby good₃- *without* being in experiential contact with them. Of course thinking things good₂! was itself a case of thus thinking them good₃!, only here we were thinking them good₃! *in virtue of* their involvement with the immediate interests of persons. This is not, however, the *only* way to think something good₃!- I can distantly hold something- the actions of a character in a book, say, bad in ways that simply fail to make reference to the upshot as regards the ways in which men and women respond with pain or pleasure to the lives they lead as they are leading them. Logically I am quite at liberty to think like this at least *some* of the time, but, given the role of stability (including stability₂) in sustaining the significance of the very idea of wanting things, not *all* the time. And given the value we in fact place on stability (and in particular stability₂), we are justified in viewing such whimsicality of thought about value as being- outside such peripheral and contained concerns as amusing oneself with fantasies about lunar vegetation- a mark of insanity.

9.9. The expressivist and internalist metaethics I have defended might seem to favour an understanding of value that focuses upon the actual subjective evaluative concerns of particular agents, a focus that may well lead to a voluntaristic kind of view most characteristically perhaps espoused by writers of existentialist sympathies who are inclined to recognize no source of evaluative authority that transcends the particular evaluative views decided upon by individual people. The problem with such a position is that it can easily seem arbitrary and implausible, leaving us struggling to explain the felt defeasibility that seems so basic a feature of the phenomenology of our values and thus unable to make sense of the claim that the wholeheartedly depraved are wrong and wrong moreover in a less anaemic sense than is involved in their being merely the objects of my disapproval.

There are, given such an understanding, only the particular evaluations of particular people, this man's fanatical devotion to some political cause, that woman's disapproval of terrorists. Such evaluations, it might be supposed, are not beliefs but attitudes, world-word in direction of fit and hence, *at least in principle*, not responsible to any feature of how the world is, not so defeasible.

In principle perhaps, but, *in practice*, one's evaluations are constrained by norms and in particular by norms of stability. Given this, the defeasibility of evaluation, together with other features plausibly related to objectivity, falls into place. Substantial features of the norms that govern evaluation offer a route out of the solipsism of infeasible personal commitment towards less undisciplined forms of evaluative thought. But we are constrained to follow such a route not by the metaphysical facts about the kinds of things values are but, if at all, by the kinds of values that we have.

An enriched understanding of value, one plausibly favoured by the preceding argument, might focus on the subjective concerns of moral subjects (plausibly rather more numerous than moral agents) broadly conceived to include *all* pro-attitudes,

simple desires and aversions as well as values more narrowly conceived. This may plausibly lead to a roughly utilitarian sort of view, best typified perhaps by Hare. My preceding argument places me in some alignment with such views given my claim that what is *found good* in the immediate experience of individuals is central to our imputations of goodness and hence that the sort of consideration dubbed weakly hedonist above had better be a central ingredient in our conception of what, substantively, is good. Stability of response and attitude are not rationally obligatory but, given that our attitudes are not almost unimaginably narrow in their objects, it starts to look pragmatically desirable to have a fair amount of it. When we *do* have a fair amount of it, I will at a given time be inclined, at least *pro tanto*, to value things because they are valued, and, in particular, immediately valued or just liked, at that or other times, by myself or other people. Such an inclination motivates the favoured *weak* form of hedonism. Against a background of stability of response and attitude, then, and recognizing the primacy of immediate findings of value in experience, there will be some pressure to recognize some such utilitarian considerations. I have, however, stressed that such stability, though we might take it as in part constitutive of rationality in some relatively rich and substantive sense of that term, is hardly rationally necessitated in any more formal and logical sense.

Where does this leave objectivity? Let us consider another fictitious community which we will call "Utilitas". In Utilitas there is a great deal of stability of response and attitude, both stability₁ and stability₂, resulting in the *universal* acceptance of a utilitarian set of values. In this society then, evaluative language will enjoy the second (convergence) of Wiggins' marks of truth (1.3 above), subject to qualifications about the explanation of that convergence given at 8.8 above. It will also enjoy all four of Wiggins' other marks together with (insofar as these differ) all five of Dummett's characterizations of quasi-assertions (1.4). Utilitans, unlike the Atlantans of chapter 8, will indeed plausibly tend to favour moral realism insofar as all their moral concepts are

likely to be "thick" ones- *even* with "good" the descriptive meaning will be, in Hare's language, "entrenched". Utilitarian moral anti-realists would be forced to invent their own "thin" moral concepts.

But this is not yet a victory for the Utilitarian moral realist. *Firstly* and obviously, in Utilitarianism, *platonism* is false. The statements in which the Utilitarians¹⁸ express their attitudes and responses may indeed be true but their truth is not independent of the fact that the Utilitarians happen to have the attitudes and responses that they do.

Secondly and *thirdly*, both *externalism* and *descriptivism* about the evaluative language of Utilitarianism are false. For a Utilitarian characterizing something as "good" not only characterizes it as having certain natural characteristics which Utilitarians agree in valuing but expresses his or her own commitment to those same values. What is said has a more than merely sociological content and also expresses something of the speaker's own pro-attitude to the object of evaluation- good would remain a "Janus-word" in just the same way as the Atlantan for "liar" was seen to be. What masks this is just the very consensual and non-pluralistic character of Utilitarian values. Because the internal and external senses of their value-concepts so consistently *coincide* the distinction is so much the less apt even to be noticed.

Nor, and this *thirdly*, should this coincidence invite *scientific realism* about values since, for reasons given in 8.8 above, such realism is idle.

If the Utilitarians did notice this distinction and took to analysing out the evaluative and descriptive ingredients of their evaluative utterances they might, like the Atlantans of chapter 8, opt to express the latter in some, wholly non-indicative "boo-hurrah" construction. Or they might not, preferring an indicative form. Nothing of significant philosophical importance can plausibly be supposed to hang on which they do. The latter indicative construction will invite perhaps a minimal realist interpretation but I

¹⁸ It would be less ugly to call them "Utilitarians" but this would invite confusion.

argued above that this was *compatible* with expressivism. But it will not invite a descriptivist one.

This sort of utilitarian view may well seem an advance on a simple voluntarism. For although in chapter 4 I began to show how evaluations might be distinguished from simpler sorts of desires, likings and other pro-attitudes, I nonetheless was concerned there and in chapter 3 to render plausible the view that values are nonetheless broadly of a kind with other pro-attitudes. So that stability of response and attitude will involve our values and our other pro-attitudes *conforming* to some extent. And thus from the point of view of such stability, something will be horribly wrong if, in general, getting what one likes and liking what one gets are things one has a principled objection to. To have a set of values that simply failed to recognize the claims of ordinary human desire and pleasure would be eminently disastrous. That is plausibly why of all the alternative types of monolithic ethical theory, theories that wish to reduce worthwhile human good to a single qualitative dimension, it is really *only* the broadly utilitarian variety (be it hedonistic or preference-based) that even *begins* to look plausible. Other monolithic theories must simply take on an appearance of ugly fanaticism given their commitment to licence the unlimited sacrifice of human (or, more broadly, sentient) interests on the altar of whatever it is that is taken as axiologically prior to them. Of course a simple and monolithic utilitarianism itself allows any human interest to be overridden by others of greater magnitude, a fact which leads to all kinds of unpalatable consequences. But though I in fact take this to be a serious objection to at least a simple utilitarianism, it is, surely, at least *less obviously* defeated by it than are rival forms of axiological monism.

The defeat of such monistic utilitarianism is less obvious but it is also, I think, real. Found goodness must a *central* ingredient in our conception of the good but it need not be the *only* ingredient and indeed it is plausible that there had also *better be* such other ingredients given the difficulties that plague simple monistic forms of hedonism

over cases of experience machines, malicious or otherwise debased forms of pleasure, pleasure occasioned by false beliefs and so forth. The hedonism defended is advisedly *weak*, in the sense explained above.

A third understanding of value that has been influential is of the conventionalist kind I shall consider in the following chapter. This stresses the constitutive role in our evaluative thought of what is given by our society, our language, our traditions. Holders of such a view tend to look away from the particular concerns of individuals to more collective bases for our evaluations. They look to the conventions and norms that actually operate in our society and to the traditions by which these are fed. This seems richer in many ways than a voluntaristic view according to which what I should understand to be good is just what I care about and value, a view somewhat at odds with what is widely taught:

He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool; but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.¹⁹

However, for a simple *externalist* kind of conventionalism according to which what I should understand to be good is what convention determines so to be, there is a problem when I myself am not *participant* in the evaluative outlooks embodied in my culture, when I am alienated from the values of my social milieu. It is not plausibly *meaningless* to suppose a whole society, or all but a few members of it, to have gone morally awry. The challenge for conventionalism, as was seen in chapter 3 above, is to avoid the sort of externalism that leaves the values in question without any of their

¹⁹ *Proverbs*, XXVIII, 26. It depends, of course, just who your teacher is. What for some is the supreme authority of the individual conscience is for others "The Law of the Heart and the Frenzy of Self-Conceit" (Hegel, 1977)

needed leverage on the motivation of particular agents who may or may not share them. And just as the denial that there is any source of authority or appeal above and beyond the values of a given individual can seem to conflict with the felt defeasibility of one's personal values, we may also want to recognize that whole cultures and societies can go badly wrong in what they, collectively, value. I will address this problem in the following, final chapter.

Chapter 10: Conventionalism, Confucianism and Contingency

10.1. A simple conventionalism and a simple hedonism both face problems, mutual confrontation with which occupies much of the time of their respective defenders. We need not *choose* between these problems. Any dichotomy between these over-simple views would be false. Social norms and personal concerns offer often competing sources of value. Each in practice has a certain poverty judged by the standards of the other, a poverty that makes either alone an unwelcome theoretical option. Value understood purely externally is dead when we merely know its content without additional emotional commitment:

The Master said, "Those who know it are not as those who love it nor those who love it as those who delight in it."¹

On the other hand the sort of solipsistic moral individualism that accords *no* authority to the value judgements of those who make up one's moral environment represents a failure of stability of the sort that, as suggested above, though not strictly irrational in principle, is nonetheless highly problematic for the sorts of creatures we actually are—socially and personally integrated creatures apt to value that very integration. Given that we are such creatures, the problem of *authority* in matters of value, is rendered far more tractable. But before this can be seen clearly, we should address the way in which a place for convention and tradition is needed to enrich the weak hedonism already argued for.

¹ *Analects*, VI, 20. All translations from this work in the present chapter are my own. Compare Aristotle's account of *akrasia* at *Nicomachean Ethics*, VII.

We want to enrich the picture of the sources of evaluative argument given by focusing too exclusively on the voluntaristic and hedonistic such sources described above, insisting on the role to be played in this respect by *both* human interests *and* inherited values. We are saying, in effect, that arguments from broadly utilitarian considerations need to be supplemented by what is too readily derided as the "argument from received opinion" if we are to do justice to the way in which our moral thinking does and should work. Why so?

10.2. It is best to begin with the failings of a strong, monistic hedonism or utilitarianism. Of the two most powerful objections to this, one, its failure to differentiate between *distributions* of pleasure or utility, does not presently concern me. The second, that does, is its failure to make adequate sense of the way we differentiate pleasures and preferences *qualitatively*.² To see this consider the sort of person we might describe as "*contemptible*"- and as I shall use it this shall be something of a term of art. Such are for example the denizens of the "Brave New World" described in Huxley's novel of that name. From a strictly utilitarian perspective such happiness is all very well. So long as these people *are indeed* happy then there is nothing to worry about. It might however seem an inhuman and contemptible thing where "*contemptible*" contrasts with "*enviable*" and "*pitiful*" in the following ways.

I will normally think of someone as *pitiful* if, by their own lights, their life goes badly, *enviable* if it goes well. But these reactions may sometimes fail me, notably if *their* lights and *my own* are too far apart. Thus consider Teddy who is a gangster, motivated by a love of wealth and of the status it brings, anxious above all to be an object of fear and envy to those around him (note that being *envied*, a vicious

² The most compelling statements of this objection are those of Charles Taylor. See "What is Human Agency" in his 1985 and 1989.

ambition, differs from being *enviable*, a natural one). By such lights as he has Teddy may fare very well but, given what these lights are, we will *not* congratulate him or aspire to a life at all like his. Someone whose lights are thus deficient we might call *contemptible*.

Ignoring the few dissenters Huxley threw in to provide a plot, the people of *Brave New World* appear contemptible as a class. The whole culture, although all very well on utilitarian grounds, is a contemptible one. Of course what is contemptible is contemptible to *someone*. There is no "objective", culture-independent standpoint from which the denizens of *Brave New World* are contemptible. They are so merely to us, lying within that jurisdiction of our values that is wider than their source.³

It is not because my (our) values are "better" in some such objective sense that I can find these people contemptible but rather it is a matter of their generality and their wholeheartedness which together give them that *rigidity* that has been stressed by various writers following Humberstone and Davies.⁴ This is a further dimension to what may be said to distinguish moral and other strongly evaluative attitudes from mere attitudes of taste.

A second example may be helpful. Consider two instructive, if rather improbable people, Paul and Saul. Both of them have a certain instability of response and attitude. Paul, like myself, hates liquorice. Except that is on Tuesdays. On Tuesdays, as it happens, he loves the stuff. This isn't really a problem for him. What he does is avoid eating liquorice from Wednesdays to Mondays while eating it on Tuesdays. On Mondays he cheerfully, anticipating his habitual change of taste, places his order with

³ See 9.1 above.

⁴ See Davies and Humberstone, 1980; Smith, 1987, pp303-4; Wiggins, 1987, pp205-206.

the confectioner. On Wednesday's he feels no regret at the indulgence of the previous day.

Saul, on the other hand, is constancy itself where liquorice is concerned. He has a different problem. Saul is married and loves his wife. His marriage is a basic and indispensable ingredient in what he takes to be of value in his life. In Williams' language, it is one of his "ground projects".⁵ The values it engages are fundamental to the way he feels both about his life and about himself. All this makes a big difference, obviously, to how he lives. Certain things are demanded, others ruled out: adultery for example. Except on Tuesdays. On Tuesdays Saul has no trace of a qualm on this particular score and is disposed happily to avail himself of any adulterous opportunity that comes his way.

Like Paul, Saul is subject to some instability. But the difference is vast. This highlights again the silliness of Friedman's conflation of tastes and values⁶ and will point up another dimension in which the latter are distinguished from the former. For clearly, unlike Paul, Saul, to put it mildly, *does* have a problem. On Tuesdays he is disposed to do things which on Wednesdays to Mondays he will be intensely unhappy about having done. He doesn't just, on a Wednesday, say, dislike what, on a Tuesday, he liked. He dislikes *himself* for having done it.

My dislike of liquorice, lacking any great wholeheartedness, is entirely conditional on its own continuance. If I learnt that I would wake up tomorrow loving the stuff, I would feel entirely untroubled. My dislike of Teddy's values is otherwise. To be told that I could expect to lead the sort of life Teddy would be disposed to admire would depress me and to be told in addition that I would come to value this myself would make matters *worse*, not better. Similarly, it is *worse* for Saul on Wednesday if, on

⁵ See Williams, "Persons, Character and Morality" in his 1981.

⁶ See 4.3 above.

Tuesday, he *enjoys* his adultery. If we are utilitarians, then what is important to us is the realizing of our values, *whatever* that may amount to. But in fact what is important is realizing of *our* values, of our *actual* values, if only because (again following Charles Taylor⁷) such values are constitutive of just what we value most in our conception precisely of *ourselves*.

The source-transcendent jurisdiction of our values includes our own later selves and our descendants. In holding a set of ethical attitudes of appropriate generality we adopt a position regarding the proper content of the ethical attitudes of these others. Of course this position has no validity independent of the contingency of our happening to adopt it. But the question is whether there is really anything for such independent validity *to be* and, in chapter 3, I suggested that the answer to this was "No". But once the contingency is *realized*, the dependency is harmless. Understanding the contingency of the moral order need not *undermine* it. What it will do is underline our sense of its *fragility* in a way that serves to dramatize the urgency of the task of sustaining and transmitting it by *educational* means. This urgency of course does not itself transcend the values we happen to have. But then what does?

10.3. A similar sense of the contingency of value and linkage to a stress on education is found in Aristotle:

So the place for us to start is with what is familiar to us. Therefore for the proper hearing about noble and just things and about anything concerned with politics, our habits must have been educated in nobility. For the starting point is what is given and if this is clear enough there is no further need for any justification, a person so raised either having

⁷ See his 1989, especially chapter 4.

acquired or being able easily to acquire the starting point. He who can do neither should hear the words of Hesiod:

He who knows all things for himself: he is best.
 Good too the attentive and compliant student.
 But he, ignorant in his own right, who will not
 Hear or weigh counsel, is wholly without worth.⁸

A comparable, but less familiar stress on the importance of the education of the emotions for the sustaining of morality is found in what survives of the thought of Confucius. Indeed this somewhat neglected (in the west) philosopher has much to say that speaks with great relevance to those aspects of the communitarian strand in contemporary moral philosophy that I am here in sympathy with- no less so, I believe, than such more familiar points of reference as Aristotle or Hegel. And it is, I think, illuminating to understand the main problems for conventionalism and how what is right about it, properly understood, avoids them, in terms of the form of conventionalism espoused by Confucius.

Basic to moral education, for Confucius, is the role of *li*, a word usually rendered "ritual" or "ceremony". The principle materials of moral education were conceived to be twofold. The first was music, including such poetry as was canonically represented in the *Shih Ching* or *Book of Songs*. And the second was *li*.

The Songs uplift us, *li* establish us, music perfects us.⁹

⁸ *Nicomachean Ethics* I, 4, 1095b3-13. My translation.

⁹ *Analects*, VIII, 8. Cf. III, 20; XVII, 9 and XVII, 10 on the importance of the *Shih Ching*. Cf. also XIV, 12; XVI, 5.

Po-yü, Confucius' son, is reported as giving the following account of his father:

Once, when he was standing alone, as I was hurrying past the hall, he said, "Have you studied the *Songs*?" "No," I replied.

"If you do not study the *Songs*, you will have no competence with words." I withdrew and studies the *Songs*.

Another day, when he was again standing alone, as I was hurrying past the hall, he said, "Have you studied the rites [*li*]?" "No," I replied.

"If you do not study the rites, you will be unable to take a stand." I withdrew and studied the rites.¹⁰

10.4. This preoccupation with *li* was a central theme in the attacks on Confucianism mounted by its main rivals. So in the *Tao Te Ching* we read that:

when the way was lost there was virtue; when virtue was lost there was benevolence; when benevolence was lost there was rectitude; when rectitude was lost there were the rites.

The rites are the wearing thin of loyalty and good faith
And the beginning of disorder.¹¹

And in the *Mo Tzu*:

¹⁰ XVI, 13. Cf. XVII, 9; XVII, 10.

¹¹ XXXVIII, 83-4. Tr. Lau.

The upholders today of elaborate funerals and prolonged mourning pronounce: If these are not the Way of the Sage Kings, how to explain why the gentlemen of the central states perform them without fail, cling to them instead of doing away with them? Master Mo Tzu says: this is what one calls getting used to the familiar and taking the customary for the right. Formerly, east of Yüeh there was the country of Shai-shu; at the birth of the first son they dismembered and ate him calling it an obligation to his younger brothers. When a grandfather died they carried away the grandmother and abandoned her, saying "It is impermissible to live with the wife of a ghost". This was recognized policy above and recognized custom below, clung to instead of done away with, but is it really the way of the benevolent and the right?¹²

These two problems for Confucianism are also basic problems for conventionalism more generally. The first, which we might call the *Sourdust problem*¹³, raises the threat of the fossilization of social conventions often remote from more living human concerns. The second, *the relativism problem*, is that a conventionalist understanding of value will legitimate *anything*, just so long as it is sanctioned by convention and leaves our actual values with what seems an alarming feel of contingency.

10.5. The first thing needful here is stressing that, although *li*, in Confucius, is as close to "rites" as to any other English word, it is scarcely to be associated with the notion of *empty* ritual.

¹² Chapter 25. Tr. Graham in his 1989, p40.

¹³ So-called after the librarian in Peake, 1968.

The Master said, "Should we understand *li* as merely jade and silk?
Should we understand music as merely bells and drums?"¹⁴

As to what more the rites are beyond jade and silk we get a clue at III, 3:

The Master said, "If a man is not *jen* ["humane", "benevolent"], what has he to do with *li* or with music."

And we learn more from III, 26 and XIX, 1:

The Master said, "High office without breadth of spirit; practice of *li* without reverence [*ching*]; mourning without sorrow [*ai*]: how can I countenance these things?"

Tzu-chang said, "That scholar will be acceptable who, seeing danger, is ready to give up his life, seeing the prospect of gain, thinks of what is right [*i*^a], in sacrifice thinks of reverence [*ching*] and, in mourning, of sorrow [*ai*]."¹⁵

The centrality of *jen* and the constitutive role therein of properly cultivated emotions is here clear. Reverence (*ching*) is, in Confucius, the proper emotion of people towards their ruler¹⁶, of a son to his parents¹⁷, of a "superior man" (*chün tzu*)¹⁸

¹⁴ *Analects*, XVII, 11. Cf. III, 8.

¹⁵ I will be referring to two distinct words that both romanize as "i" and have introduced alphabetic superscripts to disambiguate.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 20.

to his superiors¹⁹, of friend to friend²⁰, basic human relationships in Chinese tradition. It is *ching* that distinguishes the sustenance of parents practised among brute beasts from *hsiao*, the filiality commended by Confucius.²¹ *Ai*, "sorrow", on the other hand, is the feeling proper to the rituals concerned with mourning and especially with mourning for one's parents.

Tzu-yu said, "Mourning is sufficient when *ai* is fully expressed."²²

When Tsai Wo, not Confucius favourite disciple, asks if one rather than three years mourning is not enough, he is asked if, in such circumstances-

"you would feel comfortable eating your rice and wearing your fine clothes?" Perfectly comfortable," he replied. "If you are comfortable, go ahead. But the *chin tzu*, when in mourning, finds no savour in fine foods, no pleasure in music, no comfort in his home. That is why he abstains from these things. But if you are comfortable about it, indulge yourself."²³

¹⁷ Ibid., II, 7; IV, 18.

¹⁸ This term is desperately hard to translate but signifies for Confucius the ideal character of the virtuous person. Aristotle's *megalopsychos* provides a good analogy.

¹⁹ Ibid., V, 16; XV, 38. the centrality of *ching* to public service (*shih*) appears at I, 5; XIII, 19 and XVI, 10.

²⁰ Ibid., V, 17.

²¹ Ibid., II, 7. Cf. II, 8.

²² Ibid., XIX, 14.

²³ Ibid., XVII, 21.

Tsai Wo is morally defective in that his emotions are not in accordance with *li*. He is *doubly* defective in that he fails to *recognize* that he is. This is what makes him unteachable²⁴ for it is, for Confucius, the inability to recognize that one is in need of teaching that, above all, renders tuition futile.²⁵

Ching, a feeling of respect in another's presence and *ai*, one of sorrow at their absence, both characterize human emotions as they should be and they constitute the feelings proper to the performance of the *li* by which such relationships and such emotions are ordered and which, without such emotions, in virtue of which we are *jen*, are emptied of value.²⁶

Li is that body of social convention and ritual that sustains morality, the institutionalization of correct behaviour. Another notion at our disposal in modern English to which *li* is close is that of *etiquette*. We may however be tempted to feel that any such assimilation between morality and etiquette as such a comparison would suggest could only serve to trivialize the former. Thus when Foot claimed a close similarity between the two the project was, as we have seen, a subversive one²⁷, to invite scepticism about the former.

But of course, and this is my main point against the Sourdust problem, what we perceive as the pettiness of etiquette is, to some extent, the pettiness of *our* etiquette and what we perceive as its sharp separation from considerations of morality is, to some extent, a result of such a divorce prevailing precisely in *our own* culture. And, for

²⁴ See *ibid.*, V, 10.

²⁵ See *ibid.*, XV, 8. Also II, 17; VIII, 9; VI, 20; IX, 23; IX, 24; XVI, 9; XVII, 3; XVII, 26.

²⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, III, 8.

²⁷ See Foot 1978, p18 and 3.8 above.

Confucius, the separateness in our culture of what we call "morality" from what we call "etiquette" would be taken as a sign that things were amiss with us, that our rituals had become empty ones divorced from the service of *jen*. It is a point well made, in our own time, by Stuart Hampshire:

The draining of moral significance from ceremonies, rituals, manners and observances, which imaginatively express moral attitudes and prohibitions, leaves morality incorporated only in a set of propositions and computations: thin and uninteresting propositions, when so isolated from their base in the observances and manners, which govern ordinary relations with people, and which always manifest implicit attitudes and opinions.²⁸

Likewise at *Analects*, I, 12, the disciple Yu Tzu says:

If the realization of harmony is not governed by *li*, it will be ineffective.

And at VIII, 2 Confucius says:

Respectfulness without *li* is merely laborious; carefulness without *li* is timidity; courage without *li* is cantankerousness; frankness without *li* is rudeness.²⁹

²⁸ Hampshire, 1983, p97.

²⁹ Cf. *Analects*, XVII, 8; XVII, 23; XVII, 24.

Such passages as this highlight the richness of Confucius' conception of the virtues. The names of such specific virtues as courage (*yung*) relate, for Confucius, to dispositions that come to be virtues only when brought to order by such harmonizing forces as *li*, *i^a* ("fittingness", "rightness"), and *hsieh* ("learning"). That these, in turn, are only of value insofar as they serve to sustain the virtues, we see from such passages as III, 3; III, 8; XIII, 5 and XVII, 11. *Li* provide the order and fine-tuning that make the virtues possible but conversely it is only when *they* serve to sustain *jen* and *ching* that *li* are more than "jade and silk".

10.6. *Li* are the traditional and inherited embodiment of a moral order and Confucius concern with them is the most salient aspect of his deep conservatism, the conservatism of a thinker who proudly describes himself as "a transmitter, not an innovator".³⁰ To understand this aspect of his thought we might begin by recalling David Hall and Roger Ames' relating of Confucius' notion of *i^a*- "rightness", "fittingness" or, as they render it "signification"- to the imposition of order on the self.³¹ They stress at once the cognacity of *i^a* to the homophonic *i^b*- "appropriate"³²- and the shared normativity involved in both language and ethics. *I^a*, they argue, is the "investment of meaning" in the world accomplished by action in accordance with *li* and it is by such investment that the moral foundations of the social order are sustained and

³⁰ Ibid., VII, 1. Cf. VII, 28.

³¹ Hall and Ames, 1987, chapter 2.

³² Ibid., p96. Cf. the *Chung Yung*, chapter 2:

I^a is *i^b*. The great thing is to honour men of merit.

renewed. It is, they go on to suggest, in virtue of such investment that order is imposed upon the self, making of *i^a* "a notion of self-construing identity".³³

A person, like a word, achieves meaning in the interplay between bestowing its own accumulated significance and appropriating meaning from its context.³⁴

Noticing this, we may, in our turn, seek to relate the notions of *i^a* and *hsin*- "correct speaking" to the importance of freedom from *huo*- "doubt", inconstancy", "being in two minds". Through *hsin* we seek that general coherence of our words and actions that protects the values these serve to sustain. In the obedience or accordance of words is found the key to the successful conduct of public service, ritual and political order. Thus the people are enabled to "take their stand"- a blessing it is the function of ritual to bestow³⁵, to occupy the roles proper to them, prince, minister, father, son; the thoughts of the *chün tzu* never straying from the duties proper to his office.³⁶ In a society characterized by obedience³⁷, trust (*hsin*)³⁸ and reciprocity (*shu*)³⁹, the competing good of persons are brought into harmony (*ho*) by the practice of *li*:

³³ *Ibid.*, p92.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p95.

³⁵ See Hall and Ames, pp85ff. Relevant passages in the text are VI, 30; VIII, 8; XI, 7; XVII, 13 (quoted above); XIX, 25. A notable revival of this metaphor is found in chapter 2 of Taylor, 1989.

³⁶ *Analects*, XIV, 26. Cf. VIII, 14.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 2; I, 6; I, 11; II, 5; IV, 18; IV, 19; IV, 20; XIII, 6; XIII, 20; XV, 38.

Yu Tzu said, "In the practice of *li* the thing that is valuable is harmony."⁴⁰

The Master said, "The *chün tzu* harmonizes without becoming standardized."⁴¹

The avoidance of *huo*- "inconstancy" is that coherence of the person that might be taken as analogous to the interpersonal coherence represented by *ho*, *shu*, *hsin* and *i*²:

To love someone and wish for his life, then to hate him and wish for his death, so that having wished for his life you go on to wish for his death: this is *huo*.⁴²

From the anger of a single morning to forget one's own life and also that of one's parents: is this not *huo*?⁴³

³⁸ Ibid., I, 4; I, 5; I, 6; I, 7; I, 8; I, 14; II, 9; II, 13; II, 18; IV, 22; IV, 24; V, 10; V, 26; VII, 25; VII, 26; VIII, 16; IX, 25; XI, 3; XI, 7; XI, 20; XIV, 20; XIV, 27; XV, 6; XVI, 4; XVII, 6; XIX, 10; XIX, 24.

³⁹ Ibid., IV, 15; VI, 30; XI, 2; XV, 3; XV, 24.

⁴⁰ I, 12.

⁴¹ Ibid., XIII, 23.

⁴² Ibid., XI, 10.

⁴³ Ibid., XI, 21.

The Master said, "The *chün tzu*, applying himself to a wide culture and given shape by *li* can be relied on not to turn against what he has stood for."⁴⁴

Here is urged, in effect, a certain *stability* such as we might defend, along the lines of 9.8, on purely pragmatic grounds. Thus it was effectively freedom from *huo* that Chesterton urges, for example, in the passage juxtaposed to the above at 9.8. Such correct avoidance of *huo* would be, like so much else, the end product of the proper education of the emotion through *li*.

In the light of this we may approach a sympathetic understanding of what Confucius says about *hsiao*- "filiality". Here we deal with an aspect of his thought that is apt to alienate moderns. It is also again an aspect that was strongly repudiated by Mo Tzu who sought to supplant the Confucian emphasis on the importance of particular personal relationships⁴⁵ with an advocacy of the principle of "loving universally".

The job being done by freedom from *huo* in giving continuity to the life of an individual is done, it might be suggested, by *hsiao* in the life of two or more individuals, a respect for the *tao* of one's parents analogous to the respect one lacks, if one is *huo*, for one's own past commitments. Thus a son, for Confucius, has a fundamental duty of loyalty to his father's *tao*:

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, XI, 15. And cf. VII, 26; XIII, 22; XIV, 12. Cf. also Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, VII, 6, 1240b12-17, *Nicomachean Ethics*, IX, 4, 1166b6-29 and Plato, *Republic*, 559D4-562A3..

⁴⁵ Again paralleled in Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VIII, 9, 1159b35-1160a7.

The Master said, "When the father is alive, look to the will. The father being dead, look to the conduct. For there to be no alteration from the *tao* of the father for three years may be called *hsiao*.⁴⁶

Tseng Tzu said, "I heard it said by our Master of the *hsiao* of Meng Chuang Tzu that other men might be able to match it, but that, as regards his way of not replacing his father's ministers nor deviating from his policy, they would find that difficult to manage.⁴⁷

The conservative aspect of Confucianism can helpfully be understood in the light of such passages on *huo* and *hsiao*. Major changes in the *tao* that governs a given community may be taken to be *prima facie* undesirable as such, because such a change constitutes a betrayal of the commitments of the past. The viciousness of a radical break with tradition thus parallels the viciousness of being *huo*. The sort of case cited here, it will be recalled, was where, for instance, love and a desire for someone's good are displaced at moments of anger by hate and a desire for his ill fortune. Just as the unity and harmony of the self is fractured and damaged by such jointly unsatisfiable and conflicting impulses, so the unity and continuity of a social group is marred by deviation from the traditional order. Charitably understood, Confucius' rigorous insistence on filial loyalty can be seen as a deepening of that norm of stability of which my preceding chapters have made so much.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ *Analects*, I, 11. The last sentence is repeated at IV, 20.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, XIX, 18.

⁴⁸ Compare Conrad (1963, p430) on Mrs Gould:

10.7. The authority Confucius accords to *li* is enormous:

Yen Yüan asked about *jen*. The Master said, "To bring one's self to order and return to *li* is to be *jen*. If, for a single day, one brought one's self to order and returned to *li*, the whole world would recognize one as *jen*. Being *jen* comes from oneself, not from others."

Yen Yüan said, "May I ask you to specify further?" The Master said, "Do not regard what is not *li*. Do not hear what is not *li*. Do not utter what is not *li*. Make no movement that is not *li*."

Given his attachment to tradition, it is clear why Confucius should have accorded *li* this authority as the embodiment of human values. It also comes across that he did not see those same values as answerable to some source external to humanity. His ethical *humanism* appeared to run deep:

Man is able to shape the *tao*. The *tao* cannot shape man.⁴⁹

It had come into her mind that for life to be large and full, it must contain the care of the past and of the future in every passing moment of the present. Our daily work must be done to the glory of the dead and for the good of those who come after.

⁴⁹ Ibid., XV, 29. The verb in the Chinese literally means "broaden". I *don't* think Confucius means the *tao* doesn't "shape" us in the way Taylor (1989, chapter 2) thinks it does. After all the *chiün tzu* is "given shape by *li*". Rather that its shaping us is ultimately just a way in which we shape ourselves. We are constitutive of it in a more

The *tao* is shaped by the human beings to whom it is proper and is not something that is legislated for us from without. Outside actual human interests and inherited values there is no Archimedean point that furnishes a standard by which these may be judged (cf. chapter 3 above).⁵⁰

When men follow a *tao* that is far from men, it is not the *tao*.⁵¹

Such a recognition highlights again that contingency and fragility of all human commitments that, as noted above, is apt to seem disturbing when such views are contrasted with more "objective" conceptions of value.⁵² Recognizing this contingency may well seem to undermine those very commitments and suck us into a kind of shoulder-shrugging relativism that leaves us puzzling what *authority* inheres in a given

basic sense than it of us. Cf. Marx (*Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Introduction- 1975, p244):

Man makes religion. Religion does not make man.

⁵⁰ Cf. Taylor, "What is Human Agency?" in his 1985. It is tempting to relate the Confucian conception of a *tao* that is not far from men to the Aristotelian conception of a *telos* proper to man (see in particular *Nicomachean Ethics*, I, 7). The similarity is perhaps tenuous, but on the thought that goodness is necessarily bound up with human interests and desires, see further Hampshire, "Ethics: A Defence of Aristotle" in his 1972.

⁵¹ *Chung Yung*, chapter 13. My translation.

⁵² Cf. Smith, 1989.

set of values that could make the project of transmitting and sustaining it as important as Confucius took it to be. This we noted was a fundamental objection levelled by the Mohists.

But were extreme relativism a position we might be tempted by were we to attempt to view evaluative questions from, as it were, the "point of view of the universe", it ceases to look quite so eligible once it is realized that there is no such point of view for us to occupy and that rigid strong evaluations play an essential role in the way our ethical thought operates.

The sort of conservatism I am discussing here has, needless to say, a rather small "c"- we are concerned rather with a philosophical account of value than with any specific ideological stance, where the former tells us where to look for the standards by which the latter may be appraised. It is a position on which, rejecting Mackie's dichotomy⁵³, morality is neither *invented* nor *discovered*. In Burke's words, "no new discoveries are made in morality".⁵⁴ Moralities are not amenities such that we might look forward to the "invention" of novel moralities and the obsolescence of our own in the sanguine way we might with technological innovation. Such sanguineness would contradict our present sincere commitment to our own *actual* values. This is not, as we will see below, to say that our actual values are simply *indefeasible*. Rather that the *constraints* on defeasibility are of a different order in the moral case. It is no essential part of our factual *beliefs* to feel any *pro tanto* disquiet at the prospect of their supersession. With imputations of *value* it is.

One aspect of the distinction between fact and value, it may now be suggested, is just that while *facts* are what we may look to scientific researchers to surprise us with, for *values* it may be more proper to look to a more humanistic category of teacher, of

⁵³ From the subtitle of his 1977.

⁵⁴ Burke, 1968, p102. cf. 3.8 above and the passages from Walzer there cited.

which Confucius furnished China with an ideal, to prevent us from *forgetting*.⁵⁵

Returning for a moment to utopian fiction, recall how the political culture of 1984 was founded precisely upon collective oblivion.⁵⁶ In the case of both fact and value there is a possibility of learning, but the learning in the case of values is humanistic rather than experimental in character- that, incidentally, being plausibly basic to the humanities having much point.

The *tao*, as Confucius conceived it, is embodied in the actual ethical attitudes, practices and institutions of human beings and its survival is contingent upon that continuing embodiment. In one of Borges' essays reference is made to:

the fable that says humanity always includes thirty-six just men- the lamed Vovniks- who do not know each other but who secretly sustain the universe.⁵⁷

The idea this attractive fable suggests, that for goodness to be possible, there must always be at least some good men, seems also to be a Confucian one:

Kung-sun Ch'ao of Wei questioned Tzu Kung, saying, "How did Chung-ni [i.e. Confucius] get his learning?"

Tzu Kung said, "The *tao* of Wen and Wu [legendary Sage kings] has not yet fallen to the ground. It is present among men. The intelligent

⁵⁵ Cf. *Analects*, II, 11; VII, 1; VII, 28; XIV, 12; XIX, 5.

⁵⁶ Such institutionalized oblivion is indeed a strikingly common feature of pessimistic utopian fiction. Compare the book-burning firemen of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* or the censored dictionaries of Jean-Luc Godard's *Alphaville*.

⁵⁷ 1964, p34,

remember the great things and the unintelligent the small things. No one is devoid of the *tao* of Wen and Wu. How could our Master have failed to get his learning?"⁵⁸

The Master said of Tzu-chien: "A man such as this is truly a *chün tzu*. If there were no *chün tzu* in Lu how could he have accomplished this?"⁵⁹

As regards ethics we should precisely not follow Locke in his repudiation of argument *ad verecundiam*. For where it is a question of values, returning to the starting point of chapter 3, Plato in the *Meno* was, in a sense he did not quite intend, right after all. Knowledge is indeed recollection. The Way is sustained by being walked upon.⁶⁰

10.8. Tradition and convention is then one source of evaluative argument and quite properly so, *pace* Hare. However, given the force of the kind of hedonistic considerations characterized in the preceding chapter, it is not plausibly the *only* one. We have seen throughout how desires, tastes and other such relatively crude responses differ from values in a stronger sense through such facets as impersonality (chapter 4), wholeheartedness (chapter 9) and rigidity (this chapter). Nonetheless they remain in fundamental ways *of a kind with* such other responses for reasons mainly rehearsed in chapters 3 and 4. Given this, something will plausibly be wrong in any society whose values are over-scornful of the desires, interests and needs of their members, wrong,

⁵⁸ *Analects*, XIX, 22.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, V, 3.

⁶⁰ *Chuang Tzu*, chapter 2.

moreover, by that society's *own* lights, given only that something like stability of response and attitude is valued there.

Certain interests and concerns indeed are almost universal. We all (or almost all) prefer pleasure to pain, success to failure, participation to exclusion, love and companionship to isolation, health and longevity to illness and death. If such concerns are of a kind with other values, it is fair to say things are amiss when prevailing ethical and moral conventions push in directions strongly opposed to them. So that the communitarian considerations marshalled above do not leave us at a loss to make sense of such moral alienation as must take issue with, say, slavery or female circumcision to take relatively uncontroversial (to us, here, now) examples. As MacIntyre puts it, discussing Marx:

Appeal to moral principles against some existing state of affairs is always an appeal against the limits of that form of society; to appeal against that form of society we must find a vocabulary which does not presuppose its existence. Such a vocabulary one finds in the form of expression of wants and needs which are unsatisfiable within the existing society, wants and needs which demand a new social order.⁶¹

The upshot is that evaluative argument is seen to have not *one* source but *two*. First there are the utilitarian considerations that arise from stability of response in the way described in chapter 9. But, secondly, these are constrained by our rigid identification with actual values that tell us *any old* happiness is not enough, there are utilities and utilities, higher and lower pleasures. Indeed not, in a way, two sources but many. For our society is not a hypertraditional one and the questions, "Which

⁶¹ 1966, p213.

tradition?", "Whose conventions?" and indeed "Who exactly are we?" are quick to press upon us when we move from theory to practice.

Given a norm of stability things are as they should be when there is a reasonable *match* between the desires of individuals, the values embraced by individuals and the goals and values embodied in tradition and convention. *Alienation* is the state of crisis, social or personal, that arises when this fails to happen. To the extent that this is so, one of the criteria by which we may assess which desires and values it is best to have is just their *aptness to promote such match*. A Confucian norm of deference to the inherited values of a community is one thing to which this criterion points. But we are not left with a fossilized conventionalism. For it *also* points to a norm, or set of norms, whereby the conventions themselves may be assessed in terms of whether they are of a kind apt to be internalized and embraced by normal, natural, rational human agents. "Normal", "natural", "rational" and "human" are all here undisguisedly and unashamedly evaluative terms invoking values held by ourselves and by those with whom we can share a common evaluative vocabulary. There is no circularity for we are pursuing coherence and accommodation, not reduction.

There is then a *pro tanto* case for me to seek, albeit critically, to internalize the values of my social milieu within my own subjective economy of desires and interests. From the point of view of society this is something to be achieved by means of the education of my desires and emotions into conformity with what it recognizes as the good.

To bring one's self to order and return to *li* is to be *jen*...Being *jen* comes from oneself, not from others.

It is also however a state of affairs that stands to be promoted by my society's values themselves being such as to invite conformity. We have here a further substantive

evaluative conclusion that may be seen as a child of stability. For, given such stability, that coincidence of internal and external, of subjective and conventional alluded to above may be seen as itself a good. And certain sorts of evaluative position on the part both of individual and society are plausibly *more apt* to promote such match or coincidence than others.

By recognizing a dual basis for our evaluations we lose in simplicity but gain in plausibility. Insisting that any old happiness is not enough does away with the difficulties that plague the monistic utilitarian- be they Rachels' deluded Womag, Huxley's cheerful genetically engineered work-units, Smart and Nozick's neurally titillated dreamers or the basic questions of distributive justice. The roles played by tradition and convention as well as the fundamental status of found goodness, meet, given the right sort of stability, the problem of explaining evaluative defeasibility that bedevils the more simple-minded subjectivist. And the insistence that commonly held values are open to appraisal, again given the right sort of stability, in terms of their aptness to promote match with the values and desires of individuals and by a moral bottom line of respect for human welfare, together with the rigidifying move employed in interpreting strongly evaluative claims, meet the challenge to a simple conventionalism of explaining how a *whole society* might be imagined to stray from the right moral tracks.

What is being said then is, I hope, plausible metaethics. It explains how, given stability of response, moral arguments are even possible. But it is also perhaps disappointing ethics. For it does not pretend to adumbrate a theoretical perspective from which such argument can be at all straightforwardly resolvable. In this regard two sources of moral argument is perhaps one too many in the absence of some formula for dealing with conflict between them and I have none to offer. For ambitious moral theorists with a love of desert landscapes, this conclusion may be disappointing but I take it to be correct.

10.9. In view of this let us return to the issue of moral authority again adopting Confucian terms of reference. Consider the man alienated from the values of those around him.⁶² Suppose him to value those things Confucius appears to have valued—*shu* (reciprocity), *jen* (humanity, benevolence) and *ching* (reverence). To have such values is to have values rooted in human community, in human interests, in benevolence and in the recognition of the competing attitudes of others as commensurable in urgency precisely with one's own. Such values demand a search for accommodation with one's culture that seems to carry with it a degree of obligation to respect the very values from which one may be alienated. Likewise a culture that is characterized by such values must regard just such alienation as an evil and should seek on its own part similar accommodations with those who find themselves so excluded.

One's recourse, when so alienated, is, in the first instance, to that recognition of others *shu*, *jen* and *ching* demand; and it is, I would propose, in the dialectics of such mutual recognition that the felt defeasibility of the individual's moral attitudes is best located.

Tzu-yu said, "In serving a prince, to be going on and on at him is to invite disgrace. To be going on and on at one's friends is to invite estrangement."⁶³

⁶² Such alienation poses a serious problem for a simple form of conventionalism. Thus it is instructive to note the rather heavy weather Lovibond (1983) makes of this matter.

⁶³ *Analects*, IV, 26. Cf. also XI, 23, XIV, 17, XIX, 10.

In the service of one's parents, remonstrance should be mild. If you perceive them unwilling to come into line, you should remain reverent (*ching*), obedient and diligent. You should not be resentful.⁶⁴

When, as here, Confucius makes so much of filiality (*hsiao*), we are likely to be detained by a highly local version of the alienation problem: what his outlook can say to a son who has a thoroughly awful father- does this son owe anything to his father's *tao*? The answer that best fits my reading of Confucius would emphasize the same considerations of accommodation, mutual recognition and deference that seem central to his thought. It would proceed by asking of such a person, "Awful by whose lights?" And if the answer is "my own", then that, to a Confucian ear, will have a wholly unsatisfactory ring. For the whole point of Confucian ethics is its emphasis on deference to and recognition of the lights of others in the shaping of one's own. "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool". And the lights of a father enjoy, at least for Confucius, a privileged status among the lights from which one might, in principle, choose.

One's recourse, in the second instance, is to that ordering and rectifying of the self that is the basis of that *te* (very roughly "virtue") whereby that same order is communicated to those who surround one. Thus the alienated man can hope, by becoming good, to end his alienation and acquire "neighbours".⁶⁵ So at XI, 21, Confucius says:

To combat the evil in yourself, not that in others: isn't this how to transform corruption?

⁶⁴ Ibid., IV, 18.

⁶⁵ Ibid., IV, 25.

Moral authority does not, on such a view, adhere to the arbitrary attitudes of the individual's will, but rather to the attitudes of an individual whose emotions have been educated and ordered into conformity with complex patterns of deference and respect such as are expressed and sustained in the ritual and institutional order of a well-functioning society. The man who "loves learning" "attends upon such as possess the *tao* and is rectified."⁶⁶ Possessed of such culture a man is then empowered to transmit it to those about him who may well be his pupils, progeny, political subjects. He is also competent to adopt *critical* attitudes to the institutional and ritual order he sees about him, as Confucius in fact did. He may seek accommodation with those from whom he differs but the *tao* he follows will set limits to that accommodation. Likewise he may, the more he deepens his ethical culture, exercise this critical capacity in thinking things through for himself. But this autonomy is always exercised against a background of deference to the tradition that nurtured it and its canonical texts. The *chün tzu* "is in awe of the words of sages" which the "small man" mocks.⁶⁷

10.10. It may be instructive to recall Saul, discussed above, whose adulterous inclinations were confined to Tuesdays. Various strategies are available to Saul which are instructive here. Firstly *of course* he might adopt what we might, recalling the Sirens, call a *Ulysses strategy*⁶⁸, spending Wednesday to Monday seeking ways to ensure that, on Tuesdays, adulterous opportunities do *not* come his way. But it is unlikely that this will always be feasible.

⁶⁶ Ibid., I, 14. Cf. I, 6; I, 8; IX, 25; XV, 10; XVI, 4.

⁶⁷ Ibid., XVI, 8.

⁶⁸ A classic discussion is Elster, 1984, chapter II.

Secondly, although we have supposed that, on Tuesday, he has no *principled* objection to adultery, he may still have an *instrumental* objection. For he may still be averse on Tuesdays to actions which will distress him, for whatever reason, on other days. Given enough stability to interest his Tuesday self in the well-being and the values of his more normal self even without directly sharing those values, this might prove enough to restrain him from actions he will later prefer not to have done. This strategy is *deferential*. On Tuesdays he does not embrace certain values but at other times he does- as no doubt does his wife. So because both these people matter to him, he *respects* those of their values that he does not currently *share*.⁶⁹

Thirdly, he might seek to *disassociate* himself from his Tuesday self. This is likely to be a desperate strategy if carried to any length. The temporal parts of himself are just too intimate to make this possible. They have the same life, the same job, the same friends and, of course, the same wife. Will he, so disassociated, take his Tuesday self's amorous behaviour as cuckolding his "other" self? Will he seek consistency through the week in the lies he tells his wife, the promises he makes to his mistress?

The strategy of disassociation is hopeless for similar reasons to those that make the deferential strategy possible. His temporal parts are too mutually bound up institutionally and physically for instability in their responses and attitudes not to be undesirably pragmatically disruptive in ways akin to those described at 9.1 above. Divergence in values between the lonely immortals described there is a problem for no one. Divergence between the temporal parts of Saul is a problem for everyone concerned with him. Once there is *enough* convergence between them, enough stability

⁶⁹ Saul's problems would be increased of course if on Tuesdays he was not only unaverse to adultery but had a strongly evaluative commitment to it. This would make the pursuit of mutual accommodation between his temporal parts harder and his result no doubt more compromised but that need not make it any the less a good for him.

amongst them to make a certain mutually deferential and accomodating attitude to each others' values and desires a good for them, then that convergence may become self-reinforcing as the pursuit of more of it becomes itself one of Saul's values.

The values that drive the strategy of deference are relatively thin, relatively free of qualitative distinctions: a broadly contractualist recognition of the goods of accomodation and broadly utilitarian concern for his own and others' welfare. Such values are apt to be most prominent in cases like this when values are in some state of crisis- in situations of conflict and confrontation between sharply divergent values. When mutually contemptible parties share the same small space and get sick of fighting, strongly evaluative qualitative distinctions may play little part, and properly so, in the bargaining principles on which they are able to agree. But this is not the *only* situation to which moral theory is concerned to do justice and its workings do not show values that are thin in this way to be either all we have or what we should settle for.

10.11. Where have we got? Is all this intended as a defence of evaluative anti-realism? Up to a point, yes. Evaluative anti-realism is right *insofar as* it refuses to recognize any sort of objective values that transcend actual human attitudes and responses or to measure the latter, taken collectively, against anything other than themselves. It is right to in recognizing an essential non-descriptive ingredient in evaluative language, world-word in its direction of fit, alongside what may be a highly entrenched descriptive one. And it is right to deny the role of values in the "furniture of the universe" where this denial is taken to exclude values from any general involvement in the wider causal order that is the provenance of physical science. So we are left both with mind-dependence and non-cognitivism.

As to whether the anti-realist is right to deny, as some have, all claim to such other marks of truth as groundedness and defeasibility, then that, it has been the role in

particular of later chapters to suggest, is something that depends to a great extent upon the *content* of our values themselves. There *could be* creatures for whom all evaluative responses were as simple and as rationally irresponsible as responses of nausea. Such creatures would not be guilty of any metaphysical or logical mistake. But given a certain stability in what we value- stability₁- and given, crucially, our placing a certain value on that very stability, - in effect stability₂- and depending on the degree to which this takes place, our evaluative thought will indeed be apt to structure itself in ways that lend it to interpretations that are "objective"- not in some transcendent platonistic sense, but in allowing a distinction to be made between what somebody does value and what they should were their competence greater than it is, the sort of distinction I take to pose a problem for the sort of crude subjectivism that has by now, presumably, been left far behind.

Given such stability a complex picture emerges in which we may see ourselves to have reasons to give weight to two sorts of consideration, roughly *utilitarian*, as motivated mainly in chapter 9 and *conventionalist*, as motivated mainly in the present chapter: we have reason, of a utilitarian kind to value just whatever (*nonrigidly*) is *valued, as well as* reason of another kind to value whatever (*rigidly*) is valued. We value what *we* value and *we* are creatures very unlike the denizens of either Atlantis or Utilitas.

We should then, I suggest, dispense with the insistence, well stated by Michael Smith, that:

so long as we can imagine some *hypothetical* rational creature to whom we cannot justify our moral beliefs, the search for reasons in support of them is in place. Thus, we may say, moral beliefs seem to be beliefs about some non-relative fact of the matter and the search for reasons in support of our moral beliefs seems to be the search for reasons that

would convince rational creatures *as such* to take on such beliefs for themselves.⁷⁰

The sort of insistence found in Foot and repeated above by myself that this is not so, that our values lack the sort of privileged rational defence Kant sought to provide by the categorical imperative, is condemned as leaving our values simply *arbitrary*:

as to be explained rather than justified; as to be explained, in much the same way that loving Leningrad is to be explained, simply in terms of *when, where and how we were brought up*.⁷¹

The rigidifying move deployed above is considered by Smith and deemed inadequate to this difficulty:

it does nothing to remove [...] the arbitrariness of the dislike that is the source of the unease. After all, in another world I dislike myself in this world for not caring only for myself. How *peculiar* each of these attitudes seems in the context on the other! Far more plausible is the idea that my actual attitude towards myself in worlds in which I don't care for justice is itself dependent upon my belief that I am, in the actual world, possessed of a *justification* for caring for justice.⁷²

⁷⁰ Michael Smith, 1989, p99. The Leningrad example comes from Foot's "Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives" in her 1978.

⁷¹ Smith, 1989, p103.

⁷² Ibid., p105.

What Smith is here demanding I take to be wrongheaded. There is actually far from being *nothing* I can do to justify my interest in justice. But that is just the point- that there is *actually* far from nothing. For I actually have the values I actually do and to some extent indeed (depending on the precise extension of "we") the values *we* actually do. And, given adequate stability and coherence among these, it might well be realistically hoped that some ingredient of this set of values- my interest in justice say- is open to justification in terms of those *other* values that form its background. But it is quite another thing to suppose there to be some transcendent Archimedean standpoint point from which my (and our) actual values are open to a justification that may appeal to *none* of them. There is not.

There is nothing for us to appeal to *vis à vis* the *phenomenology* of our evaluative thought that could plausibly be supposed to back up the sort of strongly objective conclusions Smith seems to be endorsing. For all such phenomenological appeals can deliver is considerations relating to our actual practice, the way we actually think and argue about values. And we are simply never called upon to engage in evaluative argument with Martians, Daleks, or any other species of rational *possibilia*. The phenomenology of value does indeed powerfully impel us in the direction of the unambitious form of objectivity defended above. But that I take it is all it does. And again, it may be stressed that this is not a point about values that generalizes across worlds. It is a point purely about *our* values. In a culture with minimal stability there is, in effect, minimal objective phenomenology of value. And indeed *minimal objectivity*. The metaethical conclusions about value we have reached fail to be independent of the forms of value we happen to have.

We are left then with the fragility and contingency of the values we hold in virtue of being the sorts of creatures we in fact are and having the cultural milieu we in fact do. Of course both we and our values might have been different. Many of these possibilities might well strike us as pretty dreadful but it is idle to think some

transcendent or absolute standpoint available from which to justify such judgements of relative dreadfulness. Nor does this unavailability detract from our possession of excellent conceptual resources for justifying this judgement *to ourselves*. Ultimately indeed, it may be suggested, our sense of what it is we value in being the sorts of creature we are is inseparable from our rigid identification with the kind of values precisely such creatures espouse.

Appreciating music is a manifestation of the life of mankind.⁷³

I can't live among birds and beasts as if we were of a kind. If I do not associate with these human beings, whom would that leave? While the *tao* can be found in the world, I will not change my place with him [i.e., the hermit Chieh Ni].⁷⁴

Well, maybe man should get rid of himself. Of course. If he can. But also he has something in him which he feels it important to continue. Something that deserves to go on. It is something that has to go on and we also know it. The spirit feels cheated, outraged, defiled, corrupted, fragmented, injured. Still it knows what it knows and the knowledge cannot be gotten rid of. the spirit knows that its growth is the real aim of its existence. So it seems to me. Besides, mankind cannot be something else.⁷⁵

⁷³ Wittgenstein, 1980, p70. Cf. 5.8 above.

⁷⁴ *Analects*, XVIII, 6.

⁷⁵ Artur Sammler in Saul Bellow's 1971, p189.

When men follow a *tao* that is far from men, it is not the *tao*.

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