

THE MORAL LIFE AND THE ETHICAL LIFE

Eliseo Vivas

With an Introduction by
Joseph Wood Krutch



Cursed is every man that has hope in man.

JER. 17:5

No one can suffice to himself either for beginning or for completing any good work.

ST. AUGUSTINE

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Joseph Wood Krutch.

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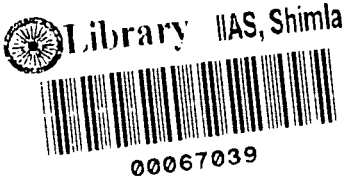
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For
DOROTHY

PREFACE

WHAT name shall I give the doctrine propounded in this essay on moral philosophy? Had not the name been pre-empted by a distinguished school of philosophy I would have liked to call my central affiliation "personalistic," since one of the cardinal ideas of this essay is that "person" is an axiological and not a "scientific" category, in the positivistic sense of the term "science." But personalists in the United States stem from a tradition to which I am somewhat alien. I have learned a great deal from them, for which I am deeply grateful; but I do not have the right to enlist under their banner without giving them the chance to pass on my credentials and to reject me if they see fit.

I would have liked also to call myself an "empiricist." I have tried to keep my eyes on the facts of the moral life, and when my own experience seemed limited, I did not hesitate to go not only to the moralists but even to the theologians and to the poets. I believe that experience is the plasma of relevant, meaningful thinking. However, the term "empiricist" would be even more misleading than the term "personalist." I would use it in a homely, nontechnical way, but it has been pre-empted by men given to methodolatrous, a priori lucubrations about the possibility of extending the methods of the positive sciences to all fields of human interest. The result is a positivistic scientism which seems to me to be inimical to the humanistic liberality of mind which I believe we have the right to demand of students of philosophy.

I would like to call myself an "existentialist" in

the sense in which Kierkegaard used the term, because I share his distrust of academic systems. But today the term designates, in the mind of the educated public, a philosophy which is imported from Paris and which is supposed to be gloomy and must, therefore, be false. In fairness to this philosophy and to myself, I would not want to be identified with it. I do not object to its alleged gloominess, since I have nothing but the deepest contempt for the shallow, Philistine optimism of our world; but I object to Sartre's atheism and his total lack of "Christian" love. All I would mean by the term "existentialism" is the refusal to allow the content of human experience to be sacrificed to any purely intellectual ideal, even that of clarity. Clarity or any other intellectual ideal is a desirable quality of thought, but the clarity which is today the ideal of positivistic and analytic philosophy seems to me nothing but thinness of content.

I am forced, however, to call myself something, because a man who does not insist on a label of his own invention—any kind of label, so long as it is of his own choosing—is merely inviting those with whom he disagrees to break his bones with the names they will choose for him. Let me therefore call myself an "axiological realist"—the term is vague enough not to cramp my growth if there is any in store for me, and yet damaging enough in the eyes of those with whom I disagree to meet their needs for an epithet. I believe that the moral man *discovers* the values he espouses, in the same way in which the scientist or the logician discovers the laws of his science. There is a difference, of course, between the laws of nature and laws of morality and of logic, but the difference does not concern us here. Values are real and have status in

being antecedent to our discovery of them; this is what I mean when I say that they have "ontic status." They are a peculiar kind of fact, since they possess "requiredness" to which we respond, and it is this aspect of value that is the source of the moral imperative. Human beings are animals, but they are also endowed with personality; and it is their possession of personality that marks the radical distinction between them and the other animals. By "person" I do not mean what is meant by the term in the dawning science of "personality," in which psychologists and social scientists are beginning to be interested. In my terminology the only aspect of man that positive science can study is the "self." The human self is a valuing animal, but that he ought to value this rather than that is something which positive science cannot tell him. A "person" is constituted by the values which the self espouses and which he is able to espouse because the spirit which inheres in him is capable of objectivity, whereas the selves of the lower animals are not.

I do not know whether I have borrowed some of these ideas and the way in which they have been elaborated; perhaps I have borrowed all of them. My concern is not with being original but with doing justice to essential facts of the moral life which naturalistic philosophers misconceive or ignore.

Some ten or twelve years ago I began to see that the philosophy which until then I had uncritically accepted and which I thought of as the "new naturalism" could not give an adequate account of certain dimensions of human experience which circumstances suddenly thrust within my purview. For a few years after I began to suspect the inade-

quacy of naturalism, I continued to think of myself as a naturalist; I could not see the validity of any alternative and vainly hoped that the leaders of the naturalistic movement would acknowledge the need to broaden their vision. I took seriously what the founders of contemporary naturalism have said about the need for the progressive correction of empirical truth. I therefore expected that the social crisis which came to a head with the holocaust of World War II would lead to a rebirth of philosophy; and I hoped that the limited insights of the American philosophies (the idealisms no less than the naturalisms) which developed in the age of the "Robber Barons," with their shallow vitalistic optimism, would be enlarged in the light of the tragic experience of our own days. It is natural that until our day American philosophy should have neglected the tragic dimension of experience; neither a man nor a people can take tragedy seriously in the optimistic flush of youthful expansion. But since 1932, or at least since the last years of the thirties, we cannot plead, as an excuse for juvenile innocence, the limitations of our happy experience. Hitler, Franco, Stalin, and physicists and bacteriologists have forced us to look at the reality behind the optimistic mask of our history.

My hope that naturalism would broaden its horizons was vain. What at last led me to take the difficult step of giving up my old intellectual loyalties and losing many loved friends—for I knew that they would not forgive me my defection—was the conviction which slowly gripped me that the limitations of naturalism spring from a peculiar anesthesia from which naturalists suffer, which is shared in greater or lesser degree today by all those men who refuse, as they put it, to lose their nerve

and who have no radical quarrel with the secularistic direction of the *Zeitgeist*. It was not merely a question of insensibility to the tragic dimension of existence; it was something deeper and more extensive, although more vague. My quarrel with the naturalists, I came clearly to see, is the quarrel of a man radically opposed to the present drift of historical events and therefore unsympathetic with those who employ their talent in the manufacture of an apologetic for the direction of contemporary history. I would not for a minute pretend solidarity with men who do not realize that one of the essential marks of decency today is to be ashamed of being a man of the twentieth century. No one can, of course, advocate turning back toward the Middle Ages. So far as students of philosophy are concerned, all I advocate is that they do not play yes men to the age but that they assume the role of critics of it, since this is the ineluctable duty of anyone who takes his thinking seriously.

Once I clearly perceived that at the heart of naturalism is to be found an inability to grasp the meaning of certain essential aspects of human experience, I began to search for a better philosophy. I searched in books that I had until then more or less consciously neglected and in authors whom I had arrogantly spurned or whom, if I had read, I had misunderstood. Ravenously hungry, I swallowed fast and greedily; and, because I was reading against time and for the sake of something infinitely more important to me than my "scholarship" and because the last thing that I then had in mind was the preparation of a book, I do not now remember how much I borrowed from each of the books I then read. There must be many writers whom I have more or less forgotten and

from whom I must have helped myself generously. But there are some to whom I feel that my debt is so large that I cannot help being constantly aware of it. Bergson, whose *Two Sources* I did not seriously read until 1940, was the first to show me the basic importance of the distinction between what I now call "the moral life" and "the ethical life." In so far as I had grasped it in my naturalistic days, in the form of the Kantian disjunction between the hypothetical and categorical imperatives, I had done my best to deny the validity of the distinction. The problems to which Bergson's dichotomy gave rise led me back to Kant's moral philosophy, for which I had always had a grudging admiration in my naturalistic days. Kierkegaard, whom I began to read passionately in the late thirties, pointed out to me the importance of the concept of the "crisis" for the completion of human experience. Dostoevski showed me that the inward reality of faith is compatible with an absolutely clear grasp of the problem of evil. Berdyaev and Francisco Romero taught me the importance of the category "person," and Scheler and Hartmann helped me to rid myself of the naturalistic prejudice that denies ontic status to value. Professor Brand Blanshard's powerful dialectic ripped off what remained of my dogmatic behaviorism. From Kafka I learned the limitations of positivistic empiricism for those who take one of the essential tasks of philosophy to be, as I do, the definition of the destiny of man. Bernanos first, and St. Augustine afterward, helped me to recollect what constitutes the inwardness of the religious experience, with which, as an adolescent, I had been intimately acquainted but toward which, as I came close to my twenties, I became hardened and indifferent. From a historian—because I must con-

fess that I am as little ashamed to learn from historians about my problems as I am from storytellers and poets—I learned what the most serious and urgent task of philosophy is; it was not until I read Cochrane's *Christianity and Classical Culture* that the relation which I had always vaguely believed to hold between history and philosophy became fully clear to me. And from Urban first, and from Cassirer afterward, I learned the limitations of positivistic semiotics.

But to consider influences and debts and to make acknowledgments to writers whose books have helped me is to tell half the story. I have learned as much from direct contact with my honest teachers or with my colleagues and friends—including those of my students who have honored me by demanding my best from me—as I have from books.

To my wife, Dorothy Gant Vivas, I would not attempt to express the fulness of my debt. Not only did she maintain the home conditions essential to the student and help me unsparingly with the merely mechanical labors of composition, but she encouraged me daily and with her perspicuous criticism helped me avoid philosophic blunders and forced me to improve on statements that were not adequate to my intentions and on ideas that were inchoate. To many of my colleagues at the Ohio State University I am also deeply indebted. If this essay has value, I know how much I owe those who have generously helped. Its faults and shortcomings arise from the limitations of the writer.

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PREFACE

TO THE GATEWAY EDITION

THE publication of *The Moral Life and The Ethical Life* in this edition, so generously introduced by Mr. Joseph Wood Krutch, does not call for extended comment on the author's part, beyond the expression of his satisfaction that his work is joining a distinguished company. But it does furnish the opportunity to alert the reader as to what he may expect to find in the book and what cannot be found in it.

What the book tries to do is to examine the theoretical ground on which we sometimes resolve radical moral conflicts morally. And this demands of the writer that he keep his eye on the facts of the moral life as he encounters them—as they are encountered in the world of men, in actual living, here or there, now or then; bearing in mind that the moral schemes of different groups of men differ widely.

You are writing, a friend who read the book in manuscript commented, a *phenomenology* of moral experience. Yes, he had it right, and I had not been unaware of it. But since the word "phenomenology" has a fairly well defined acceptance in philosophy, and I could not pretend any sympathy for what Husserl and his disciples have been trying to do, I did not think it advisable to employ the term. But if by the term "phenomenology" be meant an examination of the phenomena of moral experience as it appears to an honest observer

who, considering it as carefully as he can, seeks to discover what is implicitly assumed when man judges and acts morally, then the term applies to what I am trying to do. But if this is what the term "phenomenology" refers to, it should be noted that all moral philosophers have been phenomenologists. For until recently, when they began to turn their attention exclusively to linguistic problems in England and the United States, this is what they have always been interested in.

Thus in the case of the moral judgment, I examine how men seek to validate, or justify, or establish the acceptability of their moral judgments. This task is usually performed today under the head of "the logic of value judgments." I sought to describe what principles are appealed to and how the judgment is either declared acceptable or is rejected. But I kept close to the data of moral experience and to the complexity of the actual entanglements that we encounter when we men seek to arrive at a moral solution of our moral perplexities. The discussion could have achieved greater elegance, in an utterly specious way, and thus could have met more adequately the demands of the current fashion of the schools, had I been more abstract, had I simplified the data, and had I introduced symbols. But that would have been merely to pay court to the methodolatry that I so strongly condemned in the first part of the original book.

In order to explain how men occasionally—rarely, if you will, but sometimes—resolve radical conflicts morally, I assumed or posited, what in the book I call "the ontic status of value." It seems desirable here to give the reader some indication of what I tried to do in respect to a notion that I knew well in advance of the publication of the book

would be rejected by the reigning orthodoxy in contemporary American philosophy.

By the phrase "the ontic status of value" I mean—as explained in the Preface to the original edition—that values do not only appear to be objective, do not only appear to be aspects of things or persons "out there," as much as colors, say, or sounds, but that they have a status in being independent of our apprehension of them. Thus I take the high road of Western orthodoxy in respect to value. But with a difference. The difference is that I think I know well the difficulties the ontic hypothesis—as we may call it—has to overcome today. I shall not review here either the grounds that led me to accept it or the difficulties that the hypothesis encounters. Enough to say that I do not believe that the hypothesis can be demonstrated directly or proved in the way, say, that the Darwinian hypothesis as to the fact (not the factors) of evolution can be proved. The only argument that can be adduced in favor of the ontic hypothesis is that it gives a better account than any I am acquainted with of what I take to be the whole range of moral experience.

The hypothesis as to the ontic status of value marks perhaps the deepest difference between contemporary naturalistic philosophy (on which I animadverted in Part I of the original edition of this book) and my views. For the issue finally comes down to what constitutes the stuff or substance of moral experience and whether or no the speculations of the moral philosopher must be controlled by the results of a scientific metaphysic that men have been struggling to free themselves from since its very inception, with the beginning of modern science. The reasons for rejecting the belief that values are part of the structure of reality do not emerge from

the speculations of those moral philosophers who reject it; they are imported by them into their task. They emerge out of ontological concerns of thinkers who acknowledge the primacy of science for all philosophizing. Just as naturalists had not reckoned with the tragic dimension of living until criticism forced them to, and just as they have not yet reckoned with the heroic, and just as they concern themselves with the holy by reduction to moralistic terms, they have no real grasp of the whole of experience. How can men who start from the unshakeable premise that the good is the satisfaction of desire reckon with these data? No doubt some of them are among the finest of men. And they may be good philosophers of their kind. But although they may be, they are not the empiricists they think they are. They are apriorists. In moral philosophy, as in value theory in general, they do not begin with a conviction they have gotten from an examination of moral experience or from actual human experience with value in general. As I have showed elsewhere, the notion that the universe is value free comes from Galileo. It has precious little to do with morality or with the rest of culture; it was derived from the physics of the 17th century, from classical mechanics. Its acceptance is the acceptance of the primacy of natural science in respect to all cognitive activity whatever. But what is this but positivism?

The reasons for the naturalist philosopher's lack of grasp of the data of morality was gradually revealed to me, and some day I must sit down to write the story of how I came to see it, for it is of more than private interest. This is not the place to do it. In any case it is simply not true that the good is the object of desire, as naturalists, following Hobbes and Spinoza, have asserted. The satisfaction of desire, as

Aristotle pointed out, is one of the things we call good. But not the only one. Since I could see that the resolution of radical moral perplexities morally was not possible on the basis of naturalism, and since the experience of my generation forced this problem on the moral philosopher, and since in my own personal experience I had been forced to reckon with this problem, the moral philosophies that naturalists could rear seemed to me parochial, limited, mean, and in the not-so-long-run, incoherent, self-contradictory, for they ended by throwing up their hands when the going got roughest. If a hypothesis like the ontic status of value gave an account of the whole range of moral experience, particularly if it gave any hints at all as to what is involved, at the theoretical level, when men appeal to something other than force in their moral conflicts and when, even though rarely, that appeal is successful, I was not willing to let what I had come to see as a purely scientific prejudice—the dogma of the value free universe—keep me from trying it out. The hypothesis proved its value when it was shown to be the structure to which men appeal more or less explicitly when they seek earnestly to resolve morally radical moral conflicts.

In other words, in so far as there can be any proof of the ontic hypothesis at all, it consists of employing it to develop a systematic account of morality. This development I take to be the objective of moral philosophy conceived as a practical science. Men have—on rare occasions if you will, but sometimes—transcended what, arbitrarily, I call “the moral” plane, with its irresolvable conflicts, and stepped onto what I equally arbitrarily called “the ethical” plane. How is that possible? It is possible, I seek to show in the pages here printed, by positing the ontic status

of value and coming to the realization that the value of the person is the supreme value of the fully moral, the *ethical* man—in the arbitrary terminology I employ.

The proof of the ontic doctrine is to be found, in yet other words, in the dimensions of moral experience that it takes into account. The error of the views I animadverted on consists in the narrowness of the moral data they are able to interpret. I did not think when I wrote the book, and I do not think now, that I was offering a transcendental deduction—*à la* Kant—of the ontic status of value. But that, it would seem, is the least that those who reject the doctrine would be satisfied with—because they know, perhaps, that such deductions are vain. I agree with them; I do not believe Kant brought it off, even on his assumptions, and Kant's way of philosophizing is no more acceptable to me than it is to the naturalists. (His great contribution lies elsewhere.) All I think can be done is to ask myself: What must I assume in order to give a full account of moral experience as I have undergone it in my own life and as I have seen it undergone by others, either in my reading or within the range of my purview? The question forced me to reject *ab initio* the contemporary lust of a neat universe, metaphysically uncluttered, possessing nothing but things, one of which, the featherless biped, possesses a language, in terms of which, and exclusively in terms of which, he can explain himself and the rest of the universe. There may be good reasons for wielding Occam's razor on the, to me, august and revered beard of Plato. These arise in the natural sciences. But human experience as I am acquainted with it in the aesthetic, the moral and the religious modes, furnishes none.

INTRODUCTION

By
Joseph Wood Krutch

THIS is a serious, learned, and searching exploration of some of the most difficult questions which have ever concerned the human mind. It is also tough-minded—in the sense that it recognizes all the difficulties, begs no questions, offers no easy solutions and, unlike conventional protests against modern scepticism, makes no plea for a leap in the dark to an unexamined faith.

No mere introduction can hope to carry the discourse further; to add anything to it; or to refine upon it further. The only function an introduction can perform is to provide a little background for the benefit of a nonprofessional reader who will find himself introduced into the middle of a discourse which, in one form or another, has been going on ever since men began to think. "What are Good and Evil; how may they be recognized; are we free to choose between them; what motives do we have for choosing one rather than the other; what are the rewards and the penalties for right or wrong choices?"

All these questions have been asked in one form or another for as long as we have any record of man the thinker. If there is one thing so persistently characteristic of the human mind that we seem justified in calling it a permanent and inevitable trait of the human being it is just this belief in, and concern with, the question what we ought or ought

not to value, praise, and do. Because there are no questions to which such varied answers have been given, one is tempted to conclude that we are doomed never to get solutions satisfactory for long to problems which we must nevertheless always face.

The simplest solutions are always purely authoritarian. We are told that the revealed will of God, the traditions of our society, or perhaps an infallible inner voice with which we have fortunately been endowed, answers all questions for us. Ours is not to reason why but simply to do what one authority or another commands.

As soon, however, as men have any contacts with other men outside their special group they become aware of rival authorities, and when they do so they either stiffen (as some do even today) into a more intransigent assertion of the legitimacy of the authority they have been accustomed to follow, or they seek in one way or another to demonstrate by an appeal either to history or reason that their authority has a clear claim to recognition.

The only solutions other than the authoritarian which are possible are those which assert the power of the human mind to reach truth, either absolute or approximate, by the exercise of its own powers of observation and reason. At this point there is born that form of metaphysics which is conventionally called "Ethics." Unfortunately, metaphysicians have arrived at conclusions almost as diverse as have those who give their blind allegiance to authority. But at least they can carry on a discourse. There is a meeting of minds such as is not possible between the dogmatic defenders of one authority rather than another.

Perhaps no age before ours has ever stressed so strongly the diversity of the answers which have been given at one time or one place or has so often drawn the nihilistic conclusion that this diversity is sufficient to demonstrate that the questions which metaphysics asks have received no answers because they are, as the proponents of "logical positivism" insist, "meaningless questions." Good and evil, they say, are merely what our society has taught us to believe them to be; only public opinion can enable us to decide which is which; we cannot actually choose between them though we seem to ourselves to be doing so; and there are no penalties or rewards for the right or wrong choice other than those which a society committed to one or the other set of values imposes.

Something like this is certainly the direction in which a great deal of contemporary philosophy, psychology, and sociology has been tending. Stop a mere man in the street and ask him how we know what is good or evil and the chances are that he will reply that everybody knows in his heart and has been told in his church; that there is no problem unless one makes it. But if the man in the street happens to be an intellectual, he is likely to reply, in one way or another, that there is no problem because there is no answer; that, as one psychologist has put it in a widely used textbook, we call a man "moral" when he acts in accordance with the laws and customs of his society—presumably no matter what they are.

Yet if anything is clear from history it is that, seemingly irreconcilable though the answers given have been and obvious as it is that many of them are compatible with a stable and lasting society, the

belief that there *are* true answers and that it is important to seek them has nearly always prevailed unless the society itself was on the point of dissolution. And it seems not unlikely that the deepest cause of the doubt, anxiety and insecurity of our world is the fact that it has tended to surrender to the conviction that the very questions with which men have been most persistently concerned are actually "meaningless."

Many of those who argue that all standards of value are arbitrary and that we cannot actually choose one or the other because our seeming choices are the result of a chain of cause and effect which is part of the "conditioning" to which we have been subjected, are, nevertheless, not ruthless or unprincipled men. With total illogic they are indignant at, for instance, the Nazis who were, by the indignant relativist's own definition, moral men when they exterminated the Jews. Were they not acting in accordance with the laws and traditions of their society? Thus, those who profess not to believe in the reality of the moral refuse to recognize that the very fact that they are continually making the moral judgments they call "meaningless" is a strong indication that man is, whatever his scientific or philosophical convictions, inevitably concerned with moral questions.

If we ever come to act consistently upon the convictions towards which so much philosophy, psychology and sociology have been tending, the result will be a world of intolerable barbarism. Unless we revise those convictions there is danger that we will in time act in accordance with them—as nations, if not most individuals, seem already tending to do. Hence the importance of those who, like Professor Vivas, have returned to the questions because they

believe they have come to seem meaningless only because we have refused to ask them persistently enough; only because we have dismissed too readily the real existence of certain actualities in persistent human experience.

A life either moral or (to accept one of Professor Vivas's unusual distinctions) ethical is possible only if we assume the existence of three things: (1) An integrated and persistent "persona;" (2) some freedom to choose inherent in each human being or persona; (3) good and evil as objective realities having an existence which is not merely either the projection of a subjective state or the customs of a given society.

Yet the tendency of a mainstream of modern science as well as of such quasi-sciences as psychology and sociology has been to question, if not positively deny, the existence of all three of these prerequisites. The unified persona tends to dissolve into a mere shifting configuration of instincts and conditioned responses which has no permanent center. Increasing investigation seems to discover causes which predetermine certain choices seemingly free, until extremists like Professor B. W. Skinner, the Harvard psychologist, can announce dogmatically that "the free inner man who is held responsible for the behavior of the external biological organism is only a pre-scientific substitute for the kinds of causes which are discovered in the course of scientific analysis." As for good and evil and right and wrong considered as permanent objective realities, they have been under attack for so long that anthropologists often assume without argument that "morals are no more than mores or customs."

Professor Vivas faces frankly the fact that if the

persona, the power to choose, and the objective reality of right and wrong have actually been disposed of, then discussions of his topic in terms such as he employs are indeed useless. But he asks what should have been asked long ago; namely, just how conclusive and how complete are the destructive demonstrations and what evidence do we have on the other side? He points out how far beyond the actual evidence the destructive critics go in drawing their conclusions; how completely they fail to recognize that their methods predetermine the kind of information they can collect; how stubbornly they have focused their attention on the variable rather than the permanent characteristics of human thought or behavior; how persistently they have neglected the inner life of the human being whose experience contradicts what he has been told about himself.

Without rejecting the so-called objective study of man as man can be tested and described from the outside, he undertakes to examine the actual processes of the mind as it faces the so-called "meaningless questions," makes the choices it believes itself to be making, and senses the persisting integrity of the individual persona it feels itself to be. Literature, as he points out, is now the only popular form taken by the effort to describe human life in terms which recognize the realities denied by science. And while he bases little of his argument upon literature as such, his philosophical analysis is one which recognizes realities of the sort which literature is compelled to recognize if it is to remain literature at all. He refuses to believe that the methods of science are alone capable of revealing truth and he insists that, on the contrary, "literature is an actual vehicle of important knowledge of the nature of man."

Like the novelist or the poet, he asks us to observe what goes on in the human mind, and though his account is far too wide-ranging and complex to permit summary, certain of his most significant conclusions may be cited as indications of the drift of his thought.

A person becomes a person only when he recognizes certain values, and he becomes "a moral person" only when he not only recognizes but also espouses them. Some of the values which we espouse can be explained in terms of their utility or "survival value" but the demonstrated willingness of certain men to sacrifice even life itself to the values they have espoused is sufficient proof that values are not always explicable in merely biological terms. Faced with the necessity of a moral choice we choose that which, in the long run, we believe likely to produce the deepest satisfaction; but this deepest satisfaction is not necessarily one which is determined by the "pleasure principle." And though "the conscience" is not the dependable thing it has sometimes been assumed to be, though it may make different decisions for different people, it is nevertheless, in practice, the source of moral authority for the individual who begins to be a moral person when decisions are made in terms of the values he has espoused.

He has not, however, become a completely moral being until he has justified his private choice by reconciling it with "the world of values which rational minds can descry and to which they can respond, but, practically, it is the conscience of man, of men, 'the conscience of the community of mankind.'" This does not mean that men will necessarily agree or that moral judgments may not vary with time and place. But it does mean—what it

seems to me history and anthropology demonstrate at the very moment when they are denying it—namely, that there are centers or norms which human beings persistently revolve around and to which they return. These centers are objective in the sense that either the universe itself or, at least the human animal, recognizes them—as is suggested also by the fact that it is rare to find a relativist so consistent that he does not himself make moral choices plainly relevant to “the conscience of the community of mankind.” When a rare person does seem to refuse any concern with that conscience he is generally set down, even by fellow relativists, as a monster.

In his final chapters Professor Vivas borrows (with some apology) the word “ethical” to name a concept which goes beyond the merely moral because it recognizes the supreme importance of that sense of the concern of man with all other men for which the oldest name is “*caritas*.” He credits Christianity with having been more responsible than any other religious or philosophical movement for the recognition of this capstone to the moral life, but since he remains a metaphysician rather than a man of faith he adds his conviction that reason itself can, without the aid of religion, discover the ethical life.

There are two kinds of people to whom Professor Vivas’s book can have little to say, namely, those who are unwilling to question what they believe to be science’s successful effort to demonstrate the essential unreality of all purely ethical inquiry and, on the other hand, those who are satisfied to accept completely one form or another of merely authoritarian pronouncements. Those who, on the other hand, believe that there are inquiries to be made will be impressed by his analysis. He gives no final answers to all specific problems and holds out no

promise that it will ever be possible to do so. But long before he has reached the end of his discourse he states what is to me the most important of truths concerning the relation between man and moral questions: "The quest for certainty thus defines man's destiny and to dissuade him from it is to strip him of his armor against despair. But it is the quest and not the result of it that defines his destiny, for certainty is not given to man to possess." As long as man seeks answers he is a human being. Once he abandons the search he is in danger of ceasing to be what we recognize as such. If history proves how unreconcilably men may differ in their moral judgments it demonstrates also that a belief in the importance of such judgments is a persistent characteristic of the human mind.

IN LIEU OF PART I

The Moral Life and The Ethical Life was written on the assumption that the basic problem of moral philosophy is that of discovering the theoretical basis to which men, explicitly or implicitly, appeal when they seek a moral resolution of their moral perplexities. The writer took it for granted as more or less obvious that it is only when men confront radical moral perplexities that their loyalty to morality faces its ultimate test. Of course, most of the time the majority of men—probably all men, with very rare exceptions—fail the test. They—no, not they, *we* betray our commitment to morality and fall back on force, naked or disguised, actual or potential, as means of resolving conflicts. More often than not, we do this under the banner of the very morality we are betraying. At any rate, we find no record in history, so far as I know, of nations or peoples fighting for causes they avow to be wrong. As regards individuals, the matter is more complex. Men sometimes acknowledge that they have acted wrongly and often act knowing that what they are doing is wrong. But all too frequently individuals manage to convince themselves that their side is without qualification the right side and the other altogether wrong. They—no, not they, *we* then appeal to force, on the ground that we cannot allow our values to be destroyed by our enemy. This is our excuse to

destroy those who oppose us. And we usually appeal to force long before we have given the moral process a full chance. Thus, our alleged loyalty to morality turns out to be, on examination, nothing more than a stubborn adherence to our interests and not to morality itself. To resolve moral conflicts morally, this is the defining trait of moral activity; to find the theoretical grounds for such an activity, this is the task of moral philosophy—at least as conceived in *The Moral Life* and *The Ethical Life*.

These are not assumptions that have guided the inquiries of all moral philosophers. The largest number of philosophers have assumed that the end of their activity was to define the nature of happiness and point the way to it; others thought the end was to demonstrate that morality was realized through the expression of the will or of their sympathetic nature. In any event, on the assumption that the end of morality is the resolution of moral conflicts morally, moral philosophy must be conceived as a practical and not a merely theoretical science, somewhat in the same sense that Aristotle employed the term. It is important to bear this in mind if the analyses of this book are to be adequately grasped. Otherwise the book will be bound to fail because it does not answer questions the reader asks but the writer does not, or if he does, does not try to answer fully because they are not central to his purpose.

Philosophers in the United States and in England today conceive of moral philosophy not as a practical but as a theoretical science. They are chiefly interested in analyzing the language of morals, or in exploring "the logic" of moral judgments, or in doing "meta-ethics." On the older view that moral philosophy is a practical science, these theoretical undertakings are unquestionably valid activities, but

they are distinctly subordinate, as are other activities that sometimes have concerned moral philosophers centrally, such as discovering the psychological basis of our moral responses or the cultural determinants of moral patterns of response. All of these inquiries must be objects of serious interest to the philosopher. But they are of value only if they serve the end of moral philosophy as a practical science. To employ a term used by T. S. Eliot in discussing literary criticism, when moral philosophy is conceived as a practical science these activities are not *autotelic*: their success is not tested by ends intrinsic to themselves.

On the assumption that guided the writing of this book it follows that the sharp separation between the activity of the philosopher, thought of as purely theoretical, the activity of the teacher of morality, and the actions of moral men, is a separation that is subversive to the basic aim of the moral philosopher. To distinguish among these activities is necessary; to separate them is fatal. We need to distinguish them in order to achieve the clarity that is one of the goals—but only one, and not the only one, and not even the paramount one—of the moral philosopher. But to separate these activities and to suppose any one of them can be carried on satisfactorily in disregard of the other two, is to misconceive them from the start. One of the defects of much contemporary philosophizing about morality is the assumption that it can analyze the language of morals without reference to the thick and baffling content of actual human living. Moralists undertake minute and subtle analyses of the expression “‘X’ is right means.” These enable him to reach a preclear lucidity that comes close to matching that of the mathematician.

But what does this simplistic expression have to do with what we undergo when we face a moral perplexity of any import? And these men call themselves empiricists.

Sometimes these empiricists are bold enough to consider actual instances of moral perplexities. They ask themselves, then, in all seriousness, whether a man should return a book he borrowed when the person who lent it to him has no need of it and has forgotten he lent it. Here is an actual moral perplexity that has cosmic reverberations that classical tragedy could not hope to match. Compare the deeds of Clytaemnestra or Orestes with the devastating, traumatic turmoil a man suffers when he is trying to decide whether or not to return a book that does not belong to him, and you can see how superficial and how merely histrionic the old Greek myth-makers were. Or is it that there is a question in the minds (for I would not offend them by using the old-fashioned word "consciences") of these men regarding the obligation to return borrowed books?

No, of course not; the men who employ illustrations of this sort are honest professors and dons. But they are after that precious quality, clarity, and to obtain it they are willing to pay any price whatever. It is not too high a price to jettison what they know about the genuine difficulties faced by men when they are torn by moral dubieties and uncertainties, or when they are pulled one way by strong desire and the other by their knowledge of what is right. And certainly it is not too high a price to pay, if for the sake of clarity they abandon the muddy language used by men in the actual appraising of their actions. But since it is obviously quite absurd to most of them to substitute the language of contemporary

symbolic logic for the actual language we use, when they seek clarity they see no reason why they should not simplify their data: "‘X’ is right means."

Let it be noted in passing that not all philosophers think it is absurd to put questions of value in the terms of contemporary symbolic logic; I know one who seriously claims that we can only arrive at clarity in aesthetics by the use of the language of *Principia Mathematica*. And if in aesthetics, why not in moral philosophy? A quick glance at human experience would convince these pre-clear philosophers that what men mean by "right" and what men ought to mean by it are not matters to be settled by means of their ingenious but simplistic paradigms.

When I wrote *The Moral Life and The Ethical Life* I had not read R. G. Collingwood's *Autobiography* and had not, I now see, grasped the full extent of the mischievousness and error that is the result of the separation of theory and practice. But I had always sensed the error and had never in my heart—or in my lips either, for that matter—had any respect for the work of those whom Collingwood calls "gloves-on-philosophers." The technical excellence of the work of these men is not to be disparaged, but what has never ceased to shock me about their philosophy is its fundamental irresponsibility, its ineradicable triviality, a triviality that springs from its irrelevance. This is not, however, the proper place to expatiate on this theme. It is brought up here to buttress the claim that whatever defects the book has—and I think I now know what some of its most serious ones are; and, let it be said in passing, they are not the ones its bitter critics called attention to—the book cannot be fairly criticized unless the critic accepts, provisionally at least,

and for the purposes of understanding what I was trying to do, the assumption of the continuity of theory and practice and the mutual relevance of one to the other. The alternative is to reject the book *in toto*, and *ab initio*, without turning any of its pages, to reject it because it is reared on an inadmissible assumption.

It was in the light of the controlling assumption that moral philosophy is a practical science that Part I of this book—entitled “Animadversions Upon Naturalistic Moral Philosophy,” and not reprinted in this Gateway edition—was written. After an “Introduction,” in which the meaning of moral philosophy as a practical science (as I understood it) was elucidated, I undertook an examination of a number of doctrines that at the time the book was written dominated the American academic world. With the exception, perhaps, of the Freudian theory, these doctrines are no longer as influential as they were then. These doctrines were discussed under the name of *naturalism*.

Naturalism is a philosophical view of the world, a *Weltanschauung*, or rather, a family of *Weltanschauungen*, that involves, minimally, the assumption that man is a part of nature, that there is nothing besides or outside nature, and that therefore man is fully explainable in terms of science—if not today, *mañana*, and if not *mañana*, *pasadomañana*, the day after *mañana*. Thus, as one of their own party put it, the naturalist heavily mortgages the future of science. For moral philosophy the faith of the naturalist would not represent a threat did it not contain, as one of its basic tenets, the belief that the universe is, as it is put in the language of the schools, “value free.”

The belief that the universe is neutral in respect

to value, that it is indifferent to man's ends, is a deeply rooted dogma in our contemporary intellectual ethos. It is the consequence, as is fairly well known, of the breakdown of the teleological conception of the world of our medieval ancestors. It is also a consequence of the rise to hegemony of the scientific view of the world. The older assumption, the assumption that controlled Western orthodoxy since at least the days of Plato, that was taken for granted by the writers of the Bible (for God looked on his creation and saw that *it* was good) and that in our own day has had champions of the stature of Max Scheler and Nicolai Hartmann, is taken by contemporary American and English philosophers to be utterly inadmissible—taken indeed for a piece of antiquated superstition. Value is a purely human phenomenon, to be explained genetically in terms of desire—or of numerous other terms, more or less synonymous with desire, such as “interest” or “appetition,” that philosophers, for technical reasons, prefer to the more homely term “desire.”

So deeply rooted is this dogma that those who hold it do not hesitate to proclaim it as an incontrovertible tenet backed by scientific evidence. To reject it is to reject science, to proclaim oneself, if I may borrow a phrase of that prince of philistines, C. P. Snow, an intellectual Luddite. Thus, in a review of Sidney Zink's *Concept of Ethics*, that appeared in *The (London) Times Literary Supplement* of 18 May 1962, the anonymous writer offers us the following gem for our delectation, no doubt because of the spirit of empiricism with which it glows:

. . . no matter how carefully we are led, we know all along that values are not discernible properties, and nothing which Mr. Zink can say will persuade us that they are.

If I were to argue that this statement puts the anonymous reviewer in the same class with the men who refused to look through Galileo's telescope, the argument would be dismissed as an *ad hominem* serving only to exhibit my superstitious attitude. I shall, therefore, not advance this argument. But I must be allowed to point out that whether values are discernible or not, and in what sense of the polysemic term "discernible" they are discernible, is too difficult and too important a question to be settled dogmatically, as the anonymous reviewer does. The reviewer's mind is closed: nothing anyone can say can persuade him. Nothing Galileo could say could persuade some of his contemporaries. Here is a magnificent example of philosophy at its best—current style. And let it be noted that a great many contemporary philosophers, while they would be more guarded in the statement of their conviction as to the objectivity of value, would in effect agree with the open-minded writer of this little gem.

It is from the premise as to the neutrality of the universe in respect to value that the central difficulties of naturalistic moral philosophy, as I viewed it, sprang. According to naturalism, values originate in man. But for a number of reasons that cannot be gone into here, *man* is considered today to be an empty abstraction; there is no such thing as man, all there are are men rooted in geography and history. Let this assumption go, as it has indeed gone, to its logical conclusion, and you do not have nations, or peoples, or cultures, but individual men, each a source of value, and each, as William James did not hesitate to assert, having desires each of which had as much right to satisfaction as any other desire of his own or of his fellow beings. It does not take much wit to see what is the consequence

of this view when men clash radically about their interests. To the degree that the clash is radical, to that degree it is irreconcilable. Call your interests taken together your morality and let the other man do the same, and what can you or he appeal to when there is a conflict between you? Force takes over.

A few doughty thinkers—E. B. McGilvary, Charnier Perry, Donald Williams—saw clearly the practical consequences of their interpretation of the moral life. One of the most important negative jobs I had to do in the “Animadversions” (Part I of the original book) was to show that naturalistic moral philosophies provided no other way than an appeal to force for the resolution of radical moral conflicts. Implicit or explicit, this was the conclusion that all the philosophies examined—and I examined what I took to be the most important and distinctive ones—led to. Since Freud’s theory of the genesis of the super-ego is not a fully developed moral philosophy, but concerns itself solely with the parental sources of our moral responses, and since I had my hands full with his views and with the eclectic modification of his views that has been advanced by Julian Huxley, I left the practical consequences of the Freudian theory unexamined.

It was to be expected that the naturalists who saw clearly the consequences of their views—McGilvary and the other philosophers mentioned—would present those consequences in attractive terms. Their rhetoric is of the best. They ask moral man to stand by his values when all rational means of defending them have been exhausted—which is to say, when he cannot have his way. The time comes when further talk is useless and the shooting must begin. This is the ultimate test of our morality—for these

thinkers. But under the sweet coating the pill of the theory was hard and bitter.

What difference, I asked myself, did the philosophy of these men make in their conduct, in their relations to their colleagues, their students, their friends and family? Theirs is a "hard" philosophy—no doubt about that. But were they "hard" men? My evidence did not carry me very far, and the generalizations I could offer in answer to this question have to be put forth with extreme diffidence. On their theories, the conduct of these moralists should not have been different from the conduct of men guided by the moral philosophy of "the ugly Nietzsche" (as I call him to distinguish him from the other Nietzsche) or by the philosophy of the Nazis or of Lenin or Trotski. But so far as I could see—and that was not very far—I could not detect any difference between the way they acted and the way anyone else around me acted, whatever his philosophical commitments. The difference in conduct that could be noticed among the philosophers I have known well enough to have an opinion of them—and of course important differences in behavior can be noticed among those one lives with—could not be traced to their theories.

But there is one difference between the men I have named and the other naturalists, and it is an important one. The former are better philosophers than their fellow naturalists. They see what their views entail in practice. The philosophers I have known behave more or less alike: they are "respectable" members of the academic community. They have their virtues and their vices, but by and large we'll meet them all in purgatory, I dare say, until the day of judgment, for morally they are no better or worse than the rest of mankind. To say that their

philosophy was the result of their temperament, or both the result of divine grace freely given, is something that I am not prepared to assert. But intellectually, the men I named had the courage and the clarity—and it took courage and clarity—to follow the thread of the argument to its logical conclusion. The other naturalists should have arrived at the same conclusion but they did not.

These, then, were the consequences of naturalistic moral philosophy. If naturalists did not practice what their theories recommended them to practice, in the last analysis it was simply because of the decency that they had socially inherited from their families, their schooling, and their world. These factors had shaped men on totally different principles from those that would shape a young Nazi or a young communist, with his systematically developed cruelty and paranoia. A decency not accounted for by their theory was operative in their conduct, whether they knew it or not.

These conclusions are significant for a man criticizing moral philosophy on the assumption that it is a practical science. But it need not be pointed out that those whose theories were exposed, and exposed at a time when the memory of Auschwitz and of Belsen was still vivid, did not particularly welcome the exposé. While naturalists are philosophers they are also men with their vanities and their defenses. Charles Stevenson once chided me in his gentle way—I can see him now, with his friendly smile, stooping air of concern and myopic squint—for writing that his views were Nazi. That was going too far, he demurred. Now, I never meant and have never said that he or any other naturalistic moral philosopher is a Nazi. Those whom I have known personally, with one or two

exceptions, let me say it once more, are no worse than any other academic man who ever walked under the elms of a campus. And as to those I have not known, I have no reason to suppose they would have worked for Eichmann, however attractive the salary and elegant the uniform. Not at all. I have said it twice, but let me say it again: they are ordinarily decent men. I was characterizing their theories, not their personal conduct or the actual operative principles of their behavior. And it is of their theories that I say that they do not provide means of solving radical moral conflicts morally. What effect in the long run this failure would have on conduct would be a nice question, a sociological question, to try to answer.

But this was not the whole burden of the criticism of naturalistic moral philosophy to be found in the "Animadversions." Other defects had to be pointed out. In the following paragraphs I give a very brief resume of what I found these defects to be, reminding the reader with what emphasis I can command that in philosophy conclusions are worthless unless dependent—de-pendent, hanging from—the arguments that lead to them.

Cultural relativism is the theory that holds that morality is determined by society and valid only for the society in which it flourishes. This makes it nonsensical to judge a society by external criteria. In Rome do as the Romans do, and you must not judge the Romans by the criteria of the Periclean Greeks or the Mid-Victorian bourgeoisie. The limitations of this view as a moral philosophy are obvious. It does not tell us how we can resolve a practical moral perplexity for which our society fails to provide a customary norm—a situation in which those who live in a vertiginously dynamic society

find themselves all-too-frequently. Nor does it tell us, in a society in which conflicts of custom exist, how to choose the better custom. Nor can it explain, in cases in which an individual condemns the customs of his society, on what grounds we can adjudge the conflict. In a revolutionary age and in an age in which our society is teeming with alienated men, this is a serious lack in a philosophy.

The thesis of Santayana and R. B. Perry—the representatives of *the interest theory of value* chosen for examination—holds that values are constituted by interest. "Interest" is a generic term for which other philosophers substitute other, more or less synonymous, terms. The central defects of this theory are these: while many values are discovered by preexisting interests, the greater number of values must be recognized to be values before interest can be elicited by them. To assume that interest exists logically and temporally prior to the discovery of value forces the theory of these men into unlimited *ad hoc* repairs each more ingenious than the preceding. It is thus a position that cannot be shown to be in error. But it is today a commonplace that a hypothesis that is not open to challenge is not one that needs be taken seriously.

Instrumentalism claims that intelligence is constitutive of the good. Its error consists in presupposing a *good* will, that neither desire by itself nor intelligence by itself, nor intelligence guiding desire, nor desire moving intelligence, can account for. Again, instrumentalism has a deep distrust of regulative moral criteria. As a result it ends up in sheer expedience. This is how in practice I had seen it working with my own eyes, at close range. Men who on principle distrust regulative moral principles are apt to be more unprincipled than their fellow

beings. Or rather, as one will finally come to discover, they are highly principled men, who are guided much more rigorously by one principle than the rest of men are by their many principles; they are guided by a principle to which they are much more deeply committed than any Kantian is to his inflexible morality. And that is the principle that only that which serves their private interests is right. The systematic double-dealing that this view makes possible (whether in practice it is operative is, again, another question) is abysmal. It is a philosophy that claims to be based on a concern for human welfare, a concern it considers to be its monopoly. It insists that it is the human situation, the actual case, that must be looked at, not the rules one must be concerned with: Sunday was made for man, not man for Sunday; and so rules also. But since a rule implicitly or explicitly will always be found guiding conduct, when a philosophy advises distrust of rules, it substitutes the rule of the will in their place.

I also criticized instrumentalism because it is inimical to much in man that seeks satisfaction beyond a limited, shrunken, secularistic conception of the end of man. In spite of Dewey's arguments against the utilitarians, whose moral philosophy he did not accept, he was in the last analysis as much of a hedonist as they were. And if one could not say of him, personally, as I had no reason to suppose one could, what Marx said of Bentham, one certainly could say it of his philosophy: It is an insipid, leather-tongued wisdom of the commonplace bourgeoisie intelligence of his age. And his age, let it be remembered, began with the rosy secularist faith in progress of the second half of the 19th century and ended with Hitler's war—with the ghastly

pictures of Belsen and Auschwitz. This was not a morality for our day. But it was one of the selling points of the instrumentalists that theirs was the morality for the age of science and for the American world.

A number of years before the writing of the "Animadversions" I had pointed out that instrumentalism—and naturalism, for that matter—did not reckon with the tragic and the heroic dimensions of experience nor could it, within its bounds, recognize these dimensions. When I first proposed this criticism, an instrumentalist to whose attention I brought it, dismissed it as originating in a mind known for its addiction to literature—a disgraceful vice, addiction to which I must acknowledge, since try as I would, I have never been able to conceal it from my colleagues. *Mere poetry!* snorted the philosopher, the wisdom lover, to whom I brought my query and hence, I was to understand, something not to be taken seriously by a man who had found the truth—in Dewey. It is only in the last few years that this criticism has begun to be taken seriously by naturalists.

After animadverting on instrumentalism I examined the *postulational moral philosophy*. This theory holds that the basis of a moral system has the same relation to that system that postulates have in mathematics: they are arbitrary in that they are not deduced from any other, they are basic, and they cannot be argued about. Its defect has already been pointed out indirectly above. What happens when two men or two nations with differing conflicting postulates—postulates that in principle cannot be argued—have a serious difference? The ultimate appeal must be to force. It is a might-

makes-right philosophy, although its rhetoric saves it from the use of the ugly label. But as already suggested, postulational moralists are among those philosophers who see clearly the implications in practice of their theory.

The *psychoanalytic theory* of the origin of our moral responses, to which I turned next, was shown to be but a begging of the problem.

Two other doctrines were next examined, but not as carefully as the preceding ones. The reason for this was that the errors from which these doctrines suffered had already been exposed in the examination of the previous doctrines. These views were the *subjectivistic hedonism* of C. I. Lewis and the *emotivism* (as it is usually called) of Stevenson. According to the subjectivist hedonist, value is to be found in the experience of pleasure which satisfaction produces in a subject. Satisfaction is for this view the ultimate term of reference. Men say, and seriously believe, that many things that are neutral in respect to pleasure, or even painful, are good. Of course they are, says the subjective hedonist. But only in so far as they lead sooner or later to the eradication of a pain or the production of a pleasure. However, but for the meticulous way in which Lewis expounded his theory, and for advantages and merits of detail, there is nothing in his view that is not to be found either in American philosophy prior to the publication of Lewis's book or earlier in the tradition of Western philosophy. I once compared the efforts of this philosopher to lift himself to the Empyrean to the obstinate attempt of a chicken who thinks itself a Lindbergh and wants desperately to fly. I still think the comparison is valid. The flapping of the wings is admirable, the

persistence is there and is heroic. But for all the effort, try as he will, he cannot take his philosophy much above the trough of Epicurus.

According to the *emotivist view*, a moral judgment is made up of two components, one a factual, the other a purely emotive one. As regards the first, we can argue and arrive at a consensus. But the emotive one is beyond reasonable suasion. What then can you do with a man who disagrees with you? You can either brainwash him, or shoot him, or threaten to shoot him. Emotivism is based on a simplistic distinction between cognitive statements and emotive statements. This distinction has been borrowed by Stevenson from *The Meaning of Meaning* of Ogden and Richards. The fact that Richards, as he deepened his analysis of poetry, was forced to abandon the distinction did not concern Stevenson: he had his distinction and he worked it for all it was worth. But what actually is the worth of the distinction for moral philosophy that is not a theoretical discipline but a practical one? At the time the "Animadversions" were written, emotivism loomed as one of the profound contributions to moral philosophy of all ages—or at least, so it loomed for those who were then riding the crest of the wave of fashion in the schools. For that very reason it was the critic's duty not to hesitate then, and it remains now not to hesitate to state clearly what the distinction is worth: for moral philosophy considered a practical discipline the distinction on which emotivism was based was worth nothing at all.

In the "Animadversions" it was pointed out that a panoramic survey of naturalistic moral philosophy also suffered from a number of errors that are endemic to all its forms. The first is the deeply rooted

assumption that the data of psychology are prior logically to the definition of value and constitutive of it. Another error that pervades naturalistic moral philosophy consists in the failure to realize that the term "person," when used by ethicists, cannot be a purely descriptive term but must be a normative term.

Were I writing the "Animadversions" today I would have to devote a long chapter to the developments in moral theorizing that had begun to take place at the time the book was being brooded on and written, but which were not then well defined enough to examine. For it was not until some time after the publication of my book that moral philosophers in England first, and in the United States later, published long enough studies of morality from their point of view to make clear their methods and objectives. I refer, of course, to the turning away from traditional, substantive problems of moral philosophy to the analysis of *the language* of morals.

It is fortunate for me that I did not have to concern myself with the work of this group, for very little of what these men have to say I find pertinent to my interests as a student of moral philosophy. Their analysis of language is important in its own right, and no doubt the careful distinctions made by them as to the way language functions are anti-septic. But they are at best only ancillary to the task of those concerned with the problems of moral philosophy as I view them.

But if I had to undertake the examination of their views I would probably organize my criticisms under two major heads, which sum up what is the result of the reading I have done up to date of their work. The first is that they seem to be anti-philosophical, or, if you prefer, a-philosophical. Their

approach cannot deal with the fundamental problems of morality. Thus, if you ask R. H. Nowell-Smith why a man should adopt the principles he adopts rather than other principles, he answers:

What sorts of principles a man adopts will, in the end, depend on his vision of the Good Life, his own conception of the sort of world that he desires, so far as it rests with him to create. (In the Penguin edition of *Ethics*, 1954, p. 313; in the library edition, New York, 1957, p. 272.)

This statement and the lines that follow it are of course true, in the sense that unless a man lives his whole life tied to his mother's, his priest's, and his society's apron strings, the principles he adopts depend on a more or less clarified notion *he* espouses of the Good Life. But thus put, this statement is a sociological or psychological or biographical statement, and not one within the domain of moral philosophy. It is, let it be acknowledged, the answer given us by the cultural relativist. But this is precisely what makes the relativist irrelevant—that he tells us what men do and not what they ought to do. Surely a philosopher can be expected to see how utterly inadmissible this answer is. For suppose an intelligent Nazi were to say to you: The principles I have adopted to guide my conduct depend on my view of the Good Life, and that is embodied in the philosophy or theory of National Socialism. For mine is a doctrine that, taken seriously, must be accepted as much more than a political theory. It is a view of the world and of man. It defines human excellence and human destiny. And it appeals to whatever capacity for heroism an Aryan heart may be endowed with. For that reason we Nazis believe there was a job to be done—how close we came to

accomplishing it you know well enough—that men like Eichmann did superbly. That is the reason we take him to be an exemplar of our highest ideals: courage, lucidity, utter devotion to the principles of our philosophy: there was *a man* for you. And like him there were many. You have learnt nothing about us but what your propaganda machine has fed you if you do not know our ideal is a careful formulation of *our* vision of the Good Life.

What can Professor Nowell-Smith answer this man? Nothing but that he, Nowell-Smith, does not desire the kind of world the Nazi desires. But surely it does not take much acuity to perceive that that difference of desires can hardly do justice to the abysmal difference between the humane Englishman's vision of the Good Life and that of a Nazi?

The other point I would make is that this "school" of philosophy represents a reactionary trend, that reverses the direction of our contemporary intellectual development. Until about the time of its emergence, philosophy, by and large, had accepted the responsibility it has towards man individually and towards society. Before that it had been the social sciences that in their anxiety to be scientific—which is to say, to imitate the physical sciences—had insisted that their results were objective, that they represented merely a record of the facts and the connections between them. They proclaimed their utter freedom from political bias. Their hypotheses were "true." Readers of Spinoza's *Ethics* remember that social scientists were not the first ones to make the claim that their approach to man and his tangles was scientific. And those who are acquainted with Marx's brutal exposure of the partisan claims of bourgeois thinkers know that con-

fronted with the complacency of the social scientist, they had better nurse their doubts in silence.

After the war, social scientists could not retain their position as mere observers of the social scene and mere neutral recorders of its dynamics and its structure. They rushed to get recognition for the utility of their disciplines. An army of them, in a few years, "democratized" Japan—or at least, so we have been assured. While this was happening physicists had also to acknowledge that the purity of their activity faced a challenge that it had not faced before. And Professor Oppenheimer called attention to the fact that at long last physicists had known sin. It was not that the results of their physics could be applied technologically—that was no new problem. But that events dramatically exhibited a new dimension that neither they nor other men had until then foreseen. It made a few of them shudder as none of them had ever shuddered before.

The philosophers, however, rushed to take the place abandoned by some of the physicists and all or nearly all of the social scientists. They are not concerned, they tell us, with practical moral problems: They are interested only in doing "meta-ethics"—in discussing at an elevated, neutral level, the meaning of the expression, "'X' is right means 's.'"

It has been said of the work of these men that it represents an important contribution to clarity. If we judge by the results the claim is inadmissible, for we find today as much wrangling within their group and among them and other groups, as was ever to be found in the long history of philosophy. But let us grant the point for the sake of argument. What has been the gain, actually? These men have

made important contributions to the analysis of language. But in moral philosophy it is not easy to see what they have contributed. They have brought an electric flashlight into a cave. But what have they to report? The fluttering of a few bats, suddenly disturbed in their sleep, squeaking as they fly about aimlessly towards the entrance. As Hegel said, mere light is mere darkness.

Were I writing the "Animadversions" today I would make some changes in what I wrote. The substance of my arguments I would try to state differently in several places, in order to bring out some of the points that friendly readers missed, and that, therefore, I could not have made adequately. But more than the substance I would be concerned with the tone of the criticism I made of philosophical approaches with which I disagreed. My criticism has been taken to be a personal attack, although I was assured by two readers of the manuscript whose judgments I trusted, that they could see that the attack was addressed, as I intended it, to intellectual positions and not to the persons who held them. That was not the way the criticism was taken. It was taken as personal attacks on the writers holding the theories—although none of these men I had reason to attack personally, but quite the contrary. That my criticism was taken in this way I must now acknowledge to have been my fault, for the writing was more lively and warm than academic convention permits. We are expected to write today like androgynous angels. Men like Plato, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche are not considered good models for epicene professors to adopt. *Mea culpa*. The reasons for the tone of the "Animadversions" were autobiographical and were suggested in the Preface to the book. But whatever they were, they are no

longer operative, and I can now see that the style of the original Part I was impolitic.

I would also try to make another change, were I writing the "Animadversions" today—although at the moment I do not know how this could be brought off. I would try to make it more difficult for those who have used Part I of the book as a stick to beat views they disagree with, while ignoring—whatever its objective value—the true value of the book, its constructive part, the effort to explore the basis in human experience of our moral responses.

PART II

THE MORAL LIFE

CHAPTER I

THE RESOLUTION OF A MORAL PERPLEXITY. I

SINCE we are not able to find in current versions of naturalistic moral theory an answer to our question, we are forced to ask again, "How do we resolve a moral perplexity?" Succinctly stated, a moral perplexity is resolved by searching for a solution which sustains and strengthens or at least does not positively threaten, or does not threaten too radically, the values which we take to be constitutive of our personality or moral self. This assertion applies to more or less "normal" moral situations, in which the perplexity which confronts the moral agent does not force a reconstruction of the moral personality. Cases in which the situation forces a repudiation of the extant values, either in part or in entirety, will make us qualify the answer here given.

Whether, normally, the solution strengthens, or at least does not threaten, the person is a question of degree. The ideal would be to arrive at an alternative that not only sustained but reinforced the person's values. If growth and expansion happen to be important values of the moral self, as at certain periods and in certain cultures they tend to be, then the moral resolution seeks to reinforce and sustain

these values also; however, to give the values of growth and expansion an unqualified primacy, as some vitalistic philosophies tend to do, is illegitimately to turn into a universal condition one that is only partially or locally valid. Most young men and some nations under certain historical conditions place at the center of their scheme of values the vitalistic ones; but there is repulsive incongruity in an old man behaving like the character from Pola whom Aschenbach sees in the boat in *Death in Venice*, and a wise and ripe civilization rates other values higher than those of mere biological youthful vigor and growth.

It is not possible to determine on a priori grounds the values that make up a person; and even with full knowledge of the social world to which a man belongs it is not possible to predict, except loosely and vaguely, the manner in which his constitutive values are organized. The reason for this brings us back to the doctrine of cultural relativism: societies more or less effectively control the values that their members are allowed to discover and are permitted to espouse; but cultures cannot create, and most cultures do not want, individuals who are exactly like one another. In all societies, unless totally isolated, the process of diffusion gradually integrates new values into the extant system of the culture, and, within varying limits of tolerance, purely idiosyncratic value differences are allowed play. Thus the selection and specific organization of values in each individual are at best only an approximate copy of the loose and vague conception which his society inculcates as the ideal type for him: what a man considers "morally acceptable" in a concrete way depends on his own moral sensibility and on the values that constitute his person. I

believe that we have the capacity literally to discover values, and, if this were all that intuitionists like Ross were intent on maintaining, I would apply for admission to their ranks. To the extent to which it is operative, this capacity to discover values is the pivotal point in the moral process, since it enables men to correct what they incline to consider right and good by comparison with what they discover to be right and good. But the grasp of the worth of a value, the apprehension of what the value's rating is in comparison to the other values we espouse, seems to be conditioned more or less effectively by subjective factors from which it is doubtful whether individuals can ever completely liberate themselves.

If this is true, moral philosophers must abandon the notion that they can actually reach an unqualified objectivity in their moral theory; and we must give up the hope, as human beings involved in moral conflicts, of ever achieving apodictic certainty in moral matters. The subjectivity which creeps into all moral valuation accounts for the ubiquity of moral conflicts among members of a society and between societies. This is the irrefragable truth of the relativist that we ought not to lose sight of and that the so-called "absolutist" tends somehow to dissolve or ignore. But it is not the whole truth. If the values that we acknowledge were determined without qualification by culture, the conclusion of the relativist would have to be accepted in the way in which he formulates it; but our apprehension of values is not entirely controlled by cultural factors, and hence there is considerably more to the resolution of moral perplexities than an appeal to extant socially acknowledged values could resolve. For one thing, the phenomena to which the relativist

points and which are found within the area of data that in this essay are called "morality" are not exhaustive of the subject matter in which the moral philosopher is interested. There are the phenomena which I call "the ethical." It must, of course, be admitted that what is concretely meant by "right" and "good" by one man in a certain situation and in the context of a given cultural scheme of values is not the same as what can be meant by another in a somewhat similar situation. But we shall see that the "relativism" involved in these varying conceptions of "right" and "good" in concrete terms can be reduced by the process of justifying the decisions reached privately. The process of justification, in effect, tests what we take to be the right against a progressively ascertainable notion of what is truly right. The subjectivism thus involved ceases to be vicious, since it can be, at least in theory, gradually eliminated and since in the definition of the moral process are included two factors or imperatives which cannot be disregarded without becoming immoral: The first duty is the duty of resolving moral perplexities not merely in terms that satisfy our desires but in terms that meet the "requiredness" (as Köhler has called it) which the values have that are involved in the objective situation in which we find ourselves.¹ The second is the duty of keeping the moral process open, of not closing it, of not being the first to appeal to force in the resolution of moral conflicts.

The problem of the moral philosopher, dealing with the data of morality before the ethical developments emerge and force him radically to alter his account, is thus to do justice to two sets of facts which do not seem to be compatible and which

make up the moral life: one fact demands of the individual that he preserve his personal integrity and maintain his loyalty to principles to which he owes fealty; the other set demands of the individual that he not become a moral despot, using principles as masks behind which to conceal his arbitrary wilfulness.

Moral perplexities constitute value conflicts complicated by the fact that values are sustained by interests which often successfully pass off their objects as valuable. The moral man is the man who undertakes to adjust these conflicts, not merely satisfactorily to himself (if by "himself" be meant, as we have seen is usually meant by naturalists, a dynamic and hierarchically organized system of interests or desires) but *morally* satisfactorily to himself. The first difficulty which we encounter when we look into this answer is a practical one, namely, that it is not so easy as it is supposed to be by philosophers like Santayana, R. B. Perry, and Dewey actually to know what values do, in fact, constitute our personality. Even in well-established, smoothly running societies, in which each man may be assumed to occupy a well-defined station to which well-defined duties are assigned, it is often difficult to learn what those duties demand in the specific circumstances and how their fulfillment affects others and ourselves. Of course, only a simplistic psychology would assume that a man's personality is defined by his public station and his institutional duties. Men are not social insects. Their personalities have aspects other than the social or public one, other than those defined by the institutional roles they play in their society; their personalities have depths of which neither their societies nor even

they themselves can be expected to have knowledge. And there are other reasons why it is impossible to expect a man to know with clarity what his constitutive values are, even in a settled society. The most important of these is that it is only through the resolution of moral perplexities that a man can discover, *by creating*, what he is. (The fact that I take the mind's creative powers literally gives rise to a paradoxical difficulty with which we must deal later on.)

But, even if the elements that make up the personality were as easy to separate as sheep in a flock and even if one could therefore resolve practical perplexities with relative ease, the philosopher would still want to know more than this discussion has so far disclosed as to the ground of moral authority and the kind of validity that pertain to the moral judgment; for, in the compact form in which our conception of the moral act has been stated, the source of moral authority seems to arise out of the individual. If this hypothesis were true, it would be impossible to resolve radical conflicts of interests between individuals in a moral way. Consequently, then, such conflicts could be resolved only by an appeal to force.

The first step in the elucidation of our problem consists in analyzing the nature of the moral self or person. It was not, of course, until recently that psychology could have given much help to the moralist. In Hobbes's day and even later in Hume's, or even in the days of John Stuart Mill, the account of human nature which psychology offered the moralist made it impossible for the latter to come to grips with all the complexities of the moral act.

Either moral philosophers disregarded psychology, or they floundered in palpably inadequate accounts of the moral agent. But the rudimentary development of psychology cannot be accepted as an excuse for philosophers. They did not need to put up with the simplistic caricatures they used in their moral speculations: if the psychologists failed them, literature offered them abundant light, the pertinence of which, for their problems, many of them obviously seem to have ignored. I do not mean that literature offers (as John Stuart Mill discovered after the mental crisis which he describes in the famous chapter v of his *Autobiography*) a means for "the cultivation of the feelings." I mean that literature is an actual vehicle of important *knowledge* of the nature of man. But if philosophers until Mill's day had little excuse, much less of an excuse have those later philosophers who have had easily within their reach the psychological researches of the last hundred years and the vast accumulation of studies on the nature of man by such psychological novelists as Dostoevski and such philosophical psychologists as Nietzsche or Kierkegaard. Contemporary philosophers have tended either to ignore this material or to criticize it arrogantly without understanding it.²

In his classical study of personality, Allport has given us fifty different usages of the term "persona" and its immediate derivative meanings.³ Starting with the original, theatrical meaning, he goes on to theological, philosophical, juristic, sociological, biological, and psychological meanings and finally to his own usage. These meanings cover a large number of loosely overlapping data. The variety of definitions or usages now current, however, need not embarrass the moral philosopher; a guiding notion should be functionally useful, and, so long

as the moral philosopher does not deny facts to which the other usages point, he can, if he considers them irrelevant for his purpose, simply leave them aside. For him the human personality (man at the moral level) is centrally constituted by a hierarchically organized system of values, some of which the person "espouses" and others of which he merely "recognizes," but not all of which are normally discovered by his reflective consciousness as constitutive of himself. In the absence of a better term, I call the "recognized" and the "espoused" values, when I need to speak of them together, the "acknowledged" values of a man or a culture.

It is only in profound moral crises that perspicacious men find out what values truly constitute them. My experience inclines me to the belief that men in general live their lives through without finding out who or what they really are. We think we are courageous when we are cowards, honest when we are cheats and thieves, truthful and generous when we are liars and pigs, and self-respecting in spite of the high coefficient of pliability of our moral spines. But whether we men are actors or are somehow protected from the mirror that would show us ourselves, this I know: that we fight desperately and bitterly against the knowledge of what we truly are, barring no holds and giving no quarter. It takes a crisis to reveal to us what values we truly espouse, and even that is often not enough, for each of us has his system of jujitsu for disposing quietly of bothersome truth. Captain Marlow, who tells the story of Lord Jim's trial and subsequent adventures, has something to say in this connection worth recalling:

"He discovered at once a desire that I should not confound him with his partners in—in crime, let us

call it. He was not one of them; he was altogether of another sort. I gave no sign of dissent. I had no intention, for the sake of barren truth, to rob him of the smallest particle of any saving grace that would come in his way. I didn't know how much of it he believed himself. I didn't know what he was playing up to—if he was playing up to anything at all—and I suspect he did not know either; for it is my belief no man ever understands quite his own artful dodges to escape from the grim shadow of self-knowledge.”⁴

There is no question that Captain Marlow is absolutely correct. And two pages later he comments again, referring to the days Jim spent on board the ship that rescued him:

“I did not ask Jim about the nature of his feelings during the ten days he spent on board. From the way he narrated that part I was at liberty to infer he was partly stunned by the discovery he had made—the discovery about himself—and no doubt was at work trying to explain it away to the only man who was capable of appreciating all its tremendous magnitude. You must understand he did not try to minimise its importance. Of that I am sure; and therein lies his distinction. As to what sensations he experienced when he got ashore and heard the unforeseen conclusion of the tale in which he had taken such a pitiful part, he told me nothing of them, and it is difficult to imagine. I wonder whether he felt the ground cut from under his feet? I wonder? But no doubt he managed to get a fresh foothold very soon.”

The full picture of a man's iniquity and evil is seldom revealed to himself, and what is shown to us by circumstances is, in any case, never distinct

and clear. The inward life is fluid and shadowy, and the stream has tremendous depths. It is not merely that we do not want to see but that there is not enough light.

The organization of the constitutive values is achieved by the psychic powers or faculties of which the animal disposes. The animal, as endowed with these powers or faculties, I call the "self." It is the self that espouses the values that spirit discloses to it, and this creates the person. (About spirit more later.) The self is the subject matter of the psychologist, and therefore I am not using the term "self" in a peculiar or idiosyncratic sense; it is necessary to bear in mind that the term refers to a conceptual isolate. Hume was right, for, in reality, moral man never comes into immediate contact with his "self," although he can reflectively come more or less successfully into contact with his own moral self, which is to say, with his personality or person. I am, of course, distinguishing components of man that cannot actually be separated, and I am also disregarding the fact that analysis cannot exhaustively distinguish the components of an organism as if they were independent parts which additively make up a machine. With these qualifications in mind, we can, for our purposes, conceive of the total man as a biological organism, a mere animal, endowed with a self, which is to say, with psychic aptitudes, and with a personality, which is to say, with a system of values which he recognizes and which makes him what he is, which gives him the uniqueness he possesses as a member of the human race.

The "person" or the "personality" or "the moral self" is, then, a composite of values achieved by means of the self's psychological powers or faculties, based, in turn, on a physiological system. We speak

of these faculties as belonging to a "self," and we assume that the self stands toward them in the same relation as that in which substance stands toward its qualities for Locke. But introspection, as Hume pointed out, fails to discover a "self" if by the term is understood, as I wish it understood in these discussions, a psychic totality. The parallel with Locke holds because, according to Locke, we are able to perceive qualities but we do not perceive substance, although somehow we can infer it. Here we come up against a problem that clearly transcends the limits of an essay on moral philosophy and leads off into serious questions of the metaphysic of personality, philosophical anthropology, and the relations between the natural and the normative disciplines. In order to explore this question, we would have to suspend our inquiry and undertake another, even more extensive perhaps than this one. This I do not intend to do, but I do believe that it is incumbent upon me at this point to make explicit the assumptions which underlie my discussion.

I hold that the self is more than a collection of aptitudes or powers of the body and that the person is more than an integration of espoused values. I do not think I am altogether ignorant of the attacks to which the substantialistic approach to philosophical anthropology has been subject since, let us say, William James's day; and I am firmly convinced that the scientist, whether psychologist or sociologist, is encumbering himself with useless impedimenta if he starts his inquiry with a substantialistic hypothesis. For his purposes there is no need of such a hypothesis: like Laplace, who could not find God in the heavens, neither the psychologist nor the sociologist is likely to find, with the kind of telescopes with which *he* looks, a psychic substance or a sub-

stantial person within the depths of man. What he finds, as psychologist, is signs, language, and behavior or Freudian instincts and neurotic complexes or some such similar product of analysis. But he has not earned his conclusion that, because this is all he finds, this is all there is to find. What he finds is limited by his telescope—by what he looks for as controlled by the purposes that set him in his search and the conditions of admissibility of what he finds. Science is not metaphysics and cannot rule on questions of reality. It formulates invariant relations into comprehensive systems for the purposes of prediction. But whether or not the objects of its inquiry, the scientific laws it systematizes, are real, and what is meant by affirming or denying that they are real, and whether or not they are the only real things in the universe—these are questions which the scientist qua scientist cannot answer. If the term “knowledge” can be applied only to the findings of the scientist, then these questions are nonsensical. But whether or not the term “knowledge” can be applied only to the results of scientific inquiry and to nothing else is not a question on which the scientist qua scientist can decide. For this reason and without disrespect or inimical bias against science (although, of course, in frank opposition to scientific positivism), I can assert that a moral philosopher has to go beyond events, relations, and qualities or beyond categories reducible to these or beyond signs, language, and behavior if he is going to tackle his own problems with any hope of success.

On grounds which will in part be discussed below, I believe that the self is more than a collection of interrelated powers and aptitudes of the body; they constitute a self in the sense that they are the expressions of a psychic totality. And what I mean

is that if we take these powers together in their mutual interdependence and if we view them generically as possessing traits (or a trait) which enable us to classify them as psychical and not physical, we are forced to admit that they have a specific organization and share an identity which is much more than the unity which we may claim for them if we consider them additively together. There is a substantial psychic fact of which all our psychic powers are the expression, which enables us legitimately to speak of the aptitudes and excellences of a *self*, as if they were its possession. I am not unaware of the fact that this statement, standing dogmatically stark and unsupported by lengthy analysis, is hardly admissible, since it is so flatly contradicted by a long and powerful tradition which goes as far back as Hume at least. But I shall leave it unsupported, since its justification, as I have suggested already, would take us too far afield. If the reader desires more information on the arguments which I would advance in order to justify my conviction, I refer him to the careful analysis of Felix Krueger, which, on the whole, I accept and which validates, as it seems to me, the belief in a "psychical totality." ⁵

Because these are questions on which one is easily misinterpreted, I will be excused if I reiterate that I have asserted that the "psychic totality"—the "self" in my terminology—is possible, so far as we *positively* know, only because it is sustained by an organic structure which it is the business of the biologist to study. This biological structure is, in turn, anchored on a merely physical structure. The psyche makes possible the organization of values which constitutes the person. This is not, however, exactly true, for between self—the psychic reality—

and the fully developed person there lies the spirit, between which and the powers of the psyche, as Scheler argues, there is a chasm which cannot be bridged.⁶ For the purposes of moral theory, however, we may (for the moment at least) neglect the spirit. We shall consider the person solely as if it consisted of an organization of acknowledged values.

The person is immersed in a social medium, toward which it bears complex and mutually incompatible relationships of dependence and antagonism, which affect the medium but also in part determine the manner in which the biological organism, the self, and the person each becomes what it is. This, however, as we shall see later on, does not imply a total denial of freedom. The faculties with which the self is endowed or which constitute the self organize not only the moral values which make up the moral person but all other values found in it—cognitive, aesthetic, and religious. And thus we see that the human being—the man of flesh and blood with whom we have to do daily, John or Peter or Paul—is not merely what the biologist says he is, or what the psychologist takes him to be, or what the sociologist tells us he is, although the last comes closer to the real person than the others; he is what we have in front of our eyes, a complex physiologically and psychologically endowed creature, whose prodigious faculties enable him to discover and appropriate to himself through the acts of espousal and recognition an interrelated complex of moral, aesthetic, cognitive, and religious values.

Without a social medium made up of institutions through whose aid the values that a man discovers enter into reliably enduring relations with him, a man could never become *a person*. But we must not

expect the sociologist to be able to explain the person, any more than the psychologist does. Presupposing society, the sociologist can legitimately investigate a great many very important social components of the person, just as, presupposing the person, he can explain society. But it is impossible to posit society unless we suppose that it is constituted by "persons," as we have here conceived them, and vice versa. This is so important a point that it is advisable to go into it in some detail, although it will involve us in a long digression.

The functionalist in anthropology pretends to be able to explain the development of culture by assuming an infra-social animal, endowed with biological "basic needs" which create cultural institutions. This is repeatedly asserted by Malinowski in his exposition of his method, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*. For instance, in "The Functional Theory" we read: "The second axiom in the science of culture is that every cultural achievement that implies the use of artifacts and symbolism is an instrumental enhancement of human anatomy, and refers directly or indirectly to the satisfaction of a bodily need."⁷ On this "axiom" is based the assertion that belief in immortality is "related perhaps to some deep biological craving of the organism" and that art "might have to refer to directly physical reactions of the organism to rhythm, sound, color, line and form, and to their combinations."⁸

This does not mean, as Malinowski explains, that every institution we know of can be traced to a basic need. Malinowski recognizes only seven basic needs, and these seven are said to create institutions, which, in turn, lead to the development of other derived needs. How? I cannot find an explanation. But, unless I have totally misread the book, its author is

satisfied that he does explain the development of culture by reference to his axiomatic needs.

I could ask, With what justification does a scientist who is supposed to keep to empirical subject matter lay down material "axioms"? but I will turn to another question. This can be broached by observing that the functionalist approach implicitly posits an infra-social individual whose organic needs are transformed into cultural necessities and imperatives and that this is tantamount to asserting that they are transformed into the world of values which constitute him a person. But the concept of the infra-social individual is ambiguous, and either of the two meanings which we can distinguish in it offers difficulties which render it useless as an explanatory category. The infra-social individual may be conceived either as (1) an analytic isolate or as (2) an actual atomic component which in combination with other components of the same kind makes up society.

Let us first consider him as an analytic isolate. This is not a meaning which seems to have been in Malinowski's mind when he thought of the human animal which is endowed with basic needs; but it has to be examined, nevertheless, because it is one of the meanings which can be attached to the ambiguous notion of the infra-social individual implicitly assumed by his explanation. Thus conceived, he need not have existed temporally prior to the society of which he is a member; rather is he an a-temporal component of his society. This means that the needs now fulfilled by a society are not traced to a *temporally prior* biological or psychological needs actually existing before the constitution of society. Rather, the needs are analogous to the elements isolated in a work of art by a discerning

critic who seeks to explain its structure. Prior to their informing the work of art, these elements were not what they became after their informing it, and thus we come to think of them as mere data of experience. The work of art, then, may not be exhaustively accounted for in terms of these elements only, because the genetic process calls for powers and faculties possessed by the artist prior to his creative act and for the creative transformation of the elements in the artist's mind. Were this the way in which the functionalist conceives the infra-social individual, he could say that he finds in society diverse institutions and that, when he looks into them, he finds that the individual is interrelated with these institutions in such a way as to manifest actual needs which the institutions are more or less able to satisfy. As the institutions change, the needs change, and vice versa. But which of the two terms of the relational complex we take as primary is a purely relative matter, and our selection of either cannot prejudge the genetic or historical problem, since the choice depends on the exigencies of analysis. On this interpretation no temporal priority can be asserted. This is too simple, however, since we have to take into account the fact of discrepancy between needs and institutions. When the institutions outlast the need, there is no difficulty, since the fact can be explained, at least to some extent, by reference to the interests which the institution vests in those who serve it: the vested interests of its functionaries keep the institution from dying long after it ceases to be of genuine use in meeting the needs of a society.

The emergence of new institutions within an already constituted society causes a radical difficulty because we cannot recognize the phenomenon and,

at the same time, interpret the infra-social individual as an analytic isolate but are now forced to interpret him as an actual atomic component. This seems to be the way in which Malinowski conceives of him sometimes when he discusses the role that needs play in his functionalist approach. But this manner of conceiving the infra-social individual runs into two difficulties, either one of which is fatal. The first objection is that the psychologist would no more recognize the validity of Malinowski's axiomatic needs than he would accept today an attempt to revive the long lists of "instincts" with which psychologists used to endow man a generation or so ago. Thus Malinowski tells us, as we saw, that belief in immortality is related, perhaps, to some deep biological craving of the organism. It may be, but I do not believe that we could find a reputable psychologist who would take seriously such a craving, whether deep or shallow. The second objection is methodological, and it is equally fatal, since the manner of explanation involves the reification of the result as process and its employment as explanatory cause. In short, it is tantamount to explaining the power of opium by its dormitive qualities. A third objection may be added to these two, which naturalistic scientists certainly take very seriously, namely, that it suggests a thoroughly teleological conception of psychology. This is for me no objection but, on the contrary, the only good feature of the functionalist hypothesis, since it strengthens the conviction that it is impossible to attempt a serious explanation of distinctly human phenomena without falling back on concealed teleological assumptions.

The upshot of these considerations is that we are utterly in the dark about the way traversed and the

factors used by man in order to become a person. The basis for our belief in social evolution is, then, pure faith. And, if this is the case, our belief in naturalism lacks inductive evidence at the point where it claims to have it and where it most needs it. Men who believe that the only way to obtain knowledge is through scientific method should hold an attitude of rigorous agnosticism in regard to how and when man, as we know him, came about. *Biological evolution*, I have said, I do not put into question here, since what we are talking about is the genesis of those dimensions which transform the infra-social animal into the person. I mention biological evolution only to suggest that the reigning scientific orthodoxy maintains itself by ignoring difficulties. The principle of continuity cannot be invoked at this point, since what is at issue is precisely this principle. If naturalistic philosophers admitted this much, with the candor which their commitment to scientific method demands of them, they would have confessed the breakdown of their faith and would have fallen back on agnosticism, as Ernest Nagel honestly does in respect to the origin of language. But, of course, agnosticism is not compatible with naturalism, and Mr. Nagel should choose one or the other.⁹ Mrs. Langer, who is a naturalist with a difference, sees clearly her difficulty, but apparently the difference is not enough to allow her to rid herself of her sustaining faith:

"What causes this tremendous organization of substances [which constitute man] is one of the things the tremendous organisms do not know; but with their organization, suffering and impulse and awareness arise. . . .

"Now this is a mere declaration of faith, pre-

liminary to a confession of heresy. The heresy is this: that I believe there is a primary need in man, which other creatures probably do not have, and which actuates all his apparently unzoological aims, his wistful fancies, his consciousness of value, his utterly impractical enthusiasms, and his awareness of a 'Beyond' filled with holiness." ¹⁰

A heretical naturalism which is frankly a faith and which admits the possibility of discontinuity is hardly kosher and holds off agnosticism by sheer Tertullian assertion: "Darwin, we do believe, help us in our disbelief." Naturalism fails when, on the precise questions on which it pretends to be able to throw scientific light, it tells us that it has no light to throw but that the light is coming.

Man as a moral agent, then, is constituted by the values he acknowledges—which is to say, by a hierarchical organization of values at the base of which are to be found those values that he espouses and, above these, those he recognizes, the whole organized hierarchically into a loose system of acknowledged values. Naturalistic moral philosophies make their first radical error when they conceive man solely in terms of abstract psychic powers, faculties, and endowments. They make their second, no less serious, error when they conceive those powers reductionistically, led by the dogmatic insistence that knowledge can be achieved only through physicalist methods. The first error does not appear to have been much noticed, and, although the second has not passed unperceived, the criticism to which it has been subjected seems to have had little effect in halting the trend among naturalists. The reasons for this failure, I dare say,

are not philosophic but sociological. Those committing the first error fail to grasp the fact that an organism endowed with psychic powers is an ideal isolate and only one of the components of the moral animal which is man. Man is *moral-man-in-culture*. He is more, for he is also religious-, and philosophic-, and artistic-, and scientific-man-in-culture, but for the moral philosopher he can be no less than moral-man-in-culture. If the philosopher conceives of man abstractly, he cannot discover the source of moral authority and the ground of moral decisions.

While the values which constitute the personality may be said to be organized into a hierarchical system, the organization is never perfect, the order of rank never well defined, and there are always values of which it is not easy to say whether they belong distinctly to the system or not.¹¹ A "normal" personality is fairly well unified; but this is a definition, since what is meant by "normal" is precisely the fact that it is fairly well unified. But, since a personality has a temporal dimension and is capable of growth, perhaps through the larger part of its career, the unity that the person can achieve is at best only a dynamic unity; as a result, it can be grasped in the concrete only at a given moment, and one has always the difficult problem of deciding, at least practically, what values constitute it permanently and what are ephemeral accretions. But, even putting this difficulty aside, it seems clear to observation that the unity of the moral personality is purely relative and is discoverable, if at all, only from a macroscopic point of view; close scrutiny reveals cracks separating more or less important sub-units which seem to enjoy a certain degree of autonomy. Nor is this all. Another great difficulty in our efforts to grasp the structure of the person arises

from the fact that it is not all open to introspection, much less to behavioral observation. How much of the self is submerged and how much is manifest at the level of the conscious, reflectively, and how much expressed in action, I do not believe is precisely known. Today we have to reckon with the "unconscious," nor can we dispose of it on the simplistic methodological or so-called "logical" grounds on which I once heard Morris Cohen in a lecture dispose of it. "The notion of unconscious ideas," he retorted triumphantly to a student's question, "is a contradiction in terms." Nor is it possible to dispose of introspection on the behavioristic grounds of Dewey and his disciples, who argue that what is not amenable to external observation cannot be admitted into science. If the method of positive science can acknowledge the category of the unconscious and the data of introspection, so much the worse for positive science.

Another aspect of the personality is what I shall call its "telic aspect." I do not mean the perfectly obvious and undeniable fact that persons are capable of purposive behavior. However it is explained, the fact remains that men are endowed with foresight and consciously project goals into the future toward which they direct their activity. We can take for granted that some of this behavior can be explained mechanistically. I cannot convince myself, however, that purposive behavior at the creative level can be explained mechanistically. Benbow Ritchie, a disciple of Tolman, has given an explanation of artistic creation which needs to be read to realize how superficial such explanations can be, how much they are forced to leave out of account in order to be able to order the data they do

accept into some sort of plausible hypothesis. Krikorian has tried to explain the creative activity under the mechanistically conceived notion of "problem-solving." In both these attempts (and in similar ones) the genuine novelty which constitutes the creative addition is virtually denied, and what we have, formally, is an appeal to a sophisticated Hobbesian theory of creativity.¹² What I mean by the "telic aspect" of the person, rather, is that, considered from the vantage point from which we must view the person, we see an incomplete axiological whole which tends to complete itself teleologically. If this is the case, it is advisable, in spite of its inherent difficulty, to face as best we can the problem of teleology.

Taken seriously, the concept of teleology gives rise to two distinct problems, the scientific and the metaphysical. In the sciences the problem arises first at the biological level, for below it there is no question as to the desirability of excluding it. The first difficulty we run into is that the term is usually employed in a shallow sense by those who are opposed to the conception. I recently heard a biologist arguing that "there is no pull from the future." Now with our ordinary conception of time, the idea of a pull from the future is silly, and neither Aristotle nor Driesch ever meant by "entelechy" anything so silly. It should be made clear in passing, however, that there is nothing inconceivable about pulls from the future unless we define "time" in such a manner as to make the notion of a pull from the future inconceivable and contradictory. But it can be argued (although I would not trust myself with the defense of a point that requires encyclopedic knowledge) that Driesch's "vitalism" is not the strongest representative of "teleology" today.

The question of teleology arises when organic "form" makes its appearance. Given the biological organism, a biologist can push his inquiry as far as he wishes exclusively along lines of efficient causality as this category is understood today in the laboratory, and he will not require teleology in his explanation. Nevertheless, the question of the "form" or "type" of the organism arises inevitably when we inquire with thoroughness into the origin of the organism's functions and not into the physico-chemical conditions of the organism's activity. Thus the concept of "type" or "form" is the ignored fulcrum of the biologist, which he can safely ignore or leave unanalyzed so long as his interest is in efficient causality, in the conditions of maintenance of living processes. In a practical way he knows what an organism is, in that he has objective criteria which enable him to pick out organisms from a random collection of objects both organic and inorganic. And if his scientific objective is to learn what he can of the conditions which enable the organism to behave organically—to maintain itself, to repair itself, to reproduce itself, and the like—a nonteleological inquiry suffices to give him the answers he seeks. This is all that the biologist may be interested in, but it certainly does not exhaust the problems that the existence of organisms gives rise to. Whether these other problems are "scientific" or "philosophic" is a delicate question; all that needs to be insisted on here is that these other problems are genuine problems.

The notion of organic function presupposes in some sense the concept of "type" or "form" to which the functions of the components of the organism must be referred to explain their specific activity; and the questions which the teleologist

claims have not been answered by the Darwinian tradition have to do with the origin of these types or forms and their relation to the components of the organism whose functioning brings them into existence. Succinctly put, as I understand the problem, the teleologist argues that the notion of an "organism" entails functions of its component organs, controlled by the type or form, and that explanations carried on along lines of efficient causality do not preclude or obviate, however far they may be carried, the problems which arise when we ask about the relation of the component organs to the organism. It goes without saying that it is not possible to set a priori limits to analysis in terms of efficient causes alone. Biochemistry tells us what the physical conditions of life are, and knowledge along those lines enables us to predict the course of life's processes. But when we go beyond these questions and ask about the origins of the forms, the way in which the organism arose, the struggle for existence and survival may account for their maintenance, once constituted, but does not account for their genesis. What we are given as answers are such question-begging terms as "emerge" and "levels of integration." But these notions can hardly be called "explanations" of what appears or emerges when life begins; for here is a type of form controlling the activities of organs that presuppose the type in order to function as they do. Evolutionism may in the future solve this problem. All that needs to be argued is that, as yet, the problems of teleology have not been eliminated from a thorough and comprehensive inquiry of the organism.

It is not merely among biologists that one encounters a deep-seated prejudice against teleology. One also encounters it among comparatively ob-

jective students of man, who quite candidly are prepared to go to any lengths to avoid being suspected of the employment of teleological habits of thought. For instance, when Kluckhohn and Murray define personality, they admit that it has several "functions";¹³ but the authors tell us that, to avoid suspicion of teleologism, they propose to use terms like "need," "drive," or "vectorial force" in the interpretation of the "functions of personality." Have they thus avoided teleologism? What they seem to have done is to have substituted terms in which the notion of final cause is decently concealed but not absent for terms in which it is clearly visible. A "need" or a "drive" is not a blind lack which any object will satisfy but a structured lack addressed toward a *determinate class of objects*. The notion finds its meaning by reference to an ideal whole, made up of the present incomplete state of affairs and of something not present, which, together with the present state, defines the whole. The incomplete state is conceivable only in terms of that class of objects which it lacks. Otherwise the need would be utterly blind and so utterly indeterminate that any object whatsoever could satisfy it. But *that* kind of state is not a need. A grocery bag which can be filled by anything small enough to go into it cannot be said to have a need for what is put into it. Only a certain class of things will complete the incomplete state, and it is only in such cases that we can speak of a "need." If I am hungry, the finding of a fountain pen on my plate will not satisfy the need, although lobster, bananas, oysters, beans, horse meat, snails, or eels will. The search for satisfaction may be planned or random, and the finding of a thing which will satisfy the need may be utterly accidental. What makes a thing

capable of satisfying a need is not the manner in which the former comes within the reach of a thing in an incomplete state and is incorporated; rather, it is the manner in which, upon incorporation, the completing thing is able to establish a relationship that gives the incomplete state and the completing thing a determinate and interrelated wholeness. The result is that the newly completed thing is capable of performing activities which were impossible before completion and which cannot be conceived as a merely random new state of affairs. At any stage, then, "need" or "drive" presupposes structure, so that a purely nominalistic empiricism, such as is widely employed today in scientific analysis, finds itself helpless before the phenomena involved in organic processes if one asks for an explanation of them as wholes and not merely of the mechanistically discernible conditions that keep them going.

Whether or not the organic structure, while real, is itself a product of chance, depends again on whether a purely mechanistic analysis can be applied to it to account for its development or whether it requires the same kind of explanation we have just insisted on for "drive" or "need." If the latter is the case, teleology has been pushed back another step. But I do not see how the highly *organized* processes involved at the level of the psyche can be traced back to random activities, when the discovery and recognition of value as value are essential to set them going. Much of the subject matter which Kluckhohn and Murray studied under the heading of "personality" involves activities which are value-oriented and which therefore cannot be conceived as random. The personality is an integration of values, and its growth is a growth in the values

which men recognize and from which they select some for espousal. Man, as a person, seeks to complete himself axiologically. The activity by which he seeks to achieve his completion enables the person to add values to himself which are congruous with those which already constitute him. But the activity by which values are added is not mechanical, and "congruence" is not a simple criterion when employed in the choice of those values which will be espoused by the person. Additions are accepted by the person not merely because they "fit" the extant organization but even when they do not apparently fit or when there is no question of fitting at all; they are accepted for some obscure reason because the added value or values obey a telic determination of an ideal of the person which somehow seeks to actualize itself. Reflective consciousness may envisage this ideal in only the vaguest and most incomplete way. The ideal consists of a complex of values which is perhaps never more than partly realized. It need not be fully envisaged and, indeed, at first, like Socrates' voice, often functions merely as an agency of rejection which excludes values which, but for its veto, would seem worthy of incorporation. The denial of this telic aspect commits mechanists to an assumption no less telic in nature, since it forces upon them the presupposition that the goal toward which persons work in their self-development is the projection of pre-existing needs, innate and potential, that constitute the values after some such manner as is assumed by the interest theory.

Of course, I do not mean by the term "telic" anything which can be interpreted mechanistically, in the way in which Pepper interprets it, or in the way in which Hofstadter interprets teleology, following

Ralph Barton Perry. I mean that the relevant data demand for their complete explanation the positing of a final, as well as an efficient and a material, cause. Hofstadter's paper represents a noteworthy effort "to find a place for objective teleology within empirical science."¹⁴ He tries to explain conscious purposiveness in an agent as viewed not from within but from without. What I am saying is that, besides that aspect of the agent's growth which can be accounted for by the envisagement of ends toward which the agent consciously addresses his activity, his development is purposive. The person's aversions, predispositions, predilections, inclinations, and attitudes, instinctive no less than acquired and unconscious no less than conscious, taken singly and taken collectively, have a direction toward an ideal completion. The movement toward a goal is subjectively evinced to the person by the discovery, accidental though it may be, of an object of which, verbalizing the relationship, one says, "This, indeed, after all this time, is what I now see I ought to have," or "This is what fulfills." The telic aspect of the person is evinced objectively by phenomena such as conversion, moral self-repudiation, and self-discovery. It is said of Van Gogh that one day, when he was a preacher in the miserable Belgian district of the Borinage, he accidentally began to draw a miner and that the discovery of what he did was a revelation to him of what he was destined for. I believe that I know what it must have been like, suddenly finding himself face to face with what he was. Here was the shape of a personality revealed, and what remained to do was to fulfill it. If we say that this can be explained by appealing to a need or an interest which, until then, lay submerged within Van Gogh, we have, in order to remain

good mechanists, gone from one kind of telic explanation to another, since innate potentiality and latent powers are clearly telic in nature.

The facts on which this teleological interpretation is based are acknowledged as facts when one forces attention upon them, but the prejudice against final causes is still so strong and irrational and the misunderstandings as to what teleology involves so pervasive and thoughtless that it is hopeless to bring the question up for serious philosophic discussion among naturalists. In the Foreword to a recent collection of essays on materialism the editors dismiss the concept of teleology in the following manner: "General teleology is therefore excluded. The modern materialist foregoes the comfort, unless it be in poetic reverie, of imagining that the order of nature is attuned to his purposes, or endowed with sensitivity and beneficence. Such longings have yielded myths in all ages, but are scarcely appropriate for a scientific era like our own." ¹⁵ Let us note that the materialist does not reject all metaphysical longings, since a few lines below this statement we are assured that "materialism does not doubt the possibility of satisfying man's need for a comprehensive picture of the universe." If the need for a comprehensive picture is valid and ought to be satisfied, more than arrogance is required to show that the need for an explanation of the order of the world is not valid and ought not to be satisfied. At this point a number of queries and objections arise to which the writers do not give us the answer. It is advisable to take some of them up.

Let us first parenthetically observe that a great disservice is done to philosophy by the polemical technique of psychoanalyzing away the opposition. The editors of the book from which I have quoted

are serious philosophers, and most of their contributors are also. They should have left the technique of imputing motives to the editors and contributors of *Partisan Review*, who liquidate to their own satisfaction intellectual currents they do not like by psychoanalyzing them away under the imputation of "failure of nerve." To call a serious philosophic conception a "longing" is to suggest that it is a mere subjective and vague demand, as contrasted with the "needs" of mature "scientific" minds, and the editors are thus able to gain an easy victory. But in philosophy, at least, easy victories are not worth winning. At its shabbiest, "teleology" probably represents very little more than a longing for a beneficent universe; but in men like Plato, Aristotle, and Leibniz, whatever purely psychological function it may fulfil, it is also a hypothesis grounded on objective argument and claiming objective truth.

The editors of *Philosophy for the Future*, by their failure to qualify and modulate, give the impression that the teleologist is a kind of philosophic Christian Scientist, asserting the unqualified benevolence of the universe. They probably know some who are; but, since they are professional philosophers, they must also know many who are not—philosophers and scientists ancient, modern, and contemporary, who are hard-boiled thinkers but nevertheless see in what they take to be the rational structure of the universe a philosophical problem of the first magnitude. I imagine the majority of men know that the beneficence of the world is unstable, partial, and always, it would seem, ambivalent; but that the order of nature is indeed in part attuned to man's purposes is neither a "longing" nor a hypothesis but, so to speak, a fact of common sense. And

the problem is not to assert this patent fact but to gain some insight into its ground. It is at this point that the split occurs between opponents and defenders of teleology. The former take the order of the universe as they find it and, on diverse philosophic grounds, assert that all they need to do is to plot that order correctly so that they may adapt themselves to it. But they take this position, when they are serious philosophers, on the grounds which they state and which constitute an argument, nor do they dismiss with contumely the alternative view.

Thus, whether or not teleology constitutes a philosophic problem cannot be settled by psychoanalyzing away the opposition. Hume took the problem seriously enough to give it his most concentrated attention, nor can anyone say he found it simple. Again, whether the teleologist gains comfort from his analysis or anguish or despair cannot be deduced from the fact that he "longs" for cosmic order; for an answer to that question we usually lack adequate biographical information. The result of belief in teleology is sometimes the sort of cheap Pelagianism which is such a pervasive feature of our intellectual climate and probably of most historical periods. Or it may lead to Manichaeism, since the universe exhibits both good and evil, or to Kierkegaard's anguish. Whatever the result, there is more to teleology than the comfort which it allegedly brings, and that more is what the serious philosopher has to look into.

It would also seem that the writers of the quotation do a serious disservice to philosophy by rejecting teleology on the criterion that it is scarcely appropriate to our age. Do they mean seriously to maintain that they accept or reject philosophic truths on

the basis of their "appropriateness"? But they forgot to inform us how we are to decide whether a view is "appropriate" or not to a notion so vague and incoherent as "our age."

I have argued that we cannot, on a priori grounds, decide how far explanation in terms of efficient cause alone—which is what mechanism boils down to—can be carried. But, on the other hand, neither at the biological nor at the psychological level can the notion of "organism" be accounted for genetically in a mechanistic way. But it should be clear that *the formulations of positive science are not here under attack. Nowhere in this essay are they under attack.* They remain beyond the reach of philosophic criticism, since they are systematic abstractive processes, ontologically unprejudiced, directed to the ends of predictive formulations. They disregard the factors which are part of the situation within which a more comprehensive organization, such as the philosophic, is achieved. What is under attack is the naïve assumption that because, for their purposes, the positive sciences dispense with teleological processes these processes do not form part of the furniture of the universe. Positive science has achieved its triumphs by limiting itself rigorously to the discovery of invariant relations found implicit in the data of experience. In other words, it searches exclusively for efficient causes. But the activity of science is rigorously controlled by its aims and the meaning and scope of its results relative to these aims, and therefore science cannot furnish ground for denying reality to what it disregards. That would be as valid as if a recruiting officer, who is exclusively interested in the military fitness of the volunteer and therefore indifferent to his aes-

thetic opinions, were to deny that men have aesthetic opinions, since, in his examination of volunteers, he has never come across them. If he did come across them, he would not be minding his job and would be lowering the efficiency of the army.

An adequate understanding of the manifestations of personality involves the grouping of the data, not for predictive purposes, but for the end of comprehending the total process as defined by ideal goals. This does not mean assuming, as we have said, a "pull" from the future; but it does involve some sort of notion like "entelechy," which is to say, a notion of structural preformations inherent in the incomplete thing, such that the thing is endowed at an earlier stage of its development with the power of completion along certain lines which are determinate within limits. "Instincts" do not involve pulls from the future, but they do involve pushes from the past toward specific complex goals. They are genuinely telic, in that any process which is called "instinctive" involves preformations addressed to generically determinate goals not yet present but to be realized. And in this sense life and psyche seem to be, and the moral life is through and through, telic.

I asserted above that life and even psychic processes can, within certain limited ranges, be examined for their invariant relations according to the methods of positive science, which forbid the inclusion of telic terms in their formulations. It must also be pointed out that this way of explanation has not produced any results whatsoever when it is applied to moral philosophy conceived as a practical science; the reason is that morality is nothing unless it is activity addressed to ideal goals which axiologically measure progress made toward them. The word

"potential" does not camouflage telic factors well enough. The notion of "potentiality" refers to preformations which, within limits and under determinate circumstances, will develop along determinate lines to complete an organic whole. The acorn is potentially an oak, and reference to an end is involved. If Kluckhohn and Murray do not mean to use the word in some such sense, in what sense do they use it? They do not tell us.

The notion of teleology is thus not precluded by the nontelic inquiry of positive science but involves a different kind of understanding from that in which the positive scientist is interested. Nor does it involve "ends," as sometimes naïvely interpreted, i.e., the end of grass is to be eaten by cattle and of cattle to serve as food for man. Telology has been redefined by antimechanistic biologists who today use the concept to refer to the fact that organisms have powers of self-maintenance, recuperation, and reproduction which are empirically discoverable. These powers maintain the ordered processes of the organism. Such maintenance involves activities whose fruition from the beginning of the species is measured by the effect that these activities—without which the organism could not have survived at all—have on complex organic wholes. The multiplicity of these activities, the narrow limits within which their success is measured, the way in which success is defined by a whole without which the complex activity could not have come about and which itself presupposes the activity—it is the interrelation of these complex factors that precludes "chance" as an explanation. Given the organism as already functioning, the search for causal processes of a strictly mechanistic nature can be undertaken. But not until a meticulous, purely causal account of organisms,

starting with purely physical terms, is actually available (and not merely promised as around the corner) can mechanists argue with any plausibility that in biology the telic notions can utterly be dispensed with. Teleology is not a principle of explanation, if by "explanation" be meant the formulation of invariant relations which the positive scientist seeks, but it is a principle of intelligibility. Whatever we *call* it, it is involved in intellectual activity outside the ranges controlled by the aims and the techniques of positive science.

All sorts of metaphysical abysses open around us at this point: the question, for instance, as to whether the formal structures thus found have ontic status; and as to whether they are best understood as the result of design; and, if so, whether—and how—they are analogous to human productive processes; and perhaps a question which is logically prior to all these, namely, what can be meant by seeking to understand structure altogether. But, obviously, a universe in which there exist structures that exhibit traits which call for notions such as "potentiality" and "telic processes" is not a random universe in any ordinary sense of this word. A German biologist—Bleuler, unless I am mistaken—is said to have calculated that the probability that the internal structure of the eye could have a chance origin is approximately $1:10^{42}$. If we consider the human body and the organs which together co-operate toward its maintenance and self-regulation, the chances are enormously against its being a random product in any usual sense of the term. I do not believe that from such arguments we can get to the "God" of theism, as by a simple and direct route. The teleological argument, by disposing of

the possibility of mechanism, merely opens the gate for analogical speculations—for metaphysics, in other words, in one of its most serious endeavors. "Teleology" is a term which calls attention to the fact that the phenomena under explanation involve structures such that earlier stages of the development refer to later and become intelligible by reference to those later stages, to whose appearance they contribute as parts to wholes. "Instinct" involves a teleological process, since activities called "instinctive," although not conscious, find their completion in later activities, without reference to which they remain unintelligible.

If the argument I have put forth holds, it is impossible for anyone who has respect for the conventional meanings of words to equate, without previous careful analytic specification of his decision to use terms contrary to accepted custom, the terms "need" and "drive" as synonymous with the term "vectorial force." In the last term, reference to a predetermined object is out of the question, for a vectorial force is merely a force having a magnitude and a direction and not involving a determinate class of objects which are its goals or its need-fulfilling objects.

This discussion indicates the error involved in the effort to define "personality"—even at the psychophysiological level at which Kluckhohn and Murray conceive it—without clear acceptance of its telic nature. When the term is used as it is used in this essay, to point to an organization of values which function as ideals toward which the person moves, the impossibility of leaving the telic dimension out of account is much more obvious.

The personality has telic unity, but it also has open connections with the world, or channels of

intake and outlet, and this fact makes its borders with the world theoretically indeterminate. Human beings are moral persons, unified integrations of values which inform psychic powers; but even above the physiological level it is not possible to define, in advance of the specific data in each case, where the individual begins and where the ambient world ends.

CHAPTER II

THE RESOLUTION OF A MORAL PERPLEXITY. II

AT THE core of the system of acknowledged values constituting a person is to be found a constellation which is sustained by active interests. These I call "espoused" values. From history and from anthropology we know that the values men espouse and even those they recognize are a relatively small number as compared with those from which they could choose. We also know that among the espoused values men tend to include a number which are not subtended by biological needs and which, arranged according to different orders of rank in their various systems, are present in all societies wherever and whenever flourishing. These values, espoused individually by the members of a society, are not necessarily espoused by the society collectively. It is a man's espoused values which define the direction of his moral activity. Among them we usually find friendship, pride, courage, loyalty, security, and those values which can, without trouble, be related to man's biological needs. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle studies friendship, courage, temperance; virtues concerned with money, with honor, and with anger; the virtues of social

intercourse and justice; and the intellectual virtues. Each one of these "virtues" involves a value, and, although in the concrete they are interpreted differently by every human group because of the varieties of institutionalized expression they are permitted and although in various cultural patterns they are therefore given different ratings, they are widely recognized human values. The fact that they do not exhaust the human capacity points to the limitations of Aristotle's experience—the Greek world with its splendid pagan virtues and its tremendous shortcomings—but roughly they draw the range of human capacity at the purely temporal level. Contemporary anthropologists would make up what would seem on the surface to be a totally different catalogue. And no doubt there would be additions to the list and considerable differences in the places which these values would have in the opinion of those who study them. The historian of medieval Europe or of India would notice that some values which his data would lead him to place as pre-eminent are conspicuously ignored by Aristotle and that modern apostles of scientific humanism would place some of the values of medieval society under the heading of pathology. Nevertheless, when we make allowance for the limitations of data, the prejudices of the observers, and the complexity and vagueness of the subject, we are still left with the remarkable fact that the values men espouse, *formally* considered, are less varied than certain relativistic doctrines would lead us to believe.

Among the values which human groups seem to select, as already suggested, from among the totality of possible values and which they organize and put at the core of their world, we find compatibilities and clashes which are resolved or mediated in many

ways. These values—which I call “espoused” values—are secured and maintained through those fantastically elaborate constructions which are man’s institutions. To the values discovered and resting on specific biological and, if there be any, on psychological needs must be added others which cannot be traced to any such needs discoverable in the individual considered as a biopsychological organism but which are essential to human societies. It is of capital importance to realize that the fact that men rigorously limit the values included in a culture makes the use of the category “the universally human” or “generic man” an extremely vague one. The notion of a human nature—as ideal—which somehow integrates all values now found only restrictively embodied in various human societies can be very misleading. On the other hand, one occasionally encounters among cultural anthropologists a prejudice against universal categories. If this prejudice were taken seriously, they would have to desist from their inquiries: if zoölogists can generalize in spite of the uniqueness of their specimens, it becomes difficult to understand why anthropologists cannot.

The nineteenth century, with its obsession with biological evolution, tended to believe that the core of espoused values consisted of those which maintain physical survival, and its moral philosophers undertook the impossible task of demonstrating that the “higher” values could be explained by an elaboration and “evolution” of these basic ones. But whether or not these higher values can be explained by reference to the biological ones is, for our purposes, a trivial problem. The difference between that scientific abstraction, the human animal, and the basic category of the moral philosopher, the

person, is the system of values which the person acknowledges and which constitutes him; and the problem of survival as human is precisely the problem of maintenance, against destructive odds, of a value system; that is, all man's values as constitutive of a hierarchical system have, by definition, a survival function, since their disappearance means his destruction.

Thus viewed, the problem of self-sacrifice, which is so difficult for the naturalists, is no problem at all for us. In preferring death to the surrender of his values, a man is merely asserting the supremacy of that in him which constitutes his essence over that in him—his body—which is a mere means or vehicle which makes possible the temporal continuance of his essence during a historical span. This is not to deny that the core of the espoused value system which constitutes the personality sometimes consists almost exclusively of the values of physical survival, of hedonic gratification, and of mere animal existence. Nor is it to deny that some human animals can only with difficulty and charity be said to achieve the human status. The personality consists of values, but, if the person consisted only of the values he espouses, some personalities would be rather low in the human scale. The topic is best left for a later chapter, where I shall try to show that man possesses an intrinsic worth beyond what results from the fact that he is a carrier of value, a worth which gives his person an absolute primacy.

The values that are organized into systems by groups of men *seem* to have an intrinsic order of rank which is inherent in them, independently of the varieties of organizations to which men subject them. Thus courage and temperance and the values

concerned with honor would seem to be "higher," more worthy, more truly values, than those concerned with money. And justice seems to be above all these. But dogmatism on this subject ill becomes the inquiring philosopher, since the difficulties in his way are insuperable: one can never be sure to what extent one's judgment about the order of rank which seems inherently to organize values hierarchically is prejudiced by one's own espousals—which is to say, by the manner in which the self selects values with the end of constituting the person. A broad human survey, however, leaves one with the conviction—extremely difficult to establish against the skeptic's challenge—that, for instance, the heroism displayed by men in the defense of their values and "Christian" love—to call it by its local name—are higher than those amiable values enthroned by the eighteenth century and which excluded "enthusiasm."

It is to the intrinsic and objective order of rank that men appeal when for any reason they condemn the hierarchy of values acknowledged by the society of which they are members. The structure thus appealed to, against which existing iniquities are measured, is an ideal and need not be fully known. The order of rank is known to some extent, since it is at least known as imperfectly embodied in the acknowledged values, but our knowledge of it can never be perfect. Nevertheless, any human conflict that transcends mere legality is decided, if it is decided morally, by reference to this ranking. This is possible because the search to which the perplexity gives rise leads to an effort to grasp more clearly the objective hierarchy of values as envisaged from the standpoint of circumstances of which the perplexity is part. How actually this is done is something which we shall see more fully below. Here

it is enough to say that it is done through the dialectical process by means of which claims are clarified and the root of the conflict brought to light. After that, men must depend on one another's good will. A proposed resolution of a moral perplexity is an effort to formulate more adequately than was done previously the correct order to objective values. Whether the formulation is or is not valid has to be decided dialectically by giving and receiving answers in friendly intercourse. This is a process which is extremely inefficient and which tends to break down with appalling ease; but it is the only one we have. The hierarchy of values, as ideal, subsists independently of its formulation and, like the discovery of the laws of nature, is subject to error. There is, however, this difference, that interests and passions interfere with our grasp of the structure of physical nature considerably less, if at all, than they do with our knowledge of the order of rank among values. The tensions created by the discrepancy between our limited understanding of the intrinsic order of rank which values have and what we take to be that order are of central importance both to the moral philosopher and to the practical man, since it is these tensions that furnish the energy which leads us in our moral searches.

The important thing at this point, however, is to realize that our partial ignorance of the true order of rank among values is no ground for moral cynicism or subjectivistic relativism. All that is required for the possible resolution of conflicts along moral lines is the acceptance of what need be only an assumption at the practical level, namely, that the dialectical effort will disclose a basis of obligation which can be universally apprehended and which is constituted by an objective order of rank among

values having ontic status. It is either this or a wilful stepping-down from our human condition. There is no other means. If this is not enough, moral appeals are indeed what positivists so cynically tell us that they are: efforts to dupe us into accepting the arbitrary wilfulness of our fellows and, on our part, efforts to make others accept the irrationality of our will. On the subject of the ontic hierarchy of value, therefore, it is not advisable to detain ourselves any longer. Some philosophers have undertaken to give what they take to be a correct account of the objective order of values. Here I must content myself with positing that, in spite of the difficulties which one encounters when one tries to formulate a hierarchy of values as they exist independently of human actualization, such a hierarchy does, in fact, exist. I believe that the order of rank found among values is not one in which all values can be arranged without confusion but in which classes of values—corresponding to ontological distinctions in the components of man—can be so arranged. Thus we may not be able to say that courage, without qualification and considered by itself, is higher or lower than saintliness, but we are able to say that courage and saintliness and wisdom are higher than the values which a technological civilization pursues, those which contribute to bodily comfort.

This essay would perhaps be a better work if this question were fully aired, but I beg to be allowed to advance an extenuation of my failure to do so. I cannot allege the difficulty of the problem because, if an important problem in a discipline is too difficult for a writer, he should not meddle with that discipline at all; but I can legitimately advance the fact that in this essay the question as to the existence

and nature of the objective hierarchy need not be settled in order to resolve the problems which will be discussed. The resolution of a moral perplexity, the ground of moral authority, and the justification of moral judgments are problems for the solution of which we must posit the objectivity of values. But, since we cannot appeal to a hierarchy of value as we appeal to the weights and measures in the Bureau of Standards, since these problems can, in the end, be discussed only dialectically—can be argued only by the Socratic method—the specification of that hierarchy is not needed. This conclusion condemns the results of moral deliberation to remain always tentative. I see no virtue in proposing my own conception of an axiological order of rank which would be disputed by each and every reader and which, if settled at all, can be settled only as respects specific issues in prolonged and laborious discourse. *The order of rank is assumed.* Its discovery is actually the task undertaken when a judgment of value is challenged and defended and a conflict resolved. An order of rank of values independent of their acknowledgment by men-in-culture must exist, but its determination seems to be, at best, a vague enterprise because the values men know are values-in-culture.

The hierarchy which constitutes a man's value system can be formally analyzed into the values one *espouses* and the values one *recognizes*. Unfortunately, the nature of existence is such that espousal of some values involves denial or positive rejection of others, and recognition involves a disregard which is not always free of antagonism toward certain other possible values. *Espoused values* are those actively incorporated, positively pursued, and posi-

tively assimilated; these, rather than those one merely recognizes, are constitutive of one's personality. Espoused values make up constellations more or less tightly integrated, and it is to them that one refers when one speaks about the "sense" of one's self, about one's "identity," and, at the moral level, about one's "worth." The self-respect or the worth that one attaches to one's self as a moral being, as a person, arises from the fact not only that one espouses values but that one is aware of the fact that the espousal in itself is a value or has value. *Recognized values* are those which one acknowledges as values but which one does not feel the necessity of actively incorporating into one's self, toward which one does not feel active interest. Both the espoused and the recognized values are *acknowledged values*, and these contrast with those to which one denies the character of value altogether, either because one considers them as disvalues or because one is at a loss as to why other moral beings should consider them as values.

I, as a student, espouse certain values; but, although I do not espouse certain other values, I recognize that they are espoused by other members of my society or of other societies which have come to my notice. However, toward certain values I take an attitude of summary condemnation: these are disvalues. Toward some, which I see others consider as values, I take a puzzled attitude, finding them in no sense to be values either positively or negatively. Reading about the conquest of North America, I readily recognize some of the values espoused by the Five Nations but am horrified by their cannibalism. I realize, however, that the realm of values is vastly greater than those I acknowledge, for not only do I see activities espoused by others

in which they claim to find values and in which I do not find any, but even the little history I know dimly reveals to me in the past a vast array of values of which I am in no clear sense aware and which seems to suggest that many values not yet embodied in human activity will be discovered in the future if man survives his own destructiveness.

The values we acknowledge are discovered and appropriated, worked for, realized, or defended strongly or feebly because man is endowed with powers and capacities through which their discovery and realization are possible. These powers and capacities, taken together, constitute, as we have already noticed, his "psyche," the form of the body, that without which the human being could not become human, although by themselves they are not sufficient to turn an animal into a man. Other powers, seemingly lesser in scope, and lesser because of the meaner matter on which they can work to make experience, are enjoyed by the "lower" animals. These animals are properly called "lower" because, lacking our powers, they are forever kept from the discovery and realization of values, and it is their discovery and realization which constitute man's achievement and which define his destiny. The difference, however, is a moral difference and not merely a biological one. At the biological or purely scientific plane, "high" and "low" are purely descriptive, factual terms without the slightest trace of value connotation, and no animal is morally lower or higher than another. A man, then, contrary to what seems to be an old and widespread notion, is not human, not really a man, merely because his psyche is what it is but because the psyche can achieve some things—the discovery and realization

of values and, through these, the fulfillment of a destiny.

The powers of the psyche have been analyzed phenomenally with considerable accuracy since the days of Socrates at least, although only recently have certain of its dimensions been brought within the range of close investigation. This change has come about not because men, prior to the end of the nineteenth century, were unaware of the phenomena revealed to us by depth psychology but because "psychology" as a science had until then, seemingly, almost entirely ignored certain of the psyche's dimensions, leaving them in the hands of poets and priests. Even more recently a whole area of investigations into powers of the psyche which the reigning scientific orthodoxy still tries to ignore or seeks to discount has been opened up. I am not competent to judge the positive results which have already been made by these investigations, but some of the names of the men interested in these phenomena and the experimental techniques employed make it impossible to dismiss the interest as naïve or credulous or superstitious. So far, it would seem, enough has been discovered not to invalidate the results of behavioristic investigations but to point to the need for defining the limitations of the results of orthodox psychological research.¹

The classic analysis distinguishes three chief functions of the self or psyche: intelligence, will, and feeling. To these is often added a fourth, the merely vegetative; but, since this is shared with all living things, it may be left out of consideration. These three, then, are powers or faculties or distinct capacities of the psyche or self, when we consider the

self abstractly as independent of a world from which it cannot be separated without destroying it and when viewed without regard to the matter which these powers elaborate into experience. Because these three powers have been isolated and analyzed since the days of the Greeks, we need not enter into an analysis of them—an analysis which, in any case, could not be expected to do more than repeat what is already well known.² The moral philosopher need not deny the value of what psychologists have found out about the psyche, and he cannot but acknowledge that we have today a great deal of knowledge of the ways of the mind which Plato and Aristotle lacked; but not all this information is relevant to the moral inquiry, although some of it does force the moral philosopher to reconsider and correct his speculations.

We generally speak of the powers of the mind as if they could function independently of one another. Particularly in the case of the intelligence, we assume that it can normally function in isolation from the will and the effective processes of the psyche. But the effort to discover what the world is like when it is viewed from a standpoint from which all volitional and affective factors have been excluded involves the employment of complex laboratory techniques and procedures which have reached an adequate degree of perfection only since the days, let us say, of Copernicus and Galileo.³ Outside the exact sciences, what we call "knowledge" is more or less relative to men of flesh and bones; it is relative to the full human complement of prejudices and values which those who seek it bring with them to their search. Common-sense knowledge is sought in order to be employed in behalf of these prejudices and values, and when we

attempt to cut it off from its connections with the interests that gave it birth, all we do to it is to turn it into logomachy—into a dialectic of concepts in which meaningful signs are manipulated as if they had no meanings, no reference to the world in which we live; as if they were counters in a game of pure logic or pure mathematics.

On the other hand, in the exact physical sciences careful laboratory devices, exact measurement, controllable and repeatable processes, and attention to observable phenomena or to phenomena that can ultimately be traced to observable phenomena keep purely idiosyncratic determinants from coloring the results of observation. Nevertheless, the knowledge of the exact scientist is also relative in several senses: it is relative to the purposes that initiate the inquiry; relative to the theoretical framework within which the inquiry is carried on, which is, in turn, only relatively fixed; and, finally, relative to the generic human standpoint in terms of which only the results of the search of the scientist can claim validity. This means that the results are valid for all human beings as such and not merely for Russians or Americans or Patagonians or Communists or capitalists. But the results are bought at a price, and part of the price is the exclusion of vast areas of human experience from exact scientific knowability. Since we must know about these areas, however, if we cannot know them scientifically we naturally settle for less. The result is that outside the exact natural sciences what we call "knowledge" is a pretty messy product. Still, this is no reason for skepticism, since a degree of corrigibility can be achieved even in politics and in theology; but it is reason enough to invalidate without examination any claim to knowledge beyond the reach of rational criticism. All

knowledge, whether scientific or not, is corrigible. And if the meaning of human destiny were the achievement of the best knowledge possible, irrespective of the nature and rank of the object known, the reasonable thing to do would be to join the ranks of the positivists. But not only the quality of the knowledge but also the kind of objects known are of importance for the orthodox tradition when it defines man's happiness in terms of knowledge. Positivism, which values exact scientific knowledge and nothing else, ends up by turning men into even worse-lopsided barbarians than they are without its help.

It is not irrelevant, while on this topic, to point out, on the other hand, that the fashion of borrowing the name and prestigious authority of science for cognitive activities that fall short of the precision and clarity and verifiability through controlled prediction of which science is capable is, as we say in Spanish, "counter-producing," which is to say that it produces results opposite to those intended. All it does is add error and dogmatism to the already vast stockpile which we have managed to accumulate through recorded history.

If the exact natural sciences are rigorously controlled by an initial selectivity of subject matter, as we have suggested they are, and if the results are relative to the procedures, categories, and objectives which produced them, the results cannot, of course, be congruous with the whole of "reality." This point has already been made, but I do not believe that it is superfluous to reiterate it again and again and again, since it is disregarded by a scientism which is well-nigh universal. The objects of exact scientific inquiry are not exclusively constitutive of reality, nor do they constitute the essence of reality.

They constitute the reality-for-the-scientist, which is quite different from reality-without-qualification. The exact sciences abstract certain of its features from the subject matter of experience as apprehended by common sense; and if the exact scientist calls these features the real, in an exclusive sense, it is the real for his purposes and nothing more. That the objects of science are real there is no question. That they alone constitute the real is a metaphysical claim which may be valid but which cannot be established by the scientist with his equipment. The exact scientist abstracts from the ordinary objects of phenomenal experience certain features on which he focuses attention in the hope of formulating them in terms of propositions susceptible of verification by prediction. The activity involves ignoring or disregarding other appearances than those selected, and those disregarded often are the most important features of the objects of experience for the purposes of practical activity. In normal, practical activity the intelligence is pervasively guided by the will toward practical objectives, whereas in its scientific activity it is led to function as if it were independent of all other powers of the psyche. In its normal functioning, intelligence is suffused through and through with a feeling that seems to be the necessary condition of the discovery of value, including the discovery even of the "truth," as the term is used in positive science. But why should the ontic status of the objects perceived by the intelligence when it seeks the invariant relations of science be more real than those perceived by the practical intelligence? They *may* be more real, as Plato thought they were; but that they are or are not is not a question which can be settled by the scientist.

The results of an intelligence working without the co-operation of will and feeling reveal what the structure of the universe, including man himself, would be like, were no man the spectator of it. At this point there is a contradiction with which realistic epistemology has endeavored to deal, but without success. Since scientific results are results as viewed from the standpoint of an intelligence which is a human power, the results are a picture of the universe—including man—viewed by man from his own standpoint, only now viewed not by the whole of man but by only a part of him. How to avoid the egocentric predicament would therefore seem, practically, to be a problem which is not susceptible of resolution. Exact positive science gives us the world not as it is "by itself" but as it is when viewed by a generic pure human intelligence. From this statement, however, it cannot be legitimately inferred that there are no data independent of scientific perception. Nor can a disparagement be intended of the value of the picture which science gives us, when in the light of these observations it is pointed out that the results of scientific inquiry are controlled, no less but only much more rigorously so, by the purposes which set it afoot. If this point is grasped, it is not difficult to see the folly of trying to force upon the philosopher, who has other purposes, the ideal of the positive scientist. Nor can the theoretical validity and the practical usefulness of the results of positive science be prejudged by these observations.

What is true of the intelligence seems to be true of the will. A pervasive voluntarism, the complementary error of a pervasive intellectualism, seems to be abroad. According to this belief, the will can function unencumbered by the intelligence. But such a will would be totally blind, and the notion

that a blind will can function at all is a complete fiction. A totally blind will is one of the assumptions of those positivistic moral philosophers who separate "attitude" from "belief." We can distinguish "attitude" from "belief"; but only in cases of irresponsible pathological activity do we actually find attitudes controlling men which are not pervasively mixed, saturated through and through, with beliefs that are, in turn, to some extent controlled by the intelligence. This statement does not seem to be true of feeling, which seems capable of functioning unleavened by the intelligence at least, if not by the will. If we look carefully at such pure feeling, however, we seem to see that within rather wide limits it is discriminative and appears to know what it is about. In the normal human being, however, and for its normal business the intelligence acts always propelled by the will, which is suffused with feeling; the will moves, enlightened by intelligence and also charged with emotion, and the emotions do not altogether lack their cognitive value, although for certain purposes that value is negligible. At the moral level, at any rate, as Aristotle put it, reason is desiderative and desire is rational; when either frees itself and claims primacy over the other, we have grounds to suspect a pathological condition. I am not talking about the positive science of morals, the end of which may be purely cognitive in purpose, but of the practical-scientific deliberation in which men engage when confronted by a moral perplexity. Here intelligence and feeling, guided by the will, to the ends of a moral resolution of the perplexity, must co-operate, or the results are monstrous.

Human personality, however, consists of more than the values and powers which analysis can distinguish. The values that constitute it are more

or less systematically interrelated into a dynamic whole, capable of growth and contraction, which, so to speak, generates its own inertia, tone, and power of selectivity and rejection. A more important constituent in terms of our inquiry, however, is the undefinable characteristic possessed by the person (probably one of its few unique endowments), namely, its self-consciousness, by which is meant the reflective awareness of itself as an integrated system of values which is itself inherently valuable. Reflection reveals, I believe, that men value themselves. This value includes the self-love which classical psychologists used to discuss; but it goes beyond it. And, while this value—the value of one's person—inheres in the total system of values that one acknowledges, taken collectively, and only derivatively in the dominant values of one's system, taken distributively, it is nevertheless an essential constituent of one's person.

If this is what we mean by "person," we cannot expect to discover it anywhere along the route followed by Hume and his tradition, in some simple atomic fact of reflection on the level with impressions and the relations which obtain between them. Nor do we do it justice, if following the naturalistic road, we seek it in the powers themselves, abstracted from the values which inform them and the peculiar integration which binds them and, above all, from the power of reflective awareness that constitute it both subject and object to itself. Much less do we do it justice when we seek for its essence where, in some sense, it seems to have its locus, in the physical organism in which it resides. "Self," as we have already seen, is the collective term which we apply to the powers distinctly exhibited by the human organism, and "person" is the term by which

we refer to those powers when they are informed by a hierarchy of operative values which have been integrated. Powers and values make up a unique and irreducible entity, distinct from the organism which manifests it and from the totality of the powers which the organism manifests. For this reason this entity is, in one legitimate usage of the term, *a substance*, in that it is the subject for which all else that is related to it, including its constituent parts as apprehended by it, stands in the relation of predicate to it. It is this entity, the person, which decides moral perplexities and which in the performance of this, its most important function, is called "conscience."

The integration which the person achieves, the interrelationship between powers and values, is a fact, although, so far as I can find out, no one seems to be able to explain how the integration is achieved and particularly what role, exactly, bodily organs play in its coming about and in its continued existence. I doubt if anyone would question that the relationship is intimate. But it should also be noted that the relationship, like that between organism and powers, is much more complex and obscure than a simplistic physicalism allows. Materialism pretends to explain it by denying one of the terms in the relationship, thus denying the irrefragable fact of experience that awareness and all other powers of the psyche are distinct from the alleged conditions which are said to cause them. Fortunately for us, these mysteries need not block our progress, since we can accept the facts as given to us in experience, content to attribute to the psyche as its cardinal function the task of subtending the integrated system of values which constitutes the person.

CHAPTER III

THE RESOLUTION OF A MORAL PERPLEXITY. III

WE ARE now in a position to inquire as to how a moral perplexity is resolved; but let us keep in mind that a perplexity is such for a determinate person in a specific situation arising out of his specific experience. In a genuine moral perplexity a man does not know what is the right thing to do, what he ought to do. When a man knows what he ought to do and for some reason cannot bring himself to do it, he is in a difficult situation, but he is not facing a genuine moral perplexity. The majority of so-called "moral problems" are of this latter sort; therefore, they are not objects of inquiry in this chapter. Of course, moral clarity is a matter of degree: a man may know more or less clearly what he ought to do, or he may be to some extent confused, in which case his inability to act results from the unstable state of his mind. But the type of perplexity to be analyzed in this chapter is that which I have characterized as "genuine" and which will be referred to throughout the chapter as "the normal," in order to distinguish it from an extreme case on which attention will have to be focused later in the chapter and in which an individual, as a

result of his deliberation, concludes by condemning himself.

Normally in a moral perplexity the moral qualities of the alternatives which the imagination suggests are not clearly perceived, or, if the moral quality is perceived, the qualities of the various alternatives do not stand out differentially, or they stand out as having negative values. Taken by itself, each of these alternatives, in abstraction from the context within which it would be realized, may appear to be right and may be backed by existing interests. However, when we consider the alternatives in relation to ourselves as moral agents—to the organized system of values which constitutes us—the distinctive quality disappears. An alternative that appears as "right" or as "the best one possible" in a given situation is acceptable to the totality of values which constitutes our person because it seems to strengthen our values or at least not to threaten them, because it appears to go with them, to "fit" into them. If it does not appear to fit and still we are not totally indifferent to it, it is because it constitutes a more or less distinctive threat to our values, because it appears to some extent as potentially disruptive. But since, as we have seen, an individual is perhaps never perfectly integrated, the "person" to which reference is here made may not be the whole person—the total organization of all the acknowledged values of a man—but that part or sub-organization which is involved in the perplexity more or less directly and which is prospectively threatened or favored by the various alternatives under scrutiny. If the person were well integrated, all his values, working harmoniously, would make the proper choice among the alternatives. Because a man's values are seldom well integrated, wisdom

and prudence, which are the only means on which he depends to avoid moral blunders, often let him down. A moral decision often tends to be in some measure partial, tends to favor aspects of the person which are not truly central at the cost of others now recessive in respect to the perplexity but which may perhaps be more central to the person. After the crisis, when these aspects come forward and make themselves felt, new perplexities arise, which call for new resolutions, which, in turn, will lead to other perplexities. Nor need one be "abnormal" for these suborganizations to function in this manner. I believe psychologists would agree that the integration which we are able to achieve is a matter of degree. Thus Gardner Murphy: "Actually the main dynamics in most cases of double and multiple personality seems to be an exaggeration of a conflict situation which is present in nearly all of us, namely, a conflict between a conforming and a guilty non-conforming trend."¹ The assumption that the non-conforming trends are guilty is worth passing notice, for division within the conscience is thus defined in terms of one clear trend or set of trends to which we conform and of another which would disrupt the socially approved trends. But these conflicts in the person are not only between conforming and non-conforming trends but also between constellations of values, each of which, considered by itself, appears to be acceptable and legitimate. These conflicts, while they may not be disruptive normally and are usually more or less successfully resolved by the moral agent, must nevertheless be of great interest to the moral philosopher, since, in deciding the right alternative, we must reckon with the fact that what seems right for one of the constellations may not seem right for

another. Thus the problem as to which trend is guilty is much more difficult than Murphy, who, it would seem, implicitly accepts cultural relativism, appears to believe.

When in a normal perplexity we are forced into deep, anxious, difficult probing of ourselves before the alternative is chosen, the core of espoused values which comes closest to constituting the essence of the moral personality tends to become decisive in the choice, unless the individual is pathologically split. Even in the latter case the two personalities making up the individual may share values in common which function morally. Readers of Morton Prince's famous study of Miss Beauchamp may have noticed what seems to me to be implicit in the study (although Prince does not himself have occasion to point to it) that, deep as is the opposition between Sally and Miss Beauchamp, there are some values shared by both and by all the other personalities finally discovered. These values, it must be admitted, are of a minimal biological nature; but there seems to be a tone, also, which is shared by the integrated suborganizations which constitute the various persons.² I may be wrong about this, because the separation of these two people was very radical. Murphy recognizes the unity of the self and refers to a "deep-level self,"³ which includes part at least of what I have chosen to call the essence of "the person." It is this "deep-level" moral self or essential person which asserts itself in radical crises, when anxious reflection gives it a chance to come forward to present its claims as against those of the more superficial suborganizations of values which may be urging alternatives to which they are partial. This "deep-level self" or essential person is recognized by the fact that it involves the stronger espousals

and is thus felt to be the seat of moral self-identity. When a man feels his integrity threatened, it is this deep-level self that is at stake.

Unless I misread writers on moral philosophy, "character" is the term used to denote what I have been calling here the "moral person": the constellation of acknowledged values (with the habits and dispositions innate or acquired which sustain them) which constitutes the basis or ground of the moral judgment. I prefer not to use the term "character" because in a radical moral perplexity it is wrong to say that it is one's character—the values which our habits and dispositions have integrated—which does the resolving, unless one adds in the same sentence that, before the resolution is possible, one's character must be discovered in the crisis by the search which, indeed, creates it. There is no perplexity when character functions unimpeded and no "given" character when one is radically perplexed morally. A perplexity, to the extent to which it is radical, causes strains and stresses in the suborganizations of values and tends to dissolve or break them up. When the decision we are called on to make is truly radical, it involves a choice favorable to our idea not of our actual moral personality but of our ideal moral personality. This ideal is forged under the impact of the probing that the perplexity has forced us to engage in. Thus a radical moral decision is creative in two senses: first, because the discovery of the fitting solution involves a creative act and, second, because the inward search for our essential moral personality involves also the creating of an ideal person toward which we may act as if it were real and as if we ought to maintain it but which is, indeed, not actual and which, in our efforts to maintain it, we are really actualizing. The energy re-

quired to arrive at the decision and to actualize it is not merely deployed outward, upon the manipulation of means to achieve some definite end, but inward, in the transformation of the person, in its reconstitution according to the ideal which, through the decision, is made more nearly possible. The moral agent faces, so to speak, not merely outwardly but inwardly and not merely toward the past and present but toward the future, seeking to conserve and salvage through an act of creativity what he truly is, his "deep-level" values. He thus creates both his destiny and his character. The experience involves deep anxiety and, when radical, leads one to turn toward all conceivable sources of help. This fact explains why the moral experience is so seldom pure and so readily integrates with the religious.

The term "character," as usually understood, is part of a conception of personality which has neither hidden depths nor breaks; if a man is sincere, his ostensive resolutions, motivations, intentions, and decisions are what they claim to be. Ivan Karamazov was a respectable man, a man of "good character"; yet he was a murderer, fully as responsible as Dmitri and Smerdyakov for the parricide. But in a two-dimensional psychology which ignores the hidden reality of the personality it is not possible to bring the charge of parricide against him, and from the point of view of such a psychology he is not guilty but innocent. Ivan does not himself know of his responsibility until his interviews with his half-brother during the latter's illness. He begins to suspect it at the end of the second interview, and he does not fully acknowledge it to himself until after the third. In the novel it is the lackey who, for dramatic reasons, is used to bring Ivan face to face with his conscience. The means do not matter;

what matters is that, once a man recognizes what is below the surface of normal reflection, he acknowledges it as part of himself as moral agent. If he does not, his morality is rudimentary. The man confronted with a radical moral perplexity must undertake a descent into the depths, a painful inquiry into his actual, as opposed to his ostensible, motivations and values. And to discover his actual values is to create himself, since the formulation is constitutive of an ideal which is not yet fully formed.

How is the ideal created? Out of what materials? And, if it is indeed a case of genuine creation and not merely a shuffling of values already acknowledged, how do we know that it is a good and not a reprehensible ideal that we have created? We have here two basic questions: one purely descriptive and the other normative. The first of these is the basic question of this chapter, and the second, subdivided into two—the problem of the ground and source of moral authority and that of the justification of a moral decision—will be discussed in the next two chapters. At present I hope to analyze certain features of the normal moral perplexity that have not yet been investigated. But when, later, we turn to our first question, it will be asked in a different and, I take it, a more critical form. How, it will be asked, is it possible for a man to condemn himself totally and without extenuation? This question involves the problem of the creation of an ideal, but it poses it in a more difficult form. The creation which takes place in the resolution of a normal perplexity consists of an extension of constitutive values already operative; but when we repudiate our constitutive values altogether and forge an entirely new personality, a naked, empty self must

do the choosing, and how this process is possible is not at all obvious.

Let us turn back to the normal moral perplexity. In such cases, it was said, the prospective decision which is deemed right is chosen in preference to others when the agent perceives it to be "fitting." This is an irreducible moral term. If right, the chosen alternative *usually* promises satisfaction and security; if wrong, it is *usually* accompanied by a tone of rejection, fear, and discomfort or anxiety. But the "right" is not that which produces pleasure, nor is the wrong that which produces displeasure. At this point and after what has already been said about it by its numerous critics, it is not necessary again to exhibit the fallacies of moral hedonism. Suffice it to state dogmatically that a right decision may promise a diminution of pleasure or, more strongly, may be productive of considerable displeasure. Kant was probably right in suspecting a decision when it was productive of pleasure. Nor need a decision satisfy any specific standing interest other than that which the requiredness of value arouses. If a man has never had to make a moral decision which involved a sacrifice of deeply rooted, insistent interests, productive of pleasure or prestige or comfort, he has never gone through a moral crisis, and, although he may be a very good man, utterly above moral reproach, what he has to say on the subject of pleasure we may safely ignore. This is, incidentally, one of the points at which psychiatrists and psychoanalysts, with their uncritical eudaemonism, become genuinely corrupting forces in our society. But no less dangerous, although less obviously so, is the shallow sentimentalist who tells

you that the "right" decision is always productive of greater satisfaction and greater happiness than the wrong. This optimism is worthy of a Herbert Spencer and is mostly cant. The moral life involves serious, often irreparable, sacrifices, sometimes prolonged and anguished; and not infrequently it demands of an individual that he go through unspeakable torture and at the end give up his life. When a man meets these demands, he is a martyr or a hero. Those looking for happiness, as it is nowadays understood by a culture which worships bodily comfort and gadgets, would do well to go after their happiness where they are likely to find it and not look for it in the midst of moral reality. They can have their happiness and their respectability and whatever else it is that they want. The only guaranty that the moral philosopher can give the moral man is that he will save his personality from destruction, not that he will be happy.

Conversely, the wrong decision may promise intense pleasure because it satisfies an intense craving. Anticipated or accrued pleasure is thus, Herbert Spencer to the contrary notwithstanding, a most unreliable index of whether a prospective alternative is truly right or not. An intense craving can cause a temporary disorganization of the person and may succeed in making his permanent claims mute and impotent. But, viewed in a broad, temporal perspective, the right is usually productive of satisfaction *in the long run*; and, if satisfaction brings with it pleasure, then the right is usually pleasant *in the long run*. But it must be reiterated that it need not satisfy any specific interest and that a decision to accept the right alternative may bring with it only a reduction of the anxiety that the prospect of a wrong decision aroused. This reduction, of course,

involves a modicum of pleasure, to which may be added the pleasure produced by satisfaction of the interest which the requiredness of value is able to stimulate. But the decision is right not because of hedonic consequences but because it maintains the organization of values which constitutes the person or, at least, because it does not threaten but, indeed, reduces the danger to the maintenance of that organization.

These remarks indicate the importance of the fact that the personality is a hierarchical organization of values. It is not, however, a perfect one, but one in which there are suborganizations which are capable of functioning more or less autonomously and which through the vagaries of selective interest, are capable of usurping the executive function which belongs to the whole system. Since the person is always more or less divided, a part always seeks to decide for the whole, sacrificing all extant espousals for the sake of the promised satisfaction of imperious cravings. A wrong moral decision is one in which the system of dominant espousals which constitutes the person is shoved aside by the extant interests which a given alternative promises to satisfy or which they may have suggested. The strength—usually only temporary—of the partial interest prevents the normally dominant system of espoused values from asserting themselves. Normally a right decision is one which strengthens, or at least does not threaten, an organization of values, no matter what partial satisfactions or dissatisfactions of certain interests may also result from it. But there are situations in which the envisaged alternatives have so completely engaged extant interests or elicited new ones that a proposed alternative cannot be foreseen as involving a threat. A

choice of such an alternative can seriously disrupt our values, and thus, objectively, we have made a wrong decision. No moral blame can attach to such a decision if the untoward consequences which it brought with it were truly unforeseen. A morally sensitive person, however, recognizes, as involved in a moral activity, the obligation to use fully his reflective intelligence in order to reduce such situations to the least possible number.

No elaborate proof of the fact that the intelligence is centrally involved in moral reflection seems to be required. It is obvious that we are forced to devise alternatives which resolve the moral perplexity, that we must explore what is entailed factually by these alternatives, and that we must make the effort to discover how the entailed facts will affect our acknowledged values. But there are two popular misconceptions of the way in which the intelligence is supposed to function which should be criticized. The first pictures a man making a moral decision by drawing up a list of the values and disvalues which he perceives as involved in the various alternatives, giving them some sort of qualitative rating, and adding and subtracting in order to arrive at the correct decision. This may be the way in which Benthamites arrive at their decisions—but it remains to be seen whether Benthamites can be genuinely moral men. Men endowed with the moral consciences of shopkeepers can be respectable—but between respectability and morality, as Bernard Shaw long ago taught our generation, there sometimes lies an abyss that cannot be bridged. But perhaps I do an injustice to the shopkeeper, since the kind of man I have in mind is

the penny-grabbing soul too small to be criminal and too blind to be genuinely good.

The other popular conception, the instrumentalist, pictures the moral intelligence as operating on the model of the scientific intelligence. There is some truth in this conception.⁴ But the moral intelligence operates in intimate co-operation with the moral will, which is to say, with the feelings of acceptance and rejection of recognized values as they present themselves when seeking to create interest in themselves or engage interest already existing. Thus in moral inquiry there are factors which are totally lacking in scientific inquiry: in the latter all values but the value of truth are insulated and not allowed to affect the intelligence, whereas in moral inquiry all values are called on to present their claims and moral sensibility consists precisely of the ability to bring forth the claims of relevant values. A moral agent is a man who decides to seek the good and act rightly—a decision which is logically prior to all practical decisions which he makes; whereas a scientist makes a prior decision not to allow any other good to interfere with his search for the truth. Instrumentalism fails to see that the intelligence acts morally because a moral will guides it and that it can act with superb perfection in its own terms, and yet morally abominably in the absence of a moral will which it cannot create but on which it must depend.

The normal moral decision, formulated perhaps in a judgment after it is reached, is the result of the grasp of a total situation and of the feeling of congruity or of fitness between the alternatives that suggest themselves and the inward ethos—the Gestalt quality of one's person, so to speak—as it makes

itself felt in the stress of the moral crisis. One decides which of several possible alternatives is the right one, as a painter decides which of the possible ways of arranging a model which occur to him in his search for the right pose will best express what he wants: the moral man wants the morally fitting, the good; the artist wants the aesthetically satisfactory. But, whether one's intelligence happens to be analytically lucid or massively emotional or, what is the same thing, whether one's will is fully intelligent or is somewhat obtuse, the way in which the decision is reached is the same: the attractiveness or repulsiveness of alternatives is grasped by him through his more or less profound reaction (as qualified above) toward their prospective effect on his conception of what ought to be. There is a moral obligation to be intelligent, to use one's full resources; and a complete moral life involves an obligation to develop one's resources and maintain them in full efficiency. But it must always be the whole individual person, in the use of his full endowment, who resolves the moral perplexity. He resolves it through his own imaginative construction of what the alternatives involve. And when a person—which is to say, an organism constituted by a psyche, endowed with powers, and possessing values—functions in this capacity, *he is his conscience*, or he acts conscientiously.⁵

It is some sort of conflict between drives or interests subtending values which constitutes the moral perplexity and elicits the functioning of the conscience. The conflict leads us to seek alternatives which will resolve it, and these tempt us with promises of valuable rewards. A typical case of moral perplexity involves the presence of a desire whose

fitness we more or less vaguely suspect and which demands peremptory satisfaction. Reflection reveals that the prospective satisfaction creates resistance or anxiety. But the case is doubtful, since the desire not only possesses strength but is able, so to speak, to bring forward arguments to prove its innocence or at least to mitigate its guilt. Since the person is not a fully integrated system of values, there is no invader or intruder that cannot count upon a fifth column within the citadel of the conscience. Were this not the case, there would be no radical moral problems. But this fifth column is not identified as such, not clearly labeled treacherous; it argues that it represents the true person, the best side of man, and in the heat and dust of the conflict it is soon utterly impossible to tell friend from foe. The decision, when we are confronted with a radical moral perplexity, demands strength to plunge to the depths of the conscience, shrewdness to tell what we truly are, and courage and doggedness to maintain our convictions against the assault of the intruder and his fifth column. What we have to do to arrive at an adequate resolution is to mobilize our total resources, set up a constant watch to discover, as we will if we truly want to, what really are our values. Once discovered, they can usually be counted on to maintain themselves against the invader. For these values, being those we espouse, are themselves not without resources of affective and volitional strength within the person.

We have seen that this total mobilization of our inward resources, this resistance of our threatened values, constitutes what is known as "conscience." The conscience is not a spiritual organ or a psychical mechanism or a special isolated faculty but the activity of an aroused moral personality in the act

of defending itself against disruption. We do not have here a mysterious autonomous fourth power on the same plane with the will and the intelligence and our affective capacity, which acts with, but is distinguishable from, these three other powers of the person. The conscience is the person in the vital and frequently anguishing and desperate act of defending its integrity. It is true, therefore, as Charner Perry points out, that there is thus something ineradicably "arbitrary" in a moral decision, since it is you, in the fully operative uniqueness of your own personality, after inward search has revealed to you what you are and what you fundamentally desire, that alone can decide what will threaten you or will aid you and may even enable you to grow as a moral person. The voice of conscience is the voice of one's self, the cry of warning against threatening danger or the embittered disapproval of the harm already done; the approval, when the decision is "right," is the gratification of your personality because you have sustained it and, in so doing, have strengthened it against future threats.

Neither the French nor the Spanish have a special name to designate the conscience, and in English the distinction made between "consciousness" and "conscience" has some advantages. It has one disadvantage, however, since it tends to make one think of the person as inherently divided in its moral and in its purely intellectual activities. This tendency and the premium put upon pure verbal intelligence in a technological culture breed philosophic schools whose purpose is to "defend" various views: thus you hear argument to the effect that the conscience is an emotion or a sentiment or that moral judgments issue from the activity of the reason. In truth, the person is constituted by the

integrated activity which the body supports, acting intelligently, volitionally, and affectively in the fulfilment of its functions. For certain more or less clear purposes, it is advisable to distinguish these functions, and to some extent, as already noted, it is possible to free some from the co-operation of the others. If we so desire, we can distinguish in a decision of the conscience an intellectual or cognitive component, an orectic one, and an affective tonality. But the person is not to be thought of in terms of the Platonic metaphor of the team driven by a charioteer, since the team can be unhitched and the charioteer, after putting the horses up for the night, goes off to his own home to supper and to rest. The reason employed—it cannot be repeated too often—is desiderative and affective, the will rational and affective, and the feelings not without drive and perhaps sight. In routine perplexities the whole personality is not aroused, and decisions are more or less automatic or involve, at best, only segments of our constitutive values in their response. But let a serious issue come up, and, like a wild animal snarling at the hand that reaches for the feeding young, the conscience, which is to say, our whole person, arouses itself to fight.

Because the term "right" has two legitimate referents which are distinct from each other, it is advisable to discuss them in order to avoid confusion. Let us first distinguish between a relational complex and the relation and the terms in relation that constitute it:

$$(s-R-o)$$

is a relational complex, constituted by the terms *s* and *o*, which are related by relation *R*. A moral

relational complex consisting of a subject or agent involved in a moral perplexity, *s*, and an object or possible solution of that perplexity, *o*, I call a "moral transaction." As we saw, in the usual moral transaction the *s* term—the subject or agent—is constituted by an operative value system which decides whether the prospective solution, *o*, will fit or not; and the *o* term consists of a value whose incorporation into the agent's system is prospectively being considered. Thus *o* can be spoken of as "good" or "valuable," meaning not only that it is a value but that it is a value which, under the circumstances and as a result of the survey occasioned by the perplexity, is thought to be the best possible. But the term "right" can also be applied to *o*, and now we say of *o* that it is the right alternative under the circumstances. Thus "right" and "good" are in this usage—which is allowed by convention—synonymous, and both are used here adjectivally. The term "right," however, unlike the term "good," may also be properly used to refer to the *sui generis* relation of fitness *R*, which is also part of the moral transaction.

One important point, with which the reader is by now familiar, is that the value of *o* is an objective character for *s*, since it appears upon, or has its locus in, a possible alternative considered as independent of the perplexity which led to the survey that discovered it. This kind of objectivity can be called "epistemological," since it reveals itself in the moral inquiry. But from it we cannot argue to the ontic objectivity resident in *o*. *Ontic objectivity can be asserted, however, if we remember that it was shown that the values from which we chose are presupposed in the act of choice and are independent of the choosing agent.* Belief in the objectivity of value gives rise to a very serious meta-

physical problem: What is the nature and status of value when not embodied in human experience? I answer that values have the same nature and status as all universals; they are part of the structure that makes spatiotemporal existence possible. Scientific laws are not created by the scientist but are discovered, although it is true that in their formulation there enter, to a greater or lesser extent, idiosyncratic factors and what is called by post-Kantians the "constitutive factor" of the mind in the knowledge process. Similarly, values are discovered by man, not created, although it must be added in the same breath that the degree of modification which the value schemes suffer because of the interests that men have in values is probably greater by far than the modification that the laws of nature suffer in their formulation.

But we are not yet through, for it also follows from the above remarks that decisions are not presumed to be right because they are approved but rather are approved because they are, or are believed to be, right because they fit or are capable of constituting a personality; and we say that they fit if we discern in them the presence of value. Thus what actually makes a choice right, or the best under the circumstances, is that it possesses a value character or quality apprehended as objectively independent of the agent. The choice fits because it possesses this value character. Hence it is necessary to modify our original definition to read as follows: A choice is said to be right because it possesses a value character which fits into the moral system of an agent seeking the solution of a perplexity. Thus the relation "right"—*R*—is not constitutive of the value *o* but is constitutive of the value only as the *o* term in the moral transaction. In other words, it

makes no appreciable difference whether in a given context we speak of *o* or of *R*—of the value of the proposed solution or of the relation of value which obtains between the solution and the moral agent—since either involves the other. In cases, however, of total self-condemnation, this is not exactly true, since the beckoning value *o*, whose superiority is acknowledged and which leads to the reconstruction of the person, cannot be said to fit into a value system and for the simple reason that no system exists, since it has been totally repudiated. This will call for a modification of our definition of "right."

The search for the resolution of a moral perplexity which does not issue forth in total self-condemnation seeks for the right alternative and distinguishes it from what one desires. As Professor Percival puts it: "The rule of right is simply this: Obedience to the will of God; self-surrender, not self-affirmation. 'And if we obey God,' Father Mapple says, 'we must disobey ourselves; and it is in this disobeying ourselves, wherein the hardness of obeying God consists.' " ⁶ The moral philosopher, trying to develop morality as far as it will go as an autonomous practical discipline, will substitute for the phrase, "the will of God," the phrase "the requiredness of value" or a synonym thereof, though for him it must remain an open question whether the requiredness of value does not ultimately entail teleological assumptions that finally force him to find his way to the portals of theology. Be that as it may, the important point is that the search for the right alternative forces on one a distinction between obedience to something objective and obedience to what one desires, obedience to self. The distinction is vague to the extent that what one desires coin-

cides with what is right. And the ideal, of course, of moral education is that the distinction be totally erased. But only a weak, sentimental, shallow, Pelagian attitude toward human nature would conceive of the ideal as within the reach of men. The City of God is not the City of Man; man cannot hope to rear a perfect city. Normally, therefore, the distinction between what we desire and what is right is very sharp, and the two terms of the distinction are apprehended as more or less exclusive.

If the naturalistic philosopher does not see the difference between desiring a thing and desiring a moral resolution of a perplexity which arose because a thing was desired, all one can say of his failure is that either his eyes are defective or his data limited. Approval serves, at best, as a more or less defective index of the right but can never constitute the essence of what is right. That can be given to us only in the relation of fitness as an objective relation of a contemplated action with our constitutive values. W. D. Ross is, in this, it seems to me, indisputably correct. He is convinced, however, that the discovery of what is fitting is a much easier task than it actually is. The reason for this is that he has not considered seriously the moral problem faced by a man who, for some reason, has been cut off from the respectable ready-made rules of a social group. There are innumerable situations in which we desire earnestly to do what is right but cannot discover which of the alternatives is the fitting one. As he shows in Sermons III and VIII, Bishop Butler is also of the impression that one's conscience can easily decide what its duty is, but, as one of his critics puts it, "The moral genius may indeed sometimes see the path of duty where it is invisible to others; and often he will do so where trained

philosophers or moral theologians are at fault. But even he knows times when circumstances are too strong for him. Duty lies somewhere in the thicket of possibilities before him; but thought and prayer are necessary before he can discover it." ⁷

The fact that we "discover" the path of duty, as Kirk puts it, expresses only one side, however, of what seems to be the paradox which confronts the moral man when he attempts to resolve his perplexity. The judgment we pronounce refers to an objective situation which possesses its own authority and which we merely record. The good chooses us through the effect of its requiredness upon us, which we merely acknowledge. *We do not create it; we discover it.* Without the impersonal authority of value, we cannot justify the objectivity of our moral decisions. On the other hand, the judgment must be one's own judgment, must represent one, must be fully backed by the unique individual which one is; otherwise, one is not morally responsible. It is the individual who chooses one alternative over the rest. This is a paradox, but it may be removed by considering that, while it is we who choose, what we choose is what we, in our free judgment, conceive to be the good. The choice is our responsibility. But the choosing does not make it good or bad; this is a character utterly independent of our choice. Thus Bishop Butler misleads his reader when he tells him that man is a law to himself. Man freely applies the law to himself but does not make but only discovers the law. This, of course, Bishop Butler clearly knew. ⁸

But, while it may be easy to show that there is no genuine paradox in this respect, it is not so easy to show that there is not something seemingly contradictory, or at least confused, in another respect.

For the individual who chooses and espouses values does so freely, and through the act of free choices he exercises his freedom and creates his own moral nature. When a man resolves a moral perplexity successfully, he adds a cubit to his stature. But when he thus creates himself freely, he realizes himself as a full human being. And what is not easy to see clearly is that self-realization of one's humanity would indicate a determinate line of development and the achievement of a pre-existing pattern—a concept which seems to be the very contrary of freedom. The puzzle, if it is one, can be solved by due consideration of the fact that man is not God and does not create himself from nothing through the use of his spontaneity. The values which, through his own free decisions, he sought to incorporate and through whose incorporation he grew into a person were not themselves created by him. They found him and exercised on him their requiredness. However, he acted creatively in the decision that it was along this direction and not that, through the choice of this and not that alternative, that the possibility of his growth lay. Again the intuition or grasp of a general, formal notion of what man can and should be is given him through his moral reflection on the content of experience, particularized into schemas supplied by his society and to a great extent determined for him by birth and circumstances. But the actual realization in the concrete is an act achieved, in part at least, through the specific individual decisions through which he grasps the moral matter which constitutes him the specific, unique individual that he is. The act of moral reflection involves a search, as was pointed out above, for what one truly is; and what one truly is remains to be achieved and is thus a creative act.

But, while the decision whether to be this or that is a free decision, when one finally decides to be this and not that, one is bound by this decision; and how one goes about achieving one's end is not a question that one can leave to spontaneity or which can be considered an arbitrary affair. I am perfectly free to be a good or an evil man; but, having decided to be a good man, I cannot go about realizing my decision in just any old way. In my station, with its determinate duties, to be good involves the spontaneous giving-up of indeterminate arbitrariness and the autonomous subjection of myself to the conditions which I must fulfil to be the kind of good man I can be and want to be.

If I use the word "fitness" instead of "harmony" to denote the relation to which we have been devoting our attention, the reason is that in its usual acceptance the term "harmony" is intended to denote a fitness which reduces tension, whereas the rightness of a decision need not eliminate tension, so long as the tension does not produce disruption of previously existing integrations in the value system in which it fits. It might be well, however, to remember that these are all questions of degree. Here again the analogy with aesthetics may serve to throw some light on our subject. An aesthetic integration involves tensions among the elements which constitute it which, nevertheless, do not preclude their mutual fitness to make up a harmonious whole.

If what has been said should prove acceptable, Dewey is at fault in his insistence that a right resolution always involves a complete transformation of the values of the personality, and hence a continuous growth by addition. The decision may lead to growth, but it may also lead to the very

opposite, to shrinkage of the values of the person in the interest of maintaining those essential values which constitute it. The value system which constitutes it is the agency and criterion that define the limits of what other values are acceptable, except in those rare cases in which a crisis reveals the need to repudiate the system. And the idea that every need can call for a transformation of the mass in terms of a prescription of continuous progress or growth is monstrous nonsense, which can occur only to that pathetically disinherited, uprooted animal, the contemporary liberal. The moral life involves sacrifices, often retrenchments; and not infrequently it happens that moral reflection reveals that the growth and enrichment of the person which have taken place previously have led us hopelessly into the wrong and threaten our response to the ideal. Again, the notion put forth by William James, that "every *de facto* claim creates in so far forth an obligation"; that every desire, considered by itself, carries with it its own moral passport; that it is, as he puts it, "imperative to the extent of its amount; [that] it *makes* itself valid by the fact that it at all exists,"⁹ is vicious nonsense. Growth is not a self-evident imperative of morality; rather, one of the many difficult problems which the moral man has to solve is whether and by how much and along what directions he should allow growth in himself. There are times and places when shrinking from growth may well be the only moral decision which we can arrive at. And there are times and places when ceasing not merely to grow but to live is the only moral way out. A man who, in totalitarian countries like Nazi Germany, chooses to grow by the incorporation of Nazi values does not become better through his growth but worse. A good

man in that situation naturally makes fewer demands of his environment and resists the incorporation into his personality of the values with which the system tempts him to grow.

A truly serious or radical moral perplexity confronts us when disparity and incommensurability of values or lack of knowledge of possible consequences or the generalized, not individuated, nature of the impulse that sets the problem acts in such a way as to present to reflection choices among which there does not seem to be a decisive difference. Intelligence has gone as far as it can, and it is not possible to discover a basis on which a decision can be reached. Moreover, the very desires whose emergence gave rise to the moral perplexity throw a smoke screen between us and our loyalties and (since, even at best, it is not easy to determine what we really are) successfully conceal from us the values which are truly constitutive of our essential moral selves. Again, pressures from the outside tend frequently to help us to betray ourselves; and forces, resistances, and tendencies lying beyond the reach of introspection confuse us as to our values. The world expects certain things of you, and desire finds no difficulty in convincing you that along those lines lies the correct moral decision. There are also your hidden fears, your subtly disguised aggressive tendencies, against yourself and against others, and the hidden burden of guilt, some of it possibly irrational because infantile, which are as much a part of you as your Sunday-best respectability and your company manners. Some of these forces lie beyond the reach of discovery by reflection and are able to run interference against your self beyond the range of your awareness. They have refined ways of taking revenge if you offend them, deploying their defenses

in depth if you threaten them and patting you sweetly until you purr if you keep them content. Psychoanalysts, aware above all other men of these factors, tend to explain away the notion of moral responsibility and to reduce moral failure to disease. This is simply bad thinking, and, as we have seen, their account of the conscience is fallacious. The data they offer cannot be ignored, but they must be reinterpreted, for the problem at issue—whether men are capable of moral choice or not, except, of course, in obviously extreme cases, of distinctive pathological character—is one on which no compromise is admissible.

The process of arriving at a moral decision is not always so easy as the above account may have led us to believe, since the moral perplexity may reveal, by making us reflect about our values, that they cannot pass muster. And the upshot of such an experience is a total condemnation of our extant personality. But first let us ask how this can happen. Not so infrequently as one whose life has run along conventionally respectable channels might tend to believe do disruptive experiences reveal to us values beckoning which are not only genuine but of the greatest importance and for which no place can be found in our present system. And not so infrequently as the conventionally respectable may think do the consequences of our actions force us to look at the unspeakable evil will from which they issued. Any experience that will crack the hard crust of our smugness: a dire calamity or an intense unexpected happiness; illness; the threat of death; a criminal sentence pronounced upon us, with its awful sanction; perhaps only a gentle reproach, like the tap administered by a diamond cutter along

the line of cleavage—experiences such as these not infrequently endow us with a sensibility not previously possessed or bring forth latent powers of discrimination until now dormant, which force us to perceive that the values we acknowledge are evil. And the question that the action gives rise to is this: How is it possible to condemn one's self, to say to one's self, "I am evil"? How do we repudiate our constitutive values?

According to the postulational theory, it is not possible to explain how a man can condemn himself. Neither is it possible, according to the interest theory, to explain how a set of defeated interests can recognize freely the validity of the judgment which condemns them. If the interest theory is right, what we have is a constellation of interests in conflict with another constellation, but in terms of the definition each of these sets is as right as the other. But the suppression of one set does not make it wrong, unless all that is meant by "wrong" is "weaker." But the wrong set is not always the weaker and often, although stronger, acknowledges itself to be wrong. "Right" does not mean stronger; sometimes the right is weaker. What "right" means is something else: that we have reached a decision in the light of our apprehension of what a given concrete situation requires to complete itself in an ideal way; and the criterion of ideality is given to the moral agent by the requiredness of the values that he is able to discern. As my friend Professor A. C. Garnett is fond of putting it, man is a creature that "responds to value"; on this fact the moral life is founded. But for the interest theory all that "right" can mean is a successful organization of interests capable of suppressing opposition in favor of its objects. There are times, however, when a right

decision is acknowledged as right and accepted because it is right, and not because it is merely yielded to, even though it may not have the strength of strong desires to help it impose itself. This is particularly the case when we apprehend that the extant organization of our values, taken collectively, is wrong. All our interests are repudiated, collectively, and, according to the interest theory, it remains a mystery how a powerful organization will yield to the single interest which pronounces the condemnation. Obviously, it is no more possible to explain such a phenomenon by means of the working definition given earlier in this chapter than by the interest and postulational theories. If the right decision is one that maintains, or at least does not threaten, the organization of values which constitutes the person, it would not be possible for the system to apprehend that it is itself wrong. Either no such total condemnation ever takes place, or there is more involved in arriving at a right decision than has been broached so far. But how can we deny that there are instances in which men do, in fact, condemn themselves totally and act on the condemnation to change radically the pattern of their lives? Of course, they do not condemn each and every one of their values; they condemn them collectively, condemning their organization or system, and hence the order of rank which wrongfully assigned to some values a pre-eminence which they obviously cannot claim. Our initial definition of right and our initial formulation of the manner in which we arrive at a correct decision must be altered in the face of facts such as these.

What we need to do is to analyze more deeply the phenomenon from which the definition was derived. In choosing normally between prospective

alternatives, we choose that which fits; but we do so not because, subjectively, our values decide the choice but because our constitutive values are higher, superior, more valuable, than the values of any of the alternatives which offer themselves as capable of solving our perplexity. The "right," then, is normally the solution that fits, but only because we have chosen one that is the best completion to a value system which we have no reason to challenge. And thus what makes it right is that, having discerned its superior fittingness, we have responded to it. Now what is involved in total self-condemnation is that an ideal "ought-to-be" (as Nicolai Hartmann might put it) has revealed itself by contrast with the actual "is." A value or a constellation of values has been descried, possessing its own requiredness and capable of revealing it because what one acknowledged previously has discredited itself. The situation thus reveals to us that what "right" truly refers to is a relation between a value or a complex of values and a self which has the capacity to respond to the requiredness of values. Normally, as we have already seen, it is not the naked self but one informed by an operative value system that responds preferentially to competing alternatives, and "right" then refers to the relation of fitness; but the critical phenomenon of self-condemnation has left us a naked self, bereft of values and seeking to be informed again. For the self seeks values, requires them for its completion, for its actualization as a moral person. The right is a relation, *R*, which relates a self, capable of responding to value, to the value whose superior requiredness is apprehended by the responding self. Of course, the response of the self is not totally blind, since, in losing its values, it has not lost its knowledge of value; and, if it has

not until now known what the true good is, it has lately learned an awful lesson as to what evil is, and by that experience it has already acquired considerable knowledge.

I have spoken as if the process of self-condemnation and reconstitution of the personality were temporally successive, but this was only a convenient manner of speaking. In fact, the process is complex and takes place all at once. A practical difficulty induces moral reflection which reveals the evil of our constitutive values and, at the same time, searches and discerns alternatives which are likely to consist of precisely the contrasting values which formerly were rejected. A self which past early childhood can remain divested or stripped of values is an abstract figment; the mind gives values up only in the act of exchanging them simultaneously for new ones; and self-condemnation involves, first, the discovery of new values whose apprehension forces the repudiation of the old ones.

If the argument of this chapter is valid, moral perplexities are resolved by all men in the same way, whether they belong to a settled and well-ordered society or one in rapid flux in which governing principles have lost their authority. The difference between situations in which social values are accepted and those in which they are rejected is one of degree—a degree indicated by the amount of uncertainty which precedes decisions in which we lack the support of socially regulative principles. In the case of the rebel who rejects the values of the society (as in the case of individuals who merely doubt them but who, in the resolution of their perplexities, cannot derive help from the rules as they understand them), the decision must “fit.” In other

words, it must promise to co-operate with and not threaten the values accepted. When a man rebels against a culture and on moral grounds seeks its destruction, he frequently imagines that he repudiates the whole culture, with all its values. But all he manages to repudiate are certain important aspects of it, not all of it; and one thing least of all does he repudiate, and that is the self he is, into whose constitution went the major training energies of the society: his habits, emotional patterns, and trained aptitudes cannot easily be shed. No man, however, is totally a product of his culture. As an individual he has creatively contributed to his own development by the moral decisions which, as he lived, he was called on to make. In seeking to destroy the values he repudiates, the rebel does so on his own responsibility.

The question arises as to how one knows, after the self-condemnation which wrecked one's person, that one is substituting for it a better value system and not another as bad as, or worse than, that which has been repudiated; for the process of conversion, involving traumatic experiences, could easily and radically mislead one. The problem will be taken up in the two following chapters. Here we have been concerned only with a description of the actual process of moral deliberation, not with its validity.

CHAPTER IV

THE GROUND AND THE SOURCE OF MORAL AUTHORITY

THE preceding account of the manner in which we resolve our moral perplexities may be criticized for leaving the moral judgment entangled in radical subjectivism. To obviate the criticism, we must look into the ground and source of moral authority and into the manner in which we justify our moral decisions.

It is the moral agent who has the authority to make the moral decision. To place the authority elsewhere would be to deprive the agent of his responsibility. But the fact that the conscience must ultimately have the authority to do the choosing and must assume full responsibility for it does not imply that the decision is arbitrary or subjective. The moral decision is not right because *we* choose it but because we choose it *rightly*. The conscience decides upon, but does not constitute, the right. The source of the authority lies in the requiredness of the chosen values which oblige the conscience to acknowledge them. Those theories which give authority to the conscience have usually avoided moral solipsism by claiming some sort of infallibility for its deliverances; but in this essay the conception

of the conscience as a special faculty or entity—or even, as Freud would have it, as the judicial function of a special entity—has been precluded by the analysis of it as the whole person engaged in moral deliberation. The conscience has been and is still taken for a faculty which, like the old-fashioned “instinct,” is supposed to serve the animal without error. When it is interpreted as the whole person functioning at the special task of resolving moral perplexities, its propensity to error and the ease with which it falls into it cannot be concealed. The human mind has the power to arrive at the truth on questions of morals no less than on other questions, but man’s truth is always subject to correction. Apodictic truth is a fruit that man may crave and that he should pursue, for in its search he fulfils himself. The quest for certainty thus defines man’s destiny, and to dissuade him from it is to strip him of his armor against despair. But it is the quest and not the result of it that defines his destiny, for certainty is not given to man to possess. Nor is this statement intended to prejudice the question as to whether the term “truth,” in the locution “moral truth,” is formally or methodologically the same term as is found in the expression “scientific truth.” The word “truth” has been used here loosely, and its meaning will not be fixed until we explore the notion of “justification.”

The claim that in the realm of morals man enjoys certainty is still made by reputable philosophers, in spite of the destructive attacks to which rationalistic intuitionism in moral philosophy has been subjected since the seventeenth century. Indeed, one of the most vigorous schools of moral philosophy in our day is that which we call “British

intuitionism," whose most distinguished representative is W. D. Ross.

According to this author, we are endowed with a special power which enables us to apprehend moral principles: ". . . both in mathematics and in ethics we have certain crystal-clear intuitions from which we build up all that we can know about the nature of numbers and the nature of duty."¹ In his earlier book the same view is maintained; the *prima facie* rightness of certain types of acts is self-evident. We are warned, however, that "the nature of the self-evident is not to be evident to every mind however undeveloped, but to be apprehended directly by minds which have reached a certain degree of maturity. . . ."² A systematic defense of the view is not to be found in the two books of Ross with which I am acquainted, but the reasons for accepting intuitionism seem to be that every system of moral philosophy admits intuition at some point and that the arguments against intuitionism can be disposed of. The objections are that intuitionism admits of too many intuitions and that it admits intuitions which, in practice, contradict one another.³ The first of these objections is not one which I am disposed to press against Ross's view. The second deserves careful examination; but, before examining it, it seems desirable to indicate that Ross's acceptance of his own intuitions in moral philosophy cannot today derive support from mathematical intuitionism in as cavalier a manner as he thinks it can. Kant could argue that mathematics is a pure product of reason and, moreover, *synthetical*, and he may have been correct.⁴ But today it should be obvious that the validity of mathematical intuitionism is not something which, after 1868, can

be taken as self-evident.⁵ Moreover, even if intuitionism could be accepted without argument, we would require a rigorous analysis of the criterion by which we can distinguish valid from pseudo-intuitions. No such analysis is to be found in Ross, nor are we told where we can find it.

In any case the claim that there are "crystal-clear" moral intuitions seems to be contradicted successfully by relevant data of which Ross does not take account. For Ross a moral perplexity consists in the difficulty involved in the choice of *prima facie* obligations; intuition always gives at least to "the best and most enlightened of men an absolutely original and direct insight into moral principles. . . ." ⁶

Let us first observe that, *in the manner in which it is stated*, the doctrine is beyond the possibility of impugnement, and Ross is too careful a writer for us to be able to disregard his formulations. Anyone trying to challenge Ross's contention can always be stopped with the answer that those who deny the existence of crystal-clear intuitions do not have them because they are neither the best nor the most enlightened. Should these blind and evil men answer that they are sufficiently good and sufficiently enlightened, it is always possible to point out to them that their failure to have original and direct insights of a crystal-clear nature argues them as lacking the amount of goodness and enlightenment necessary to place them in the class of men of superior enlightenment and goodness who *have* such insights. Ross, however, does not need to allow that his argument is circular or that it is merely a disguised definition; for what he is saying is that the insight into moral principles is self-certifying in somewhat the sense in which Aristotle said that the de-

liverances of the theoretical reason about first principles were self-certifying or in which the intuition of truth was self-certifying for Spinoza. The good man not only knows truly the principles governing his obligations but knows himself as knowing them. I must confess candidly that the argument as I have stated it here cannot be found in either of the two books by Ross on ethical philosophy with which I am acquainted, but it seems to me to be the only interpretation of his doctrine possible if one is to assume, as I must, that the charge of circularity was too obvious for Ross not to have seen it. Thus interpreted, Ross also avoids the attacks of those who would tend to disqualify the argument because it is alleged to rest on a definition.

But, while Ross's argument cannot be impugned as stated, it rests on an assumption contrary to fact, for he ignores the frequent occasions on which men who are generally acknowledged to be the best and most enlightened are completely balked by a moral perplexity because they cannot discover the principles by means of which they could resolve the situation. Now this frustration happens when, *in respect to a single perplexity*, two good and enlightened men have contradictory intuitions. Ross argues that we never have contradictory intuitions about the same situation but have incompatible intuitions only about different prima facie obligations. It is this argument which is here denied. When the moral intuition of a good and enlightened man tells him that a nation bound by a treaty to defend another nation against unjustified attack should go to war if necessary to keep its obligations, and a pacifist opposes that very intuition because war is always and under any circumstances wrong, we are not in disagreement about two prima facie obligations—

that in respect to treaties and that in respect to war—but about the same situation: the question of the morality of taking human life. Two good and enlightened men value life differently; and if one puts treaties above life, it is because the obligation to respect the life of his fellow-beings does not seem to him so important as it seems to the pacifist. Thus the disagreement can indeed be interpreted as Ross interprets it, but it can also be interpreted as disagreement about the intrinsic value of a single situation.

Let us consider another illustration: Abraham may have been perplexed by two *prima facie* obligations, one toward his God and another toward his son. But he may also have been perplexed by his inability to arrive at a clear intuition as regards his duty toward God; he may have been unable for a time to decide whether one is obliged to obey God conditionally or unconditionally. If this was his initial problem, the conflict between his *prima facie* obligations to his son and to God still remained after he decided what his duty to God was; but he could not have decided between duty to God and love of son until the true nature of his duty to God was decided. Now, of course, the failure to come to a crystal-clear decision may be formulated either as an inability to obtain such an intuition or as a conflict between two intuitions which contradict each other in regard to the same situation. Thus Abraham, in our hypothetical example, may have been unable to arrive at any clear intuition as to what he should do, or he may have been confronted by two contradictory intuitions in regard to his duty to God, namely, that his duty was conditional or that it was unconditional. Ross's claim is plausible when we artificially isolate values from the system

in which they are found hierarchically organized and when we disregard the evidence available against his claim, in the form of a prodigious number of facts accumulated by sociologists and anthropologists about the wide range of differences found in the judgments of the peoples of the earth.

I have no doubt that Ross himself has crystal-clear intuitions. The question can still be asked, however, whether these are valid intuitions, disclosing a moral structure which is universal and prior to what the anthropologist, Herskovits, calls by the barbaric neologism "enculturation" or whether they are the expression, at the level of judgment, of habituations and training exhaustively reducible to mere cultural conditioning of physiological needs. The importance of the question is obscured for Ross by a faith (which obviously, as the reader of his books can see, goes very deep indeed) that there has been moral progress in human history and that he, Ross, stands at the top of it. What Ross takes to be the crystal-clear intuitions of men who are good and enlightened (hence in the forefront of the human trek) could be but the bland prejudices of a well-trained man in the unperturbed enjoyment of his privileged class, hermetically sealed, pre-Buchenwald, pre-Hiroshima, imperial British insularity.

This kind of intuitionism will not save us. I fear, from the fallibility that the flesh is heir to. The rightness of an action does not unqualifiedly consist in its suitability, conceived as a character shining like the flush of youth on its cheek. Suitability or fitness is a relational term, and it defines a relation between (*a*) a situation, (*b*) a decision which suits it as capable of resolving (*c*) a perplexity it gives rise to but (*d*) that it gives rise to for a specific moral agent. And the introduction of the last makes

it always possible that in the judgment there may be elements of idiosyncrasy and of sheer error.

The ground of moral authority is nevertheless, the conscience. But its fallibility is obvious to anyone who has considered seriously what is today known about the human psyche with its duplicities, its hidden depths, its strategies of rationalization, and the implacable cunning of its self-hatred and self-love. The problem for us, therefore, is not quite so easy as it is for the intuitionist: we have to examine the claims of the conscience to authority and to decide whether its judgments can be considered objective. Before turning to these problems, however, it is advisable to remind the reader that the ground of obligation, to which we as moral philosophers can point, cannot actually compel a man to act morally who wilfully refuses to do so. If for any reason a man is disposed to suppress his moral responses and to deny the authority of morality over himself, we cannot convince him.⁷ Moral philosophy is normative in that it discloses and defines and clarifies the norms operating within the moral conscience of man; one can go to it for help in respect to the perplexities one encounters in one's life. It is not, as Aristotle and Plato clearly knew, a substitute for the existence within the person of the sense of obligation whose principles and objectives moral philosophy defines and helps to clarify. So long as men are free, they can always deny the authority of morality. Freedom is an inalienable possession of man's rational nature; it can be lost only with the loss of one's reason.

On the other hand, the authority of morality cannot be denied without the agent's repudiating, at the same time, his status as person. Thus the ac-

ceptance of a single disposition or interest as ultimate and beyond the reach of rational mediation, such as we find in the postulational theory and in the emotivism of Charles Stevenson is not merely the recognition of the limits of morality in cases of radical conflict, but it is also an implicit assertion of the decision of the conflicting parties to abandon their human condition and to descend to the condition of brutes. In the face of such a repudiation we should expect the suasion of moral philosophy to be impotent. But the task of moral reflection is not to invent a system, the publication of which will lead to the conversion of mankind to it, and hence to the abolition of those conditions that the system marks off as evil, but the discovery and elucidation of those principles which, when adequately stated, enable the moral man to understand why actions are right when they are and wrong when, in turn, they are, and thus to choose the truly right action when he possesses the good will to make the choice.

Moral reflection is thus practical, since the clarifications which it achieves can be and are used in practice, but one cannot put them to use unless one first decides to do so. In this respect moral philosophy is no different from logic, another normative discipline. The fiction author of the *Letters from the Underworld* writes: "What have I to do with the laws of Nature, or with arithmetic, when all the time those laws and the formula that twice two make four do not meet with my acceptance? Of course, I am not going to beat my head against a wall if I have not the requisite strength to do so; yet I am not going to *accept* that wall merely because I have run up against it, and have no means to knock it down."⁸ The writer cannot mean that he rejects logic or mathematics; for anyone who rejects

them is crazy. He must mean that he does not accept them in an ethical-religious sense or in a pas-sional-existential or in a "living" sense; for how any-one who was sane could refuse to accept "the stone wall" in a logical or in a natural sense is not easy to conceive. It is impossible to change facts, and no phrase is falser than that which is on our lips today when we boast that we have triumphed over nature, defied the law of gravity, abolished space, and mastered the energy of the atom. This is nonsense, and, if I can be forgiven the platitude, it will be because the truth that it asserts is so frequently lost sight of by modern man in his vanity. He never defied the law of gravity and never can, and, when swishing past faster than sound in his rockets or going down thousands of feet to the cold, black depths of the sea, he is doing nothing that nature forbids; he is obeying her. His true triumph was not over nature but over himself when he taught himself to learn her hidden ways. Santayana has some wise things to say on this point, which, coming from a materialist, should carry weight. Describing the lessons young Oliver learned from his pony, he tells us:

" . . . the important point was not to pull the bridle too tight, so as to hurt Dumpy, and yet to pull it hard enough to make him mind. It soon became evident that the secret of control was not so much force as suggestion: and for suggestion to succeed the possibilities of Dumpy must first be consulted. His dumb soul must be solicited and not outraged; and on this sympathetic basis a firm and thoroughly responsible government was soon established by the child over the beast, to the latter's apparent satisfaction, and to the very serious realization on Oli-

ver's part that it was his duty to rule and that he knew how to do it." ⁹

If the control of nature that man has gained in the last few centuries were evidence, as pragmatists sometimes contend, of man's freedom, I would be a determinist, for man is never more the slave of nature than when he controls her scientifically. Nature one cannot but accept, nor is one asked whether he will or not. But one need not *resign* one's self to it; one need not exult in one's impotence. Dostoevski saw hidden helplessness behind the vanity of modern man's exultation over his dominion over nature, noticing that in those areas where man could indeed exult, because he enjoyed full freedom, he does not fully use it. Whether there are stone walls—natural conditions—which men ought to accept or not is a moral question; and what Dostoevski was trying to say, if we are allowed to gather it from the sweep of his work, is that there are certain natural conditions to which we ought never to resign ourselves. Moral principles are effective upon the *acceptance* of moral obligation. But a full acceptance of the latter involves a consequent acceptance of the insights and clarifications of moral philosophy, which operates normatively only in a situation within which moral norms are already accepted.

We can now turn to our problem. The account of the moral life elaborated in the preceding chapters is not morally solipsistic or subjectivistic because it does not trace the authority of the moral judgment to the will that chooses between alternatives according to its preferences or dispositions. Of course, normally the moral judgment refers to a

suitability or fitness alleged to obtain between a system of values and a practical decision entailing other values which are candidates for incorporation into the system. But, while the latter is a unique entity, since my system is not yours and yours is not Paul's, the suitability of a value to your system is a perfectly objective affair, in regard to which Paul and I, no less than you yourself, can judge and, on occasion, are indeed called on even by you to judge, as we shall see in the next chapter. There is no need to deny what is perfectly obvious and well known, namely, that, when I judge whether a decision is suitable for you, I am likely to fall into error because of my ignorance of your situation and your values. But so am I when I pass judgment on a perplexity by which I myself am confronted; and, whatever practical advantages may exist one way or the other, these do not diminish by the smallest quantity the character of objectivity which may pertain to a judgment about the rightness of a decision.

The judgment may be objective in this sense, however, and yet the authority it possesses may seem to derive from myself, from the values I acknowledge and which constitute me. Since it has been admitted that these are unique, the authority is unique and hence subjective.

This argument is false because it overlooks the fact that the values which one acknowledges, whether as espoused or merely as recognized, one does not acknowledge, as we saw in the last chapter, merely because *one chooses to do so* but also and at the same time because *they choose one* to acknowledge them. It is *in them*, in their requiredness, that the authority has its source. The authority is the requiredness, and one's obligation to it is not something which one can accept or reject as one chooses

but something which is the necessary result of one's being the kind of man one is, whose endowment enables one to apprehend the requiredness of values and, apprehending it, to respond to it by acknowledging that requiredness, hence owning one's obligation to the value that exhibits it. To the degree to which one is blind to values or insensitive to their requiredness, morality has no authority over one; to that extent one can live like the mere animal which one is. But practical perplexities involve values and hence requiredness and hence the need to choose. A man can refuse to accept the axiological stone wall. Like leviathan, he can dive into the dark depths of his animality. But when he loses his conscience, he loses his humanity, he becomes a mere animal, a brute. When we are forced to choose between values, we claim again our status as persons and thus open ourselves to the demands of obligation toward other persons. A refusal to accept a moral claim, which is to say, a demonstration of insensibility toward proffered values, is indeed frequent among human animals. But such a refusal bespeaks a man as a mere animal.

The moral philosopher is sometimes asked, "Why should we be moral?" Philosophers should have known the answer to this question at least since Socrates' day. If a man possessed the ring of Gyges' ancestor, the Lydian shepherd, he could live unjustly without fear of punishment. Why, then, should he not do so? Before answering the question, let us notice in passing that we are dealing here with the problem of moral obligation. The answer often given is that his conscience will punish him. But need one always fear one's conscience? It would be a great comfort for many an envious coward who does not do evil from fear of punish-

ment or from fear of his conscience if he could be sure that your Goerings and Stalins were men who lost their sleep worrying about the blood that's on their souls. But I rather suspect that neither Goering nor Stalin ever suffered from insomnia. Indeed, from 1932 until at least 1944, Goering seems thoroughly to have enjoyed himself; nor can we argue that a man as passionately fond of Cranach as he was, was a totally coarse man. Shall we then say, as I heard a man who calls himself a Christian not long ago say, that Goering "got his" after his death and so will Stalin? I think we do morality a poor service to put it on the basis of fear. We have to admit that evil men can be happy. Consider, after all, your neighbor Mr. Jones, next door. Is his soul free from the stain of injustice? And does he seem unhappy? Why, then, should I be moral?

The answer I give to this question is not one that I can expect to be generally acceptable to my contemporaries: man ought to be moral because he has two duties from which all his other duties derive, the duty to know God and the duty to make the effort to realize himself as a person. And if he doesn't, what does he lose? Subjectively, if he does not know it, nothing. The Andaman islander, before the nineteenth century, could, in his own terms, be happy and enjoy his life and have his satisfactions and would have refused, on plausible grounds, to exchange his condition for one which was objectively better. But was he a better man than his neighbor, the civilized Indian on the continent? So long as the implicit assumption is that the Indian could be called better only if he enjoyed himself more, the Andaman islander would unquestionably be right in preferring his own condition to the Indian's. This way of thinking is so deeply in-

grained in us that we have difficulty in seeing how thoroughly human actions contradict it. Men struggle to remain in their class when, by taking a step down, they could often earn more money and live more easily. Why? Because they believe that economic and social classes define quality. The Englishman who shaves daily and dresses for dinner in the jungle or the clerk who starves in gentility rather than take a highly paid laborer's job acts on the belief that one ought to live up to the highest value that one is capable of. They may be wrong as to what they take to be genuine values, but, as to their obligation to it, they are not. If, instead of trying to maintain their self-respect in terms of superficial values, as they do, men tried to maintain it in terms of the values that are truly worth their loyalty and reverence, the question of why one should be moral would be too obvious to ask.

When a person makes a moral demand of us, we recognize it as *moral* if we recognize the claimant to be a person and the values he is pleading for as values in fact; that is to say, if we recognize *them* to be values.

This double recognition brings the moral claimant, actually or potentially, in respect to the particular claim at least, within the range of the moral interest of the man on whom the claim is pressed. For a person is a human being who possesses intrinsic value and who embodies a system of values, and the man on whom a claim is pressed responds both to the intrinsic value of another and to the values that the other embodies. But he of whom the demand is made does not embody a system of values merely passively. He actively espouses some values and more or less indifferently recognizes others;

and, by virtue of those values that he acknowledges, he is open to the effect of the requiredness of the whole range of possible values within his purview. This point could be put more forcefully by saying, in the vernacular, that men are "suckers" for values, which means that in the presence of an external system one cannot help responding to it in at least a minimal way by recognizing its values as such. How we can decide the legitimacy of the specific claim is not here in question; what is in question is how one human being can make a moral demand on another or, rather, how, when one does, the other feels obliged to entertain his demands. For an answer we must fall back on the power that values have over us, once they break into our consciousness, once they brush aside all the commitments and interests and distractions that interfere with our ability to recognize them as values.

This is to say that we recognize another person's moral claim in the same manner in which we recognize any other set of values which presents itself before our consciousness and elicits our espousal, because we respond to its collective requiredness. But this is not all, since we respond chiefly to the requiredness of one value above all, the value of the other person, which we acknowledge as a value by agreeing to consider his demands. Let me illustrate what is here involved. Peter says to Paul, "You ought to grant me this request, *x*." Paul, in acknowledging his obligation to consider its legitimacy (not to grant it), recognizes that Peter is a person and, as such, embodies a value and that to disregard Peter's request is to treat him as a thing. The satisfaction of the demand is thus an addition to the universe of values espoused by Peter and recognized

by Paul, an addition which Paul cannot refuse to consider without turning his back on the requiredness of the values in question.

In practice, of course, men do not recognize all human beings as persons. And those whom they do recognize as persons they do not consistently recognize as such. But the reason for the failure is to be traced, in part at least, to *factors which are operative within the moral situation itself and which are susceptible of correction by moral reflection*. One of the factors in a moral situation we might call "centripetal," since it tends to preserve the integration, as already constituted, of the extant values of the moral agent. This force prevents a man from transcending his insularity and leads him to the jealous assertion of his own espoused values as having an exclusive primacy which entails a denial of the claim of any other value on him. This centripetal force usually wins out in cases of radical conflict, and it thus leads to the annihilation of the very moral system which it seeks to preserve. Against this we must set off, however, the requiredness of all values of whatever kind or degree of worth—and that includes the values of the claimant for the agent as well as the values embodied in the claimant's demand.

Exclusive attention to the first of these two conflicting forces, the centripetal, and the total oversight of the other help to account for the views of the postulational moral philosopher. Postulational theory disregards the requiredness of the other's values and insists intransigently on the preservation of the basic commitments of the agent. This argument leads the postulational moralist to a narrow insularity which is the essence of immorality. On the other hand, to argue that the centripetal tend-

ency is, without qualification, undesirable, as is done by the romantic moralist who asserts the primacy of growth, is, in fact, to defend sheer expediency. The romantic moralist overlooks the fact that without a certain concentration, a certain jealousy for one's own values, it is not possible to maintain a system of values.

Thus the moral man has to find an Aristotelian mean between concentration and growth, between openness and closedness. He is torn between these two mutually incompatible tendencies. It is the supreme irony of morality, and one which should not go without comment, that men honestly in the pursuit of the good end up frequently by clutching in their tight fists abominable evil. Frequently, however—or so at least I am inclined to believe—our rejection of the demands of another is to be traced simply to our inability to grant him a status as person, not for immoral reasons, but because of our sheer inability to see the human in the strange featherless biped before us. Let me illustrate with an extreme case.

The discovery of America brought up the problem as to whether the aborigines were persons. The question was a difficult one to resolve not only because the Europe of the sixteenth century lacked scientific knowledge but, perhaps, also because the Christian integration of values made it difficult for the discoverers to believe that these beings had souls. The Jew and the Mohammedan had forced the Christian European to recognize their status as persons by the exigencies of their practical relationships; but the American Indian, with his alien and repugnant beliefs and customs, could not immediately be recognized as a person. Anyone doubting this assertion has only to read in Bernal Diaz'

La Conquista de la Nueva España the description of the blood-clotted hair of the priests and the smell of the pyramid of skulls. The conquistadores—themselves not too far above the morality and cultural level of the conquered in such lands as Mexico and Peru—could not fairly be blamed for uncritically rejecting the Indians as persons. It took a genuine Christian like Father Las Casas to transcend the European's insularity through an act of that rarest of qualities, Christian love, to brush aside the barbaric insularism of his age, and to discover the humanity of the Indian. There is deep pathos in the fact that Las Casas' contemporaries, who claimed to be Christians, could not readily follow him. But the pathos is not confined to that age and people; it extends to the whole of our Western culture, which calls itself "Christian" and which is far from being so. Those who blame the deeds of the men of Cortez and of the Pizarros must not forget to blame also the blackbirding expeditions of the English in the islands of the Pacific in the nineteenth century and the unutterable cruelty of the French and Belgians in the Congo. The limitations and shortcomings of our Christianity—what people in history is going to rise and say to another, "You are guilty as we are not"?

In so far as one denies recognition to a moral demand made of him, he denies status as person to the moral claimant and deals with his claim as he deals with all external forces which impinge on him: he either uses it to his ends or overpowers it or circumvents it or yields to it. But, if a person rejects the moral demands made on him by a being whose status as person cannot be denied, the rejection is wrong. It is wrong not only to the other, who makes the claim, but it is also wrong to one's

self because, by denying the demand, one repudiates one's own status as person and proclaims one's decision to descend to the level of the mere animal. This we do daily, but we cannot do it without contradicting two truths discovered by Socrates as essential to the moral life: first, that if we deny our own status as persons, we do not know what we are doing, for no man fully cognizant of what he is up to could gratuitously destroy himself; and, second, that the wrongdoer harms himself much more than he harms his victim if he destroys his own personality. It is also possible, but not quite so easy, to destroy the personality of another. Or, rather, since on these questions we must be exact, it was not quite so easy until the nineteen-thirties. Formerly one could kill a man, maim him, but not crush him as a person. It remained for our generation to solve the problem scientifically and to demonstrate that a man's humanity can also be destroyed if we go at the job with the proper experimental objectivity. In the United States we do not yet fully know how to do this, but we know that it can be done. The Germans "solved the problem," and, in their own dialectically refined way, so did the Russians. And anyone who shares the writer's faith in American science believes that we will do it easily when the need arises.

The age of foolish martyrdom is gone. A man can stand up under the most excruciating physical tortures that unscientific men could once devise. But today, in the hands of technicians, he can be "processed" in such a way that he can be made to repudiate himself and accuse himself of any crime his persecutors choose, and he can be made to do so deliberately and without showing any marks of physical torture. Our generation should be proud of

its achievements: we conquered the air and the depths of the sea, we conquered the atom, and, finally, we have conquered the soul of man. Prattle about heads "bloody but unbowed" is sheer, unscientific nonsense. Today we can make any man bow his head without a telltale bruise. And those who have followed, however superficially, the literature on the subject know that the glories of scientific sociology which the Germans proudly claimed in Maidenek and Buchenwald have been surpassed by the glories of dialectical materialism. The Germans, in taking a man's dignity, took the appearance of dignity from him. Through dialectical materialism we have learned to take away his dignity and his humanity and yet leave him looking like a man. There is one problem, however, that we do not seem yet to have solved: we have not yet managed to destroy another man's humanity without previously destroying our own. Have we then reached the limits of science?

I destroy that which is most valuable in a person when I force him to fall back on his animality and to have recourse to brute force against me. But, before I can destroy him, I have already destroyed myself because, by denying his moral claim, I have chosen to function in a capacity which I know to be lesser than that in which I do indeed, if I but stop to think, want to function. My obligation, then, to recognize the moral claim of another person springs from my own need: the fact that I recognize him as a person because I cannot deny my own status as a person. Unfortunately, it is only too easy to allow our interests to obfuscate our grasp of what is involved in our recognition of both others and ourselves as persons. But nothing can free us from our primary moral obligation except that which

first destroys us as persons; passion is the formal and the final, no less than the efficient, cause of self-destruction. And, thus viewed, we should easily grasp the essentially corrupting immorality of some of the theories criticized in "In Lieu of Part I" of this study. The source of moral authority cannot be the will or any other aspect of our psyche. The source is found in the value requiredness to which we respond and to which we must respond in order to remain persons.

Moral behavior may call for the sacrifice of values in favor of a moral system which does not find them assimilable to itself; and in our human relations the values of others may endanger our own integrity. It is one thing, however, to sacrifice a value on stated grounds, whether that value be my own or an alien one, and another thing to deny the status of another as person by rejecting his demands. The former can be done in terms of principles which, since they are not infallible, are open to criticism and are corrigible. The corrigibility is an essential part of our moral activity and one which must be granted by anyone who claims status as person. No moral decision, therefore, is apodictic or absolute. This, of course, means that no person can claim for his judgment, as against the judgment of another, an absolute superiority. So long as such authority is not claimed by either party in a moral conflict, the moral process remains open, at least in theory, and the parties to a moral dispute can carry on. But no moral process can be maintained in the face of the widespread tendency among men to protect their interests at the cost of their personalities. For this reason, whether or not morality is capable of resolv-

ing conflicts of interests depends on the values which have been integrated into a system.

In certain human groups the values which are most influential in giving the system its character and in defining its standards, those hierarchically superior, are values which are not hospitable to growth and enrichment and which therefore tend to make short shrift of claims made upon them. But lack of hospitality to alien values bespeaks a morally defective system. And the reason for this is that the essence of the person, as we have seen, is not defined exclusively by its moral commitment to an integrity conceived as static and exclusive but by a tension between the commitment to integrity and the capacity to respond to the requiredness of those values which come within its purview. This requiredness constitutes the basis for the claim made upon a system for the incorporation of new values. And that claim cannot be morally disregarded *a priori*, although moral reflection may fairly deny it eventually. But the denial of a claim, when made by a person who allows the corrigibility of his judgment, cannot be final but constitutes, rather, the second step in the resolution of a moral perplexity.

Should it be urged that the exigencies of action frequently force us to decide with finality our moral perplexities, the contention cannot, as a fact, be denied; but it is necessary to add that, when we yield to any interest and sacrifice morality to it, we cannot claim at the same time that we are acting morally. If we admit that for any reason we are not able to act morally—and this is what we do when we put our interest ahead of the claims made by a moral situation upon us—no excuse will give our

action the character it lacks. It has already been pointed out that the moral life involves sacrifice. A life lived predominantly on the basis of interest also involves sacrifice: the sacrifice we make when we disregard morality, which is to say, when we destroy our personality for the sake of things we want.

The nature of the moral person has not been explained when it is suggested, as it may have been above, that integrity concerns the preservation of a value system against intrusion of unassimilable values. Integrity does indeed involve preservation; but it also involves the preservation of a man's or a people's status as person, as moral agents. A moral agent is concerned with acting morally; and the concern leads him to respond to moral demands made of him in the spirit in which they are made as it leads him to wish to protect his moral system from destructive alien values. For this reason among others, philosophers who conceive the moral problem as defined by the need to satisfy desires or co-ordinate interests misunderstand it because they understand it only partially. And one regrettable result of this misunderstanding is that they cannot give an adequate account of human dignity. There can be no dignity unless a person (not a mere animal) is there to have it, and there is no person if a man puts his interests or desires above the moral demands made of him.

It was said above that the claim to satisfaction made of a man by his interests and desires is a claim for *moral* satisfaction. This is obvious, since the interest or desire fastens hungrily on a value and the latter appeals to us not from within outward but from without inward. Desire—considered in the abstract, that is, considered by itself—does not de-

mand that the satisfaction it craves be moral. What desire wants, if it can be said to "want" anything, is simply the thing it wants. However, considered in the abstract, no desire could function, no desire could go toward its object, could, indeed, even have an object. The perception of a need as need is our perception, and so is the perception of the need's object. This means that the need is what it is within the structure of the mind for which it is a need. By itself it is not easy to guess what a need or desire could be, beyond being a physiological event. It may not be quite exact, therefore, to speak of a desire's demand that it be allowed to reach its object and that the reaching be considered moral. But, when this manner of speaking is translated, no error need be involved, and the translation reveals the solution to our difficulty. We want our desires to be satisfied; but, if we stop to reflect a second, we should realize that we cannot want merely to satisfy *them*, for we want the satisfaction to be *ours*, to be part of us, and it cannot be so unless it fits our value organization, unless it is moral. To the extent to which we are not fully integrated but are made up of more or less autonomous subselves, this statement does not apply. But this condition is not one which can obtain without generating conflicts and frustrations which entail the moral problem.

The seat of moral authority, then, is the personality within which the moral perplexity arises, in the sense that our normal decisions are made in terms of the values that we acknowledge. It should be clear, however, from what has been said in this and the preceding chapter that that authority does not have its source in the psyche but in the requiredness that the values acknowledged by the

psyche possess, through incorporation of which into the self it becomes a person. The psyche does not decree the law by fiat, nor would such a decree, were it to be made, have any moral authority; the law is made for the psyche by the values that it is able to discover. The appropriation of these values makes one into a person and, at the same time, endows one with responsibility toward the values. In the person we find, therefore, a peculiar ambivalence, for the inwardness of the personality, its uniqueness, and its dignity are the result of the psyche—which discovers and espouses and recognizes values; but it is no less the result of the fact that these values stand toward their discoverer as something which is distinct and independent of, I would even say *prior* to, himself. While it is I who must make my own moral decisions, I who must assume responsibility for them, and I who possess the freedom without which no decision can be called my own, the authority is mine derivatively; originally it belongs to a collective something which I have appropriated but which I must acknowledge as my superior, namely, the system of values out of which I carved my system.

CHAPTER V

THE JUSTIFICATION OF A MORAL DECISION

WHEN a person arrives at a moral decision, he expresses it in a judgment for which he must assume full responsibility. This means that he must justify his judgment by proving that it rests on adequate authority. Justification is the process through which the person accepts his responsibility publicly by testing the adequacy of his decision before the bar of reason. It involves, in its simplest terms, the exhibition of the grounds of the decision: the authority from which it flowed and the perplexing circumstances whose resolution it achieves. When a man exhibits these grounds, he opens them to objective, impersonal scrutiny, he exposes his inwardness, he parades his person nakedly before the eyes of his fellows. In practice this is achieved in several ways, all of which involve the exhibition of the grounds for the decision and the claim—open, of course, to correction—that these are legitimate grounds. A decision is justified when the grounds to which it is referred are adequate because they constitute a value system possessing the authority to arrive at a decision and because the decision is appropriate to the situation. The process thus opens

to rational inquiry, so to speak, "the whole record." And in calling the inquiry "rational," what is intended is that the appropriateness or fitness of the decision is acceptable to an "impersonal" judge who is competent, by knowledge of the situation and by sensibility expressed in his acknowledgment of the values involved, to pass on the fitness in question.

Since the impersonality of the judge is itself not operationally testable with accuracy, in the process of justification some techniques and procedures and concepts analogous to legal fictions are introduced which define "impersonality" in a practical way and which are assumed to guarantee at least a minimum of it. We appeal to "the moral sense of the community," to arbitrators, to what people will say, to the pillars of society, to respectable opinion. This is not true of the revolutionist, who repudiates the moral sense of his community. For this reason the revolutionist constitutes a critical case that tests our answer and reveals what is truly intended in the appeal made by men normally to socially acknowledged values. Otherwise we have done no more than go in a roundabout way back to the cultural relativism which has already been criticized.

The revolutionist appeals in the first instance to the values and ideals which the society allegedly espouses but to which it is unfaithful, while at the same time he appeals to a construct of his own making, variously located in the past or in the near future, which he urges that world which he condemns to emulate: democratic Rome with its virile virtues; Canaan, along whose lines the reformer would build the new utopia; a Jerusalem which has no other historical reality than that with which the utopian's fervid thirst for righteousness endows it. If no utopia in the past will do, one in the future

is invented: a utopia in which the vices and corruption and iniquity which the reformer resents are absent—a classless society in which each gives according to his capacity and from which each takes according to his need. The *logic* of the appeal in the case of the revolutionist is identical with that of the man who, having no radical quarrel with the values of his society, appeals to a moral sense which he more or less shrewdly imputes to it; he presents an ideal situation which, he hopes, will be responded to by those to whom he appeals. When the ideal is projected into the past, there is probably as little reality to it as there is when the utopia is placed in the future: democratic Rome was never what Rome was taken by revolutionists to be, and a half-naked George Washington dressed as a Roman senator expressed neither past nor present actuality. He embodied a fervid dream, even though later generations find the expression embarrassing and keep him out of sight. All these fictions collapse under the first ray of a logical flashlight, since they represent only rough practical devices to achieve the desired impersonality necessary to the moral judge. The process is vague and, in actuality, is inherently infected with error; but ideally it is not difficult to see that the appeal is made to minds free of immediate interests in the situation (that is, who stand to gain or lose nothing at all in an immediate way by their decision), who, being fully acquainted with the acknowledged values and the circumstances involved, can test the decision in terms of both. The emphasis must be both on “acknowledged values” and on “minds free of immediate interests,” for anyone who takes stock of what he is doing when he tries to justify his judgment will see that he is not appealing to social authority

because in some unexplained way it is able *morally* to command; what he is appealing to is the authority of the values that society acknowledges, on the more or less obscure notion that society is wiser than the individual and that the values it acknowledges are therefore more likely to be the true and relevant values than those that any individual recognizes or espouses.

A competent "impersonal" judge is one who looks at the total situation, is able to foresee consequences, and is sensitive enough to perceive the values involved in their proper order of rank relative to the situation. But what is the proper order of rank? Is this not precisely what we are trying to determine? Until we define either impersonality independently of the proper order of rank or the latter of the former, we are caught in a rather obvious circle. I beg the reader to allow me to postpone discussion of this problem for a few pages. Here let me suggest, rather, that, if the principles that determine the decision do not both express the value demands of the total situation and fit the value system of the conflicting parties, the decision is not justified. Appropriateness or fitness refers to a relation that obtains between the decision and the total scheme of values constituting the personality. But the process of justification in opening to public view the values of the person brings them, no less than it brings the decision, within the range of criticism, exhibiting the person's excellences and deficiencies and the way in which he is able to co-operate with or endanger the larger world of values on which he depends for his own existence. Ideally this "larger world of values" is the whole realm of values actual and possible, conceived and conceivable, in its relevant aspects to the perplexity and the judgment that

resolved it; but practically it is the acknowledged system of values which both the individual and his society share. However, the acknowledged system shared by a man and his society seldom constitutes, as cultural relativists blandly assume, a hermetically closed, neatly organized system. This may be true for a small society of primitives—the Andaman islanders, let us say, up to the end of the eighteenth or the beginning of the nineteenth century, living in relatively effective isolation.¹ It does not apply to a society of primitives that lives in cultural contact with another society, as the process of diffusion which has been so earnestly studied by anthropologists proves. The practical appeal, therefore, to a socially constituted value system is contingent upon the effective closedness and systematic order of rank which actually obtain—a closedness and order which the first challenge by a moral rebel shows up to be but the very absence of all that anyone can claim them to be.

The method by which the examination of the validity of a judgment is carried on is the time-hallowed method which Plato called “dialectics”: the interrogation of claims and counterclaims in order to elicit from them the evidence on which they rest. In the give-and-take of the dialectical inquiry the judgments in conflict are corrected by confronting them with the facts to which they pretend to refer; and the principles on which the judgments are based are themselves subject to criticism by reference to objective values, critically apprehended, to which the inquiry is addressed and which remain the ultimate basis of appeal. It is important to notice, however, that what is purely idiosyncratic, whether in the moral agent or in the

critic of his decision, is irrelevant to an objective judgment and gradually emerges when the conflicting judgments are put, in Plato's phrase, through the gauntlet of the argument. Criticism seeks to exhibit the values involved in the decision, to test the relation between it and the values in respect to which it is said to be fitting, and at the same time to inquire into the validity of the rating which orders them hierarchically. Thus the judge tries to put himself in a position from which he can evaluate objectively the agent and his decision in relation to the public hierarchy of values which, by membership in a social world, the agent acknowledges. The total process, carried on publicly, results in the gradual crystallization of opinion from which errors of subjectivity have to some degree been eliminated. We may maintain this doctrine and admit freely that the process is not one from which error can be thoroughly removed.

This doctrine would be but a thinly disguised form of cultural relativism were it not for the following radical differences: (1) Cultural relativism assumes that cultural processes are constitutive of value, while in the account here given the opposite is assumed to be the case. Value is constitutive not only of the person but of his culture. (2) Cultural relativism assumes that the authority of the judgment has its source in the rules and values laid down by the culture, whereas it is here claimed that, in so far as any operative system of values has authority, it rests on the capacity that it collectively has of eliciting response, a capacity which the value conflicts within a society prove to transcend any one group or class in the society and even all the members of the society taken collectively. (3) Cultural relativism assumes that moral judgments are valid

intra-systemically and denies the possibility of disputation across systems; but, on the view offered here, a cultural value system is effectively connected with values beyond it, since the process of recognizing values is a dynamic one, even in stratified and monolithic societies. It follows that even if, descriptively speaking, a society is effectively isolated, normatively speaking, no society ought to be isolated or it risks destroying the moral status of its members.

The foregoing account will no doubt seem to be infected with circularity to those readers who, not adequately acquainted with the actual complexities of criticism, will think of the problem solely in abstract logical terms and will peremptorily demand logical rigor and elegance above fidelity to the complex facts. But the account is not circular, since it holds that the criticism of the judgment and of the criterion which rules it is always controlled by objectively given values which can be exhibited and to which final appeal can be made. Firsthand acquaintance with the actual procedure of moral inquiry and with the process of justification will reveal them to be characterized by inefficiency and confusion but not by radical circularity. In the give-and-take criticism, through which the true values embodied in a situation are gradually revealed, the intent of the moral agent and the import of his decision are more or less clarified and his contribution to the moral life of his world assayed. The appeal in the case of conflict is always to objective values, whose "thereness" enables the disputants and the referees before whom the dispute is carried to adjudicate their claims. The referees are the representatives of the fictional objective judges to whom reference was made above—public opinion, the

respectable members of the society, or whoever may be ultimately appealed to. It is to them that we turn to decide whether the values in question are or are not what they are claimed to be, and they make their point by exhibiting the values which they discover. Values are discovered, and men can usually be brought around to apprehend them when they are exhibited to them. Because they make the surface of actuality radiant with their presence or because they tarnish it with their conspicuous absence, usually all we need to do is to turn our eyes upon them, to record their presence in our exclamation of delight. But the "usually" with which I qualified the statement is important, since men intent on something or coarsened by living do not respond readily to the requiredness of value. And the criterion of whether a judge responds to the proper order of rank is whether, in discussion, he can convince those who appeal to him that the order he perceives is indeed the proper order. We see this easily in the field of beauty if we remember that we often meet men of superior sensibility who point out to us aspects of art or nature that we have missed. Of course, a tactless, overbearing individual cannot show us anything. But we frequently learn—and not always from "superior" men. And thus we learn morally also. The judge points to values, and we are forced to acknowledge them. However, since the values to which he points often threaten our vested interests, we are loath to apprehend them, and when we apprehend them we are careful not to give ourselves away. Nevertheless, it is a fact that values can be pointed out to us and that we often recognize them as a result of their being pointed out.

One criticism that has been made of this account must be met. The doctrine has been called "conservative" because, it has been argued, it calls for a criticism which is guided by criteria of publicly accepted values. But this is not a fair interpretation of what the view intends, since established values are not, on this theory, fixed affairs to which the judgment must supinely conform. If, however, it should be insisted that the theory is more likely to give comfort to a conservative than to a revolutionist, since it seems to put so much emphasis on the extant system of social values as a source of criteria of moral adequacy or fitness, it would be well to remember, in justice to it, that the system of values constituting the person is not treated in this doctrine as if it constituted the final criterion, since that system is itself held to be responsive to values presented for espousal.

If this doctrine is open to criticism, it should be so not because it is conservative but because it sounds like Deweyism. But the similarity is specious, and it would be both more fair and more exact to accuse the writer of doing nothing more than explicating the method of Socratic dialectic in contemporary idiom. To this charge he gladly pleads guilty. Unlike Dewey, the writer holds the final criterion to be the objective relationship between a decision and a value system and between this relationship and the larger, open value system of the social world with which the individual's system is continuous. According to this doctrine, values are held to exist prior to their discovery and to be regulative of the judgment. It often happens that the values of an individual lose their vitality; in such cases the loss carries with it its

own punishment, since it means the death of the person. If, on the other hand, the growth of the personality takes place at too rapid a pace, as is often the case in our day, the rapidity also carries with it its own punishment, for the person becomes distracted, queer, eccentric, and loses his identity. The romantic ideal of indefinite expansion on which such an exaggerated value is put in our day and which is one of the dogmatic exigencies of pragmatic morals tends to add to the social disorder of which men are victims and thus speeds up the social disintegration that produces it.

The process of justification of our moral decisions completes the moral activity and involves a total repudiation of subjectivism in the moral judgment. The man who refuses to justify his decisions abdicates his place in the moral community and denies the social aspect of his person. Such a man behaves as if his own inner light were the sole and unchallengeable source of authority, as if his decisions were capable of self-validation. But the very conception of self-validation is a contradiction. For this reason, while we must agree with those who insist that private factors do, in fact, enter into valuation and must add that they serve to individuate one's person, we cannot agree with them in so far as they seem to suggest that they ever "justify" it. When a judge falls back on them, he has withdrawn his judgment from all criticism and has asserted that he is interested in the expression of his arbitrary will rather than in the objective justification of his judgment. Note, however, that, if the argument of this essay has been made clear, the phrase "objective justification" should be taken as pleonastic, since the effort to justify a judgment consists precisely in

exhibiting the objective and sharable basis on which it rests.

There are, however, two qualifications to be made of this statement. The first is that our formulation of the grounds on which we justify a moral decision does not exhibit all the factors that determined it. There is, indeed, "a private factor" in valuation which enters into our moral decisions and which perhaps could be brought into the public domain only through the effort of deep analysis. After all, our decisions are not arrived at by purely rationalistic calculation. We do not always clearly know why we decide as we do, even though we may be fully convinced of the correctness of our decision. Moral decisions are, in this respect, analogous to the creative activity of the artist: they involve subtle affective factors which one trusts, although one barely makes them out. The mind facing a radical perplexity works below the level of consciousness, in a groping way, and only in the case of shallow decisions of relatively trivial nature is it capable of grasping fully the factors that enter into them. Hence the demand that a decision be justified cannot be met in its entirety. You ask a man who has just arrived at a difficult decision, "Why did you decide as you did?" And he is troubled and somewhat incoherent in his answer. You, who know him and who are well informed about the perplexity which he has faced, suggest, "Perhaps for *this* reason?" At the suggestion his face brightens in gratitude, and he says, "Of course, *that* was the reason; what other reason could I have had?" He is not lying to you or deceiving himself or you by snatching at your suggestion; for your words, lucid and objective, embody the principles that underlie the decision at which he arrived, in so far as these can

be reached. When they are made explicit, now, in your formulation, it is easier for him to see that the suggested reason is indeed a fair expression of what he believes and of the values for which he stands.

There are also, it should be remembered, whole areas of conduct in regard to which society does not demand justification—areas to which we may refer as those in which the only social justification required is the exhibition of an idiosyncratic preference. However, the idiosyncrasy is allowed only on the condition that there be no socially pertinent consequences to the individual choice. For instance, in our American society it is assumed that the choice of a wife is a matter of subtle idiosyncratic affinities over which a man has no control. "God knows what he saw in her," his friends say of Paul's bride behind his back, since they do not see anything to commend her for and are puzzled by his choice. Usually it is enough to explain the choice on the basis of some mystic pre-established harmony. But, even in the United States, romantic individualism is sometimes required to give acceptable "public" reasons and to give up its faith in transcendental tropism. Let a man's wife turn out to be an undesirable woman, and catch him at a moment when he needs to talk about his marital troubles. Ask him gently, *why* did he marry the wench? Of course, he may be a very rare person who really believes that "love is all." But even that reason has justificatory validity on the basis of a social appeal to its self-evident truthfulness. Love then becomes a public reason. However, the majority of men will justify their choices by falling back on socially accepted grounds which can be stated more or less clearly and which in our society, for their class and condition, con-

stitute "valid" reasons. Not only, in this case, because our man "fell in love" with the woman (which process is socially structured through and through by axiological determinants) but also because he thought she would make him a good wife—help him in his career, share his interests and tastes, because she came from a good family, would make a good mother for his children, and other plausible reasons. Admitted that one of the reasons he chose her was the quick first shock that went through him on first meeting her and which he quite unconsciously cultivated into an infatuation. The other reasonable reasons, so to speak, are there, too; and, now that our young friend has to justify his choice to himself, he advances them because he is eager to justify his worth as a reasonable, intelligent, sensible man before the bar of his own, no less than his friends', judgment. It is these qualities of his which, in justifying his choice, he must vindicate in the same manner that a man vindicates his "decency" when he justifies a moral action.

The treatment of justification at this length is necessitated by the fact that British moralists since Bentham and American value theorists who have been influenced by Santayana and R. B. Perry have popularized among philosophers a shallow picture of the moral act as if it were carried out on the principles of cost accounting in an industrial enterprise. I have faith that the men who have been responsible for this view are much better than their theory; but in any case their views are shallow and leave out of account one aspect of the moral life which, in my opinion, is of decisive importance and to which we must therefore turn before we can leave our topic. It can be broached by stating that the decision of a moral agent constitutes *a creative*

act, expressive of the spontaneity which is central to the psyche and which constitutes the ground of man's heavy burden of freedom.

What a man beset by the need to resolve a moral perplexity is seeking for, we saw, is an alternative that "fits" or is "appropriate to" or is "suitable to" the values that constitute him. But not only is the search involved addressed, as we have noticed, outwardly to an objective practical alternative, but also, to the degree to which it is radical or momentous, it is addressed inwardly to a search for the espoused values that must be elected as determinative of the appropriateness of the decision. However, since these values are not all, like water lilies, on the surface and since even those which are have drooping roots entangled with other roots sunk in the slime of the subconscious, the search for them is, in fact, a search for one's personality. But the search is a *creative* search, since one's formulation of what one truly is influences in a *creative way* what one becomes: the act of expression leads to a clarification of what one is, what one stands for, the values essentially constitutive of one's self. A clarification, then, is not merely an ordering of what is there, a mere verbalizing of what hitherto has remained unexpressed, but an ordering which sets one in motion toward completion of what one is. In achieving a clearer notion of ourselves, we thus create ourselves, and the process has the stamp of spontaneity.

Elsewhere I have argued² that the creative activity of the mind must be taken in a literal sense, that the mind is *truly creative*, meaning that the creative mind transforms and transmutes the matter of experience so that what it produces is, in an important sense, utterly unlike what was taken in by experi-

ence. In respect to form and content, I have argued, the mind out of its own intrinsic spontaneity makes additions to its experience in the fields of science, art, statesmanship, morality, and religion. The medium through which the addition is made—the language of the scientist or the material of the artist—resists, for it has obdurate ways over which the creative mind must win; but, as the creative idea suddenly illumines consciousness or slowly comes to birth, the matter yields and grows and is informed with something utterly new.

It is not an exaggeration to say that we know nothing about the creative process except that it does occur. The reason for our ignorance is chiefly, perhaps, that the active imagination works unobserved, on its own, after conscious effort gives it its first push. That in some minds the idea seems to pop fully formed and quite unexpectedly into consciousness, while in other no less gifted minds it has to be dragged out painfully, piece by piece, and has to be fitted no less laboriously into completed wholes—these are both easily observable commonplaces. In the latter case, which is probably more common, it is easier to sense the effect of the “not-yet-there” whole controlling the process of creation; but this does not mean that it was absent in the former. For all that, we seem to be utterly in the dark as to how the creative imagination goes about its work. Yet our ignorance is not so abysmal that it will allow us to confuse “the active imagination” with the capacity to solve problems evinced by the merely ingenious, the merely inventive, mind or, as we may call it, the “Hobbesian mind.” The difference may be only one of degree, though this is, on the face of it, doubtful; but a few degrees more or less mark an important difference in kind between the

quick and the dead in body and *may* mark the difference between the mind of the genius and the merely ingenious mind.

These seemingly paradoxical aspects of moral reflection to which I have referred cannot be ignored in the interests of formal consistency. If there is here a real paradox, honesty to the facts demands of us that we acknowledge it. If it is not real, its resolution should lead to a deeper grasp of the phenomena in which we are interested than we could achieve by making sacrifices to the idols of a misunderstood and shallow logical elegance. The paradox is specious, however, and disappears when we remember that man does not create out of nothing, for he is not God. The mind's activity is creative, since it does not proceed through mechanical determinations; and therefore the results of its decisions are not predictable from a knowledge of the experiential matter that constitutes the content out of which the mind elaborates its decisions. But spontaneity seeks through its activity to complete or realize the mind in whose interests it acts. Otherwise put, the mind seeks to complete itself, to become itself, within the limitations set by the fact that it has a historical locus and a given segment of experiential content to inform it. In the process of creating itself, it comes closer to what a mind is; as men create themselves freely, they become men; and the more they do so, the closer they come to achieving full humanity, the status of complete personalities. It seems advisable to point out that the reason for speaking of the moral act as if it were divided into two moments—that of resolving and that of justifying—is that it is possible to arrive at a decision by proceeding in what is popularly called an “intuitive” way, which depends on a minimum of that con-

scious intellection which, when justification is called for, must be put into explicit judgments backed up by arguments. But it is probably true that men differ widely among themselves in the manner in which they think and that some men carry on their mental activity chiefly above the conscious level, whereas others do so below. This is a matter of degree and, I suspect, a question of types. Be that as it may, the moral act involves two distinguishable moments, and both of these, when a man is confronted by a radical perplexity, may call forth the mind's spontaneity.

If the argument of this chapter is acceptable, the final court to which the private moral judgment appeals for justification is, ideally, the world of values which rational minds can descry and to which they can respond, but, practically, it is the conscience of man, of men, "the conscience of the community of mankind." This does not mean, however, that the judgment is, in the last analysis, relative to a social conscience any more than an appeal to the scientific conscience means that the truth of a scientific judgment is decided by counting scientific heads. The conscience of a community is not an entity which has superior authority in some mystic sense and to which appeal can be made as if it were the Supreme Court. It has no rules of procedure; the precedents on which it operates are vague guides for its decisions; but, what is worse, the conscience of the community, even when it can be made articulate, is, for obvious reasons, the lowest moral denominator of a people's moral sensibility. And I imagine that in all cultures, but particularly in civilized societies, this conscience can easily be manipulated by malevolent agencies which are alert to the need to protect their own interests. In an

essay entitled "The Great Stereopticon," in his brilliant study of the illness of contemporary society, Richard Weaver examines the most powerful of these agencies, the newspaper, in a manner which those seriously interested in these questions cannot afford to overlook.³

It is nevertheless true that the social conscience must not be thought of as always inclined toward evil; for, just as it can be manipulated to serve selfish ends, so it can also, although rarely, be made to rise above its own low level. But, after all that can be said in its favor is on record, it remains true that between the moral individual and the social conscience there is always a tension, and the morally creative insights of individuals are always ahead of the moral sensibility of their society. For this reason the private moral judgment is relative to the public conscience only when that conscience is not challenged to justify itself—which is to say, when there is congruity between the individual's and the publicly acknowledged values. When the public conscience is challenged to justify itself, as is done by the moral prophet, the only manner in which it can do so (simplifying for the sake of the point at issue and assuming that the conscience of the community can be represented by a single voice) is by the same difficult and vague dialectical process that is employed in the resolution of private moral perplexities, now made more vague and more difficult by being carried on amid the din of the market place: by pointing to the fitness of a proposed resolution to the situation which gave rise to the perplexity, as well as by attempting a radical criticism of the values espoused by the society.

The attempt to validate a private judgment when it cannot readily justify itself by an appeal to the

social conscience launches the man who makes it into the most arduous and most controversial path he could possibly want to strike out on. At the end of it is usually to be found the martyr's reward: the cross, the stake, social infamy. But the moral life involves precisely the acceptance of just these rewards. However, this is not the whole of its tragedy, for no man can be certain that because he has been selected for the role of martyr he is a true martyr. There is nothing more detrimental to the moral life and more cheapening of the destiny of man than the facile cheerfulness with which it is so often insinuated that the moral life leads to happiness and that in the long run the right always triumphs. No one is forced to be moral—all that we are forced to be is "respectable," which is something easy and rewarding.

PART III

THE ETHICAL LIFE

CHAPTER VI

THE DISCOVERY OF THE ETHICAL. I

IF WE look critically into the account that we have given of moral activity, it will not be possible to avoid the feeling that it has ignored or overlooked certain manifestations which have been generally recognized as representing the highest expressions of morality of which men are capable. Our account, as already given, would seem to be true of the respectable orthodoxy of any society, whether Dobuan or American, whether in the past or in the present. But there are men who face their moral perplexities in a way that adds to the act a dimension of which our account has not given an inkling. Take, for instance, the Christian; I mean, of course, the true Christian—a very rare person—and not the nominal Christian. At the core of his values we find one toward which he manifests a totally different attitude than he does toward his other values; or, to state it more precisely, we find that he espouses a tightly organized complex of values which is in a class by itself and to which we can inadequately but conveniently refer as the value of “love.”

In order to mark the distinction which is to engage our attention in this chapter, I propose the use of the term “moral” to refer to the manner

of resolving practical perplexities already discussed, the term "ethical" to designate the processes of valuation and the principles of resolution of practical perplexities with which we shall occupy ourselves in this and succeeding chapters, the archetype of which, for us, will be the Christian ethics. The terminology does not conform to established usage, according to which "morals" and "morality" refer to the actual processes of valuation and "ethics" to the study of these; but I do not know of a more appropriate set of terms to serve us here, and, with regret, I claim the privilege of the student of philosophy—so far studiously and, I hope, more or less successfully avoided—to make arbitrary use of language to serve my own needs.¹

Now there is an important argument among scholars as to whether in Christian ethics we find an utterly new set of values of which the ancient world had no knowledge or whether it merely represents a higher, perhaps, but a continuous evolution of values more or less clearly prefigured in the world before Jesus. Fortunately, we need not examine the merits of this controversy, for the question we must try to elucidate is not historical or, for that matter, one which concerns the specific nature of Christian ethics, considered from the standpoint of those inherently interested in specifically Christian values. What we seek light on is whether in Christian ethics we find elements not discoverable in those ordinary moral activities of men of which we have tried to give an account and whether, therefore, Christian ethics represents an activity different in kind from the moral. If it could be shown that Christian ethics is absolutely unique, our task would still be what it is, namely, to inquire into those elements which distinguish it

from other kinds of moral activity. But if it could be shown, as I tend to believe, that there are other ethical systems that have exhibited those factors which give Christian ethics its moral superiority over other forms of the moral life, we would still be required to analyze the structure of this kind of activity and to isolate its defining constituents.

It is not irrelevant at this point to note, however, that historical controversies about the origin and uniqueness of Christian ethics depend on what exactly Christian ethics is thought to include, and this, in turn, is not a question in respect to which we can show indifference. How, then, can we define Christian ethics?

The first difficulty we encounter when we turn to this question is that it can be fairly claimed that actually there is no such thing as a Christian ethics. There is a utilitarian moral theory, which can be put into practice by a Republican or a Communist, a Chinese or a Peruvian; and there is an Epicurean moral system, which, although entailing a materialistic conception of the world, is—if we look closely—really logically independent of this conception. But a Christian ethics as separate from a Christian religion, however conceived—what sort of thing, quartered and bled white by the operation, could we have in mind when we speak of it? This is not to deny that there are specifically ethical aspects to Christianity, as distinguished from its specifically religious side, but merely to insist that the ethics of Christianity could not be the ethics of any other conception of the world than that of an actively religious Christian, since in the nature of the case his behavior toward his fellows is determined by his attitude toward *his* God. This contention, I believe, is

valid. It is nevertheless also true that we can distinguish the ethics from the religion, although we shall not succeed in adequately discussing the former without reference to the latter; that we find some men who do not partake of the Christian religion's faith do not escape so easily from the ethical influence of Christianity; and, finally, that for our purpose those types of activity prescribed by Christian ethics correspond to similar types of activity embedded in other visions of the cosmos.

I imagine that one of the most widespread conceptions of Christian ethics is that it consists in the belief in the universal brotherhood of man. Unless I misread him, this is what T. H. Green maintains.² But this is a misleading half-truth. Hebrew scholars claim with plausibility that the notion of universal brotherhood is to be found fully developed in the Prophets, and students of ancient philosophy argue similarly about the *Cosmopolis* of the Stoics. If there is a distinction between the Christian and these other systems of moral philosophy, it cannot be what it is usually taken to be, although it is to be found where it is generally sought for.

I would suggest, brushing aside a number of reflections which a historical approach would demand that I submit to the consideration of the reader, that the distinction between Christian ethics and Hebrew and Stoic morality is to be found where it is usually sought for but that, for our purposes at least, the distinction requires a more precise statement than it is possible to give it under the rubric of "universal brotherhood." What Christianity introduces is not merely the universal claim to humanity of all men and hence to their partnership in a universal moral society but something con-

siderably more radical and considerably more obscure. For we must distinguish between a moral attitude which enables us to recognize the moral demands made of us by other human beings whom we acknowledge as persons and one which asks us to treat them as possessing an intrinsic value that it is our duty to espouse and that we ought to recognize as superior to all the other values we espouse.

What the Christian means by this unique and superior value of the person is obscure for two distinct reasons, one practical, the other philosophical. The first consists in our human inability, even on the plane of imagination, to separate ourselves from our malice and antagonisms and divisive fears and hatreds and to conceive what it would be like to feel toward all men—one's hated enemies, odious strangers, those who threaten one's security, and those who are merely different—as we feel toward those who (irrespective of erotic ties) are for us more precious than ourselves. This Christian love is utterly unlike the "fraternity" of the liberal, which is abstract and, so far as my experience goes, is invariably accompanied by an intense hatred of those others who, in the liberal's view, are said to obstruct the spread of the fraternal ideal. Christian love is addressed to the concrete individual and to each and every individual; it is what we today popularly call "existential." The second reason is that, at the moral level at which one habitually lives, the person is constituted by the values he espouses and therefore possesses intrinsic value only derivatively as the composite worth of his espoused and recognized values. At this level, therefore, there are differences of worth between persons, and a hardened criminal is lower on the human plane

as defined by morality than a good man. But these differences, so real at this level, are brushed aside as trivial by the Christian, who discovers, beyond the "inherent" values (I am here following C. I. Lewis' terminology) of the person, his "intrinsic" value; and philosophically it is impossible to define this intrinsic value without reference to the religious foundations on which the notion rests.³

The philosophical explanation of the Christian belief in the supreme value of the person leads back, of course, to the fact that all men are brothers because they are children of the same Father. And as children of one Father, they are all His creatures, and as such are, as Maritain puts it, "ordained directly to God as to [their] absolute, ultimate end."⁴ Their condition as creatures, their brotherhood, and their destiny thus entail one another, and their duty is thus clearly defined. They alone of all creatures have been created for their own sake—have, in the terminology just used, been given intrinsic value—and in them alone is found the image of God. This gives them a capacity no other creature has, the capacity to realize a supreme good. It is at this point that we arrive at something which is of central interest to us: their capacity to realize this good and the nature of the good they can realize, which is not temporal but eternal, give them an intrinsic worth, a status, that no other creature has or can aspire to. It is this intrinsic worth, the presence of which in an animal enables us to call him a person, that defines what I call the "Christian ethic." The essence of this worth is not merely the ground of my obligation to recognize as moral the moral demands made of me by another person and therefore to deal with them when they conflict with mine in a moral way;

this insight, T. H. Green is perfectly correct in maintaining, is to be found in the pagans. The essence of Christian ethics is the ground, rather, of my obligation to treat the other as endowed with the intrinsic and ineluctable value which is the person's and which is a supreme and an incomparable value. It is one thing for me to recognize my obligation to acknowledge another's moral demands as standing on the same level as my own; but it is a totally different thing for me to acknowledge that the other embodies an intrinsic and incommensurable value which no other value can claim equality with, much less priority to. T. H. Green is, of course, right in his contention that what makes man ignore the demands made upon him is selfishness and fear and tribalism. But men can overcome these defects thoroughly and be as far as ever from reaching the heights on which the Christian habitually dwells. For what the Christian does is to say to himself, so to speak, the following: "Nothing I want, no value that attracts me, no secular good, whether it be power or wealth or knowledge or happiness, not even the value of life itself, which I espouse so desperately and for the sake of which, if necessary, I would be ready to sacrifice so much—no other value can compare with one special value I ought to espouse. And this is the value that resides intrinsically in each man because he is a person. So that, if I have to choose between injury to all my other values and injury to the person of another, the choice is clear because, no matter what a person may be, I must acknowledge this value above all others."

Whatever the metaphysics of the person—as we may call the analysis of his structure and of the source and nature of his value—the important fact

for us as students of moral philosophy is to note clearly that the Christian resolves his practical perplexities with reference to this "absolute value." The problem which the Christian faces when he tries to resolve a practical perplexity is different from that confronting the moral man, because the Christian has a fixed point of reference, in terms of which the integration of his values takes place and which precludes certain patterns of integration that a moral man may find desirable to achieve. If prostitution is legally recognized in a society and is not repudiated by the moral sense of the community, the woman who runs a whorehouse and the interests behind her that profit from it need not feel morally guilty because they profit from that kind of trade. The woman may not be *respectable*, but this need not even be socially inconvenient to a person who does not want to be invited to certain functions by people who live in certain neighborhoods of her city. But if she is kind and honorable in her transactions with her customers and her girls, she is not immoral. A Christian, however, cannot be a whoremaster in any society. Much less could he be a blackbirder. These are activities that destroy the dignity of our fellows and therefore our own dignity. A Christian can be a soldier, but a Christian soldier carries his weapons with a heavy heart. His heart is not heavy because he takes "life" to be sacred. There is nothing sacred about protoplasmic activity. It is heavy because he knows that the person of the other is sacred. And this is quite a different thing.

There is another difference between the Christian and the merely moral man. The values integrated into a moral system give the person which they constitute his dignity for me if I am normally

moral. But if I acknowledge the absolute value of personality, I cannot place a man's moral dignity in his successful accomplishment of the integration of the values that constitute him or in the place of those values in the hierarchical scale as I view it, but in something with which he is endowed through no effort of his own: the value of his personality. I have to behave toward him, therefore, in ways that are expressive of my espousal of the absolute and supreme value that he possesses. This value is of his essence; he does nothing to achieve it, and he possesses it no matter what he does or fails to do, no matter how contemptible morally he may be, and no matter how clearly his actions may put him beyond the pale of humanity. But, since I am also a person, I have to behave toward myself in the same way as I behave toward him. Hence toward myself as well as toward him I have duties and concerns which are greater than those that anyone acknowledges at the merely moral plane. It is this factor, the presence of this intrinsic value in the person, that makes the radical difference between the moral and the Christian life. The ethical life, of which the Christian, as I have already said, is the local name, involves a new stage and brings with it a new manner of resolving practical difficulties.

Let us assume, at least provisionally, that the ethical life is indeed "higher" than the moral. This assumption will engage our attention below. Are we not left, if we make this assumption, with the suspicion that, while the ethical life may be possible for a Christian, who on religious grounds believes in the brotherhood of man, it is not possible for anyone who lacks the Christian's religious in-

spiration to give him direction and to furnish him with the energy required to make the leap? Where does the moral man get his inspiration to deal with his fellows in an ethical way? We therefore want to know whether there is anything in the moral life that could lead one, without distinctly religious aid, to the discovery of the absolute value of the person and which could thus thrust one from the moral onto the ethical plane.

The answer that we must give to this question is a qualified affirmative: It is possible to go from the moral to the ethical without a previously discovered religious reality on which to fall back for aid. But the very process through which one discovers the absolute value of the person and his intrinsic dignity reveals, or rather forces one to notice, that there are factors operative in experience which seem to transcend the process of experience, factors of which it is not possible to give an account which does them justice but which also stays within the restrictions of a naturalistic approach. One can, of course, enlarge the term "natural" and thus give an account of these factors in naturalistic terms. But, after the criticism we have made of such transparent devices as "emergence" and "levels of integration," we ought to disdain such dodges. In a nature ontically value-free the presence of value is a miracle, capable of giving the lie to any naturalism. A much greater miracle is the discovery that man the moral animal respects his fellows in a way that sets them and himself off from the rest of the animals.

It seems desirable, before attempting the analysis of the problems that confront us, to warn the reader that he is in for a trip into the dark and poorly ventilated regions of the human psyche,

where the myopic eyes of his present guide will see even less than they have seen in the full daylight we are about to abandon. This is a region where vague moving shapes are hard to identify, where all will be doubt, and where the loud insistence to which we are used in our daylight inquiries—the tenacious “Show me!” or the insistent “How do you know?”—has a tendency to frighten the shadowy quarries and, as they scatter, to create a roiled murkiness. For the descent into these regions a Dostoevski, an Augustine, a Kierkegaard, should be engaged as Virgils. I do not believe that positivists, hard-headed “empiricists,” “realistic” moralists, Machiavellians, Hobbesians, Nietzscheans, and the rest of the numerous descendants of Thrasymachus could have read this far; but if any of them have, they are now requested to throw away the book and put their time to better use, since they can get out of the following pages only a dull weariness and irritation.

Our problem, then, is to give an account of the genesis of the ethical attitude when it takes place free from religious aid. Only then can we inquire into the authority of its claims. The ethical life develops from, or out of, the moral; to its source, therefore, we must turn.

Moral activity at best remains ambivalent, torn between two tendencies which the moral agent seeks to satisfy in order to arrive at a satisfactory solution of his perplexity. On the one hand, values urge themselves on him, clamoring for admission into his system, and this clamoring is one toward which the agent responds favorably. On the other, his own integrity tends to reject the values clamoring to be accepted into the system. When an agent is confronted with a moral claim, the jealousy of

his integrity prompts him to challenge it. But we live in a rough world, not too publicly concerned with nice moral scruples, and the world's business peremptorily demands our practical attention. Events do not wait for perfect solutions. Decisions must be made which are not always fully or adequately justifiable. Thus life at its best, even when not poisoned by rampant and insurgent evil which normally poisons it, involves an immeasurable amount of ineradicable frustration and downright injustice. To the evil that surrounds us and that wells from within us we tend to "adjust" in innumerable ways. But the most successful adjustment possible, I am convinced, merely serves to save appearances and to cover up our ulcerous sores from the world, and, if we are successful enough, from ourselves. We adjust, we get used to it, well enough at least "to take our minds off our troubles" and do the daily chore. But, for all our successful disregard of it, the noxious seepage does not stop. To the daily bitterness, the friction, the frustration, the coarse disregard of which we are one another's victims, and, not infrequently, the sheer malice are added the futile search for peace, the unslaked thirst for harmony, and the mirage of happiness that seems more perfect as it recedes. Gide tells us somewhere, perhaps in his autobiography, of a moment of unmixed joy which he experienced in Africa and how, ever after, his search for joy was a search for the repetition of the earlier experience. Men hunger for beauty and serenity and humane relations and fill up instead on grief and anxiety and the friction offered by the vicissitudes of the daily round. Morality is an instrument of life through which we seek to achieve our destiny; it is, indeed, life itself in those moments in which

we manage to live it at the human level. But behind the façade that respectability builds to shelter us from the public, we live a different life than we appear to live publicly, since our claims are only boasts and, from within our own souls no less than from without, the pollution that constitutes our defeat drains into the consciousness.

Nor is the moral life, could we successfully live it at its best, a mode of living which can be achieved once and for all and which, once achieved, will yield the peace and serenity which we crave. Anxiety is the lot of conscious man, since living consists of an intermittent series of seldom successful efforts by which we attempt, whether we know it or not, to create our humanity. Morality is a hill the top of which we must take, well defended against us, who must charge in open country. Nor do we, when we gain the top, stay there long. In spite of our finest resolutions, we soon find ourselves actively co-operating with the enemy who would dislodge us. Each defeat increases the burden of guilt in our souls and makes the next one easier. No victory is ever clean, complete, decisive. But to the anxiety which thus results and which is the bitter fruit of our human condition as moral beings, we must add that which results from the fact that we can rarely be certain of the values we serve or of our sincerity in serving them.

The picture, of course, is not altogether dark. Men live, or seem normally to live, without awareness of their anxieties. And the reason is that what used to be called "conatus," what at the phenomenal level a Schopenhauerian would call "the will," blindly drives us on, giving us, in spite of the evidence, hope and energy to carry on. Accordingly, when a writer calls attention to the factors on

which we have just dwelt, we resent him and dispose of him with facile phrases. The last thing men want is to have anyone call their attention to Thoreau's quiet desperation. Although they experience it, they will not admit that they do so unless compelled by sheer force. But men do not always succeed in ignoring this quiet desperation in which they live. There are ages when the quality of life becomes almost too coarse to bear and when the institutionalized arrangements which hold in leash the brutality to which we are prone break down. And there are societies in which violence and ill-will are potent factors in defining the tone, the affective quality, of daily life. Even in periods of relative stability and social harmony, in societies which call themselves "civilized," the mask that in daily living conceals the naked face of arbitrary force often falls down, letting us see its stark ugliness. The experience of injustice, of wilfulness, outrages the soul and leaves it embittered. The small shock, the daily pinprick, the hurt which is the result of a neighbor's stupidity or indifference or of bureaucratic arbitrariness, the passing pain inflicted by an arrogant elbow that pushes for place—these, too, leave their bitterness behind:

the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes

One need not one's self be the victim of such outrages, nor need these be large and dramatic—they need not involve the systematic exploitation of one class by another or the conquest of a people or the ruthlessness of a totalitarian regime. The sight of injustice may hurt more deeply than its direct

experience. I am convinced that it often does. Revolutionary leaders in our day have often been originally members of the oppressor class. The victim of brutality or injustice is compelled by the situation to objectify his attention, to focus it on the untoward circumstances, in order to avoid them. The spectator has more time to consider the total aspect and the formal features; his outrage, to the extent to which he truly grasps the total situation of victim and victimizer, is purer, since it is stimulated not by the felt injury but by the injustice itself. Once when I was discussing with a very intelligent and sensitive student the origin of his awareness of moral evil, the boy told me that his first clear experience of moral outrage dated back to a very early period of his life when he witnessed a policeman beating a drunken man down some basement steps. The poor man's face was bloody and one eye totally closed; nevertheless, with exasperating obstinacy, after the policeman had struck him in the face and knocked him down to the bottom of the steps, the poor fool, mumbling curses, would get up and climb back to be knocked down again. Witnessing the incident without feeling, my student was suddenly overcome by nausea and ran away. For months afterward an almost overwhelming feeling of nausea came over him at the sight of the blue uniform of a policeman. That incident made him a moral man. He brooded over it, brooded over the naked sadistic fist and the dull mumbling of the man crawling back, and the memory of it has never left him. Let one other illustration do. I know a young Venezuelan boy whose awareness of the moral problem, so far as he could remember, became explicit when his father's orderly told him how soldiers were pressed into the

army. A recruiting squad went into a district and rounded up all the men whom it could lay its hands on. Without a minute to say goodbye to their families, with the utmost brutality, in the midst of cultivating a row of corn or eating their dinners, the men were pulled out at bayonet's point, lined up, and marched away, and it would be weeks before the desolate family heard from the new soldier. This is the way the orderly had been "caught." This story, of whose truth the boy could not judge, made a deep impression on him and led him to be especially considerate of the orderly, who, acting as he did as a house servant, had a much easier time of it than the other recruits of the regiment. Later, as the boy grew up and came to read of slave ships capturing Africans, the picture of men hunted by their kind became the central symbol in his moral development. As he matured, he felt that his childhood reaction toward the orderly's account, transmuted in a strange way, was at the core of his knowledge of iniquity. But the point I want to make is not that the perception of injustice done to others is the only means of knowledge of good and evil but rather that it is not necessary to suffer injustice one's self in order to come to know it in its full bitterness.⁶

Normally the moral outrages of which men are victims or which they witness can be more or less successfully digested without radical effects or serious impairment of the soul's smugness. If your moral claims are denied, you continue to press them more or less successfully, modifying them as you observe the success or lack of success of your suit. You bargain, you use whatever influence you have at your disposal, state your case more force-

fully, insist, and get enough of what in fairness you have coming to you to be relatively satisfied. But what does a man do who becomes the victim of another who for some reason—coarse indifference, ill-will, self-interest—is beyond the reach of the appeal? Let us look into what men, in fact, do in such circumstances. But, before looking, let us thank Mr. Allport and his collaborators for disposing of what he calls the Yale formula of “frustration-aggression” as the kind of scientifically sanctioned oversimplification that, were we to take it seriously, would make us entirely lose our way.⁶

Defeated in his demand for justice, our man may search for other means of satisfying his claim; or he may give it up altogether, shrug his shoulders, and go about his business. This means that the consequences of the breakdown of the normal moral process do not seem to be serious. The injury can somehow be digested. I say “seem,” because we are too cavalier about what we take to be the trivial consequences of the breakdown of the moral procedures among men. In any case our victim, defeated in a moral contest, may come out a better man than he went in, since he may have learned a complex valuable lesson about the need for prudence and for knowledge of the ways of the world.

There are times, however, when a moral defeat may become a serious threat to the defeated. His heart may be deeply set on something which is snatched from him without a show of right. If at this moment what chiefly hurts is no more than the denial of the desired object, the situation is of no great interest to us as moral philosophers. But if our victim reacts against the injustice (or perhaps it would be more exact to say “in so far as” our victim does) rather than against the loss of the

object, the situation is of the greatest interest. For a man may in such a predicament decide, in the innocent-sounding cliché, to "fight fire with fire." Then the result is that the victim of injustice, who has a selfish interest in the strengthening and maintenance of the instrumentalities of the moral process, undertakes to aid his victimizer in their destruction. The psychological reaction is understandable enough, but the logic of it could not be poorer. Obviously, this is the logic of revenge and of what we may call "the top-dog argument," according to which in a world divided into top dogs and underdogs the reasonable choice is to endeavor to become a top dog. The argument would hold if men were truly thus divided in a moral sense. But morally there are no top dogs and underdogs: there are good and evil dogs only. What the poor reasoner does not see is that we all—even you, my reader—are underdogs. The pecking order of hens to which we find so many references among up-to-date sociologists holds for men only in the most shallow and trivial way and has no relevance whatever to the ethical life.

An attempt to make fully explicit the philosophy of the man who "fights fire with fire" would reveal that the skeleton of the argument commits him to the repudiation of the moral process on the alleged ground that, since it broke down in one case, it is best dispensed with altogether. What our man says is, "If this is the game, I, too, can play it." The variations on the theme depend on the ingenuity of the composer. But the fundamental idea is recognizable throughout: the denial of justice to me releases me of all further obligation toward justice itself.

It would seem that if a man arrives at such a position, not in practice but as a reasoned conclusion, he is rediscovering the philosophy—if something which so radically contradicts wisdom can be called a “philosophy”—of Thrasymachus; and the one redeeming thing we can say about him is that it is difficult to imagine what a man would be like who would effectively practice the doctrine that might makes right. But, while no man may be able to live consistently on Thrasymachus’ principles, we all to some extent live according to them. To that extent we are all agents of evil.

Our “Thrasymachus” is an individualist, confident of his own strength, a somewhat coarse, morally shallow, unimaginative man, with whom we need not occupy ourselves, since Plato long ago disposed of him in the *Republic*. But there is another type of man—for whom we shall find a name later—who reacts to the denial of a moral claim in a more complex way and one which comes closer to being the pattern of human action. Outraged by injustice, this man does not simplistically conclude that morality is a fiction but maintains his faith in it as an ideal worth actualizing. But, in view of his experience, he argues, it is clear that it is impossible to make the ideal actual so long as power remains in the hands of men of evil heart who prevent *us*, the victims of *their* injustice, from bringing about the classless and just society. The first step, therefore, toward a moral world must be the extermination of evil men. After that *we* shall have the opportunity to behave toward others according to the dictates of righteousness. We need not ask by what alchemy the victims of social injustice, simply because they are victims, are turned into good and righteous men

who seem to be incapable of evil; nor need we inquire into the logic which enables a mere man to decide, without scruples and without diffidence, who among his fellows is good and who is evil, who is just and who unjust. However he does it, the man of whom we speak performs the miracle without any trouble whatever: he decides that the victims of social injustice are good and the exploiters are evil, and the decision proves extremely satisfactory to his needs, since now he can hate and love with a clear heart. The dichotomy satisfies deep Manichaeic needs that we all have. Now take a man of this type, capable of deep love and deep hate, give him an outraged conscience for the masses who are the beasts of burden on whose shoulders are carried the refinements of civilization, let him see with his own eyes the consequences of social injustice and of industrial exploitation, give him a powerful intellect and feed that intellect with history and economics, endow him with what Matthew Arnold called a "Hebraic" will, and you have a potential "Karl Marx." He is not necessarily one in respect to accomplishment, for the greatness of the historical Marx is not easily equaled in the pages of history, since men are seldom given the vitality, the intellectual vigor, and the heroic strength which Marx possessed; but he is one in respect to the kind of moral reactions which he will express through his chosen form of activity.

In calling this the "Marx" type, I am not doing it in ignorance of the fierce way in which Karl Marx poured scorn on the moralistic socialists of his day and opposed to the moralistic his "scientific" approach to the social problem.⁷ The name is selected because of certain important similarities

and for lack of a better, although certainly anyone who denied Marx a strong and insulated moral hatred of the *bourgeoisie* would reveal himself as a man who had never read his writings. Be that as it may, what is pertinent here is that all one can expect from a "Marx" is a steady deterioration of the moral quality of the world over which he has influence and a steady increase in the brutality and stark cruelty of his world. But we need not pursue this matter further, since we are not interested in him and in our "Thrasymachus" for their own sake but only as contrasts to another type, the man whose experiences lead him to the discovery of the ethical process.

Let us call this man, thinking of the goal he seeks, "the ethical man." He may be the direct victim of iniquity, or he may be endowed with an unusual sensibility toward the victims of unrighteousness; in any case he is aware of injustice. But, unlike the majority of men who see it only in their own private spheres, his response, his awareness, are broader, although, of course, they cannot be fully universal in scope. If he is not himself the direct victim of injustice, he identifies himself with its victims so intimately, suffers for them so deeply, lives their experiences so heartily, that for all purposes we can think of him as if *he were* the victim himself; and therefore we can discuss the experiences of both under the same dramatic symbol. The ethical man is not a saint, not even distinctly better than most of us; but he may become a saint. Initially, whatever his actual accomplishments in the path of virtue, his distinction consists of his being endowed with something that we, the mere average, lack: a sensitive and discerning eye for moral phe-

nomena beyond the range of his own immediate concerns. Nor need we stop to inquire from his biography what factors account for the broad range of his sensibility, even though the question is undeniably an interesting one. Unfortunately, the answer to it is not obtainable from what we know of men. A hasty survey of distinctively ethical men would yield an embarrassing wealth of heterogeneous details from which it does not seem possible to pick out causal clues. Thus the greatest representative of the type in our Western history is the son of a lowly old carpenter who with his parents flees the place of his birth while still an infant in arms. We know nothing of his formative years, and the records of his activity which we possess bristle with baffling historical problems. He may have been an illiterate. In any case his obscure life was spent in an unimportant corner of a minor province of the Roman Empire, and there have been numerous well-informed and unprejudiced men who have doubted his historicity. Of another distinguished ethical man we know that he was a gay and dissolute youth, the son of a rich merchant family of turbulent Assisi in a great period of its history. Of the son of the carpenter we have, prior to the period of his activity, nothing but worthless pious legends, and of the man of Assisi nothing, so far as I know, beyond the fact that at the age of twenty-two he suffered a serious illness out of which he came a changed man.

The paucity of knowledge, on the one hand, and the abundance of specimens, on the other, leave us no recourse but to turn to what Santayana has called "literary psychology," not in order to explain why ethical men are endowed with broader and

deeper sympathy, but to construct a plausible hypothesis, useful in a heuristic sense, as to how they use their endowment to transcend the plane of the moral and reach the ethical.

CHAPTER VII

THE DISCOVERY OF THE ETHICAL. II

EITHER from his own personal experience or with the aid of his imagination, the ethical man feels keenly the sting of iniquity, the weakening, impotent bitterness caused by brutality, the vacuous inward feeling which comes when one's dignity is denied and one is pushed about like a crate. *This kind of experience is indispensable*: unless a man has known injustice, unrighteousness; unless he knows what it is to be a victim of wilful brutality, he cannot be the ethical man of whom we are speaking. The knowledge of injustice may be vicarious or it may be immediate; I suspect that it needs to be only the former. But it is important that he shall have known shame, indignity, defeat, despair. Then only, and not always even then, is he ready to take the step that carries him beyond the moral into the ethical.

In his anguish our ethical man will cry for justice, will denounce evil, and will seek a way out of his predicament. He will ask himself how men can be so brutally devoid of ordinary pity, so blindly arrogant. Since there is no easy answer to this question, our man is in danger of losing his way at this point. The temptation to turn to Thrasymachus or to Marx is great. Our man discovers them and toys

with their plausible solutions. But reflection reveals that his acceptance of the answers of both Marx and Thrasymachus would constitute merely a cunning effort on his part to deny the validity of his own moral experience. The effort is natural enough for a man in his plight, but it is ultimately self-contradictory, for both Thrasymachus and Marx effectively increase the amount of evil in the world, the outraged response to which, we have supposed, is the source of his anguish. The clarification of this insight, which for our ethical man may not constitute more than an unconscious, inarticulate response, marks an important moment in our own understanding of the structure of his development and the validity of his conclusions.

In entertaining as plausible hypotheses (which, no doubt, they are) the answers of Thrasymachus and Marx, the ethical man is desperately searching for a conviction which will mitigate the pain caused by the moral outrage of which he is a victim. Active in him is a need, not necessarily clear or even conscious, for the *katharsis* which a stoic attitude can produce: "If I know the truth about the world and about my real relations to it, I am beyond the reach of the disappointment and the grief which come from mendacious faith in justice." In other words, if our ethical man can deny the reality of moral evil by denying objective criteria and thus reduce evil to mere catastrophe, which it is senseless to condemn morally, he does not deny the reality of the practical results of the injustice; what he does is deny his sense of indignation and of outrage. Thus the practical results can now be dealt with like any practical calamity, which we try to control or to which we resign ourselves without the inward laceration which injustice produces. Or, put

still more simply, in so far as the denial of justice as such is the source of anguish; in order to get rid of the anguish all we need to do is to get rid of our faith in justice.

But, for the strategy to succeed, our ethical man must stop where we have just left him; and that is not easy to do, since it involves denying the stubborn and deep conviction that an injustice has been committed. This denying has two aspects, the subjective, existential aspect and the objective. Let us look into the objective aspect first: When a man grasps clearly that a situation which is now actual ought not to be and that another that does not now exist ought to exist, he does not mean to assert that he desires or does not desire something in a subjective sense or that he subjectively or idiosyncratically approves or disapproves of something. Sometimes this is all he means; but in that case he does not refer to a clearly perceivable relation; and we are talking only of those cases in which he does mean such a relation. That it is possible to distinguish between things that ought to be or ought not to be and things that we desire or toward which we have an aversion may be easily seen by considering that we do not desire all that we know ought to be and we often desire things that we know ought not to be. To deny that an injustice has been committed is therefore no different from denying that a fact which is perceived as such is not a fact. We may not recognize that an act is an injustice, just as we often do not recognize facts for what they are, but we cannot deny the objectivity of injustice when we do recognize it for what it is. It should, of course, be remembered that the factuality of a fact does not depend on our perception of it, or there would be no truth possible be-

yond the subjectivistic relativism that Protagoras chose to call "truth." The existential aspect of the denial of justice or injustice cannot easily be separated from the objective, since it consists in the felt outrage, in our reaction to the objective situation; we feel that it is unwarranted and cannot dismiss as groundless the appeal whose denial brought about the outrage.

The victim's need to posit a moral scheme is no proof, of course, that what he posits actually exists outside the need itself. From the subjective point of view, all we can establish is that the denial of the moral scheme ends up by producing the opposite effect from what it was intended to have. This is clearly seen in a moral catastrophe. Tell an inmate of Maidenek on the way to the gas chamber that he has not been condemned to die by an iniquitous monster and that what he takes to be evil is not really evil but a meaningless catastrophe, an accident, like suddenly discovering in one a malignant tumor or like dying in an accidental fire. Do you think you have lightened his misery? You have wantonly increased it. The moral scheme preserved the victim's dignity and gave him a superiority over the victimizer. You have taken that and more from the poor wretch; you have said to him, in fact, "You are not a man. You are not even as lucky as a steer led to slaughter. You will not be used for an end which will justify your death. True, out of the little fat that sticks to your ribs soap will be made, and the gold of your teeth will contribute to the treasury, and the rest of you will fertilize the cabbages, and the skin of your back will make an odd lamp shade. But don't get the impression that the reason why you are being killed is that you are useful. You are not being killed for any reason

whatever. Those who will kill you just don't like you, and merely that is the cause of your death. Make no mistake, there is no sense to your death. Killing you involves no crime, no violation, no good or evil. You are being slaughtered only to satisfy the irresponsibly senseless whim of those in power."

This is not reasoning that the victim of injustice clearly rehearses in his mind. But what one can, it seems to me, legitimately claim is that the victim of injustice can discover in his crisis the reality of justice, the objective validity of the moral scheme, at the phenomenological level, as an ideal requirement which would turn an immoral actuality into a moral one. The victim is not saying, "There is justice," but, on the contrary, "There is no justice and there ought to be." But he does not mean that there ought to be merely to satisfy his own subjective demands. That would not be justice, and the victim would clearly know it. He means that there ought to be, in order to satisfy the demands of a situation which, as it exists at present, is awry, which inherently and intrinsically lacks something it ought to have to be a fit human situation.¹ And what it lacks, it lacks in the same manner in which a painting or sonnet lacks something which the artist or the critic discerns not as existing but precisely as lacking, which is to say, as needed to complete the object. The ought-to-be thus apprehended as subsisting and as demanding actualization through human effort may not satisfy the demands of the victim; it satisfies the demands of what under the circumstances he *ought* to desire; and what he ought to desire is what is fitting. It satisfies the demands of the situation as a human situation. The lack is discovered through certain conditions mentioned above—namely, by a man either sympa-

thetically or actually in an extreme situation—and is apprehended as objective, as independent of the conditions which led to its discovery. The objective validity of proof in any cognitive discipline is discovered by means of a certain subjective condition in the knower, namely, intelligence, but does not depend upon this for its status as valid. We are not concerned here, of course, with establishing that the phenomenal grasp of values as objective is a fair basis on which to claim their ontic reality. As we have already seen, only on a metaphysical assumption that the reductionistic world of physics defines the real can we impugn the ontic reality of values.² An individual, then, who normally is blind to values or who habitually reduces value experiences to the gratification which their actualization yields can discover their objectivity in what we can call (borrowing an expression for our purposes) “an extreme situation.”³

If we stop to consider this objective character of the moral scheme to which appeal is made, as it reveals itself in extreme situations, we shall notice that the ground of our conviction of objectivity is found not only in the epistemic deliverance whose import we have earlier sought to establish by denying the cogency of the interest theory of value and by calling attention to the way in which values are discovered; the ground is also found in a complex factor which does not cognitively warrant the objectivity but which reinforces the conviction gained through the epistemic deliverance. We have just referred to this factor as “subjective” or “existential”; I propose to look into its role in greater detail. Note, however, in passing, that the fact that an extreme situation enables us to observe the subjec-

tive factor with ease does not mean that it is only through such a situation that we find this component of the moral life.

The existential factor is a condition of all moral experience, since it is constitutive of the person. The denial of the objectivity of evil and the acceptance of a reductive account of it which traces it to subjective dispositions deny the veracity of the deliverances of perception and thus threaten the foundations of all possible knowledge—namely, the perceived objective malformation of an evil situation. They deny also the validity of the ground for the demand that certain values be realized, the actualization of which is urgently craved in order to reduce the malformation and to restore the personality to normal functioning. But this denial of the right to make moral demands based on objective grounds involves a serious threat to the total personality. Let us consider why.

A denial of justice involves a denial of values which are actualized through espousal or are in prospect of actualization. As we have already seen, under the stress of living, but particularly under the pressures generated by a moral crisis, the organization of psychic values which constitutes the personality undergoes shifts, so to speak, in its center of gravity. As fluid situations change, the values directly involved are the ones which represent the personal organization in its transaction with the world. In an extreme situation the shift of values is more radical, and those (whether actual or prospective) involved in the response to the external threat become representative of the whole self, while values which, under normal conditions, were considered basal lose their pre-eminence. These threatened values suddenly appear as essen-

tial to the maintenance of the personality, and the threat to them becomes a threat to the whole person: they are seen as constituting the keystone of the arch and their removal as involving its collapse. In blunt terms this is to say that it is either they or madness. If, however, the threat to them can be felt as the product of an evil will, the loss of values is not complete, since it is merely the failure to actualize them and not a denial of the possibility of doing so, or at least of the possibility of establishing that there is a malformation in respect to which an objective scheme points the need for their actualization. So long as there is an ideal possibility of improvement of the malformation, even if, actually, no probability of improvement exists, one is not totally crushed. For all that one can demand is not the acknowledgment of the validity of the claim but that the means of testing it be not denied. If we are making a *moral* claim, we are implying that we will abide by the results of the moral process. A valid moral denial of our claim is no loss to us but a gain. But the denial of the objectivity of values denies the right to make the appeal and reduces the issue to a conflict of brute force which has already been lost by the victim of evil. Hence the anguish and the humiliation which one feels in the extreme situation are merely a matter of the perspective from which the situation is viewed. This amounts to telling one that the evil he is undergoing, which causes this grief, is pure illusion and the grief baseless. And this is the one thing that the victim of evil knows his grief is not. And he knows that it is not, because it is defined by the objective situation, whose objectivity is intrusively present before his eyes. Therefore, neither can the justice to which the victim appeals be an illusion, since on that as-

sumption his appeal has no ground and his grief is an illusion. One does not condemn evil and appeal against it to an untoward superior force on the ground that one does not like it or finds it unpleasant. Ultimately it can be condemned only on an objective ground—if only on the utterly unconvincing principle that the unpleasant *ought* not to be imposed on men. This is, then, what the existential factor amounts to: that there is a *vital* necessity (as distinct from an epistemic one) for asserting the objectivity of value which extreme situations force us to take cognizance of.

But this vital necessity is the satisfaction of a condition of our rationality, and hence it not only reinforces our epistemic deliverance of axiological objectivity but is presupposed by all epistemic activity and constitutes the necessary axiological condition of all knowledge, as well as of moral experience. The reason for this is that rationality—whether in its purely intellectual or in its distinctively moral sense—involves the capacity to make axiological judgments. In its intellectual aspect we make judgments of truth; in its moral, of goodness. The absence of the capacity to make judgments is what we mean by “madness.” Thus the maintenance of a personality—of a structure of acknowledged values—is the maintenance of the condition of rationality.

The reference here is to something analogous to what Kant called the “postulates of the practical reason.” In practical life we accept the objectivity of value, for which we have independent epistemic evidence, because the vital need to maintain the rational structure of our personality also compels us to believe in it under a severe penalty. The objectivity of value is a *practical* postulate. But, while

the word "practical" should not be a source of trouble, the word "postulate" can be. It is not intended to designate an arbitrary fiat or a merely logically primitive proposition functioning as the basis of an implicative system and hence valid only in that context; it is intended to designate a condition of rationality. Rationality can be rejected, but then, of course, no argument for or against it can be examined; argument can merely be ignored. Nor does the reference to vital needs mean that we must lie to ourselves in order to make life bearable or pleasant. Nor is it a question of a pragmatic "will to believe." It is a question of recognizing that the rationality by means of which we make distinctions essential to epistemic, no less than to moral, activity (of reality and illusion, valid and nonvalid, true and false, and the like, as well as of right and wrong) is grounded on certain conditions which we must accept but which cannot be proved, since they are presupposed by all proof.

We thus see that in an extreme situation we are able to discover with relative ease something which in normal moral perplexities can be grasped only accidentally or only by an extremely sensitive person, namely, that rational activity at the moral level (but it is also true of the epistemic), while autonomous, involves the acceptance of metarational conditions, to threaten which is to endanger all normal living, for normal living is defined by the rationality which governs it. An abstract intellectualism seeks to deny the existential source of rationality, to ignore it, or to challenge its authority and position as the condition of all reason. The effect in any case is to cut the line which attaches theory to its source in the total experience of man, in order that, by a denial of the latter's reality, theory may be

assigned to a single segment of man's experience. The judgment of theoretical validity, of objective truth, even when it refers to objective relations which constitute the world of physics, expresses a vital decision of the scientist no less than it expresses certain relations which can be apprehended by a pure disembodied intellect. These relations are objective, and their objectivity is warranted by certain tests. No objection can be made to them when warranted, and certainly none to the scientist's interest in them (unless it be a moral objection that the interest may not be in place under given circumstances) so long as they are not passed off for more than what they are: namely, selections from complex data. If the term "real" is reserved for them, it becomes necessary to remind the user that reality is not a predicate; but, even if it were, the arbitrary use of a term does not create similarities or erase distinctions which the subject to which the predicate applies may have within itself or with other things.

It is also important, in view of the fact that some positivists deny that "truth" is a value, to remember that the relations expressed in scientific judgments could not be glimpsed by a pure scientific intellect unless, by a prior nonscientific decision, the pure scientific intellect decides to restrict its interest to these relations and to take only those warranted by the tests agreed on. This decision is not itself a scientific, but an existential, condition which makes scientific activity possible. Of course, the decision calls for accepting the deliverances of the pure intellect only if they abide by certain specifiable conditions which warrant their validity. But, for all that, the logic of the decision is identical with the logic of the decision of a practical man to accept

the moral problem and the conditions necessary to resolve it. These conditions are inquired into by the moral man and are decided upon by his moral consciousness in the same way as the conditions which resolve the scientific problem are decided by the scientist; the former are autonomous in the same sense in which the latter are. The scientific intellect *qua* scientific can no more pass on the moral validity of a judgment than the moral *qua* moral can on scientific validity. There is no point, of course, in denying that the judgments of the pure scientific intellect have a clarity and freedom from ambiguity which the inherently obscure and irreducibly ambiguous data of the moral conscience could never equal. Nevertheless, since the aim of the moral conscience is not the selection of material in order to express it in clear propositions which have predictive function but rather to make choices among values, no matter how perplexingly vague and obscure these values may be, the inherent defects of its judgments as compared with the judgments of science cannot be a basis for rejecting them, although their vagueness may constitute a basis for seeking to clarify them as far as possible.

At this point it is desirable to gather the results of our discussion. Observe, first, that the argument led to the conclusion that a victim of injustice who reflects on what he experiences discovers that the evil of which he is a victim is objective, in the epistemic sense that it appears before his mind as constituted by the lack of certain relations required to complete the situation in a fitting manner, and in the existential sense that the objectivity of the injustice is demanded as one of the conditions of rationality. Observe, next, that the perception of evil involves, at the same time, the grasp of the

order of ideal relations whose actualization would complete the situation and would obviate the adverse judgment passed on the situation. But nowhere throughout the argument has the claim been made that the objectivity of either good or evil, justice or injustice, has ontological, a priori status.

Our discussion has prepared us to answer the question which was posited immediately after the discussion of Christianity, and to this question we must at last turn. The question—it will be remembered—is whether a man can discover the ethical life without the aid of religious conviction. I suggested that the answer would be a qualified affirmative. Let us see, then, how the discovery can be made. We saw that the practical predicament into which our ethical man has fallen cannot be solved by the usual moral appeal to the victimizer and that the strategies of escape offered by Thrasy-machus and Marx are seen to be self-defeating. Practically, then, barring suicide, the only way out is resignation. But resignation is never totally passive; it never completely stills one's mind. One asks in a silent voice, now in rancor, now in despair: "What is this justice whose authentic reality one cannot deny and whose impotence is so patent?" Or one asks: "What offense has one committed, what wrong done, to what can the plight in which one now finds one's self be traced?" An honest examination of conscience cannot let one off free, as if one were innocent. But does the discovery of one's faults bring with it the conviction that one's plight is deserved, that the victimizer was justified? If it does, there is no further problem in personal terms. If it does not, the problem remains in its

entirety, for the excess of undeserved punishment in the indubitably objective moral scheme is a puzzle, and one must dig again in search for the root of evil. The perplexed, searching conscience now asks: "Why evil, why iniquity?" And the answer it gives itself is: "You know what the root of evil is; look inside yourself and you will find it. Perhaps not the root of *this* evil but of others for which *you* are responsible. For, certainly, you, too, even you, who now appeal to justice, have you not also denied to others that for which you now appeal, even as it is now being denied you? Well, in precisely that disregard of another person or, rather, in the practical assertion of the primacy of your own values over the value of the other as person is to be found the root of evil. And have you never brushed off in arrogance another's moral claim? Come now, never?"

"I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me. I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between heaven and earth? We are arrant knaves, all"

At this point it is advisable to interrupt the ethical man's soliloquy in order to call attention to what has happened: The victim, concerned with his own plight, has translated the problem from its original singular, first-person terms into universal terms. To this translation he was led by the examination of conscience which he started when

he inquired into the reason for his present plight and answered its inquiry by pointing to his own faults. It is no longer possible to ask, "What is the source of the evil he now suffers?" There has taken place a broadening of the query: "What is the source of evil in general?" But the query does not obliterate, of course, the personal interest, for the self answers not only in terms of his own experience but in awareness that the answer applies to himself. It is disregard of another's claims that constitutes evil, and at the same time, as counterpoint, it is my disregard of the status of another as person that constitutes the evil I am so abundantly guilty of. But why does one—no, why do *I*—disregard the person of another? Why, indeed, if not because I fear that his plea will threaten my cherished espousals? Why, if not because one prefers one's own values to anything that may happen to the other?

From here on, our path is considerably easier. For, if what one wants is to abolish the possibility of situations such as that of which one is the victim, the means of doing so have already been discovered. And this is what one has come to desire, through the discovery that one is as much an agent of injustice as one is its victim. The evil does not consist in the denial of the concrete claims in their material specificity, after they have been fairly heard, but in the denial of the right of another person to institute a moral claim—a denial which usually springs out of an unconscious fear that the other's claim may force me to give up valued objects as the result of the moral inquiry. My recognition of the right of another to submit a moral claim keeps the moral process open. And the evil in

which originally I was exclusively interested is one by which not only now, but always, and not only I, but everyone else, is threatened so long as we do not keep the moral process open.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DISCOVERY OF THE ETHICAL. III

SO MUCH, then, seems reasonably clear: If we want to avoid the possibility of evil, we must find some means of keeping the moral process open. But how can we keep it open when to do so is to threaten our cherished espoused values? How can I admit another's claim when that claim threatens to destroy the organization of my values and hence my personality? A man who has no values to espouse, hence no personality to threaten, and whose integrity means nothing to him can give up anything that is asked of him. Such a man would be a perfect pragmatist; and, if he is possible at all, he is very rare indeed. But does not such an attitude mean the abandonment of morality?

I can keep the moral process open, without giving up my integrity, when I effectively and actually put as the keystone of my value arch one value to which I give absolute primacy: the espoused value of the other as person.

When this condition is lacking, evil does not necessarily follow, because conflicts between persons are not always radical; but it always hovers ready at hand, since one never knows when a conflict will reveal itself as radical. When I have grasped this insight, I have arrived, theoretically,

at the ethical plane. But whether or no that purely theoretical accomplishment leads to my espousal of the ethical as an effective operative value whose absolute primacy becomes the basis of the resolution of my moral problems is an empirical question which can be answered by each man who has discovered the ethical. Let him who institutes successfully as his primary value the primacy of the other, in spite of his own passions and prejudices, his own malice and selfishness, come forward to claim the prize.

At this point the empiricist is clamoring to be heard. He has a criticism to record. Let us hear him.

He says that, so far as he can see, the pretty picture I have painted does not prove that the espousal of the primacy of the other as person, assuming, for the sake of the argument, that it is practical counsel, will in fact achieve the desirable results I have claimed for it. Christianity's failure proves the utter impracticality of the ethical life. Furthermore, while he may grant that I have put my finger on the source of one kind of evil, it has not been shown to be the source of all moral evil whatsoever. For what I did was to equate, without giving my reasons for doing so, the term "injustice" with the term "evil."

The fact which is the basis of the last objection, I reply, is justified. I did take for granted that the terms are equivalent; but let me adduce, in justification, the following considerations: First, the evil in which we have been interested is that which is the result of the breakdown of the moral process. We must distinguish this evil from catastrophe, which is the harm that comes as the result of

causes beyond human control—illness and death not caused by negligence and any other harm which is the result of uncontrollable accident. Within the scope of our inquiry we do not call these events “evil,” for we save the term for the untoward consequences visited on a person through the decisions explicit or involved in another’s actions. But the relationship from which these decisions arise can be referred to under the generic term of “justice,” in the sense that they refer to the use of power to accept or deny a moral claim. The objection is thus a purely verbal one.

As regards the first criticism of the empiricist, it should be borne in mind that a perfectly ethical life does not seem possible, and I have myself suggested so in the last line of the preceding section—if by “perfect” we mean a life which is not marred by failure. The perfect ethical life is an ideal which, in so far as it is approached, succeeds to some extent in sweetening and humanizing the beast in man. In a recent poll conducted by the *Ladies’ Home Journal*¹ a number of Americans were asked, among other questions, whether they loved their fellow-man when he was an enemy of the country and when he was a member of a political party thought to be dangerous. To the first of these two questions 63 per cent replied “No,” and to the second, 57 per cent; but to the first, 12 per cent replied “No opinion” and to the second, 16 per cent. On this criterion, this means—if the poll is assumed to meet statistical demands, and the *Ladies’ Home Journal* did not give data from which to check on this important point—that only between 25 and 27 per cent of the American population is Christian. (On other criteria one could propose, I dare say that the number is much less.) I suggest

that the quality of contemporary life in industrial countries would be found to correlate rather closely with the effective practice of the Christian ideals of love. A perfect ethical life is impossible for men as at present constituted; but love and hatred can be increased or diminished as dynamic forces in human living, and within the scanty knowledge of history I possess I see no reason to assume that there is more love (agape) in this scientifically enlightened and humanitarian age of ours than there was in those ages which partisanship and historical ignorance dismiss as the days of the Inquisition. All the evidence points with some clarity the other way. Let us remember that it was left to our generation to invent the fact, no less than the term, "genocide."

The first criticism of the empiricist also involves a rather difficult methodological problem. In so far as an ideal is accepted because of the good consequences it promises to realize, its test is made by means which, broadly speaking, we can call "empirical." Thus, if a social ideal, let us say "socialism," promises a certain kind of life, whether the ideal is valid or false depends on the kind of life which, when put into practice, socialism does, in fact, make possible. This is, of course, utterly obvious. But the question as to whether the kind of life to which socialism leads is better than the kind of life that feudalism makes possible cannot be tested by the simple comparison of the one kind with the other but can be tested only by means of a criterion which is broader than each and capable of criticizing both; and such a criterion is itself not testable empirically, since it defines what the good life is. Suppose that you told a Nazi that the kind of life his ideals lead to is inferior to the democratic be-

cause it excludes a good deal of talent from contributing what it can to the social good. True, he would say, but that kind of contribution we do not find "good," and the evil our exclusion of undesirables brings is infinitesimal compared with the evil involved in having to co-operate with them. Now add: But your ideals involve war, destruction, and conflict. True again, he will retort, but the quality of life involved in war, the virtues it makes possible, are, for us, the highest and worth the price we are forced to pay for them. There is no need to pursue the point any further. The Nazi cannot be condemned according to a criterion which merely accuses him of traducing *my* concrete ideals; he can be condemned only according to a criterion which can criticize both the Nazi and all other competing systems in order to show how near each comes to a general notion of human perfection. That this can be done we have already attempted to show. But this ideal of human perfection, since it is normative, defines what is the desirable as human and, if what it thus defines is not acceptable, it cannot be rejected on empirical grounds but only in terms of a dialectical analysis of the ideal itself, through the process of criticism already outlined. Suppose that the Puritan was correct and that human perfection was to be found by means of his rejections and denials; surely, it would be no argument against the ideal to urge that it narrowed the scope of man's gratifications, for precisely that narrowing is demanded as the price of perfection. I labor this point because today one constantly hears even from philosophers, who ought to know better, irresponsible appeals to "empiricism" as if the "validation" of normative criteria could be achieved by reference to the facts of human life as these appear

to the objectively descriptive historian or social scientist, whose method forbids his making normative choices among the data. Dobuan life is bad because it is instinct with paranoid traits and paranoid traits are bad, and this judgment transcends Dobu and its values and takes us to the criteria of perfection (unfortunately vague and dangerous to use) by which not only Dobu but all other societies can be criticized. If this is nonsense, we would do well to quit fooling ourselves with unstable attempts to look at the truth, for the other firm alternative is the frankly "might-makes-right" morality of the positivist, which Stevenson clarified for us in our day and which we can trace back through William James, through Hobbes, to Thrasymachus.

At this point, the postulational moralist, who has sat impatiently while I tried to answer the empiricist, interrupts me. "Isn't this ideal or criterion," he says, "to which you have referred, this absolute primacy of the person, *a postulate*? For you do not pretend that you *intuit* it. And, since you do not claim that it is the result of an induction, what other alternative is there?"

We can reply that, if we view the moral process as "a logical system," the primacy of the person does indeed function as a postulate, but that thus to view it is erroneous. It does function as a postulate, since it is a primitive premise, itself not provable in the same way in which judgments dependent on it are provable by it. But ethical activity is not susceptible of formulation into a logical system, since it involves the creative activity of the moral imagination and the analogy between symbolic or logical systems and value systems, as already pointed

out, is false. Indeed, it is high time that a correction was introduced. I have been speaking of "a value system" acknowledged by a man and constituting his personality. I have said that the system was organized hierarchically and that, on given occasions, some values in it functioned as basic. Actually, this is only approximately true, since the degree of systematic organization that we are likely to find in any man's or people's values is not very high. The principles of order which govern our value systems are precisely what are in question when a man faces a serious moral decision. Therefore, the comparison between the concrete existential value complex and a symbolic system is inadmissible, since the former is dynamic, more or less inchoate, never fully finished, and hence the principles of order that govern it are never fully or clearly known.

The primacy of the person, however, is a "postulate" in a totally different sense: in the sense that Kant meant when he spoke of the "postulates of the practical reason." The ethical man in the situation in which he discovered the necessity for "postulating" the primacy of the person was not picking out arbitrarily one sentence or proposition among many to lay at the base of a deductive, purely symbolic system. He was completing the moral process by discovering the necessary conditions required to resolve the problem of evil.

We could argue, on the other hand, that the ethical decision remains conditional, since it really involves the assertion that *if* one wants to be ethical, one needs to assert unconditionally the primacy of the person. And hence the categorical character of the ethical demand has disappeared, giving way to a mere hypothetical situation. This is true, but it is further true that the moral man is confronted

all along with this alternative: either morality or chaos. The question as to whether he will accept one choice or the other is practically nonsensical, since one alternative must be rejected. The question for him, therefore, is not whether morality is possible but how it is—what its necessary conditions are. And this is the question because he has already made the initial choice by accepting morality. The other alternative, chaos, is not theoretically impossible, since it does not involve an internal incoherence. Indeed, on one reading of human experience it seems probable. This reading cannot be dismissed: Callicles, Thrasymachus, the Athenian ambassadors to the Island of Melos, Hobbes, and Nietzsche are not men whose interpretation of human experience can be lightly dismissed. The moral man, nevertheless, knows it is not the correct one. The content of human experience presents factors that these men seem to have been blind to. Thus it seems to be a fact, ignored by the prophets of force, that men universally want to be persons. What makes the difference between men is not that some want to be persons and others wilfully and deliberately choose consistently not to be, but that some choose rightly and others wrongly how to become and maintain themselves as persons. We may say of a criminal: "He is not a human being," meaning that he is not a person. And we may go so far as to assume that he chooses the wrong values because he has no regard for himself as person. But, strictly speaking, we are wrong, since we forget that in some vague and confused way criminals choose what to them seem to be values which they maintain and for the maintenance of which they are capable of sacrifice, of courage, of stubborn effort. Their values are hopelessly wrong, but a kind of

self-respect and a conception of excellence, nevertheless, they do have. They do not want merely to live. No man wants merely to live—to live protoplasmically, purely biologically, to live at any cost. Men want to live as men, or as what they in their darkened minds take men to be. There is honor in thieves, although perhaps not always among them; and they are no less punctilious in its defense than the good man is in the defense of his honor. This is the reason why the totally abject man, utterly without self-respect, is inconceivable and why we say that even the worm will turn. Dostoevski was specially fascinated by the utterly shameless man, but he found that the shamelessness was deceptive, that it constituted a means by which the shameless man sought to maintain some corner of self-respect by lacerating himself publicly. The man who loses his self-respect regains it in his own eyes by exposing his own shame, thus saying, "I am capable of shame, and, to prove that I am, I expose my shame."

There is another reason why it seems inadvisable to call the criteria which govern ethical judgments "postulates" or "commitments." On the doctrine of the postulational moralists, the moral act subserves the will which, through the practical realization of the decision, expresses itself by enforcing its dictates. But a will thus served represents what we can call the "despotic conscience," a pathological manifestation of the moral conscience. In fact, the ethical will or, more precisely, the will deciding to abide by the criterion of the ethical life is a will which abrogates itself. If it should be insisted that it is despotic, it should be added that its despotism is turned inward upon itself, since it is addressed against the tendency—seemingly inherent in all wills—to become despotic. Thus the ethical de-

cision is an act of the will that makes the will renounce what gives it its ethically objectionable character—the assertion of its primacy and the refusal to reconsider its primacy. The will thus, rather than using value for its ends, submits to the requiredness of value and freely becomes the instrument of that requiredness. We can thus see the radical distinction that exists between the moral and the ethical. In the moral, ideally, there is no radical conflict between the will and the value system which constitutes the person, since the whole system is espoused, which means incorporated into the person through a volitional act. If there is conflict, it expresses a divided will, whereas, in the ethical, the espousal of a single value absolutely—the primacy of the person—involves our loosening our hold on all our other values. There is no conflict because the other values, either viewed from our standpoint or viewed from their end, exercise in vain their requiredness on us. This fact is of the utmost importance, since it is at the root of the ethical man's tendency toward otherworldliness.

It might be suggested that the ethical, as here conceived, is in conflict with the moral activity, for it is distinctive of the moral activity that no given organization of values, no matter how deeply espoused, can be instituted as an absolute to which moral claims must conform. But in the ethical, the primacy of the value of the other is just such a fixed absolute, one which becomes the criterion for all values, whether of the ethical agent or of others. However, it is not true that in the moral life there is no fixed value, for the value to entertain all moral claims and judge them from an impersonal point of view, which is the essence of the moral life, is a fixed value, definitive of the moral life. Again, the

positing of the primacy of the person as the keystone of the ethical organization of values does not mean that the individual thereby ceases to be receptive of moral claims made against him, but, quite the contrary, it means that he becomes much more receptive than the moral man, who frequently fails in his moral activity by disregarding the value of the personality of the other. Moreover, the readiness involved in the moral life to accept all claims does not mean a duty to accept the values that are involved in the claims, but only a duty to consider them. The duty to accept all claims would condemn the individual to the moral fluidity recommended by instrumentalism. In the latter, however, there is a valuable truth of which we must not lose sight, namely, that the person who, like the postulational moralist, insists on the primacy of his commitments is a man who is rationalizing the demands of his despotic conscience. The belief in the primacy of the person is a moral belief as well as an ethical one, since it is the key to the organization of values of the moral agent, and the specific organization is threatened only by a moral perplexity in those rare cases of total and radical self-condemnation.

But, although the criterion in terms of which decisions (whether at the moral or at the ethical level) are resolved is not, for all its similarities to them, either a postulate or a commitment; it is, again in its formal aspect, the principle by which we arrive at a real definition, for it functions in distinguishing the moral and the ethical from their contradictories and both pairs of terms from the amoral and ethically neutral. However, the definition is a real definition in the sense that what it does is to point to real distinctions in a given subject matter: the subject matter which constitutes the

range of experiences of concern to a man who is practically perplexed. Such a man distinguishes one type of conduct from another. He *calls* one type the "moral" and the other, which obstructs its realization, the "immoral"; "moral" and "immoral" are contradictories because moral conduct precludes immoral and vice versa. He *calls*, at another level, one type of conduct "ethical" and the other "unethical" for the same reasons. The terms do not matter so long as it is borne in mind that the distinctions which they point to are distinctions in the subject matter.

The conviction was expressed in the last chapter that it was possible to discover the ethical without the help of religious commitments. I have shown, I hope, that intellectually it is possible to arrive at the conclusion that the root of evil among men is to be found in their mutual disregard of the primacy of one another's personalities; but this cannot satisfy those who believe that moral philosophy is a practical science whose end is enlightened action and not theoretical knowledge. There is no indication in what has been said so far about the discovery of the ethical that it involves more than a theoretical grasp of certain relations in a subject matter. A practical science involves not merely the possession of a given range of knowledge but also the possession of a will docile to the insights of that knowledge—and the discovery of the ethical does not entail the docility of the will. The religious man could therefore argue that, if we dispense with religion, we divorce the ethical practice from the theory, for only religion can bring about that second birth which enables the will to subject itself to the ends of the ethical insight.

To this criticism I cannot reply altogether satisfactorily. In so far as a reply is at all possible, it consists of reviewing the steps by which the ethical man was led to his insight, in order to show that more was involved than was recorded above, namely, a total volitional-affective, as well as intellectual, experience, which constituted a second birth. In fashionable language the insight was the result of a trauma which reorganized the personality by shaking it loose from its old values. The critic may object that it was not the trauma that loosed the ethical man from his values but the denial involved in the injustice. This is a nice point. My opinion is that the injustice caused the trauma, which consisted in the realignment of one's espousal and the introduction of a new value—that of the person—having more authority than all the others. But this does not exhaust the experience. The reflective man, undergoing the anguish of his second birth, discovering the primacy of the person and the evil to which our moral espousals, when unregulated by an absolute value, so readily lead, may go beyond the moral-ethical sphere and ask questions which fall within the range of the religious. Let us, in a sketchy manner, without attempting proofs and articulate arguments, which would turn this essay into a work on theology, look into these questions and their possible answers.

The discovery of the ethical entailed the discovery of a moral order proper to human beings: a system of objective relationships involving them in their activity as humans and thus defining their destiny as consisting in the actualization of ideal values in a certain hierarchical manner controlled by one absolute value. But this whole structure

points—as all structure does, but moral structure does much more clearly—to an axiological order which is prior to its discovery and has ontic status, although, like all structure, it does not exist but can be said only to subsist. This is to say that the discovered order exhibits the objective traits of rationality. It does not exhibit the subjective traits, since in the order the presence of consciousness or mind is not directly disclosed, as it is in human intercourse through existential communication. At the purely human level the presence of such objective traits furnishes warranted ground for inferring a mind and a purpose (agent and end). At the cosmic level the inference is challenged by the critical philosopher, the skeptic, and the positivist. The critical and the skeptical philosophers both argue, by different routes, to the conclusion that the alleged objective, ontic order is a human projection. The positivist denies the possibility of making meaningful statements about the ontic status of order and claims that after Darwin any teleological argument involves the use of gratuitous assumptions which obfuscate rather than clarify issues. The structure of the world—if structure there be—can be explained, either conceptualistically or nominalistically, as generated by the very procedures through which we grasp our world. As Nagel has argued, logic does not need an ontology.² In short, the order found in the universe is the order which we happen to find; but we must not believe that it is independent of the means employed in finding it, since it is strictly relative to these means. Or he may argue, as does Dennes,³ that the order which the universe exhibits is an empirically discovered order and necessitates no assumption as to agency or end, since it is an arrangement that is not in-

trinsic to the ordered elements but extrinsic to them. Any arrangement, for any purpose, is an order, and the arranger is the human knower who arranges for the purposes of knowing. Thus the cosmic reference is utterly gratuitous. Dennes, however, has not denied order but has merely said that the specific arrangement discovered by a knowing mind is no more intrinsic than any other that it may wish to institute. However, that a knowing mind exists, that in terms of a variety of arrangements it knows, and that therefore some sort of harmony exists between it and its objects are factors which the philosopher cannot neglect. No single discovered order may be more intrinsic than another from the standpoint of objective knowledge, but all orders are intrinsic to the mind that knows, and, since the naturalist says that mind is part of nature, we still find order as intrinsic to nature.

The ethical man who is, axiologically, a realist is convinced not merely that the order found by him is a projection which is only a descriptive correlate of his mental deficiency in his capacity for apprehending utter chaos but that it has ontic status and that that order entails some sort of agent, somehow analogous to the human agent, and therefore also an end. You can, for the purposes of prediction, merely record such order as is discovered, so long as the objective of your search is to find it for the end in view of predicting future events, considering your job done when the recorded order is verified by the more or less happy outcome of your prediction. In order to discover objectively its intrinsic nature, the best thing to do is to limit your assumptions and procedures rigorously to the ends of your inquiry—prediction. But, such as they are, the orders which men find—physical, aesthetic, or moral

—stimulate in the philosopher questions as to their ontic status and origins; and these questions clearly go beyond the objectives of the positive scientist. It is a commonplace today that the order discovered in the physical world is not the simple, elegant order which was assumed by men like Galileo, Huygens, and Leibniz. If God is a geometrician and if his alphabet is number, he is not limited to using the geometry of Euclid, and the numbers he employs are not only those we studied in the grades. The order discovered by the conscience is so vague, so weakly fluttering and unsteady, so deeply instinct with incoherence, so essentially baffling, and so cruelly mocking that it is capable of throwing the minds of men who, like Dostoevski, look at it boldly, into serious fits of skeptical doubt. And, in spite of the fact that in its defense have been employed the most strenuous efforts of the deepest and most energetic minds produced by Western civilization in two and a half millenniums, it has not yet been established lucidly as incontestably and unqualifiedly "there," and it does not seem likely ever to be so established.

But after we have said that the moral order is ambiguous and mockingly cruel, I believe that an earnest examination of the texture of human experience will reveal that there is some sort of order and that it appears to be "there" as more than the result of an axiological projection. Such as it is, order demands rationality, and rationality demands a rational agent. The teleological proof is not admissible at the biological level simply because biology is a science and science is not interested in ends but in processes, but it is admissible at the cosmological. Here the order to which it refers is not the organization achievable through mechanical

processes of adaptation, whose structure and origin can be posited as given, but is an order whose origin and end constitute a genuine problem. Assuming a structure of invariant relations, positive science can engage in the discovery of specific subsystems of such relations within restricted areas of reality. What is in question for the philosopher, however, is what the scientist posits as given—the structure. If it should be argued that the question as to its origin and nature or ontic status is not intelligible, the answer is that it is not intelligible in terms of an analysis of meaning derived from the limited data furnished by the scientists; but such a conception is based on the assumption of the univocal character of the term “truth,” an assumption which is not established by the methods of the positive sciences.

Our difficulties, however, are not over, for, if we assert (as Augustine did) the existence of an agent and an end beyond the spatiotemporal world as essential in the account of cosmic order, we will soon be stopped by the request for a theodicy. Here again all we can do is barely to sketch the lines along which an answer could be given.

The simple assertion of the omnipotence of the causal agent to whom we have traced the cosmic structure runs us into a contradiction if we simply assert its goodness also. Hume made this adequately clear. A proper understanding, as one can find it in Augustine, of the freedom of the will resolves, I am convinced, the problem of evil as we used the term above (as distinguished from mere catastrophe) from the standpoint of the agent of evil. But what about the victim of that evil, in so far as he is innocent, and what about the victim of catastro-

phe? Is it not possible that Captain Ahab was right? Remember what Ishmael reported:

"'Vengeance on a dumb brute!' cried Starbuck, 'that simply smote thee from blindest instinct! Madness! To be enraged with a dumb thing, Captain Ahab, seems blasphemous.'

"'Hark ye yet again,—the little lower layer. All visible objects, man, are but as pasteboard masks. But in each event—in the living act, the undoubted deed—there, some unknown but still reasoning thing puts forth the mouldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask. If man will strike, strike through the mask! How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall? To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me. Sometimes I think there's naught beyond. But 'tis enough. He tasks me; he heaps me; I see him in outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate.'"⁴

The questions to which these words of Ahab give rise are altogether beyond the scope of an essay on moral philosophy, but they are not unrelated to it. To Ahab's suggestion that the agent, the unknown but still seemingly reasoning thing behind the unreasoning masks, may be a malignant will endowed with an outrageous strength, how can one reply but with an *ad hominem*? "Poor man, poor, poor man, you are mad. Or do you think you are the only creature of the agent who ever felt the sting of its whip? Do you think you are the only one who was ever humiliated with the curse? Or are you going to say that you, because you are Captain Ahab, do not deserve it? You have never sinned? You are a righteous man? You never humiliated another? You were always kind and decent

and just? Why, old man, in your heart there never was love, never. And your very excellence, your strength, and your unquestioned primacy were insults to those around you, all the more since they could not contest it. Did you ever notice that? Have you ever pitied or loved? Obviously, it is not good for a man to feel, as you have too long felt, that he is the absolute master of the lives of his crew. It makes him feel, as you feel, that you are God. Your power or your pride or the devil that has you in his hands and makes you dance your pathetic dance like a marionette has made you forget, old man, if you ever learned it, that you are a creature and the agent that struck at you through the whale is not. You will harpoon it, tie it to the ship, and carve it? Poor mad man, it is hard to tell whether you are comical or pathetic. It was egregious pride that led to the first fall of all, the fall before the Fall in the Garden. The only way in which one can reconcile one's self to the evil of which one is the victim is not rationally—to seek for such a reconciliation is the first irrationality—but irrationally, as Dostoevski counseled, through love.”⁵

But this opens vast horizons toward which the moral philosopher cannot march with his limited equipment.

CHAPTER IX

THE PRIMACY OF THE PERSON

IN THE mind of the reader who has followed our account of the ethical life, there must have arisen some questions with which it is necessary to come to grips. The first refers to our analysis of the category "person." In chapter ii it was said that a person consists of a system of values integrated hierarchically by the psychic powers and abilities of the human animal into a moral agent. The "dignity" of the person has its ground in the capacity of the person to acknowledge, through espousal and through recognition, the requiredness of value. But when a man transcends the moral life and reaches "the ethical stage," he asserts the value of the other's personality without qualification. This assertion means that the ethical man espouses the value of "personality" as over and above all other values which he espouses and even above the values espoused and recognized by others.

The question that has probably arisen in the reader's mind refers to the fact that it has not been shown in anything that has been said why the person comes to acquire the indefeasible value given him by the ethical man. On the contrary, it would seem that a consideration of what has been said about the person would lead us to believe that the

imputation to him of an indefeasible and supreme value is not justified. For that imputation presupposes distinctions which the foregoing analysis of "person" leaves no room for: it calls for a distinction between the person and the values he acknowledges; and it gives the former a value which is independent of these and superior to them. Experience indicates that the person who presses a moral claim does not allow the validity of these distinctions but rather argues that, so far as he himself is concerned, *he is each and every one of those values which he espouses* and without which he is nothing but an animal. This was, moreover, what was insisted on above. But if a person is his values, it is not easy to see in what sense one can ascribe to him a value distinct from and independent of the total worth of the values he espouses. One can argue on this basis that the ethical man is merely a moral man, the principles of whose value organization are no different from those of anyone else, even if the values he organizes do differ in one respect, since one of the values of his system is particularly precious to him. Still this does not give us a foundation on which to ground the intrinsically indefeasible value of the person. Nothing has been said that establishes the dignity of man in any other but a relative manner: relative to him who grants it. Man's dignity can be said to arise from the values he acknowledges, but it must also be compared with the dignity which arises from the values acknowledged by other men. Therefore, the saint, the hero, and the genius are distinctly better, worthier persons, deserving more of the respect that dignity elicits than the average run of men.

In order to meet this difficulty, we shall have to

amplify and extend the analysis of the person put forth in chapter ii. There only those aspects of the person were presented which were directly relevant to moral activity. This was suggested at the beginning of the section, and the reason for this manner of treatment was that a more complete analysis of the notion of personality would have deflected us from the exposition of the moral life which was at the time the task in hand.

Now it is true that a person is constituted by his values and that we cannot arbitrarily disregard his value claims without disregarding him as a person; but the emphasis should be put upon "arbitrarily," for we could not have rightly asserted that the specific value claims of another man are, as presented, indefeasible simply because he is a person and he makes them. He can be mistaken. The person's claims can be challenged and require justification. Whatever the moral claimant may argue about the identity between himself and his values, when we recognize him as person it is not his specific values that we acknowledge—for these constitute a fortuitous organization from among the indefinitely large number from which he could have selected; what we acknowledge is *his right to espouse a value system and the importance for him as person of such an espousal*. Whether the specific values he espouses are morally valid or not depends on whether they stand the test of justification, and this is another and an independent question, to be decided on its own merits. If a philosophy asserts that a man has the unchallengeable right to what he claims, that philosophy is but a superficial variant of the postulational moral theory, and it leads to the same consequences. Such a philosophy has one absolute, the will that constitutes or chooses

values. The essence of a man's moral personality is not constituted by his will. This is precisely what a man discovers in the moral experience, particularly when he is forced to make a transition from the moral to the ethical. The source of injustice and of those calamities of which men are the victims and which have their origin in their fellows can generally be traced to the erection of the will into a discretionary arbiter. Postulational moral philosophers misconceive the nature of morality, and the root reason is probably that they do not really believe that there resides in the person an intrinsic worth distinct from the total worth of the values he espouses. The value of the person as person is distinct from the total worth of the values he espouses and recognizes. And our question remains: Wherein does that value reside?

It has been argued that the person is endowed with an inherent value because "a person" means "a carrier of moral values and disvalues," as Nicolai Hartmann puts it.¹ Because an individual is an agent whose function is to actualize and maintain a system of values, value inheres in the activity which defines his function, and it is the possession of this value which constitutes his dignity, claimed by himself and acknowledged by others. It could be argued further that the claim of such worth in one's self involves one necessarily in the acknowledgment of it in others, even though the acknowledgment need not be made explicitly but may be only implicitly involved in one's practical treatment of the other. This argument is valid, so far as it goes, but it does not satisfy the demands for a ground for the ethical regard for the person, which must depend (using C. I. Lewis' important distinc-

tion) on an *intrinsic* value of the person as person and not on an *inherent* value derived from his function.² The ethical consciousness would answer that, if the value is derived, it is relative and comparative; and this answer could not advance us beyond the mere moral level, according to which a person has the value his status and role in society give him. On this view a person's dignity is acquired from the functions he performs and his success in performing them and hence is defeasible. Such an inherent value, again, requires for recognition no special insight beyond that possessed by a normal moral man. Men quite naturally tend to respect one another because of the values they serve or the functions they perform, as determined by the cultural hierarchy of values they recognize. The moral philosopher could say that they tend to do so all too readily and that fawning deference before social values is of the very structure of social man. If this social dignity serves as a basis for respect, it also serves as a basis for disrespect, since the value inhering in the person through his function is comparative. Morally it is not possible to respect a coward as much as a hero, nor is it possible to respect a brothel-keeper as much as a sister of charity; but the ethical man respects the other person and treats him in such a way as to avoid violating his dignity, no matter how unworthy morally he may be known to be. For him, beyond moral distinctions lies the intrinsic worth of a man which neither vice nor weakness nor accident can annihilate. The keeper of the brothel has intrinsic worth, no less than the self-sacrificing nurse serving in the leper colony, and the ratcatcher or garbage man no less than the king. The insight on which such an attitude toward one's fellow-beings

is based may not have any objective validity. If it has, the person has an intrinsic value whose ground must be exhibited.

It is not an adequate answer to this question to argue that the primacy of the person is discovered through an act of love. It is undoubtedly true that without love the person's primacy is not *discovered*; but love cannot create the value of the person, it merely discovers it. Wherein, then, does the primacy of the person reside? Why does the person have the indefeasible value he has? I shall consider two possible answers to the question, logically independent of each other. Because it is convenient to have them labeled, I shall refer to the first, although apologetically, since the label does not seem adequate, as the "cosmological argument" and to the second as the "argument from the nature of man."

The cosmological argument establishes the primacy of the person either through his relation to God, conceived as the immanent rationality of the universe, as the Stoics did, or to a personal, transcendent God, as the Christians do. In this respect, Stoic doctrine is formally identical with the Christian doctrine, even though their metaphysical differences are radical. Epictetus speaks, at least in my translation, almost like a Christian when he tells us "that we are all, before anything else, children of God, and that God is the Father of Gods and men."³ From this belief follows the equality of men, and their mutual citizenship in Cosmopolis or in the City of God. But for the Christian the relation is more intimate, since he holds that it is a genuine brotherhood.

The second is the argument from the spiritual nature of man. For its adequate development this

argument would demand a book, for it takes us into obscure problems of metaphysics. The argument, succinctly put, is this: The person deserves unqualified respect because he is not merely psyche but also spirit, and spirit is, so far as we know, the highest possible form of being. I shall offer here a more or less summary statement of the grounds on which we can establish our belief that the ethical insight is valid. Let us go back to the account given of the person in chapter ii. There it was said that a psyche endowed with powers and aptitudes capable of integrating a hierarchical system of values from among those which press upon man for acknowledgment constitutes the person. In this account, which I have said was far from complete, no notice was taken of the fact that the psyche that creates the person is a finite being but that it is endowed with powers the presence of which define it as spirit. *The intrinsic value of the person is constituted by the value he possesses as spirit.*

Merely as the kind of finite being that it is, the psyche is intrinsically valuable, for being is valuable through and through, and hierarchically valuable. The value possessed by the psyche is higher than that possessed by many other types of finite beings—inorganic or merely living or organic beings. But spirit is highest, and what makes it highest is that, in it and through it only, is the world able to achieve cognizance of its status as creature, to perceive its character as valuable, and through man's efforts to fulfil a destiny which it freely accepts. This is a metaphysical fact, which I must assume without further proof, accepting as sufficient validation here the intuitive deliverance of my rational consciousness that mere matter in me is lower than

my vegetative process and that these are lower than the will and this, in turn, lower than my intelligence, such as it is, and this, finally, than my objective spirit, on which I depend for my grasp of the world of value which constitutes me and without which I would be an incomplete man. Were I pressed for further proof, I would be forced to fall back on the consensus of mankind and point out that men, in fact, find spirit the most valuable of all forms of being; and in their practical life, in their cultural evaluations, in their myths, and in their religions and philosophies they eloquently assert or imply that the value it possesses inheres in it and is the highest value known to man. Even in the philosophy of a distracted age and culture, antihuman and barbaric, such as pragmatism, spirit is given primacy, not for what it is but for what use it can be put to—but still it is given primacy.

But it could still be argued that the primacy of spirit is not inherent but imputed. This essay can be taken as an extended polemic against such a position. Paraphrasing Nicolai Hartmann loosely, one can say that an extended inquiry into the phenomena of the moral life of men, which seeks to do justice to it without reducing it in order to fit it into a physicalist metaphysic, reveals the apriority of value and that the deeper one analyzes, the clearer does it become that the Hobbesian theory of value fails to do justice to the phenomena. This fact is ignored or denied by naturalism, whose conception of being, borrowed from positive science, has been, for the purpose of scientific elaboration, stripped naked of the value which existentially resides in it. But the "being" of positive science is not true existential being, but an abstraction or

isolate for the purpose of discovering the kind of invariant relations which it is the business of the scientist to capture in his predictive formulas. True being—or reality or existential nature—is not “value-free.” It is intrinsically valuable. An obvious, if well-nigh universally current, confusion holds that the world of the physicist is the physical world and blandly assumes that the physical world is the real world. But, as Heidegger, I believe, has suggested, the world of the physicist is a “deformed abstraction” of the physical world, which itself is but a part of being or reality or the existential world. But, while the value which resides in the psyche is enough to place man above organic life and physical being, it is not enough to give him a place above the animal level. for that value is intrinsic generally to all animals or, at least, to the highest. In man it is the possession of *spirit*—as, following Scheler, I have called it—which gives him his intrinsically supreme value, absolutely above all the values that he as man can actualize. It is not merely a matter of arbitrary terminology that makes me follow Scheler’s use of the term “spirit” in preference to the classical “reason” to designate that capacity the possession of which distinguishes men from animals and endows them with their intrinsic primacy. The term “reason”—with its predominantly noetic referent—has been compromised by the limited meaning which technological man has come to give it through his interest in positive knowledge. When we say that the faculty of reason is the agency of knowledge or that the function of reason is knowledge and truth, using these terms in their classical acceptations, they include much more than contemporary naturalistic philosophy assigns to them. It is therefore best to avoid the

term "reason," which has been narrowed in its intension by modern positivistic naturalists.

What is this spirit whose presence in the animal gives him primacy? In developing an answer to this question, I shall follow Scheler; but the source of the doctrine is not particularly relevant to my purposes, since the doctrine is here offered on its own validity and not on the basis of authority.⁴ Scheler points out that what distinguishes man from the animals below him is not the former's possession of intelligence, for it has been demonstrated that animal activity at times exhibits authentic acts of intelligence, acts which are not merely instinctive. What the animal below man gives no sign of possessing and what constitutes a difference of *kind*, not of degree, is the principle which the Greeks called "reason," but which Scheler prefers to designate under the broader term "spirit." The marks of "spirit" are *freedom*, *objectivity*, and *self-consciousness*. By "freedom" is here meant "existential autonomy," which is conceived as freedom from all that belongs to mere "life" and to the impulsive intelligence which is proper to life. A spiritual man is thus not tied to his impulses or to his organism's ambient world but is "open" to the world by which the organism is circumscribed and which consists of centers of resistance for the organism without spirit. Man transforms these centers of resistance that he encounters into "objects." As centers of resistance, ambient things are dealt with under the determination of animal, vital impulse and of organic reaction. To transform ambient resisting things into objects is to consider them as what they are in themselves. More simply put, spirit responds to the object seen, not through the modification of

vital impulse, of organic need, but objectively because it is independent of organic need. An animal endowed with spirit responds *theoretically* to the things that come within the range of its experience, responds as a spectator, and thus grasps the relation of these "objects" to other objects and beyond to still further ones. Thus the spirit lives in an open world, whereas an animal not endowed with spirit lives closed in by the unbreakable wall of his limited organic demands. But spirit is also able to choose whether to suppress or to yield to its own impulses, to inhibit or to release them, on grounds not of impulse itself but of the ideal values that spirit either may want to actualize or may decide that other spirits ought to actualize. And, finally, spirit is reflexive: it is consciousness conscious of itself. Through its reflexiveness, spirit converts itself and the body in which it dwells into an object and is able not only to transform the ambient world—as all animals do—but to transform itself in terms of ideal values free of organic need. Man is the only animal, it seems, that molds itself.

I see no need to make any radical qualifications of this conception of spirit, although some additions will have to be made; but certain observations seem to be called for in order to avoid possible misunderstanding as to the sense in which and the extent to which I accept this view of spirit. Not that on this question one can say anything that is beyond misunderstanding. The secularistic ethos of our culture, the illegitimate metaphysical claims made by positive scientists superbly ignorant of the difficult philosophical problems over which they march roughshod, and the formidable impetus of naturalistic propaganda today shut most ears tightly against

any claims which do not coincide with popular materialistic psychology. To make a distinction between psyche and organism is retrograde enough; to make a distinction between spirit and psyche puts one on an intellectual level with the Australian aborigines or, what is perhaps worse, with "metaphysicians." And to discuss the problem and not once mention the central nervous system and the cortex or the thalamus or whatever other organs the fashion happens at the moment to use as shibboleths guarantees one nothing but obloquy and derision.

Now Scheler seems convinced that the principle through or by means of which man objectifies the world (spirit) cannot be part of the world, nor can it be localized in a determinate time or place. It can reside only in the ground of being itself. But, certainly, the assertion cannot be intended to deny that the spirit which is now seeking to elucidate these problems by writing this essay and the other spirit which follows this attempt were not in the world a few years ago and somehow in some sense are now here and in a few years more will be, so far as we can positively tell, nowhere to be found. The spirit, wherever it may have come from, seems somehow to dwell in a body in a legitimate sense of "in." It is not *in* the body in the obvious sense that, for instance, the brain is *in* the skull and that my body is now *in* a room. While the writer's body remains in his study, in his home, in Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A., there is a sense in which, at the same time, his spirit can now be back in Caracas in 1910 or in New York in 1920. Nevertheless, a spirit is *in* a body in the no less legitimate sense that it seems closely related to the body and seems to be able to make itself manifest to other spirits only through

the means which their bodies provide. The spirit may be said to own a body—even though only temporarily. Nor can we know, with the same kind of positive knowledge that we know of its sojourn in the body, what its fate is when it abandons its fleshly abode. But if the statement means (as we suspect from other sources that it must) that the principle is not *created* by physical factors, themselves devoid of spirit, then we must comment as follows: For certain, all we positively know is that spirit is different from psyche. We do not positively know what makes its appearance possible. We do positively know a few minimal physical conditions of its sojourn. We know, for instance, that the disturbances of certain glands can make a man into a mere psychophysical organism almost utterly devoid of the lucid flame of spirit; but, while we learn more and more about how to make the flame retain a bright and lambent blue cone, we can neither kindle the flame nor hope to do more than merely delay for a brief instant the moment in which it will be extinguished. For certain, we know very little about the brief candle and how it comes by its flame. But we do know, in the same positive way in which we know some of its conditions, that the spirit is something real, although immaterial and different from the body, just as the lambent flame of a wax candle, with its blue cone, is different from the candle and the physical processes which constitute the necessary conditions of its appearance. We also know that spirit is superior to the psyche in which it appears and the physical organism in which it dwells, since spirit is free and in its freedom inheres intrinsically a higher value than in any other form of being with which men are empirically acquainted. If it be claimed, how-

ever, that spirit is of an utterly different stuff from that which constitutes the physical world or the psyche, this is a claim on which I find it impossible to be dogmatic, since I am not clear as to its intention. It would seem to be so, but the speculations which back up the conviction do not constitute positive knowledge.

The metaphysical perspectives that open at this point are limitless, and the difficulty of mapping the country ahead from our own vantage point and without actually surveying it is prohibitive. If spirit is a different kind of "stuff" or substance or process from that which constitutes the physical and organic world, as it seems to be, the question cannot be settled by the positive sciences, since they are restricted by methods and objectives to the formulation of invariant relations among phenomena of sensible nature. For their purposes the sciences can operate fairly adequately, it seems, on several mutually incompatible metaphysical foundations. To say that spirit is a different "principle" or "stuff" or "process" raises questions but does not solve any; for one would naturally ask what is meant by any such statement, and the question leads straight into overwhelming problems of metaphysics and ontology. At the plane at which spirit comes within the purview of our analysis (through an examination of man and a comparison of his powers and faculties with those of the other animals), it seems to me that it is legitimate to assert that nothing we know from a study of physiology enables us to reduce without residue the psyche to the physiological basis in which it somehow resides and that nothing that we know of animal psychology enables us to reduce man's distinctive powers and aptitudes—his spirit—

to those which naturalistic psychology studies by means of analysis of animal behavior and its sign-using powers.⁵ This does not deny that the study of correlations between physical and mental processes is advancing rapidly and will continue to advance as long as scientific research pushes on, but it takes a special philosophic structure to identify the physical and the mental terms thus correlated. The argument back of such identification is valid if one disregards the special objectives of the scientist which the moral philosopher does not share. For the latter it is legitimate to assert that spirit is something distinct from organic activity and that, as yet, the extent to which and the manner in which the spirit is controlled in its sojourn by organic processes are something in regard to which we are pathetically in the dark.

I do not see what can be gained or lost by denying or asserting that spirit is positively known only as somehow embodied in an organism and that the speculations as to whether it can exist independently of the organism to which it is anchored are vague, obscure, and far from decisive. One can have *faith* in immortality, but I do not see what *positive knowledge* of it one can have. To repudiate these speculations, however, because they do not have the clarity and distinctness that we find in mathematical analysis or in the positive sciences is possible only to positivists, to whom subject matter is of no intrinsic importance and only the way in which it is manipulated counts. But to deny that they are inconclusive is unworthy of a student of philosophy. To this writer, at any rate, it is the subject matter which is of chief importance, and, if vagueness and obscurity are all that he can achieve, he sees in such inadequate results a reason not for abandoning

the problem but for doing his best with it. Much could be gained if we could convince the men who in the field of moral philosophy will accept nothing but positive knowledge that they are playing a trivial game—but that is another question. In any case it is neither desirable nor possible successfully to contradict anyone who chooses to formulate the difference and relation between spirit and psyche and psyche and body as a difference which can be correlated with hypothetical differences in the organic structures of men and the other animals, in regard to which information is not yet at hand. If this information is offered in good faith, if the correlation does not turn out to mean the denial of one of the correlates, as it does with the idealists and materialists, and if the “perhaps” and the “hypothetical” are not lost while turning the page, as they all too frequently are, and are thus not intended ultimately to serve as a basis for the denial of the actual difference, there can be no objection to the inquiry or to its results.

Nothing that has been said here can possibly give comfort to contemporary American naturalists, who are intent on denying, through semiotic analysis behavioristically oriented, the specific difference in kind between psyche and organism and hence would deny also the difference between spirit and the animal psyche. For what is at issue is not the means employed by spirit or by psyche for the expression of its activity—which is all that the behavioristic semiotician can legitimately study within the purview of his discipline and the limitations of his method; no one would deny, it seems to me, that the means in both cases are clearly physical. Even idealists—Bosanquet, for instance—readily grant this. But, if the means are physical, they are open

to positive science for investigation. What is at issue is whether the positive scientist *exhausts* the problem while staying within the confines of his methods and maintaining his orientation. By "exhausting" it is meant that he answers all the questions we may legitimately ask. I would argue that he does not exhaust it and that, if he supposes that he does, he makes two mistakes: the first is that of confusing the power or aptitude which constitutes spirit (whose discernible marks, as was said, are freedom, objectivity, and self-consciousness) with the means that it employs to manifest itself (which consist of symbolic structures); and the other is that of reducing the meanings and values of these structures to the physical means through which the meanings and values are expressed. These differences are such that for his purposes the behavioristic psychologist and the semiotician can legitimately disregard and ignore them; however, these men are seldom content to disregard them. On the basis of a doubtful metaphysics, according to which what does not interest them does not exist, they deny them, if not always explicitly, at least always in an effective, tacit manner. Stating the same thing in other words, we can say that the objectives of "behavioristics" legitimately enable the behavioristic semiotician to dispense with the notion of mind and therefore of spirit. Lest the reader be puzzled by the term, I should inform him that "behavioristics" is a science recently invented by Neurath, which, with many other useful inventions of recent times, is the subject of great a priori speculation as to its method and of very little empirical research. Therefore, for the purposes of the "behavioristician," as I imagine we must call him, a man is only an animal whose behavior includes

the use of signs. Besides the interest in semiotics, there are, however, many other interests, and these rest on the same plane of legitimacy as that which leads to the development of semiotics. The semiotician argues that he alone possesses "scientific knowledge" and that the "mentalists"—as he calls those who posit "mind" seriously as a term of discourse—do not. As he defines "scientific knowledge," it need not be argued that he possesses it and that the mentalist does not. But, of course, it should be remembered that there is a number of problems which the semiotician cannot solve with his methods while keeping faithful to his objectives. What he calls "scientific knowledge" is not the only kind of knowledge, since other quests besides the scientific can be carried on by intelligent men and these quests have generic traits in common with what he calls "scientific knowledge." These other quests are as important as, if not more so than, are the inquiries of the scientist to a broad human economy. It is not impertinent to add, however, that, if what Charles Morris has to offer about art is a fair sample of the light that the behavioristic semiotician claims he throws on the activities of the humanist, we have been given enough evidence to judge the results of the new science as trivial.⁶

But does not the anguish which is the heavy burden of spirit and which Kierkegaard and his disciples have forced on our attention give spirit a disvalue, it may be asked, or at least force us to discount heavily the inherent value that it has? Because its freedom is not complete, since spirit is finite and hence not omnipotent, and because it apprehends infinity—and for other reasons which one does not quite clearly know—spirit, it is true,

is always heavily burdened with anguish. Let us remember Kierkegaard.⁷ There is no man who is not somehow burdened with a sense of despair. Thoreau glimpsed the fact, which was also known by Paul and perhaps by the Stoics and by the Orphics and by Plato. There is no man at the bottom of whose consciousness there is not to be found a certain disquietude, a perturbation, a disharmony, a fear of the unknown or of something he does not dare face or of himself. This is a disease that, on occasion, fear reveals to him. Kierkegaard believes that only the true Christian is free of this disease. And he is probably right, since the only true Christian who ever lived is now found in heaven, sitting at the right hand of His Father. But whether more than one Christian has ever lived or not, because spirit is so burdened, as Santayana tells us, "it longs first for happiness and at last for salvation."⁸ It maintains its search for happiness as long as it can, against all odds and in the face of the most difficult obstacles. But the search (and this is what worldlings are too myopic to see and too insensitive to care about when it is pointed out to them) merely increases the unhappiness of the world and, in the end, the weight of the burden which the spirit must carry. One reason for this is that the pursuit of happiness is the pursuit of a mirage, a chase after a travesty of what spirit really wants—that completion in the Infinite which alone can slake its thirst. This we could have learned from Augustine if we had not spoiled our taste for wisdom: *Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it finds rest in Thee*. Another reason is that the pursuit of happiness, as the worldling conceives of it, is a flight from authenticity; but this is not a topic which we

should stop to elucidate here, since the existentialists have written fully on it and with a penetration I could not match. So long, therefore, as men keep up the futile effort to abolish the anguish of spirit, they will end up by merely increasing it. This is why a life merely moral; a life not leavened by the ethical insight, not touched by love, a life indifferent to the primacy of personality, is a life essentially brutal and unjust and, at the core, a lie, since it prefers the lesser to the greater good. The true destiny of man is not reached by the path of happiness but by the path of salvation, and it includes (although it is not fully defined by it) the ethical life. But what, someone may ask, is salvation? At the moral level salvation is surcease from the anguish that the burden of our guilt creates in us, which is too heavy for anyone to carry. The burden cannot be thrown off, but it can be lightened by love.

The question, however, is now only the more insistent: Does not the anguish which is the heavy burden of spirit detract from the primacy of its worth, or at least force us to discount its inherent value heavily? This question reveals inadequate knowledge of what anguish is and of what role it plays in the activity of the spirit. The anguish points to the road of liberation, and the tension of which it consists is an earnest of what the fully actualized goodness of the liberated spirit can be. Anguish is the burden of spirit, and it cannot be dropped; we must pull it after us like a riveted iron ball. But, although anguish is the eternal companion of finite spirit, it never succeeds, except in moments of overwhelming catastrophe, in destroying altogether the joy that is the essence of spirit. The joy of finite spirit, however, is never pure joy.

How can it be when it must forever contend for supremacy with the anguish which is our lot? But to assert that life is only anguish is as erroneous as to affirm that it is only joy. The error, I believe, of the existentialists who are pessimists, is that they have not done justice—as the main tradition of European philosophy has—to the fact that *existence is valuable*, is never utterly devoid of value, and that the perfect actualized mode of self-realization of spirit—as we can see by extrapolating from our own imperfections—is joy. They have not read experience correctly, since they have overlooked a factor of it which is no less important than the anguish of which they make so much. The burden of anguish cannot be dropped; but the very tension which constitutes the anguish, the oscillation between the extremes of nothingness and being in which its movement consists, is a search for the goodness of existence that a finite creature never fully possesses. This is true for Kierkegaard, who, as a Christian, believed in the possibility of salvation. And if it is not true of German and French atheistic existentialism, the reason is obvious: that philosophy has lost God. Sartre said in a speech in Canada on his first trip to America after the war, unless my memory deceives me, that the fact that God does not exist does not amuse the existentialist. We can complete the statement for him and add that it is the cause of his despair. If there were no greater goodness than that which I now possess, if the disvalue of my finitude did not point to the full value which could complete it, I would be forced to accept the conclusions drawn by these men. But the distance between actuality and the ideal which anguish reveals marks the curve of the dialectic of existence from the finite to the in-

finite, from that which we are to that which we could be, from incompleteness to fulness, from the creature to its cause, from partial to total value. The sputtering, feeble joy which actuality contains reveals the full, steady amplitude of the joy with which that complete actuality, could we but reach it, would flood spirit. Anguish does not indicate total disvalue; that would be utter nothingness, the unthinkable void. Nor does it indicate that we possess all the amplitude of joy that we could possess. It indicates that to a more complete reality, a less finite finitude, belongs a greater joy, and to the infinite the greatest joy. Anguish is our burden, since we are placed between nonbeing and Real Being.

We need not doubt, then, that the possession of spirit marks a difference in kind between man and the other animals. But is it so obvious that spirit is free? In the chapter on "Indeterminacy and Indeterminism" in his *Foundations of Ethics*, W. D. Ross concluded his discussion with the following remarks: "A philosophical genius may some day arise who will succeed in reconciling our natural thought about freedom and responsibility with the acceptance of the law of causality; but I must admit that no existing discussion seems to be very successful in doing so."⁹ Whether Ross's problem can be solved or not, one thing would seem obvious—that the solution cannot be arrived at by the mere asseveration of a point of view which is all that we have done so far. But what, first, is meant by the freedom which has been claimed for the spirit? For Scheler the freedom of spirit means its autonomy, which is to say, its independence from organic factors, manifest in the capacity we

have of surveying our organic impulses and, in the light of our apprehension of ideal values, of deciding whether we will yield to them or not or which among them we will satisfy. The determinist will say that this is *subjective* freedom but that, *objectively*, the choices are determined by factors unknown to the chooser but operative nevertheless in the selection of alternatives. What evidence is offered for this claim? Since the factors are admittedly unknown, the evidence is not empirical but a deductive inference drawn from the so-called "law of causality," which holds that all events whatsoever must have a cause. However, when we ask how the believer in this so-called "universal law" came by it, we see that, as regards the freedom of the spirit, he begs the issue until he shows one of two things: either that spirit, although a phenomenon different in kind from organic phenomena, is determined in the same way that organic phenomena are or that spirit is not a different kind of phenomenon, as it has here been claimed to be. In other words, the law of causality cannot be applied deductively to spirit until it is inductively verified for it. For those who claim the freedom of spirit need not deny the validity of causality in the physical realm; they need only hold that it does not apply to phenomena of a different kind, namely, the spiritual.

Of course, the freedom of the spirit in no way abrogates the bondage to which man—who is more than spirit, who is also flesh—is subject. Man is a creature of habit, of impulse, of passion, driven here and there by forces of nature which are beyond his control and, as we shall see, ineluctably determined at both terminal points of his trajectory. His freedom is limited, episodic, far from omnip-

otent. But, in so far as he is spirit, he is free. And the law of causality cannot be said to apply to him until it is shown in detail that his spiritual activities are controlled either at the physical or at the psychical level or both by specific determinants verified in terms of predictions.

So long as the creative activity of the spirit remains the mystery that it is, we have a right to reject the distinction between subjective and objective determinism with which Schopenhauer and determinists since his day have tried to fasten their dogma on philosophy. I am free because the "I" which claims the freedom is the spirit in me, a thing which I have reason to believe is distinct from the organism that sustains it, a body on which my spirit may, for all I know, depend for its existence but which does not seem to control me entirely. I am free because I can use the organism for my spiritual purposes, which are ideal and which transcend my body's impulses and needs and not infrequently frustrate them, and I am free when I decide that I will not allow my body to use me for *its* purposes. There is no denying that the organism imposes conditions on my spirit; charges it, so to speak, for its room and board. And to that extent my spirit is in bondage. I have to take care of my body, my health; I have to sleep, to play, or the body will not let me do my work and may dislodge me altogether before my work is done. The body distracts me, too, with importunate demands and encases me in a hard shell of habits; so that I am never utterly free, nor is the freedom I possess a gift. To maintain it is not easy, and I am never utterly free, nor could I ever be, since I am not God. The freedom I possess is always qualified and incomplete. But, if spirit wants to assert its freedom,

it can always and in all circumstances do so, since it can at any time decide to break the moorings that attach it to its body. If the body becomes arrogantly importune and bondage to it unendurable, spirit can decide on flight. I think Socrates and the Christians are probably right, as opposed to Epicurus, when they tell us that we do not have a right to take our own lives. But death is seldom difficult, and, if spirit decides on flight, there is nothing the beggarly body can do, for all its cunning and sullen, insufferable tricks but resign itself to turn back to the condition of mere thinghood, to become a carcass. If this is not freedom, what is it?

Heidegger argues that man's only freedom consists in his capacity to see the world in its real meaning and that therefore all that freedom can do is engender detachment, submission, renunciation.¹⁰ Nor are men capable of rising above their fate. The reason is that man's life is determined by two ineluctable facts over which he has no control: he is thrust into life without his consent and snatched from it without his leave. These are undeniable, although Heidegger's conviction that beyond death lies nothing is not quite so certain as he seems to believe. But between the poles of birth and death there is an area over which we have some mastery, since between them we can exercise in spontaneity the creativity of our spirit, can play with beauty, create truth, and mold even our own character. If the bondage gets too heavy, we can will nothingness—if that is all there is beyond life. We are not God, which is perhaps what a demoniac spirit like Heidegger would want to be before he would be content with his freedom. Since we are only finite creatures, our freedom is qualified and partial, but it does seem to consist of more than a Spino-

zistic apprehension of the order of determined things; for one of the things it seems clearly to apprehend is that the order of things is not fully and through-and-through structured.

Once the primacy of the person has been established, it is not difficult to see why the formula of the ethical can be expressed practically in the Golden Rule and, from another point of view, in Kant's "kingdom of ends." But it is not superfluous to point out that an ethical life is a practical—not a theoretical—task, something to be lived whether one philosophy or another does justice to the factors which constitute it. This is said to introduce a remark which will, no doubt, seem obvious to the reader but without which I could not consider my exposition complete. The ethical life is a matter of existential attitudes involving the feelings and impulses with which men regard themselves, their fellows, their ambitions, their children, and their goods and which define the turn they would like to see things actually take. It is not possible without Christian love and charity and respect for the other man. But in calling it "Christian" love, we should remember that this love is often manifested by men who never heard of Christianity and that it is only rarely manifested by those who call themselves "Christians." Christian love is something which no theoretical activity—the reading of this book or of any other on ethical philosophy, however superior to this one—can create in a man. Intellectual activity is effective in practice in a complex and roundabout, indirect way; but it cannot be a substitute—as Aristotle saw—for the growth and development which the moral man undergoes and the second birth which, I have argued, the

ethical man achieves. The ethical life, in particular, is not a matter of philosophy, however much the student may concern himself with its structure and sources, but of the way in which we treat our fellows at the humble level of humdrum existence and of the concern, the gentle, unyielding vigilance lest our interests and passions make us forget what our function as human beings is. Nor does it seem to correlate in any way whatever with a man's literate culture of belletristic achievements. There is no evidence on which to base the belief that we find it realized more frequently among the learned or the aesthetically sensitive or the worldly respectable than among the lowly or the disinherited.

But if the ethical life consists in the way in which we regard the person and value his intrinsic worth as above all other values, in what sense does it transcend the moral life? Or could we not interpret the phenomenon which defines it as an aspect of moral experience? The answer is that we would not do it justice if we interpreted it in this way, because the moral life involves the manner in which claims can be satisfied by integration into a fortuitously organized system of values, none of which singly, or all together, can claim a priori justification as opposed to any claim that could be made against them. The ethical life involves the recognition of one value which, in regard to the moral system acknowledged by the ethical man, functions with a priori validity and which is therefore, in respect to that moral system, "absolute." However, the ethical does not demand in an a priori way a given system of values of an a priori nature as a moral context within which it functions. This in practice means that one could live an ethical life in Dobu no less

than in the Roman Empire of Diocletian's day or in the Spain of Philip or in the America of the Robber Barons or in the Mexico of Cortez. What a man's dignity is at the ethical level does not depend on the artificialities of the world and what it chooses to consider his dignity in an institutional sense. The dignity of the President of the United States and the respect we owe him are one thing, his inherent dignity as man quite another. When the king enters, a subject uncovers himself, bows, and addresses him as "Majesty" or "Sire." A Spanish grandee you address as "Alteza," and a naval officer as "Sir." You give these men signs of your respect. But these actions have nothing to do with their primacy in an ethical sense. You can, if you are strong enough, dethrone the king; you can tie him to your chariot and drag him along the crowded streets. As a man, you cannot dethrone another man or drag him without dethroning and dragging yourself first. To kill a king may be a *political* necessity which a Lenin can argue about with a Suarez. It can never be an *ethical* necessity, since the only necessity that the ethical man would recognize is that of living according to his primary insight. When two necessities—the political and the ethical—clash, you may be facing a tragic conflict in the sense that whichever way you choose to resolve it involves irreparable loss. But your ethical insight will tell you that the greatest loss of all is that which is involved in repudiating your destiny.

For this reason the ethical man is a hopelessly burdened man, set in the midst of a fierce conflict; he functions within a system of moral values, and, if he gives these up or repudiates them, he gives up the matter which the ethical life informs. His ethical insight has led him to see beyond the

values of his moral system, and he knows deep in his heart that the effort and concern with which men espouse their values are never justified, for in their fierce espousals and with the best intentions, for the sake of their moralities they willingly sacrifice their most precious value, their dignity as men. If the possible pathological developments of the moral man are found in the despotic and the overanxious conscience, as they are, that of the ethical man is an exaggerated asceticism which denies all values except the value of love, since the espousal of any other value than love may imperil love—as it indeed does. But when a man loves men and despises what they love in general and without discrimination, what he loves is an abstraction. Nevertheless, the ethical is otherworldly. The ethical insight detaches us from our moral espousals, from our worldly loyalties, and turns us toward the source of our freedom and the goal of our salvation. But this—which points the way in which the ethical transcends itself and becomes the religious—is a subject for another essay.

NOTES

NOTES

CHAPTER I

THE RESOLUTION OF A MORAL PERPLEXITY. I

1. The term "requiredness" was introduced, as students of theory of value know, by Wolfgang Köhler in *The Place of Value in a World of Facts* (New York: Liveright Pub. Corp., 1938), chap. iii.

2. E.g., John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (New York: Modern Library, 1930), pp. 34, 133, 153, 252.

3. Gordon W. Allport, *Personality* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1937), chap. ii.

4. Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim* (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., 1934), pp. 79-80.

5. Felix Krueger, *La Totalidad psíquica* (Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 1945), *passim*.

6. Max Scheler, *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos* (Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1949), *passim*.

7. Bronislaw Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture and Other Essays* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), p. 171; see also pp. 41, 55-66, 72, 75-84, and chaps. ix, x, xi. See also the article by Dorothy Gregg and Elgin Williams, "The Dismal Science of Functionalism," *American Anthropologist*, L, No. 4 (October-December, 1948), 594-611.

8. Malinowski, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

9. See his remarks in *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*, ed. Yervant H. Krikorian (New York, Columbia University Press, 1944), p. 228.

10. Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), p. 40.

11. Moral philosophy seems singularly silent about the facts which can be bracketed within the term "multiple personality." For Dostoevski "the double" created a serious problem. We can no longer disregard

these data. For a recent and comprehensive treatment of the problem of multiple personality at the psychological level see Gardner Murphy, *Personality* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1947), Part III, chap. xviii, and Part V.

12. Benbow Ritchie, "The Formal Structure of the Aesthetic Object," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, III, Nos. 11-12 (n.d.), 5-14; *Naturalism*, pp. 257 f.; and my criticism, "Two Notes on the New Naturalism," *Sewanee Review*, LVI, No. 3 (summer, 1948), 495-509.

13. *Personality in Nature, Society, and Culture*, ed. Clyde Kluckhohn and Henry A. Murray (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), p. 14.

14. Stephen C. Pepper, *A Digest of Purposive Values* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1947); Albert Hofstadter, "Objective Teleology," *Journal of Philosophy*, XXXVIII, No. 2 (1941), 29-39; see also the companion study, "Subjective Teleology," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, II (September, 1941), 88-97.

15. *Philosophy for the Future: The Quest of Modern Materialism*, ed. Roy Wood Sellars, V. J. McGill, and Marvin Farber (New York: Macmillan Co., 1949), p. vii.

CHAPTER II

THE RESOLUTION OF A MORAL PERPLEXITY. II

1. For an up-to-date summary of work in this field see S. G. Soal, *The Experimental Situation in Psychological Research, Being the Ninth Frederic W. H. Myers Memorial Lecture, 1947* (London: Society for Psychological Research, n.d.), *passim*; see also H. H. Price's review of J. B. Rhine, *The Reach of the Mind*, in *Mind*, LVIII, No. 231 (July, 1949), 390-95.

2. It is desirable to state what position the writer takes toward the power that distinguishes man from the other animals and which I refer to here as "intelligence." Contemporary behavioristic psychology seeks to erase the line that separates human from merely animal intelligence, and the behavioristic semioticians undertake to give a behavioristic account of all the activities of the mind. This book is not the place to consider

these claims. It is enough to observe that, as Mrs. Langer has pointed out (see n. 10 in chap. 1), the power of symbolizing indicates a break in the evolutionary development which naturalists have not yet been able to bridge. Human intelligence is distinguished from mere animal intelligence because the human animal is able to use symbols, while the lower animals are able only to use signs; because the human is capable of objectivity, while the lower animals give no indication of capacity for objectivity; and because the human is creative, while the problem-solving of the merely animal intelligence seems incapable of creative expressiveness. Symbolic power, objectivity, and creativeness have not been shown to be common along the whole range of biological forms in the natural world. "Intelligence," therefore, as I employ the term, is more than what the psychologists study in the animal laboratory under the heading of "learning" or "problem-solving." It includes what below I shall call "spirit."

3. There was, of course, a strong development of natural science in the ancient world, and one could with as much propriety speak of Aristarchus or Archimedes as of Copernicus or Galileo. Those who trace the origins of exact science to the ancient world are quite correct in doing so. I hope that I am not totally ignorant of this fact. Again a man engaged in writing a philosophic essay cannot deny objectivity to his activity without stultifying himself. It is a question of degree. Exact natural science approaches objectivity to a degree that philosophy and common-sense knowledge do not.

CHAPTER III

THE RESOLUTION OF A MORAL PERPLEXITY. III

1. Gardner Murphy, *Personality* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1947), p. 443.

2. Morton Prince, *The Dissociation of a Personality* (2d ed.; New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1913), *passim*.

3. Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 449.

4. John R. Reid, "The Apotheosis of Intelligence," *Journal of Philosophy*, XXXII, No. 14 (July 4, 1935), 375-85.

5. Compare Kenneth E. Kirk, *Conscience and Its Problems* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1948), chap. i.

6. M. O. Percival, *A Reading of Moby-Dick* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950). The quotation from Father Mapple comes from Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), chap. ix, p. 40.

7. Kirk, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

8. Joseph Butler, *The Analogy of Religion* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1856), Sermon II, p. 403.

9. William James, *The Will To Believe* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1927), p. 195. (Italics in text.)

CHAPTER IV

THE GROUND AND THE SOURCE OF MORAL AUTHORITY

1. W. D. Ross, *Foundations of Ethics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), p. 144. Hereafter referred to as "*Foundations*."

2. *The Right and the Good* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), p. 12.

3. *Foundations*, p. 82.

4. *Kant's Prolegomena*, ed. Paul Carus (Chicago: Open Court Pub. Co., 1933), p. 32.

5. It was in 1868 that Riemann's work on the hypotheses that serve as the basis of geometry was published.

6. *Foundations*, p. 172.

7. But this does not mean that I agree with Stevenson's emotivism since he argues that two men, both clear about their respective intentions to be moral, cannot mediate their differences, and I argue that this holds only as between a moral and an *amoral*, not an immoral, man. But are there any genuinely amoral human beings? And, if there are, are they human?

8. Feodor Dostoevski, *Letters from the Underworld* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., n.d.), p. 17.

9. George Santayana, *The Last Puritan* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), p. 99.

CHAPTER V

THE JUSTIFICATION OF A MORAL DECISION

1. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Andaman Islanders* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1948), Intro., esp. pp. 6-9.

2. "Two Notes on the New Naturalism," *Sewanee Review*, LVI, No. 3 (summer, 1948), 501 ff. All too kindly commenting on this article, Professor Brand Blanshard noted the similarity between it and his own argument in *The Nature of Thought* (London: Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1939), chaps. xxi and xxii. It is quite possible that there is more than a coincidental similarity between these two arguments, although when I wrote the *Sewanee* article I did not have consciously in mind the Blanshard book. But I had read it sometime in 1940 or 1941, at a time when I was desperately looking for light to help me out of the dark forest of naturalism in which I suddenly found myself utterly lost. I am glad of the opportunity to acknowledge my deep debt to Professor Blanshard, and I wish I could find the opportunity to acknowledge my debt to the many other writers who helped me in my spiritual and intellectual distress.

3. Richard M. Weaver, *Ideas Have Consequences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), chap. v.

CHAPTER VI

THE DISCOVERY OF THE ETHICAL. I

1. I introduced this terminology in a review published in *Kenyon Review*, IV, No. 3 (autumn, 1942), 419-22, as a result of the study of Kant and Bergson which I undertook when I was trying to free myself from the errors of naturalism. At the time that I was struggling with this problem, a paper of Paul Weiss, "Morality and Ethics," published in the *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 14 (July 2, 1942), helped me both terminologically and materially to see the need for drawing the distinction.

2. Thomas Hill Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics* (4th ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899), Book III, chaps. iii and v.

3. Clarence Irving Lewis, *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation* (LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court Pub. Co., 1946), p. 392.

4. Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), p. 5.

5. Ignazio Silone makes this point, out of a fund of experience that deserves the deepest respect, in his recent account (which came into the hands of the writer after this chapter was written) of his road to Moscow and back (*The God That Failed*, ed. Richard Crissman [New York: Harper & Bros., 1949], pp. 82 ff.).

6. G. W. Allport, J. S. Bruner, and E. M. Jandorf, "Personality under Social Catastrophe," in *Personality in Nature, Society, and Culture*, ed. Clyde Kluckhohn and Henry A. Murray (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), pp. 347-66.

7. Karl Marx, "Moralising Criticism and Critical Morality: A Polemic against Karl Heinzen," in *Selected Essays* (New York: International Publishers, 1926), pp. 134-70.

CHAPTER VII

THE DISCOVERY OF THE ETHICAL. II

1. Note that the needs of human beings are involved in the situation, since the fitness is the fitness of a situation to a human being. But it is not the idiosyncratic needs, the subjective needs, the passing needs, of human beings, or the needs of this person, the individual involved in the situation. It is the needs of any human being in such situations. Or, better, the needs of a person in a situation, but considered not in his and its unique specificity but in his and its universal aspects. This is where naturalists and positivists go wrong. A situation is not right because desired—it is right because desired in a certain way, desired impersonally; and it is desired in such a way because it is what, under the circumstances, ought to be desired. We say, "it shouldn't happen to a dog," and thus express our conviction that there is an order fitting to human beings and an order fitting to living beings that are not

human and that human beings often are the victims of events which fall below the latter order.

2. See chap. II, pp. 221-23.

3. I do not use the expression in the way in which Bruno Bettelheim employed it in his well-known article. I refer to situations that force the person to face the moral crisis (Bruno Bettelheim, "Behavior in Extreme Situations," *politics*, I, No. 7 [August, 1944], 199-209).

CHAPTER VIII

THE DISCOVERY OF THE ETHICAL. III

1. November, 1948.

2. Ernest Nagel, "Logic without Ontology," in *Naturalism*, pp. 210-41.

3. William R. Dennes, "The Categories of Naturalism," in *Naturalism*, p. 290.

4. Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick, or The Whale*, ed. Willard Thorp (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), chap. xxxvi, p. 153.

5. The reader has a right to complain that I do not treat the problem of evil with adequate seriousness, and he is perfectly correct. These remarks do not pretend to solve a problem which has baffled the best minds of Europe since Plato's days. In this essay, in which I have struggled against centrifugal tendencies to keep within the confines of moral philosophy, the discussion of this problem would take us too far afield. Succinctly stated, my opinion is that, while viewed psychologically, there is nothing more real than evil, viewed metaphysically, we must follow Augustine's *De natura boni*. A few scattered and, no doubt, muddled thoughts that have occurred to me on this awful problem are to be found in my article, "The Two Dimensions of Reality in *The Brothers Karamazov*," *Creation and Discovery* (New York, Noonday Press, 1955), pp. 47-70.

CHAPTER IX

THE PRIMACY OF THE PERSON

1. Nicolai Hartmann, "Moral Phenomena," in *Ethics* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1932), I, 316.

2. Clarence Irving Lewis, *An Analysis of Knowl-*

edge and Valuation (LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court Pub. Co., 1946), p. 392.

3. *The Stoics and Epicurean Philosophers*, ed. with an Introduction by Whitney J. Oates (New York: Random House, 1940), p. 229; see also Paul Barth, *Los Estoicos* (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1930), p. 176.

4. Max Scheler, *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos* (Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1949), *passim*.

5. J. R. Jones, review of E. D. Adrian, *The Physical Background of Perception*, in *Mind*, LVII, No. 226 (April, 1948), 244-49.

6. See my criticism of Morris' aesthetics in *Creation and Discovery*, pp. 249-265.

7. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), Book II, p. 32.

8. George Santayana, *The Realm of Spirit* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), p. ix.

9. W. David Ross, *Foundations*, p. 251.

10. A. de Waehlens, *La Filosofía de Martin Heidegger* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1945), p. 270.

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