THE AMBIGUITY OF MORALITY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The guiding impulse of this essay is to examine a concept that has perplexed philosophers for centuries. That concept is morality. Though it is true that philosophy deals with subjects so extremely complicated and, at the same time, of such a general nature that it is certainly not unusual (and more usually it is the rule) for there to be difficulties and discrepancies in any comprehensive position; it seems that the problems uncovered in attempting to make sense of morality are indicative of something more than this perennial difficulty.

It is primarily in the discrepancy between moral theory and moral experience that these problems become most apparent. Moral theories do not seem to be able to clearly and satisfactorily account for moral experience. Some important element of moral experience is invariably slighted.

It will be the aim of this thesis to show that the failure of moral theories is, at least in part, traceable to the peculiarities of morality itself. Morality is an ambiguous concept. It contains two elements -- order and intution -- which are ambiguous in themselves and which also have an ambiguous relationship. The experienced need for order, though essentially moral, can become immoral if it is isolated from intuition. Likewise, the experience of intuition which takes

place outside an established order is subject to chaos and solipsism and hence to error, misapprehension and self-deceit. In separation these two elements tend towards distortion and immorality yet they resist combination. Order and intuition are both important in understanding morality yet they are, in some senses, antithetical.

Hans Castorp, a character in Thomas Mann's novel, The Magic Mountain, might be seen to refer to the two moral elements of order and intuition when he claims: "There are two paths to life: one is the regular one, direct, honest. The other is bad, it leads through death -- that is the 'spirituel' way."[1] The two moral elements of intuition and order can be understood as implying two different moral sensibilities and two different approaches to morality. In one approach, the sensibility of order dominates the sensibility of intuition. In the other approach, the opposite is true. However, both of these approaches contain something of the other. In fact, both of these approaches are attracted to one another. And both of them contain vices and virtues peculiar to themselves.

An understanding of these two paths will be helpful in explaining several troubling things about morality. It will help explain the frustration of trying to be clear about moral experience without being false to it. It will help explain why many theories of morality are unsatisfactory. It will help explain the duality and ambivalence of moral experience. This thesis will be an exploration into morality by way of these two paths.

The path which signifies the way of the moral sensibility most attuned to order will be explored by reference to the works of four men: Immanuel Kant's Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals,

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's The Social Contract, G. E. Moore's Principia Ethica, and Edward Westermarck's Ethical Relativity. These will be used to represent a spectrum of views from the strict absolutism of Kant to the social relativism of Westermarck. They will be found to emphasize either rigid universal or rigid social rules, both of which point towards a general imposition of moral rules regardless of particular individuals and situations. In stressing traits of universality, majority opinion, or custom (as they variously do) moral theories tend to reject the immediate insights and intuitions of the individual in preference to order.

In this context "order" is meant to indicate a regularity of life which results from adherence to a clearly defined directive or set of directives used in decision making. Thus, it is possible to distinguish a similar moral sensibility in seemingly disparate views. It is their common attempt to actually enumerate or otherwise explicitly state rules which will unambiguously guide moral behavior which is the hallmark of the orderly sensibility. What is sought, at all costs, are definitive boundaries between what is moral and what immoral. The burden of morality is placed on "rules" and not on individual moral decisions. Rules define a stark contrast of black and white. Such a view makes for an assurance not possible for those who recognize the presence of grey. In striving for clarity, however, the moral sensibility dominated by a love of order shows itself to be insensitive to the subtleties of moral choices. While striving for unambiguity, it is not itself unambiguously good.

On the other hand, the concept of "intuition" will be used to indicate moral regions which are not marked by the stark contrasts

implied by "order." As opposed to the technical meaning of intuition found in Descartes and others "moral" intuition is not the region of "clear and distinct ideas." Within the context of this thesis "intution" will be used in a manner more closely related to the homely phrase "woman's intuition" than to what Descartes had in mind. The primary reason for distinguishing "moral" intuition from other uses of the term "intuition" is that moral intuition is not marked by indubitability. It is, rather, the sensibiliity of order which insists on indubitablity. The moral sensibility guided by intuition is less able and less willing to make hard and fast distinctions.

Any liberties herein taken with the term "intuition" are meant to reflect the special requirements of morality. "Moral intuition" cannot be understood without accounting for an emotional element as well as an epistemological one. Moral intuition is not merely a "knowing" or a "seeing" it is an emotional response which is a "knowing." Moral intuition is not only a question of intellect, but a question of emotion as well. It is an understanding confirmed by the heart rather than a knowledge which is the result of calculation and rational demonstration. Such understanding need not be irrational, but rationality is not its primary attribute.

Because it represents an emotional attachment, moral intuition cannot always be restrained by the rational and the calculative. It is chiefly supported by an act of will. Unlike a rational demonstration which can be accomplished once and for all; or a law which can be invoked again and again, a moral intuition must be continually reasserted and re-experienced in order to maintain its hold on a man's conscience.

It is due to this blending of feeling, knowing and willing that the intuitive sensibility cannot acknowledge moral claims on the basis of rigid universal or social rules. Morality is not the result of adherence to an abstract code, but an attachment to goodness confirmed by the emotions. Because it cannot guide itself by codes and inviolable rules, this sensibility must feel its way along the path of morality in the dark -- and it is a rare man who can walk in the dark without stumbling. The sensibility of intuition is acknowledged to be dangerous.

The path which signifies the way of the moral sensibility most attuned to intuition will be explored chiefly with the help of Thomas Mann's novel, The Magic Mountain. Reference will also be made to the works of Hermann Hesse, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, and Friedrich Nietzsche -- all of whom represent a view of morality which, though not intuitionist in the strict philosophical sense, displays an emphasis on the individual and his personal insights into morality which is the hallmark of moral intuition. This emphasis on the individual and the emotional usually takes the form of rebellion against the rigidness of social, conventional and absolute morality.

The rebellion against the social, the conventional and the absolute, as reflected in the works of these men, has been well documented. The result of this rebellion has been the creation of a new literary type commonly called the anti-hero. The anti-hero is a study in ambiguity himself. He exudes a strange mixture of immorality and moral indignation which is, to say the least, striking. Consider the tirade of Goethe's Werther:

> Oh, you sensible people! Passion! Drunkenness!
> Madness! You stand there so calm, so unsympathetic,

> you moral people! . . . Shame on you, you sober people! Shame on you, wise men![2]

This statement of rebellion against morality and order is echoed in the works of a number of men. Another anti-hero, Dostoyevsky's Underground Man, begins his musings by proclaiming: "I'm a sick man . . . a mean man. There's nothing attractive about me."[3] But he ends them by saying:

> As for me, all I did was carry to the limit what you haven't dared to push even halfway -- taking your cowardice for reasonableness, thus making yourselves feel better. So I may still turn out to be more alive than you in the end.[4]

Such a statement smacks of a strange "moral" superiority.

This phenomenon of the inversion of morality might be referred to as either the "morality of immorality" or the "immorality of morality." It explicitly rejects the morality of order and heralds the morality of the spontaneous and intuitive individual. Friedrich Nietzsche immediately comes to mind in such a context. His works are full of vehement disapproval of morality; yet it is interesting to note the moral tone with which he urges immorality. It is the safe "reasonableness" and commonality of morality which he abhors. And judging from the quotations above, he is not alone in his disgust and rejection. The anti-hero is symbolic of a moral rebellion against the hypocrisy, oppressiveness and "immorality" of the moral order. His role in the moral world is necessarily ambiguous since what he rejects is commonly accepted as "moral." Walter Strauss moves to the heart of this ambiguity when he speaks of "Alienation, solipsism, and madness: the wandering Rocks and the Scylla and Charybdis of modern literature."[5] The moral sensibility of intuition involves the risk of chaos and solipsism, as contrasted with the risk of ossification and externality

implicit in the sensibility of order.

The modern reaction against morality as exemplified by Nietzsche, Mann, and others, has understandably caused some consternation among moral philosophers. Ralph Barton Perry expresses his concern in his book, Realms of Value:

> Thomas Mann, in his Magic Mountain, had one of his characters, the brilliant and voluble Hans Castorp, propound the paradoxical opinion that morality is to be looked for not 'dans la vertue, ce'est-a-dire, dans la raison, la discipline, les bonnes noeur, l'honnetete', but rather in their opposites -- 'la peche', ens' abandonnant au danger, a ce qui est nuisible, a ce qui nous consume.' A similar paradox is to be found in Nietzsche's view that morality lies 'beyond good and evil.' . . . If such confusions are to be avoided it is necessary to distinguish the qualities of fidelity, discipline, perseverance, and enthusiasm which lend vigor to any cult, from the specific content of the moral cult.[6]

While we can agree with Professor Perry that it is important to pay attention to the "specific content of the moral cult," it may well be that an investigation into "such confusions" might add a dimension to the study of morality which moral philosophers have largely overlooked. Examples of the peculiar moral sensibility recorded in much of modern literature, together with the dominant sensibility of order and clarity found in moral philosophy, gives us an insight into moral experience which helps to explain the illusive and ambiguous nature of morality.

Our task then will be to show how, in general, traditional moral theories have been inadequate to account for moral experience and why this has been the case. In addition, we will attempt to give some idea of what sort of factors would be needed to account for moral experience. Two of these factors, intuition and order, will be used to show the essential ambiguity of morality and to elucidate two distinctive moral

impulses as they interact with each other in moral theory and moral experience. The failure of moral theory to come to grips with morality will be traced to the impossibility of framing a theory which can clearly and adequately balance these factors of intuition and order.

In the next chapter we will explore morality as a general concept while attempting to comprehend and describe moral experience. The experience of morality will be seen to contain two qualities without which it could not be conceived of as moral. The first quality is that of inspiration. The moral experience which urges men to act in particular ways is marked off from other lures to action by its inspirational quality. This quality can be identified to some extent with intuition.

The second quality is that of objectivity. The experience of morality as inspiring indicates more than a close attention to personal desires or social mores. Moral inspiration must be thought of as something which draws a person out of himself and out of unthinking conformity toward something greater and more perfect than himself. Such objectivity is expressed in the desire for a transcendent moral order.

Moral theories, to be true to the moral experience, must find some way of accounting for the subjective experience of inspiration and the objectivity which the experience connotes. Chapter II takes up this theme and attempts to show some of the basic errors of moral theorizing in regard to the experience of morality discussed.

The third and fourth chapters discuss various theoretical approaches to morality as exemplified in selected works of Immanuel Kant, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, G. E. Moore, and Edward Westermarck. In these works we will find attempts to account for the coincidence of the

subjective experience of inspiration and the experience of objectivity present in the moral experience. These works will all be seen to display the sensibility of order. Order in the moral world is expressive of the desire for objectivity and a recognition of the importance of objectivity in morality. However, in seeking order too rigorously, the role of intuition or inspiration will be seen to suffer eclipse.

The fifth chapter will take up the difficulties involved in a total reliance upon intuition and inspiration to produce morality. Here the phenomenon of morality as rebellion against morality will be discussed. As contrasted with the overly cautious and straitened sensibility of order, the sensibility of intuition insists on the highly personal and subjective nature of morality. As in the case of the orderly sensibility, it will be seen that the intuitive sensibility also has need of its counterpart to safeguard the individual from excesses.

In the sixth chapter, we will discuss "order" and "intuition" in a more general way and attempt to evaluate what we have discovered about their roles in morality. In exploring these two moral sensibilities, it will be seen that both depend upon each other and yet resist each other. It is this strange tension which leads to the ambiguity of morality.

ENDNOTES

[1]Thomas Mann, The Magic Mountain, trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Vintage Books, 1952), p. 596.

[2]Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, The Sufferings of Young Werther, trans. Harry Steinhauer (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1970), p. 33.

[3]Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Notes from Underground, trans. Andrew R. MacAndrew (New York: New American Library, 1961), p. 90.

[4]Ibid., p. 203.

[5]Walter Strauss, Descent and Return: The Orphic Theme in Modern Literature (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 48.

[6]Ralph Barton Perry, Realms of Value (New York: Greenwood Press, 1954), pp. 86-87. Castorp's opinion is that morality is to be looked for, not "in virtue, that is to say, in reason, discipline, good manners, honesty" but rather in their opposites -- "in sin, recklessness, what is hurtful, what destroys us."

CHAPTER II

MORALITY AS A GENERAL CONCEPT

It seems obvious from the outset that the function of morality is to establish some kind of criterion for discriminating between different possible actions. Thus, at its broadest, morality represents a general outlook on life which shapes the individual lives of men through its power to direct their choices. It is a peculiar way of "ordering" life. If you want to know what a man values, you must notice not only what he says he values, but also the choices he consistently makes. However, it is always possible to value things, or to make choices based on grounds which are not "moral." Not every way of ordering a life is a "moral" way.

It seems that most people have certain explicit or implicit criteria in mind when they ascribe the term "moral" to their own or to another person's actions such that it is appropriate to call some actions "moral" (i.e., actions which spring from considerations which might properly be called "moral" as opposed to "amoral") and inappropriate to so name other actions. William K. Frankena suggests six factors which seem to him to mark off the special conditions associated with morality. Morality must include:

> (1) Certain "forms of judgment" in which "particular" objects are said to have or not to have a certain moral quality, obligation, or responsibility; (2) the implication that it is appropriate and possible to give "reasons" for these judgments; (3) some "rules," "principles,"

> "ideals," and "virtues" that can be expressed in more "general judgments" and that form the background against which particular judgments are made and reasons given for them; (4) certain characteristic natural or acquired "ways of feeling" that accompany these judgments, rules, and ideals, and help to move us to act in accordance with them; (5) certain "sanctions" or additional sources of motivation that are also expressed in verbal judgments, namely holding responsible, praising, and blaming; (6) a "point of view" that is taken in all this judging, reasoning, and feeling, that is somehow different from those taken in prudence, art, and the like.[1]

If Frankena is right, any morality must at least lay claim to the ability to make moral judgments or pronouncements based upon reasons that derive from the application of ultimate principles, which are accompanied by certain feelings or emotions of "rightness," and which are encouraged by the coincidence of social sanctions expressed in the form of praise and blame; all of which aim at "something" that is not adequately expressed as a prudential, an aesthetic, or a logical concern.

A man intent on ordering his life in a moral fashion could then be expected to discriminate between different possible actions with some or all of these criteria in mind: (1) Is this action the result of the application of ultimate moral principles? (2) Does this action seem "good," "proper" or "correct" to me? (3) Does my society approve of this action? and (4) Is this action truely based on moral considerations or is it more truely the result of prudential, aesthetic or logical concerns?

Morality and the Individual

In discussing morality and its relationship to the individual whose choices it presumably directs, three of these criteria seem particularly relevant. They are the second, fourth, and sixth factors

dealing with the kinds of reasons and feelings which accompany moral actions, and the way these reasons and feelings differ from other, non-moral, reasons and feelings. For an individual to direct his life on the basis of a "moral" point of view, it is indispensable that he think of himself as having reasons for choosing as he does. It is also indispensable that he be able to differentiate these reasons from other kinds of "non-moral" reasons that might be given for choices. This differentiation is based upon the presupposition implicit in moral experience that moral reasons cannot be reduced to prudential, aesthetic, or any other non-moral reasons. This is in large part due to the fact that moral reasons are accompanied by certain "ways of feeling" which can be distinguished from feelings which might accompany non-moral reasons. In short, if an individual thinks of his life as containing a "moral" element, it is because morality is, for him, a distinctive activity for which distinctive reasons may be given, which are themselves accompanied by distinctive feelings.

What kinds of reasons and what kinds of feelings are these distinctively "moral" reasons and feelings? If they cannot be successfully differentiated from other kinds of reasons and feelings then there may be good reason to claim that morality itself is a confused notion which can and should be subsumed under the heading of other human interests -- such as prudence, aesthetics, hedonics, etc.

To a large extent, many modern theories of morality have done something very like disposing of morality as a distinctive activity. Curiously enough, this tendency in modern moral theory to "dispose" of morality has been accompanied by what has often been referred to as a "moral crisis." "Morality" seems to a large degree to have lost its

significance as a shaper of human lives. Perhaps this coincidence is more than coincidental. It is, in part, the aim of this chapter to show that the modern moral crises is not merely coincidental with this tendency in modern ethical theory.

Traditionally, there have been two types of explanations offered to account for the ground and origin of moral experience. The division has been between those who ground morality in a transcendent source, and those who insist that morality is a strictly human concern. The former believe moral laws are binding because they stem from a transcendent reality. Actions are right insofar as they are consistent with this transcendent reality, and wrong insofar as they are inconsistent with it.

The latter insist that morality has nothing to do with transcendent realities; it has rather to do with the affairs of men. In other words, morality is relative to the desires, needs, and wishes of men and cannot be determined without reference to these. Since morality is relevant to the satisfaction of such desires and needs, it can be expected to change when and as human desires and needs change. It can also be expected to change according to the situations in which men find themselves. Different situations may call for different responses in order to secure the objects of men's desires and needs.

It is this latter view which has become more and more accepted in the modern world. The prevalence of this view is understandable for several reasons. It is understandable in the face of difficulties encountered in explaining how it is possible to discover transcendent moral laws. It is understandable seen as a reaction to the existence of contradictory moral laws each claiming to be "true." It is under-

standable in the face of the need for differing applications of moral rules which seem appropriately keyed to differing circumstances. And, finally, it is understandable within the modern framework of change and adaptability. Moral "relativity" fits the secular, scientific, and social mood of the age.[2]

However, it is important to distinguish two kinds of relativity. One type of relativity claims an objective status. Morality, according to this type, is relative, but it is relative to the desires and needs of men; and these desires and needs are objectively grounded in man's nature. Not every possible desire or need could be the basis of morality. Certain desires and needs are "truly" human and "truly" satisfying to human nature as a whole, whereas others are not. Further, it is possible for individuals to be mistaken about the things which are really conducive to their own well-being.

The second type of realtivity is one which Ralph Barton Perry describes as a "viciously relativistic view."[3] This view claims that all judgments of comparative value are relative to the preference of the one judging them. It is of this type of relativity that W. T. Stace claims:

> If taken seriously and pressed to its logical conclusion, ethical relativity can only end in destroying the conception of morality altogether, in undermining its practical efficacy, in rendering meaningless many almost universally accepted truths about human affairs, in robbing human beings of any incentive to strive for a better world, in taking the life-blood out of every ideal and every aspiration which has ever ennobled the life of man. In short, the charge against it is that it revolts and outrages man's moral <u>feelings</u>.[4]

If Stace is correct, it may mean that it is impossible for anyone to be a moral relativist in this "vicious" sense. Such a theory simply

is not "moral." It is also inherently inconsistent. If morality were anything anyone claimed it to be, the effect would be to make the concept of morality meaningless. If nobody could ever be "wrong" then nobody could ever meaningfully be said to be "right" either. Morality depends upon the coherence of its opposite. If there is nothing which is immoral then there is nothing which is moral.

Most "vicious" relativists attempt to avoid this latter objection by considering morality in its social aspect and basing the "rightness" or "wrongness" of individual positions on their agreement or disagreement with majority opinion or social custom. This does give morality a kind of objectivity -- but Stace's objection goes beyond the problem of objectivity. He claims that this type of relativism is unacceptable because it cannot supply men with the incentive needed to motivate them. As a moral theory, it is not sufficiently inspiring to direct men's lives effectively, and is therefore lacking Josiah Royce's criterion that men seek not only the truth, but the "inspiring truth."[5]

While agreeing with Stace's condemnation of "vicious" relativism as a moral theory, it is still possible to claim that the other variety of relativism (of which Stace himself is a proponent) fails in similar ways to satisfy men's "moral feelings." It is possible that "vicious" relativism and the objective version of relativism have more in common than is immediately evident. Some of these common traits will be discussed in the fourth chapter, but the matter of inspirational and motivational power bears directly on the individual and his relationship to morality, and will help to clarify the possibility of understanding morality as a distinctive activity.

It is important always to keep in mind that when we speak of

morality we are speaking of how a man can or will order his life. We are speaking of the commitments which will inform his actions. This is, for most men, a question of great importance. Men like to feel that their commitments have "moral" significance -- that peculiar, as yet undefined significance of which all we know is that it must differ from other kinds of significance.

When an individual asks, "Why should I be moral?" -- the answers given by objective relativists come back, "Because it is the best policy;" "Because you can be happy in no other way;" "Because none of us can survive if most of us don't conform to general rules;" "Because it is in all of our best interests to do so;" and so on in a similar vein.

This type of relativism does not just explain morality, it explains it away. Morality is found to be ultimately reducable to other pursuits. There is no such distinctive pursuit as "the pursuit of morality." There is, for instance, nothing peculiarly "moral" about a man seeking to fulfill his own best interests. Nor are the equations of morality with the perfectly natural desire to survive, or the desire to maintain a minimum of security, or the desire to obtain happiness and satisfaction peculiarly "moral." In fact, all such equations might be seen as good reasons to deny to morality a peculiar "point of view" different from those taken in "prudence, art, and the like."[6] Granted, all these goals are acceptable, even commendable -- but they are not themselves "moral" goals.

When morality becomes, by definition, majority opinion or customary behavior, as it must in the case of "vicious" relativity; or when it becomes so prosaic as to be equated simply and completely with

practicality, survival, or self-interest, as it does in the case of objective relativity, it no longer has the ability to allure or inspire. It no longer inspires, because it is an activity indistinguishable from other mundane activities.

Morality, dissected in either relativist fashion says "no" to the existence of personal virtues. An insistence on honesty becomes a habit of good policy. A desire to abstain from extra-marital affairs becomes a socially inculcated hang-up. A compulsive need to keep promises reflects a convenient social convention. A charitable act towards another is translated as a method of obtaining self-esteem. Such analyses make of moral behavior a cautious, conforming, self-regarding, pragmatic monster.

In brief, the modern answers to "Why should I be moral?" have been framed in terms of individual interests and human psychology rather than in terms of obedience to transcendent values. Even the impulse of altruism is ultimately explained as a means to personal happiness and satisfaction in order to justify it. One ought to be altruistic because men are made in such a way as to be happy only on condition of being altruistic. Morality can be founded on the "facts" of human existence and on the psychological analysis of the concept of human happiness.[7]

Oddly enough, as was mentioned earlier, such answers have not seemed to make people more eager than ever to be moral, even though they hold out such strong personal incentive. In some cases they have seemed to drive people in the opposite direction.[8] Many consider the question of "Why should I be moral?" to stand in more urgent need of an answer than ever before. However, now the question might be rephrased, "Why

ought I submit myself to the tyranny of sociological and psychological impulses?" Joseph V. Dolan investigates such an attitude:

> Here a person who has formed the judgment that some particular action was "right to do" and experienced an obligation to perform it is now reflecting on the genesis and implications of that experience and wondering whether there are objectively verifiable grounds which warrant it -- making the obligation, so to speak, de jure -- or whether the necessity experienced as moral has a merely psychological origin, say as the product of a superego or as a survival in the collective unconscious. If that be the case, the "ought," however deeply imbedded in nature, is a tyrant without any genuine authority, and we may then deal with it as with any neurosis or mere de facto condition of nature and can start the elaboration of a liberating morale sans peche". Ought we -- I mean really and truly ought we -- to do what is "good," i.e., what perhaps because of a collective neurosis, we are compelled to judge as good?[9]

Doestoevski's Underground Man puts the matter in a similar light:

> Who was it that first said that man does nasty things only because he doesn't know where his real interests lie, that if he were enlightened about his true interest, he would immediately stop acting like a pig and become kind and noble? Being enlightened, the argument goes on, and seeing where his real advantage lay, he would realize that it was in acting virtuously. And, since it is well established that a man will not act deliberately against his own interests, it follows that he would have no choice but to become good. Oh, the innocence of it! Since when, in these past thousands of years, has man acted exclusively out of self-interest? What about the millions of facts that show that men, deliberately and in full knowledge of what their real interests were, spurned them and rushed in a different direction? They did so at their own risk without anyone advising them, refusing to follow the safe, well-trodden path and searching for another one, an unreasonable one, stubbornly working their way along it in the darkness.[10]

That which inspires men to shape their lives according to a moral point of view is not necessarily their own happiness and security. Nor is it possible to be inspired by one's own (or one's society's) inexplicable, subjective preferences. One can give into such preferences, but that is a question of being shaped rather than of shaping. The peculiar and distinctively "moral" reason for choices is

the personal apprehension of a real and inherent "rightness" or "wrongness" connected with an attitude or a course of action. And the distinctive moral feeling is the feeling of "oughtness" surrounding such apprehensions. The moral experience is the personal experience of a "rightness" and "oughtness" which transcends the individual.

In denying transcendence both types of relativity leave the door open to accusations of tyranny. In the case of "vicious" relativism it is the tyranny of custom, or of the majority. In the case of objective relativism, it is the tyranny of nature. If man's behavior can only be justified by reference to what he cannot help but want -- what it is "natural" for him to want -- then he is a slave to those natural impulses, just as in the case of "vicious" relativism he is a slave to majority rule or to custom. Instinct is a brute fact which cannot be got around. No wonder Doestoyevsky's Underground Man feels a sense of revulsion and rebellion when confronted with the "stone wall" of inescapable fact.[11]

Thus from the point of view of either type of relativism, men are mere pawns. They are subject either to their own inescapable desires, or to the no less inescapable desires of the majority. These desires can provide no claim to "worthiness" as their credentials. They "are," and that is all that can be said of them. Man is what he is, and we can only work with those "facts" in elaborating a moral theory.

But "facts" alone are not adequate to produce morality. It is, of course, practical to consider "facts" in elaborating theories, but it is just this "practical" approach to morality that some men find repugnant -- witness the response of the Underground Man. Men have

been known to reject practicality, happiness and well-being in search of something else. But what else is there? At this point it is impossible to say, but whatever it is, it cannot be considered "immanent" in the sense outlined by the relativists. Morality can not be dependent on contingent, brute, inexplicable and inescapable facts of existence. It must instead depend upon an unrealized, perhaps unrealizable, ideal. But, strangely enough, this ideal cannot be "imaginary" as opposed to "factual." If it is, the ideal falls back into inexplicable preference. Why does a man have certain ideals and not others? If his only answer is "Because" -- then such ideals are no less brute facts of his psychological and sociological makeup than are the "facts" of human happiness. Moral ideals must occupy a strange space somewhere between the brute facts of existence and the completely imaginary world of what is not. They can be neither as solid as a concrete bodily urge, nor as ephemeral as a purely imaginary whim. Moral ideals must "transcend" the world of brute facts; they must transcend it in two ways. They must transcend the natural world of psychological, physiological and sociological "facts;" and they must transcend these things in the direction of reality. Transcendent ideals must be thought to possess a type of reality, and hence a peculiar type of "appropriateness."

It seems then that part of the moral attitude and feeling is the attitude and feeling of transcendence. If the element of transcendence is removed, then morality becomes obedience to that which cannot be got around. The element of "uniqueness," of nobility and inspiration so necessary in marking off morality from other concerns is whisked away by purely immanent explanations of morality. When morality ceases to

be "experienced" as a special obligation, there seems little sense in retaining an empty word.

According to the failure of the non-transcendent, relative approach to provide for the special experience of morality, it would seem that the alternative approach to morality, the transcendent approach, must inevitably lead to the special reasons and the special feelings of the moral experience. The answer is "yes" and "no."

When transcendence comes in the form of rules which seem just as inexplicable and arbitrary as the preferences of individuals and majorities, then to refer choices back to a transcendent ground is just to shift the tyranny to a higher level, not to end it. Answering the question "Why should I be moral?" by reference to a transcendent realm of rules has the savour of "stone wall" as surely as does answering it by reference to personal and communal preferences. Such a realm is just another brute fact -- a peculiar kind of fact, no doubt, but a "fact" nevertheless. Once these transcendent rules are disclosed, they are fixed and no amount of fist pounding on the stone wall will serve to move them one inch. No "feelings" will change the "facts." Men can only acquiesce to the facts in dumb obedience -- or else -- mount a foolish and definitionally "immoral" opposition.

Here is the twist. What is it such opposition might seek if not some "higher" good? Why mount an opposition at all if not for the personal experience of "oughtness?" Joseph Dolan remarks: "We can no more withhold the judgment that good must be done and evil avoided than we can resist the principle of contradiction."[12] Thus, even a revolt against morality may be undertaken in the name of morality -- and both morality and the revolt from it are based upon a personal intuition of appropriateness or "oughtness."

Morality loses its inspirational power to shape lives if it is conceived of as something extrinsic to the individual, as something which weighs on him from above or from without. An action done under duress, no matter how subtle the duress, no matter whether the source of the duress is transcendent or social, is an action done from other than a moral motive. Morality must be intrinsic to the individual. It must have something to do with his own "feelings." Morality cannot be reduced to a set of intractable rules which issue impartial commands to a generalized "man" independent of the particularity of individual men and their feelings. If a man does not participate in the moral event, it is not <u>for him</u> a moral event at all. It might well be considered an experience of force and imposition rather than an experience of morality. Morality is the result of the meeting of individual men with an obligation they take to be transcendent of them.

This may seem at first glance to be a relapse into the "viciously" relativistic stance; but it is not. Morality is not <u>just</u> the experienced obligation of the individual. "Right" is not defined as anything anyone experiences as obligatory. Morality has none but a psychological or emotional meaning if such experiences of obligation are to be considered infallible. In order for the concept of morality to have substance, it must be possible to be wrong about what one feels to be moral. There must be something objective about morality.

Here it might be helpful to refer to Gabriel Marcel's notion of the impossibility of positing an opposition between the immanent and the transcendent.[13] Unless these two are considered capable of meeting, morality is a chimera. The important word to note in the description of morality given above is the word "meeting." In the moral experience

the elements of immanent "feeling" and transcendent reality are equally necessary. These two elements must meet and recognize each other if morality is to emerge. If there are such things as transcendent good and evil, but men are incapable of discovering the difference between the two, morality is impossible. If men can discover the difference between good and evil, but remain indifferent to it, morality is irrelevant. If there are no such things as transcendent good and evil, but yet men have experiences which suggest them, morality is illusory.

Without positing transcendence, morality is reducible to practicality and preference. Without taking individual feelings into account, morality is extrinsic and imposed from without. As the practical or the preferred, morality has no need of encouragement -- only enlightenment, and the important notion of obligation drops out. As a merely suppressive imposition, morality can be justifiably ignored whenever it is feasible and profitable to do so, and the notion of personal obligation is again misplaced.

If transcendence is to count as a "moral" feature it must come in the form of personal intuition. This is so whether the intuition is that it is appropriate to obey rules in general, or whether the intuition is that one "ought" never to obey rules which seem arbitrary or inappropriate. In short, morality must come in the form of a feeling of personal obligatoriness. It is not so important that a generalized theory be affirmed as it is that a particular and personal obligation be experienced.

On the other hand, if personal intuition is to count as a "moral" feature it must reveal itself as an insight into transcendent truth. If it does not, its importance is purely psychological.

The peculiar and distinctive activity which is experienced as moral activity is activity undertaken in response to the personal apprehension of a transcendent appropriateness. The distinctive reasons given for such activity presuppose the objective status of the transcendent realm which is intuited in the moral experience. Here objectivity is taken to mean existence outside the mind of the individual or individuals who experience the moral imperative. If morality is not taken to be such, it can only be taken to be impossible, irrelevant, or illusory.

The Two Paths

So far, we have discovered this important thing about morality: morality is the act of ordering a life in response to the personal apprehension of truths which are (or appear to be) both appropriate and transcendent. But, although the experience of morality points towards both personalism and transcendence, the conjunction of these two qualities may be experienced in more than one way -- just as a life may be ordered in more than one way. As was implied earlier, a personal intuition of "oughtness" may come in the form of rule-abiding behavior. It is possible to find it both transcendently appropriate and personally obligatory to obey rules and laws even when such laws and rules seem opaque to the individual. On the other hand, it is possible to find it both appropriate, and personally obligatory to refuse to obey such opaque rules, and to insist on being guided by personal understanding and feelings. The former is the mediated path of "order;" the latter is the immediate path of intuition. Hans Castorp calls the first path "the regular one, direct, honest" and the second one, the one which is

"bad," the one which "leads through death."[14] Safety is to be found in the externality of laws, and in their imposed order. Danger is to be found in the internality of emotions, and in individual discretion.

In the next two chapters we will examine some attempts on the part of moral philosophers to account for the moral elements of personally experienced obligation and the objectivity such experiences seem to imply. It will be seen that moral theory leans heavily in the direction of "order" -- whether imposed by transcendent or immanent realities -- without being quite able to reject the lure of "feeling."

ENDNOTES

[1]William K. Frankena, Ethics, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973), p. 9.

[2]John Herman Randall, Jr. documents such a social mood in his work, The Making of the Modern Mind: "Many social factors conspired to popularize the idea of development and its corollaries. The fundamental social fact of the Industrial Revolution with its continuously accelerated change in the technique of applied science, and the revolution in the life of man brought about by the growth of cities and the utilization of new inventions, has brought home to every man the realization that our whole civilization is in process of thorough-going reorganization. Ways of life that seemed firmly established a single generation ago now have by the very pressure of circumstances been made almost obsolete, and few are so blind as to escape the significance of this fact of social change for every human institution. Transformations of political, economic, religious, and moral life, are now commonplaces; every idea and custom has to be dated if it is to be understood properly." Randall, The Making of the Modern Mind, rev. ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1940), p. 490.

[3]Perry, Realms of Value, p. 54.

[4]W. T. Stace, The Concept of Morals (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), p. 45.

[5]Josiah Royce, The Philosophy of Josiah Royce, ed. John K. Roth (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1971), p. 40.

[6]Frankena, p. 9.

[7]W. T. Stace clearly indicates such a position in the following quotation: "The question is, why should I work for your happiness? And the answer is that this is the only way to reach my own happiness... 'You ought to be moral' means that if you wish to be happy yourself, the only means to adopt is to be moral." Stace, pp. 254-255.

[8]We have already seen one example of such an "immoral" tendency in Dostoyevsky's Underground Man.

[9]Joseph V. Dolan, "Law, Obligation, and God," in God Knowable and Unknowable, ed. Robert J. Roth, S.J. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1973), p. 188.

[10]Dostoyevsky, Notes from Underground, pp. 105-106.

[11]"What stone wall? Why, the laws of nature, of course; the conclusions of the natural sciences, of mathematics. When they are through proving to you that you descend from the monkies, it will do you no good to screw up your nose -- you'll just have to take it. Trust them to prove to you that a single drop of your own fat is bound to be dearer to you, when you come down to it, than a hundred thousand human lives and that this conclusion is an answer to all this talk about virtue and duty, and other ravings and superstitions. So just take it for what it is -- there's nothing else you can do; it's like two and two make four. That's arithmetic just try and disprove it!" Dostoyevsky,p. 98.

[12]Dolan, p. 198.

[13]"...this is just the moment to remind ourselves...about the impossibility of accepting...the opposition between the ideas of the immanent and the transcendent in its elementary form. It follows that there may perhaps be no absolute contradiction between the two aspects of truth with which we are here confronted." Gabriel Marcel, The Mystery of Being, vol. I: Reflection and Mystery, trans. G. S. Fraser (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1960), p. 86.

[14]Thomas Mann, The Magic Mountain, p. 596.

CHAPTER III

THE TRANSCENDENT PHILOSOPHERS

Putting aside for a moment the question of "Why ought I to act morally?" and taking up the question of "How am I to act morally?" -- we find philosophers offering various solutions ranging from the advice to absolutely obey transcendent laws to following one's own conscience; and from obeying the rules of society to following one's own inclinations. In the next two chapters, we will examine a few representative answers to the question of how an individual can act morally. In this examination, we will pursue the modern pattern of movement from moral transcendence to moral immanence; rather than following a strictly historical account. Thus, this chapter will examine the transcendent theories of, first, Kant and then Rousseau. The following chapter will discuss the immanent philosophies of Moore and Westermarck.

The Problem

The movement of moral theory from transcendence to immanence (from heaven to earth) is largely based on the general philosophical problem of "knowledge." What kinds of things can men know? In many respects, the shift in emphasis from transcendence to immanence is simply a product of the epistemological skepticism of modern philosophy. Such skepticism includes at its most extreme a wholesale desertion of

metaphysical claims as "meaningless." At its most lenient, it stresses empiricism as the measure of "truth."[1]

On one hand, value claims of all kinds are dismissed as "meaningless," since they are incapable of being empirically verified. A. J. Ayer maintains such a view with regard to morality when he claims:

> For in saying that a certain type of action is right or wrong, I am not making any factual statement, not even a statement about my own state of mind. I am merely expressing certain moral sentiments.[2]

On the other hand "truth" is taken to be that which "works." According to William James, "'The true', to put it very briefly, is only the expedient in the way of our thinking, just as 'the right' is only the expedient in the way of our behaving."[3]

The first view reduces morality to irrational emotivism; the second fosters a thoroughly pragmatic and immanent view of values. The first suggests that no reasons can be given in support of moral judgments, since it is impossible to have "knowledge" of moral values. The latter suggests that moral judgments are entirely "reasonable" since our "knowledge" of moral values has to do with empirical facts and measurable results.

The last chapter dealt with the failure of both these attitudes to account for morality as a distinctive pursuit, and the equal failure of both to account for the "inspirational" power of moral feelings. It was pointed out that the moral feeling of obligation is actually illusory unless it is somehow grounded in transcendent reality. But if transcendence is important in retaining morality as a distinctive activity and attitude, it is equally important that men be able to discover what this transcendent morality requires of them. It is more

than a little ludicrous, and it is certainly impractical, to tell men that there is a transcendent ground of morality, and then supply them with no access to it.

It is this problem of finding an acceptable access to transcendent morality which encouraged more and more philosophers to turn to immanent and intelligible "signs" of morality, rather than to authoritative decrees, as a measuring stick of morality. It is only if immanent experience somehow reflects transcendent reality that the moral experience is a meaningful one. There cannot be an absolute break between the two. But, how does this reflection take place, and how can we be sure that it is indeed a transcendent reality which is being pointed out?

The Western tradition had long accepted certain attitudes, goals, and beliefs as constituting the obviously correct and moral ones; but with the challenge to "prove" the moral obligatoriness of these beliefs, philosophers began to fumble.

If "truth" consists only in what men are able to prove in an indubitable way -- in the way that they can prove that 2 + 2 = 4, or that fire burns and water boils at 212 degrees Farenheit -- then moral knowledge of a transcendent kind is unobtainable. But, philosophers seeking this kind of indubitable justification for moral obligation scorned dogmatic assertions and attempted to found morality on grounds that were susceptible to either complete rational agreement or definitive empirical evidence. Morality came to be considered in view of certain "tests" which could be applied to guarantee its correctness.

How can man know (with certainty) what he ought to do? In the very act of posing the question, dogmatic absolutism begins to lose its

grip. Religious absolutists have long insisted that they know the will of God through revelation and thus they claim to be able to organize their lives according to this ultimate transcendent standard. But what basis have these claims to knowledge? Is it enough to maintain that such "knowledge" is based on faith in divine revelation? With such a proliferation of religious sects, each insisting that it has the "truth," it seems a bit frightening to place one's trust in a single religion and deny all others without some more substantial proof. But what would count as proof in such a situation? How could the claim of the divine inspiration of the Bible ever admit of final unambiguous proof? Even given such a proof, how could we arrive at a single, unambiguous reading of the Bible?

For men facing this deadend, there seem to be three alternatives. It cannot be that knowing the will of God through revelation is the only possibility of acting rightly. For instance, the command of God could not make cruelty moral and mercy immoral; and if it is possible for a man to understand the truth of the preceding claim, then it must be that God Himself (if He exists) is bound in His decrees by a still higher law. This higher law, the "natural law" must be something which men have the power to know either by direct intuition, by the use of their rational powers, or through their own experiences in the world.

Beginning with Kant, we will examine some of the answers given to the question of the possibility and content of moral knowledge. Through this examination we should begin to notice the peculiar moral bias involved in ethical theories. We will also examine the inherent problems in reconciling the bias of the orderly sensibility with moral

experience as it was outlined in Chapter II. How successful are these moral theories in reconciling transcendence and immanence, objectivity and subjectivity? Can they adequately account for both the personal and the extra-personal element in moral experience?

Immanuel Kant

According to Kant, the path to moral knowledge is to be found by reason. It is necessary that rationality and rationality alone be the basis for morality. He urges:

> Is it not of the utmost necessity to construct a pure moral philosophy which is completely freed from everything which may be only empirical and thus belong to anthropology? That there must be such a philosophy is self-evident from the common idea of duty and moral laws...the ground of obligation here must not be sought in the nature of man or in the circumstances in which he is placed, but sought a priori solely in the concepts of pure reason, and that every other precept which rests on principles of mere experience, even a precept which is in certain respects universal, so far as it leans in the least on empirical grounds (perhaps only in regard to the motive involved) may be called a practical rule but never a moral law.[4]

Kant seems here to be confirming some of our own findings in the first two chapters. He affirms that morality must be differentiated from practical rules based on empirical findings and anthropology. He also insists that this necessity is self-evident, in regard to man's common moral experience.

In addition Kant agrees that morality must be peculiarly related to the individual in order to retain its status as "morality." He clearly differentiates between the non-moral status of a rule or law obeyed in order to obtain some personal end; the equally non-moral status of a rule obeyed from compulsion; and the truly moral status of a rule or law obeyed in response to one's own recognition of the

validity of the rule and one's own will in accordance with that rule:

> For if one thought of him[self] as subject only to a law (whatever it may be), this necessarily implied some interest as a stimulus or compulsion to obedience because the law did not arise from his will. Rather, his will was constrained by something else according to a law to act in a certain way. By this strictly necessary consequence, however, all the labor of finding a supreme ground for duty was irrevocably lost, and one never arrived at duty but only at the necessity of action from a certain interest. This might be his own interest or that of another, but in either case the imperative always had to be conditional and could not at all serve as a moral command.[5]

At this point, however, our agreement with Kant is at an end. Whereas we have stressed the importance of moral sentiment, Kant insists that morality can have no more to do with "moral feelings" than it can have to do with empiricism. He dismisses moral sentiments as a possible constituent of morality on two counts. First, he insists that "feelings" cannot be commanded while actions can be -- the implication being that morality must be susceptible of conscious, self-control.[6] Second, he points out that "...feelings naturally differ so infinitely in degree that they are incapable of furnishing a uniform standard of the good and bad...."[7]

To begin with, it is not self-evident that "feelings" are beyond human control; but more importantly for our purposes, it is with the use of the words "uniform standard" that Kant's orderly bias becomes evident. Kant assumes that morality, in order to be objective and not "...a mere phantom of the mind..." must be uniform, and uniformity demands that morality be based on reason alone and unconcerned with differing situations, consequences or emotions.[8] "Feelings," as he rightly points out, differ from person to person. Likewise, consequences can vary independently of an individual's will and are

contingent on many uncontrollable circumstances. Reason alone, by its very nature, is unvarying, superior to peculiarities of circumstance or personality, and identical in all rational beings. In basing morality solely on reason, Kant attempts to create a uniform standard which can be applied indifferently to persons and situations -- one which can be trusted to give infallible directives for moral action. He attempts to make morality "orderly."

Still, however indifferently rules must be applied to and by individuals, Kant agrees that the application of the rule cannot itself be experienced as a matter of personal indifference. He is well aware of the danger of morality falling to the level of mere external constraint, and it is in reason that he hopes to bring the necessary objectivity of constraint and the equally necessary subjectivity of obligation together. Morality, as he sees it, is not and could not be an external restraint (which could never produce morality); rather, it must be an internal restraint. The force of moral laws must be grasped internally as a personal obligation. Morality is, for Kant, the recognition of duties, discovered through reason, as binding on the individual in so far as he is a rational being. It is respect for these rational laws and for oneself as a rational being which constitutes the moral attitude.

> For though there is no sublimity in him in so far as he is subject to the moral law, yet he is sublime in so far as he is legislative with reference to the law and subject to it only for this reason.[9]

As should be apparent by now, Kant's morality is not without its own feeling. He speaks feelingly of the "sublimity" of man's existence as an autonomous moral agent. Respect for the moral law is yet an-

other type of feeling Kant connects with the moral attitude.[10] What he hopes to do in relying primarily on reason rather than emotion is to lift morality above mere inclinations and feelings and ground it in something more solid, less susceptible to human frailty, less intensely personal (and so less prone to solipsism) while still retaining morality's necessary link between the individual and his subjective experience. "Feelings" alone seem too uncertain, too idosyncratic to be trusted with the important job of constructing a morality. Rationality, on the other hand, is neither idiosyncratic, nor is it totally unrelated to subjective experience. It too involves a personal recognition of appropriateness akin to the internal "click" of intuition.

Kant sees a grave danger in allowing morality to stand or fall with the absence or presence of emotional "feelings" and inclinations. How are such feelings to be objectivised? Granted an individual "feels" as though some action or attitude "ought" to be taken, how can he know whether or not this feeling "ought" to be obeyed? For Kant, feeling is just as apt to lead men to do something in conflict with duty as in accordance with it.

It is his claim that it is only respect for, and obedience to duty which constitutes morality. Duty is discoverable solely by the light of rationality which uncovers the form of the categorical imperative: "Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law."[11] Since rationality (unlike feeling) is the same in every person, every person should discover the same duties. Thus morality is made "orderly," regular, and objective. It does not differ from person to person and time to time. "Duty" is indeed the result of the moral freedom of the

individual, but reason belongs both to the individual acting as an autonomous moral agent, and to men in general as rational beings; so that what holds for any man holds for all men, and even for all rational beings.

According to Kant, philosophers in the past have mistaken the source of morality either by making morality dependent on the feelings of the moral agent and/or by making the legitimacy of morality rest with some external force such as God or society, rather than grounding it in reason and in the autonomous individual:

> Man was seen to be bound to laws by his duty, but it was not seen that he is subject to his own, yet universal, legislation, and that he is only bound to act in accordance with his own will, which is however designed by nature to be a will giving universal laws.[12]

The guide to moral action must be internal, but the type of internality required must be an internality which is shared universally on the basis of a priori and apodictic rational laws. Only thus can moral law be both subjective and objective, immanent and transcendent.

The rational law upon which Kant grounds morality is the law of non-contradiction. Non-contradiction ties morality to the intelligible and noumenal world rather than to the emotional and phenomenal world because of its status as an analytic a priori law. Morality must be based on participation in the transcendent, ideal, intelligible world rather than on shared experiences in the real, empirical world. It is only in so far as morality rests upon purely and formally logical grounds that it can be separated from relativism and practicality. Moral rules founded on the application of the categorical imperative, which is itself founded on the law of non-contradiction, are not only valid for the individual who experiences the obligation (if they were,

they would possess only a subjective necessity) -- they are obligatory on all rational beings. They are true not only for this phenomenal world (if they were, they would possess only a hypothetical necessity)-- but for any world whatsoever.

It would seem that Kant has managed to successfully bridge the gap between transcendence and immanence; objectivity and subjectivity with the rule of reason. But has he? In relying solely on reason and on the logical principle of non-contradiction, he knowingly and purposely cuts himself off from all appeals to "feelings" and psychological principles. But, no matter how sympathetic one may be with his efforts to demonstrate the logical contradiction involved in immorality, the results yielded by the application of the categorical imperative to many "immoral" impulses are not as apparently contradictory as Kant presumes. He claims:

> When we observe ourselves in any transgression of a duty we find that we do not actually will that our maxim should become a universal law. That is impossible for us; rather the contrary of this maxim should remain as a law generally, and we only take the liberty of making an exception to it for ourselves of for the sake of our inclination, and for this one occasion. [13]

Now Kant has come up with a powerful psychological insight, but logically it is less successful. It is not obvious (to use one of Kant's own examples) that it is logically contradictory to will not only one's own destruction, but the destruction of everyone else as well. It may well be possible to will one's own suicide without contradiction of any sort. If willingness to commit suicide logically implies a willingness for everyone else to do the same, then Birkin, a character in D. H. Lawrence's novel, Women in Love, demonstrates the possibility of such a willingness when he claims he would "die like a shot" if and only if he thought it would bring about the total destruction of mankind:

> "You yourself, don't you find it a beautiful clean thought, a world empty of people, just uninterrupted grass, and a hare sitting up?"
>
> The pleasant sincerity of his voice made Ursula pause to consider her own proposition. And really it was attractive: a clean lovely, humanless world. It was the really desirable. Her heart hesitated and exulted.[14]

If Kant cannot base his system on strictly logical contradiction, he must base it on psychological contradiction, and even that will not always suffice to prove something (such as suicide) to be contradictory. Birkin shows no contradiction of either a logical or psychological kind in willing universal suicide. At any rate, psychological contradiction is verifiable only empirically; and Kant cuts the lifeline of his own theory if his categorical imperative is based on what men can in fact be expected to consistently will. If the duty to refrain from suicide still remains, it must be based on some other kind of "ought" than the psychological or rational "ought." The only "ought" left is the "ought" of personal intuition and feeling -- but Kant has already rejected it as being too unstable. It seems his only recourse is to admit the non-moral status of suicide while maintaining that the standard of non-contradiction is still the only way of ascertaining morality. But how many accepted moral maxims will have to be discarded if all appeal to "feeling" and to consequence is to be cut off?

If it can be shown that men in one society can consistently will to universalize that which men in another society cannot consistently will to universalize, then Kant's claim to bind up objectivity and subjectivity in reason, avoiding empiricism on one side and "feeling" on the other, falls apart. He can give us a consistent form for morality, but not a consistent content. The content must be provided by differing psychological, sociological, and emotional considerations.

For instance, it is easily possible to conceive of a person in a primitive culture being psychologically and emotionally willing to universalize the practice of infanticide without involving himself in a logical contradiction. It is not the case that such a person wishes to make an exception of himself -- he is willing to acknowledge the right of others to practice infanticide too. Similarly, it is possible to think of a number of other such practices which, though considered to be immoral by Western standards, in no way involves one who holds them in a contradiction. If it is possible for two groups to be acting "morally" (in spite of the fact that one group affirms as "moral" exactly that which the other group shudderingly rejects as "immoral") then morality must be relative.

The only solution which might help Kant here is to acknowledge that even though persons can logically and without contradiction will such things as universal suicide or infanticide, they ought not to.

The categorical imperative may hold good universally, but it need not discover the same duties for every society, nor even for every individual within a society. If it does, its doing so depends either on a general psychological truth, or on a generally shared emotional or practical rejection of consequence. Provided that an individual is capable of willing the results of universal application of a maxim, in most cases, the maxim -- no matter how immoral it might seem to be -- has the credentials to pass Kant's test of universalizability.[15] Reason without emotion and desire to direct it is empty -- and it is certainly too vague to qualify as an absolute and universal moral system. The same form can be used to justify widely diverse and even conflicting moral maxims. Kant intended the categorical imperative to escape the trap of emotional sentiments, but it does not.

On top of these difficulties, add the commonly noticed discrepancy between the moral actions which Kant understands the categorical imperative to command and our intuitions concerning what constitutes a moral action, and the plausibility of Kant's claim to have found the basis for an objective, universally valid, non-empirical morality grows dim.

The most famous example of this discrepancy involves the situation presented to Kant of a man who, after sheltering a friend from a would-be assassin, is forced to choose between lying or telling the truth when asked by the murderer whether or not he is concealing his friend. Kant's reply is that it is the man's duty to tell the truth. He concludes that: "Hence it is a holy -- unconditionally commanding, and by no conveniences to be limited -- Imperative of reason to be 'truthful' -- that is, honest -- in all our statements."[16]

Kant's use of rationality leads him to insist on the inviolibility of the rule itself, even when its application seems counter-intuitive. The general rule of truth-telling can have no exceptions because reason points out the fallacy of such exceptions. If it is our rationality which demands right action, and not our emotions, any exception here is wrongly made on the basis of an emotional rejection of the consequences of truth-telling rather than on any logical inconsistency in truth-telling; and Kant, of course, thinks that the force of morality depends on its being completely isolated from appeals to consequence. "Rightness" is a property of actions and intentions determined by rationality alone and not by feelings or results. Results and feelings depend on various uncontrollable elements; rational actions do not.

It is, however, just this callous refusal to take feelings and consequences into account that offends many people's moral intuitions.

Most people would take very little time to decide that in the case presented to Kant, it was the man's duty to lie in order to save his friend.

Looked at from one angle, there seems to be no very good reason for Kant to insist on applying the categorical imperative in the strict way that he does, and a lot of good reasons for applying it more liberally. It seems possible to formulate maxims which conform to the rule of universalizability and still take peculiar circumstances into consideration. For instance, could not one will to universalize the maxim that one ought never to lie -- except when doing so would save the life of an innocent man? Is it strictly a case of all or nothing at all, as Kant would have us believe?

Marcus George Singer claims that the logic of the categorical imperative does not compel us to accept such "ethical rigorism."[17] Singer claims that the original distinction between categorical and hypothetical imperatives was not one between duties unconditioned by any circumstances whatsoever and duties conditioned by circumstances; rather it was a distinction between duties unconditioned by the desires and purposes of the moral agent and duties so conditioned. "Thus what he [Kant]seems to have done is to have shifted from thinking of a categorical imperative as one not conditional upon any purposes of the agent to thinking of it as not being conditional upon anything at all."[18]

If indeed Kant does make such a shift, the interesting question is "Why?" What did he hope to gain from such a shift? To answer that question, we must return to our earlier observations concerning Kant's orderly bias.

The most obvious answer is that pure reason can only be retained

as a guide to moral action in the absence of qualifying circumstances. If circumstances are included in the working out of the categorical imperative, it is clear that elements of experience and emotion have crept in. What kinds of circumstances should qualify as special exceptions? How can one be sure that he has come across a case genuinely deserving of exception? Pure reason could be of no help here. In order to decide, one would have to appeal either to the practical consequences involved in making an exception, or to one's "feelings" as to whether an exception would, on the whole, be more in line with morality.

Kant flatly refused to consider the first alternative, and while he admits that, "...the moral feeling is nearer to morality and its dignity..." he still refuses to sanction feelings as a guide to morality.[19] Obviously he feels that the losses incurred by allowing "feelings" to settle moral questions would be greater than any possible gains.

Perhaps the key to his insistence on pure rationality can be found in his desire for simplicity, clarity, certainty, and order. Reason is an appealing basis for morality because of the externality and objectivity it connotes. The principle of non-contradiction is not suceptible to charges of being based on mere whim or fancy. With logic in command, problems can be handled neatly and cleanly by slotting the appropriate words into the universalization formula. Personalities, feelings, situations, consequences...all such things blur distinctions. They are messy, irregular and stubbornly resist set patterns. They lend themselves to error, confusion, and self-deceit.

Kant's insistence on the moral rigorism of the categorical imperative can be linked to his peculiar moral sensibility. His moral theory

displays the sensibility of order. While he agrees that morality must be the product of the interaction of a free agent and a transcendent realm, he prefers the path of order, and the safety of uninvolvement to the path of intuition and the danger of involvement. He provides a prime example of the personal intuition of "oughtness" which comes in the form of rule-abiding behavior. His is the "mediated" path of order, and the mediator in his case is reason.

Feelings are dangerous because they can never be trusted to be only what they are. One can never be sure that his feelings have not betrayed him into immorality. Kant writes:

> It sometimes happens that in the most searching self-examination we can find nothing except the moral ground of duty which could have been powerful enough to move us to this or that good action and to such great sacrifice. But from this we cannot by any means conclude with certainty that a secret impulse of self-love, falsely appearing as the idea of duty, was not actually the true determining cause of the will. For we like to flatter ourselves with a pretended nobler motive, while in fact even the strictest examination can never lead us entirely behind the secret incentives, for, when moral worth is in question, it is not a matter of actions which one sees but of their inner principles which one does not see.[20]

Kant is rightly suspicious of feeling. It is incapable of providing men with the certainty they crave in making moral decisions. Only reason based on a priori principles could provide such certainty. It is the search for order and certainty which drives Kant to such stern lengths as he displays in the case of the hidden friend.

Two things of particular interest to us surface in studying Kant's moral theory. First, it becomes apparent that it is impossible to avoid reference to moral sentiments in formulating a morality. This is so if for no other reason than that the moral law is powerless, unless it can produce in men a desire to obey it. Thus, if the reverence which

he accords duty can count as a moral sentiment — and surely it can -- Kant makes important use of feeling in his own moral theory. One might well be aware of the moral law without respecting it.

In addition, even at those times when Kant presumes that he is appealing to rationality only and not feeling, it is apparent that feelings have slipped in despite his efforts. In the examples cited earlier, it seems to be something other than strictly logical contradiction which makes the actions immoral.[21] If the universalization principle makes sense at all, it is because we "intuit" that even though a person could logically will to universalize many "immoral" activities, he ought not to.

Furthermore, in the few cases in which the universalization of a maxim does produce a logical contradiction, it is far from evident that Kant's principles outline one's moral duty. Universalization of lying promises produces an easily noted logical contradiction; nevertheless, there seem to be times when lying promises are not merely expedient, but "moral." In isolation, "rationality" seems inadequate to convince men that there are universal duties which are in themselves absolutely inviolable, and so must be adhered to regardless of consequence. In fact, it seems immoral to smugly repeat moral maxims as though the concrete consequences of those maxims did not matter, or as though one was merely a pawn in the hands of reason and therefore not responsible for the consequences of his actions. This immoral attitude of smugness is certainly the impression many get when first confronted with Kant's adamant insistence on truth-telling.

One might, at this point, recall the Underground Man's "stone wall."[22] Kant's categorical imperative has something of that about it.

It is a formal, impersonal, legalistic, unbending stone wall; and it is this characterization which leads to the second discovery in Kant. It appears that at least part of Kant's theory is determined by a certain aversion to emotion. He almost seems to be repelled by a quality involved in moral sentiment best described as "messiness." Feelings are ambiguous and thus misleading. Kant fears the uncertainty that accompanies reliance on emotional response to guide moral actions, and tries to provide a method for determining moral actions regardless of personal feelings. However, he does not succeed in dismissing "feeling" from the moral realm. He does not succeed because his own drive for clarity might be seen as the result of a peculiar moral sentiment. Kant's orderly sensibility results in a strict legalistic morality, but even so it displays the features of a personally experienced obligation based upon the intuition of a transcendent reality. If Kant's moral theory fails to satisfy, or to coincide with our own moral experiences, it is because he fails to balance the role of personal feeling and intuition with the need for a stable and objective moral order. In attempting to secure the one, he suppresses the other.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

It is interesting to note that in spite of their diverse theories, Kant had a great deal of respect for the moral philosophy of Rousseau.[23] According to Charles Frankel, "Kant's conception of the rational will as the will to act so that one's action may be taken as a universal rule of conduct is the formal development of Rousseau's general will."[24] We should expect then to find Kant and Rousseau in agreement on several issues. Most importantly, they agree on the necessity of morality

springing from the moral autonomy of the individual, rather than from his personal desires or inclinations. Rouseau writes: "...it is slavery to be under the impulse of mere appetite, and freedom to obey a law which we prescribe for ourselves."[25] Such a statement could easily be attributed to Kant. Thus they would both seem to agree that the principle task of ethical theory is to demonstrate how men can be both free and obligated. Both insist on the importance of individual autonomy, but agree that autonomy must be tied down or objectivised so that it does not fall into sheer subjectivity and personal appetite. Morality must have both an objective and a subjective pole.

Kant turns to reason to accomplish this task, and it is here that Kant and Rousseau end their agreement. Rousseau is convinced that reason alone could never discover moral truths.

> Although it might belong to Socrates and other minds of the like craft to acquire virtue by reason, the human race would long since have ceased to be had its preservation depended only on the reasonings of the individuals composing it.[26]

How then can men discover within themselves the springs of moral action without falling into the trap of solipsism? Rousseau suggests that the need for stabilization and objectivity -- the need for some ultimate authority which transcends mere subjectivity -- is to be found in the community. But, it is important to keep in mind that he is not seeking a purely practical resolution to the moral disagreements of individuals; he is seeking a moral principle. A community is not merely a political and social entity, it is a moral entity. Rousseau, on the other hand, insists:

> What is good, and conformable to order, is so from the nature of things and independently of human conventions. All justice flows from God, He alone is the source of it; and if we knew how to receive it from on high we should require neither government nor laws.[27]

The problem, of course, is how to "receive it from on high." Rousseau turns to "government and laws," and for him, the moral problem becomes one of locating the legitimate power to govern and make laws.

Distrusting rationality, Rousseau looks to intuition to provide the link between man and the transcendent. He has great faith in the natural goodness of men. He agrees with Kant that the only unqualifiedly good thing is a "good will" -- and he considers that every man naturally and intuitively wills the good. However, this natural, intuitively good will can be corrupted (though not destroyed) by private will directed by private appetite. Even when uncorrupted, it may sometimes err in its judgments, since to will the good is not necessarily to know what the good is that is willed.[28] Thus private will alone is not a <u>safe</u> path to morality.

The natural, private will of each man, insofar as it wills the good, is in agreement with the wills of other men. It is only when the private will mistakes itself, or when it is seduced by the private appetite that it fails to coincide with other wills. Thus the general will of the community can be taken as the yardstick of morality, and the failure to coincide with the general will can then be taken as a sign of immorality. In the case of such non-coincidence, the individual who disagrees can only conclude that, though he cannot detect it in himself, at a fundamental level he really wills in accordance with the others and it is in agreement with them that his true freedom of will lies. If he were to manage to assert his private will in such a situation, he would only succeed in violating both the moral law <u>and his own free will</u>.

It is in the social realm of the communal will that the immanent

sign of the transcendent and ultimate authority is to be found. And it is in the individual's self-acknowledgment of this moral authority that ethical autonomy is found. Thus Rousseau reconciles the subjectivity of the individual and the objectivity of the transcendent law with the immanence of social data.

It is at the point of this victory that Rousseau's theory begins to founder. He is genuinely seeking a moral power, not just the power of social numbers and social pressure. That this is the case is apparent by his careful differentiation between private will and the will of all on one side, and the general will on the other. The first two have no moral significance, they refer to the appetites of men. It is only the "general will" which has a moral significance. The "general will" is not equivalent to majority vote. Majority vote refers to the "will of all" which is the sum of private wills. The "general will" transcends private will.[29] But unless the "general will" corresponds to something which men can locate and experience in the world, it can be of little help to Rousseau in making the transcendent knowable and socially accessible.

Rousseau seems loath to make the simple equation of majority opinion and "the Good" and hopes to provide a safeguard against such an equation by appealing to the "general will" as being the authority which marks the boundary between right and wrong. Still, it is not clear what kind of thing the "general will" is, nor how it is to be arrived at. If it cannot be had by counting, how can it be discovered? If it is true, as Rousseau assumes, that

> It is therefore necessary to make the people see things as they are, and sometimes as they ought to appear, to point out to them the right path which they are seeking, to guard them from the seducing voice of private will...[30]

then the paramount question is, who is going to undertake this project, and on what authority?

According to Rousseau, the power to legislate comes from the people through their participation in the general will. The people are both sovereign and subject. They both make and obey the laws. Thus it is that Rousseau settles the question of how men can be both free and obligated. However, this sovereign power has its source, not in the will of all or majority opinion, but in the general will. The Sovereign power is the expression of the general will which can never be wrong as opposed to "majority opinion" which may well err.

> ...the Sovereign, being formed only of the individuals who compose it, neither has, nor can have, any interest contrary to theirs; consequently, the sovereign power need give no guarantee to its subjects, because it is impossible that the body should seek to injure all its members; and we shall see presently that it can do no injury to any individual in particular. The Sovereign, by its nature is always everything it ought to be.[31]

Though Sovereignty rests with the people as a whole, "the whole" is not a matter of discreet entities lumped together, it is conceived of as a living, breathing power which functions with one will. But how is that one will to be determined? It is not immediately apparent that "the whole" displays any such solidarity as Rousseau contemplates. Charles Frankel points out in his introduction to The Social Contract that Rousseau's concept of popular sovereignty can be seen differently depending upon how one understands the "general will." Rousseau is used not only to support the morality of democracy in its purest form, but also the morality of authoritarianism in its purest form.[32]

It may well be that in the process of collecting the majority opinion the "general will" will surface and be generally recognized. But then again, it may be that some one individual or group of individuals

will correctly intuit the "general will" and so have a duty to "...make the people see things as they are..."[33] Rousseau seems here to advocate the use of external force as a "moral" tool. Depending on the interpretation preferred, the majority, or the man or men who perceive the general will, have absolutely coercive power. The general will becomes the "stone wall" of morality beyond which dissenting individuals have no recourse. As in the case of Kant's Categorical Imperative, personal feelings are here irrelevant. Rousseau starts from a position of reliance upon sentiment and personal intuition and ends with a theory which must disregard all personal feelings and intuitions which conflict with the general will.

Shigalov, a radical socialist revolutionary in Dostoyevsky's novel, The Possessed, makes this striking comment: "I am perplexed by my own data and my conclusion is a direct contradiction of the original idea with which I start. Starting from unlimited freedom, I arrive at unlimited despotism."[34] Such, it seems, is the plight of the social contract theory. The general will, whichever way it is interpreted, is absolutely despotic. Its will is both the legal and the moral law; no appeal can be made to its decrees since every individual in his capacity as legislator of the general will, wills the law whether or not he recognizes himself as doing so.

This notion of the will of the people as law is similar to the religious absolutist's notion of the will of God as law. Rousseau even takes the requisite step of deifying the general will, referring to the Sovereign power as "sacred" and "inviolable."[35] Still under the guise of transcendent morality -- since Rousseau never ceases to profess belief in a divine authority who marks the true boundary of good and

evil -- he has moved from an authoritarian God-Centered morality to an authoritarian man-centered morality. As Albert Camus puts it: "It is evident that, with The Social Contract, we are assisting at the birth of a new 'mystique' -- the will of the people being substituted for God Himself."[36]

Not only does the general will possess "a universally compulsive power, for moving and disposing each part in the manner most convenient to the whole;" the power it possesses is sanctioned as "moral."[37] The general will is always morally right, not just strong enough to do what it pleases right or wrong. Not only should individuals who run afoul of this "will" resign themselves to any punishment they receive, they should themselves condone and decree their own punishment as "right" since they are a part of the general will even when their private will runs counter to it. In this strange fashion, men are "forced to be free."[38]

Rousseau confounds the usual distinctions between the secular and the religious, force and right, liberty and servitude, morality and legality. What he arrives at is a society whose secular religion defines "right" because it has the force to do so, but has the force only because it must, by definition, be right. "Besides, in any case, the people are masters, and may change even the best laws, for, if that body is disposed to injure itself, who has a right to prevent it?"[39]

Such ambiguous comments as these make it unclear how one should understand the general will. It is never clear whether it is a suppressive force or a persuasive moral power. Nor is it clear whether or not it can be detected by such signs as majority agreement or prosperity, as Rousseau himself sometimes suggests in comments such as the following:

> What is the end of political association? The preservation and prosperity of its members. And what is the most certain sign that they are preserved and that they prosper? Their numbers and their population. We need seek no further for the sign in dispute. That government is infallibly the best, all other things being equal, under which...the citizens increase and multiply. That is the worst under which they lessen and decay. Calculators, it is now your affair; count, measure, and compare them.[40]

On one side, the general will seems to correspond to a transcendent truth available only through intuition; on the other side, the general will seems to be discoverable only by reference to the completely immanent and practical consideration of numbers. The first has the inherent difficulty of subjective solipsism. Who is it that sees rightly, and how can we know that he does? The latter has the practical advantage of wielding the power of numbers and also of being open to a social means of verification.

In the final analysis, modern morality has leaned in the direction of interpreting morality as immanent and practical -- as something which can be had by counting. In that respect, Rousseau's is the preeminent modern transition morality. On one hand, the general will seems to reflect an ideal conception of transcendence and has a certain almost mystical quality about it; on the other, it seems quite down to earth.

Some Conclusions

Strangely enough, it is the interpretation of Rousseau which advocates the immanent, clear-cut method of majority vote and the equally immanent appeal to social welfare which links him to the same moral sensibility found in Kant. Frankel seems to be on the right track in pointing to the principle of universality as being "the formal development of Rousseau's general will."[41] The aim of both the

universalization principle and the general will is to give a definite form and shape to the concept of morality. In the final analysis, Rousseau seems to trust personal intuition and feeling as little as Kant. Kant uses formal logic to keep individual feelings and impulses in check; Rousseau uses the general will to do the same thing. Both are devices for eliminating the uncertainty of the personal emotional element while still claiming the importance of individual moral autonomy. Theoretically, they are at least partially successful in this, but in actual moral experience the personal element in both their moral theories is frustrated. Imagine the personal frustration of clearly seeing where your duty lay only to be told that despite your "feelings" it lay in the opposite direction. Such is a very real possibility in the theories of Rousseau and Kant.

In Rousseau's theory, private intuition and will are wholly subservient to the suppressive force of majority will. In many ways (and in spite of his efforts to the contrary) it seems as though Rousseau's attempts to secure objectivity result in turning private impulse over to public impulse. In spite of his talk of the general will it is not clear that there is such an identifiable thing as an infallibly moral, and socially unified will. In spite of his efforts, the suspicion lingers that The Social Contract is a thoroughly immanent document which seems to advocate a modified program of "might makes right" where "might" is taken to mean the power of numbers.

Kant, of course, thoroughly rejects the connection of morality with social data of any kind. In his case, the individual is overwhelmed, not by society, but by intractable "reason." Nicolas Berdyaev remarks:

> Kant's theory of autonomy has no bearing on human freedom. It is the moral law that is autonomous and not man. Freedom is needed solely for carrying out the moral law. Kant's autonomous ethics really ignores man: all that exists for it is the moral and intellectual nature which suppresses man as a concrete individual.[42]

In both Kant and Rousseau the personal connection to morality is thoroughly mediated through an impersonal force. Like Kant, the sensibility displayed by Rousseau is the sensibility of order. This is true despite his appeal to emotions, feelings, and intuitions. In the final analysis all such personal sentiments are used only to endorse the surrender of personal feelings to an impersonal higher realm. In neither case are the elements of personal intuition and transcendence completely abandoned, they are merely transmuted into a safer form; but in both cases it is this transmutation which leads to actions and attitudes which run counter to many basic moral intuitions. Rousseau, like Kant, demonstrates the mediated path of order; but in Rousseau's case the mediator is social rather than rational. Both mediators serve the purpose of making moral actions relatively accessible and stable; and both succeed in escaping the dangers of misapprehension and confusion inherent in relying on personal intuition and feeling; however, insofar as they relegate personal intuitions to a secondary status, they fail to adequately account for the role of personal intuition in morality. Intuition is sacrificed to order.

ENDNOTES

[1]See Frank Thilly and Ledger Wood, A History of Philosophy, 3rd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1957), pp. 655-658.

[2]A. J. Ayer, Language, Truth, and Logic (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., n.d.), p. 107.

[3]William James, Pragmatism (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1950), p. 145.

[4]Immanuel Kant, Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, trans. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1959), p. 5.

[5]Ibid., p. 51.

[6]Ibid., p. 16.

[7]Ibid., p. 61 (emphasis mine).

[8]Ibid., p. 64.

[9]Ibid., p. 58.

[10]It is odd that Kant's moral system should, in this important aspect, rest so heavily upon the possession of what appears to be an emotional inclination. It seems logical to presume that a person who felt within himself no inclination to respect the moral law would have no means to impell himself towards obeying it, or even have reason to wish to impell himself towards obeying it. Thus it would seem that Kant's whole system is irrelevant unless he presumes the existence of an emotional inclination to respect the moral law.

[11]Kant, Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, p. 39.

[12]Ibid., p. 51.

[13]Ibid., p. 42.

[14]D. H. Lawrence, Women in Love (New York: The Modern Library, 1922), p. 144.

[15]At least one exception to this general claim is Kant's injunction against lying promises. The universalization of lying promises does seem to produce a genuine logical contradiction.

[16]Immanuel Kant, "Concerning a Pretended Right to Lie from Motives of Humanity," in Ethical Choice, eds. Robert N. Beck and John B. Orr (New York: The Free Press, 1970).

[17]Marcus George Singer, Generalization in Ethics (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), p. 228.

[18]Ibid., p. 224.

[19]Kant, Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, p. 61.

[20]Ibid., p. 23.

[21]See p. 40, above.

[22]See note 11, Chapter II.

[23]Sir David Ross, Kant's Ethical Theory (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), p. 91.

[24]Charles Frankel, Introduction to The Social Contract by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1947), p. xxviii.

[25]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract, with an Introduction by Charles Frankel (New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1947), p. 19.

[26]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, On the Origin of the Inequality of Man, trans. G. D. H. Cole, in Great Books of the Western World, 54 vols., ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins (New York: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1952), vol. 38, p. 345.

[27]Rousseau, The Social Contract, p. 33.

[28]Ibid., p. 26, "Our will always seeks our own good, but we do not always perceive what it is. The people are never corrupted, but they are often deceived, and only then do they seem to will what is bad."

[29]Ibid., "There is frequently much difference between the 'will of all' and the 'general will.' The later regards only the common interest; the former regards private interest, and is indeed but a sum of private wills...."

[30]Ibid., p. 35.

[31]Ibid., p. 35.

[32]Frankel, Introduction to The Social Contract, p. ix-x.

[33]See note 30, above.

[34]Fyodor Dostoevsky, The Possessed, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: The Modern Library, 1963), p. 409.

[35]Rousseau, The Social Contract, p. 30.

[36]Albert Camus, The Rebel, trans. Anthony Bower (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), p. 115.

[37]Rousseau, The Social Contract, p. 27.

[38]Ibid., p. 18.

[39]Ibid., p. 49.

[40]Ibid., p. 75.

[41]See note 24, above.

[42]Nicolas Berdyaev, The Destiny of Man, trans. Natalie Duddington (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 81.

CHAPTER IV

FROM GOD TO MAN

On top of all their other difficulties, the supposed link between immanent and transcendent reality is questionable in both Kant's and Rousseau's moral theory. The connection between rationality and a transcendent realm is asserted on the basis of the exemption of rationality from natural law, but Kant himself admits that this is not a formal proof so much as a practical presupposition.[1]

The connection between the general will and the will of God is even more hypothetical. Rousseau is ambiguous on this matter. Even though he hangs onto the notion of God as the final arbiter, God is no longer a real factor in deciding cases of morality -- that function has been (for all practical purposes, if not for all of Rousseau's moral purposes) usurped by "the people." He implies that there is a real connection between a transcendent realm and the general will, but never quite explains how this connection is possible. Rousseau asserts the existence of a transcendent authority almost as a matter of course, but as a hypothesis it serves no useful function; and since it possesses no additional explanatory power it is, in keeping with Ockham's Razor, duly deleted by later relativist's accounts of morality.

Kant's theory might well be seen as an attempt to stem the tide of immanence, practicality, and morality by majority vote (unleashed by Rousseau and others) but his arguments fail to convince us that

consequences and sentiments are irrelevant. And if "feeling" and acceptable consequences are the chief factors in determining morality, then men should be able to determine their moral duty without reference to any world other than this one. If the immanent "signs" of transcendent morality include such things as personal feelings, majority preference, and practical consequence, why presume that there is a transcendent side to morality at all? Is it not possible that morality only has an immanent side?

Among Rousseau's most important contributions to modern moral theory is this shift in emphasis from the transcendent and the individual to the immanent and the social. He brings into focus the utility and feasibility of the social concept of morality and thus ushers in a new age of moral reasoning. With rare exceptions, society -- rather than the individual -- now becomes the focus of morality. If the basis of morality is social and society provides the only "objective" measure of morality, then an individual's morality must be measured by a social standard, and the concepts of majority opinion, practical consequence, custom, etc. become important parts of the moral vocabulary.

In the next two sections -- using the ethical theories of G. E. Moore and Edward Westermarck -- we hope to point out three things about the rise of immanent morality. First, we hope to point out the similarity of objective relativism and 'vicious' relativism. Second, we hope to point out the peculiar habit non-transcendent morality has of implicitly pre-supposing transcendence. Third, we hope to point out the sensibility of order displayed by these immanent theories of morality.

G. E. Moore

Moore represents the coming together of two modern moral traditions, those of intuitionism and utilitarianism; but in bringing them together, he modifies both. His intuitionism is primarily a reaction against the problems involved in holding the traditionally hedonistic utilitarian view. His utilitarianism is formulated, at least in part, in response to the difficulties of holding an intuitionist view. As a utilitarian, Moore argues that the goal of ethics must be to achieve "good" consequences; while as an intuitionist, Moore argues against the utilitarian attempt to define "good" as a natural, empirical property.

Utilitarians argue that morality is merely a problem of discovering what is humanly good and then determining how it can best be obtained. Unlike Kant, who insists that the consequences of an action are irrelevant in determining moral duty, the utilitarians insist that they are the most relevant factor in determining moral duty. The utilitarian response to Kant is to point out the absurdity of maintaining the obligatoriness of an action from which absolutely no good consequence emerges. If it is impossible to discover any positive effects a moral action has, what possible point could there be in acting morally? Moral actions must be aimed at bringing about some good consequence. So far, our own findings have confirmed this observation. We noted in the last chapter the counter-intuitiveness of completely ignoring the consequences of an action. However, consequences can be of more than one type. For instance, a distinction might be made between "exterior" and "interior" consequence. Exterior consequences have to do with visible or otherwise "public" effects in the environment. Interior consequences have to do with less tangible

effects on one's character or spiritual life.

Further, it seems only fair to point out that the basic presumption of the utilitarians is not as far as is generally supposed from a hidden presumption in most transcendent theories. That presumption is this: "If all men were to follow the rules and standards laid down by this ethical, moral, or religious view, the world would be the best possible world it could be." Of course the transcendent moralist insists that it is a man's duty to obey such rules regardless of how other men act, or how the world actually is; while the immanent relativist insists that duties are subject to change accordingly as men can be expected to act, or as the world is in reality.

Still, it is not quite fair to claim that the transcendentalist ignores consequences altogether while the utilitarian takes them into account. It is more the case that one places greater emphasis on the consequences of an action in developing personal, moral traits; and the other places more emphasis on social consequences regarding the general public welfare. Thus, there are at least two levels of consequence which may be considered -- and not only the social level of consequence as is often implied by the utilitarians. Utilitarians generally regard the development of personal moral traits only in relationship to their value in promoting public welfare, but they need not be so considered. The development of personal moral traits may be thought of as a desirable consequence in itself apart from any positive effect such traits might have upon society.

Despite this difference in emphasis, however, it is not in the acknowledgment of an ideal aim that the two groups disagree; rather it is in their method of determining what kinds of things are truly good

and truly worth having. The transcendentalist claims that there is an ultimate, transcendent guide to such goodness and worthiness, and that individual men and societies are not always correct as to what is good and worthy. According to them, men must often submit to a wisdom greater and truer than their own desires and inclinations in order to produce goodness.

In dismissing the reality of a transcendent guide, utilitarians are totally dependent on the conceptions of goodness actually present in actual people. They believe that the only reasonable way of discovering moral duties is to notice the results which actions tend to produce, and name those actions which produce desirable consequences "moral" and those which produce undesirable consequences "immoral." This appears to be a fairly straightforward approach to morality, until it comes to the point of identifying and discriminating between good and bad, desirable and undesirable consequences. On their own grounds, something which no one thought good could ever be good; and something which everyone thought good could never be bad. So far their criterion remains fairly clear. But what happens when there arise disagreements about what is desirable and what is not? Moore's argument with utilitarianism and his flirtation with intuitionism starts at this point.

John Stuart Mill maintains that: "...actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness; wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain and the privation of pleasure."[2] He arrives at this conclusion in the following manner: first he assumes that the only way of discovering what is desirable or

good is to find out what it is that men actually desire; second, he claims that the one thing all men desire above all things and as an end in itself is pleasure. Even though he admits that men desire other things as well, he insists that all other things are desired because they provide a means to pleasure.[3] Third, from the fact that all men singly desire their own happiness, Mill draws the doubtful conclusion that all men must therefore desire the general happiness.[4] Thus, Mill uses four terms as though they were interchangeable. The good is the desirable; the desirable is the desired; the desired is pleasure; and so the final good at which all moral actions aim must be pleasure.

Mill's theory contains several debatable issues, but the important issue to which Moore takes exception is Mill's first step which claims that the desirable is merely that which is desired.[5] Moore insists:

> The desirable means simply what ought to be desired or deserves to be desired; just as the detestable means not what can be but what ought to be detested and the damnable what deserves to be damned.[6]

Moore is concerned primarily with two issues. First, he is concerned to discover how men come to know what is desirable if it cannot be simply identified with the desired. In other words, he is interested in the meaning of the word "good." Second, he is concerned with the question of how men can effectively aim at producing "the Good" -- which he, as a utilitarian, claims is the final end of all moral actions.

Rejecting the identification of "goodness" with what is desired by arguing that the two could never be sensibly interchanged without vastly changing the meaning of sentences in which they are used, Moore concludes that "goodness" can only be described as a simple, indefinable property (like yellow) which can only be detected by direct intuition.[7] So far, this tallies with some observations of our own made in earlier

chapters. "Goodness" in Moore's theory is intimately connected with personal cognition of goodness. Moore also believes that the attempt to identify goodness with some particular "natural" property such as pleasure, survival, evolution, etc. is destructive of morality. He explains:

> I have thus appropriated the name Naturalism to a particular method of approaching Ethics -- a method which, strictly understood, is inconsistent with the possibility of any Ethics whatsoever. This method consists in substituting for "good" some one property of a natural object or of a collection of natural objects; and in thus replacing Ethics by some one of the natural sciences.[8]

Just as we were in Chapter II, Moore in concerned with the necessarily unique quality of the moral term "good". He determines that when goodness is reduced to some natural quality (as is the case in classical utilitarianism) one of two things happens: (1) either morality ceases to be a distinctive activity and is absorbed into other human affairs; or, (2) it is discovered that despite the description of what "is," the question of what "ought" to be remains open. Any description of what exists in reality is, for Moore, logically distinct from the question of what ought to exist -- just as the question of what "is" done is logically distinct from the question of what "ought" to be done, and the question of what "is" desired is logically distinct from the question of what "ought" to be desired.

At least part of the problem Moore sees in identifying the desirable and the desired, is that in such an identification the only possibility of being wrong about what is good is for a man to misunderstand what it is he actually desires -- and it might be a considerable task to convince anyone that he has made such a mistake. This identification of the desired with the desirable also implies that it is

possible for different people to hold radically opposing views on what is good -- each of which would, nevertheless, be correct. Thus the utilitarian concept which was meant to insure a level of objectivity to morality ends up relying, in its most important aspect, upon a very subjective criterion. In many ways, it begins to sound like a version of the "vicious" relativism criticized earlier.

Of course the limiting factor for the hedonistic utilitarians is the notion of the greatest good for the greatest number.[9] But this means that the desirable is no longer defined as the desired, rather it is defined as that which the greatest number desire. This makes the objective model of morality the "commonly desired" and, as in Rousseau, the oppressive weight of the majority is again felt by the dissenting individual. Social "force" takes the upper hand from moral "right" in this formulation.

Another problem in identifying the desirable and the desired is that the use of the moral "ought" seems entirely misplaced in such a theory. To say that one "ought" to do what he already wants to do, or will do anyway, sounds at best rather strange. It helps very little to explain that what is really meant is that an individual ought to do what the majority wants to do regardless of what the individual himself desires. Why "ought" an individual promote the general welfare at the expense of his own? In what is such a command grounded? It can't be justified on the basis of what is in fact desired because what the individual in fact desires is his own happiness. Even if it is based on what the individual <u>really</u> desires (in spite of what he thinks he desires) the problem of duty is not ended, merely postponed. We again find ourselves at odds with the notion of obligation. In differentiating

between "superficial" and "deep" desires the problem is once-removed, but still related.

Owing to such problems and inconsistencies, Moore believes that the concept of hedonistic utilitarianism cannot account for man's actual experience of morality. But he is far from evading all problems by insisting on the intuitive quality of goodness. His problem is one met with previously in Rousseau. If the desirable is not merely that which is desired, either by a single individual or a majority of individuals, who or what is the true standard of the desirable?

Moore is a utilitarian, but he insists that morality is not simply that which produces the greatest pleasure for the greatest number, but rather that which produces the greatest amount of good. "Good," for Moore, is not reducible to pleasure, or any other natural quality, although he is willing to admit that pleasure is a good. According to Moore, when we say that something is "good" we are claiming nothing more than that it possesses the intuitive property of goodness.

"The Good," on the other hand, is not simple but complex. It, unlike "goodness," can be analyzed into its component parts such that pleasure may be a part of the "Good" but is certainly not equivalent to it. Nor can the "Good" be abstracted into a number of experiences, objects, or actions each of which possesses the indefinable characteristic of goodness, rather it is a complex whole which may or may not include things which possess "goodness," but which <u>as a whole</u> does possess "goodness." In the final analysis, then, not only "goodness" but the "Good" as well can only be known through intuition. In other words, intuition and intuition alone is the true standard of the desirable -- both as a means and as the final end of morality.

It is with this reliance upon individual intuition that Moore begins to have troubles of his own. His trouble is due, in part, to the difficulties of any intuitionist theory, but this trouble is compounded first, by his refusal to ground intuition in any transcendent reality and second, by his own account of how men should best go about obtaining the "Good."

Moore observes that not only does the equation of morality with any "natural" feature of reality fail to produce morality -- the equation of morality with any supernatural feature of reality fails as well. He admits that metaphysical schemes of morality are superior insofar as they recognize, "...that for perfect goodness mcuh more is required than any quantity of what exists here and now or can be inferred as likely to exist in the future."[10] However, metaphysical schemes imply that an "...ethical proposition <u>follows</u> from some proposition which is metaphysical; that the question 'What is real?' has some logical bearing upon the question 'What is good?'"[11] Metaphysical schemes shift the "is" from here and now to some eternal reality, but still make the mistake of trying to obtain an "ought" statement from an "is" statement. Just as Moore claimed that the question of what the world is like is logically distinct from what the world ought to be like, so he claims that the way any ultimate reality "is" is logically distinct from the way this world "ought" to be.

Moore cannot anchor intuition in some transcendent reality, nor does he want to. However, if he is neither willing to ground morality in naturalism or supernaturalism, what <u>objectivity</u> could his notions of the good or of goodness have? How does an appeal to intuition help him to differentiate between the desirable and the desired if there is no

ultimately objective criteria against which these essentially subjective intuitions can be measured?

Moore claims that imaginative formulations of utopian schemes are far more helpful in determining what ought to be than are investigations into the metaphysical question of what is.[12] Nevertheless, as was mentioned in Chapter II, a moral ideal must be something more than "imaginary."[13] If it is not, it is impossible to appeal to ideals as better or worse, right or wrong -- they merely <u>are</u>. By what right does a man claim that his ideal is better than another man's? What makes a man have a certain ideal? What makes it seem ideal to him? If ideals do not transcend the natural world of psychological, physiological and sociological "facts" in the direction of some kind of reality, then ideals are no less brute facts than that which they pretend to transcend. No ideal could, in itself, claim to be the inherently correct or right ideal except insofar as it could claim to be the ideal held by most people.

Moore, in attempting to avoid the identification of the desired and the desirable appeals to intuition, but in his refusal to indicate for intuition a transcendent status, it is unclear how intuition avoids the extreme form of subjectivism which makes the "desired" unsuitable as a standard of morality. Just as desires differ from person to person, so too, it seems, do intuitions. Just as it proved impossible to speak of good and bad, better or worse desires; so it proves impossible (even in theory) to differentiate good and bad, better and worse intuitions.

If intuitions are the only standard for the truly desirable, then each individual intuition must be infallible and it is again

possible for conflicting goals to all rightfully insist upon being the truly desirable. Once again, the similarity of such a view to "vicious" relativism cannot be overlooked.

Moore seems to be aware of the problem of solipsism inherent in relying on intuition, and constructs the other half of his moral theory with that problem in mind. But it is hard to reconcile his practical moral conclusions with his original statements about the relationship between individual intuition and goodness. It is even harder to understand how he can consistently maintain his theoretical stance on "the Good" and "goodness;" his ideal stance on the true nature of the Good; and his analysis of the practical application of ethics at one and the same time. They seem determined to fly off into separate corners.

Moore attempts to account for the personal and emotional element of morality by reference to intuition, but intuition isolated from a transcendent reality cannot account for the objective element in morality. Thus, in his ideal ethics, intuition provides men with a universal guide to morality binding upon all men; while in his practical ethics intuition at best furnishes a warning to individuals to stay within their own limited social customs.

Moore believes that the ideal goals of men must be, and are, self-evident. This is very much in keeping with his intuitionist theory of the Good. According to Moore:

> By far the most valuable things which we know or can imagine, are certain states of consciousness, which may be roughly described as the pleasures of human intercourse and the enjoyment of beautiful objects. No one, probably, who has asked himself the question has ever doubted that personal affection and the appreciation of what is beautiful in Art or Nature, are good in themselves; nor, if we consider strictly what things are worth having purely for their own sakes, does it appear probable that any one will think that anything else has nearly so great a value as the things which are included under these two heads.[14]

This would lead us to understand that Moore is claiming that all men do universally desire these two things as ultimate ends. However, he cannot mean by this that these two values are merely descriptively universal, or else he becomes a victim of his own naturalistic fallacy. The "pleasures of human intercourse," and the "enjoyment of beautiful things" cannot be good because they are valued universally. By describing these ideal goals as universal, Moore must have something else in mind than descriptive universality -- though he may also believe that these ideals are descriptively universal.

Being unable to base this universalistic claim on what "is" the case, Moore attempts to find this universal formula for morality by relying on intuition. His theory rests on an appeal to social utility, but it is based upon the pursuit of an intuitive social ideal, rather than on the pursuit of pleasure or the mere survival of a community. This social ideal is, he thinks, universal. Societies in general should pursue a moral program which has as its aim the ideal of the enjoyment of friendship and beauty.

Moore's problems begin when he attempts to give definiteness to the concepts of friendship and beauty. In so doing, he seems to imply that these concepts are not only descriptively universal in their applications, but also transcendent in scope. This becomes apparent in his discussion of the relevance of truth to his categories of the experience of personal affection and the appreciation of the beautiful. Since this problem is seen most clearly in his discussion of the beautiful, we will use it to illustrate the point.

When Moore attributes intrinsic worth or goodness to the whole phenomenon of appreciation of beauty, he has several things in mind. "Appreciation" and "beauty" cannot be taken to mean any emotion of

approval or attraction in the case of "appreciation;" nor merely perceived or imagined beauty in the case of beauty. "Appreciation" means here the precisely appropriate emotional response to the correctly cognized object. Moore goes on to say:

> But it is important to observe that these wholes are organic, and that hence, it does not follow that the emotion by itself, would have any value whatsoever, nor yet that, if it were directed to a different object, the whole thus formed might not be positively bad. And, in fact, it seems to be the case that if we distinguish the emotional element in any aesthetic appreciation, from the cognitive element, which accompanies it and is, in fact, commonly thought of as a part of the emotion; and if we consider what value this emotional element would have, existing by itself, we can hardly think that it has any great value, even if it has any at all. Whereas, if the same emotion be directed to a different object, if, for instance, it is felt towards an object that is positively ugly, the whole state of consciousness is certainly often positively bad in a high degree.[15]

Beauty, both by implication of the meaning of appreciation, and by explicit statements of his own, seems to mean to Moore what is honestly and truly beautiful (one might say, objectively beautiful, in the sense that an object can actually be said to possess beauty) and not merely what seems to some, or even most, people to be beautiful.

Moore gives to both "appreciation" and "beauty" status as being capable of being true or false. It is possible to accuse someone of responding to an object "incorrectly." It is possible to deny that an object, which others perhaps admire, has any "real" beauty. Thus, "truth" is important in deciding which things are beautiful and what sort of emotional response is appropriate to different objects. Not any appreciation of any object will do. The ideal of "appreciation of the beautiful" would be the proper emotional response to an object which was properly cognized and really existed in the mode in which it was cognized. This clearly seems to implicate Moore in the belief that not only should

men strive to appreciate beautiful things, but ideally they should strive to appreciate properly the true beauty of truly existing things.

It follows that one should not only enjoy personal intercourse with persons, but that one should properly enjoy appropriate intercourse with persons who are truly worthy of friendship, and who are correctly cognized as being truly worthy of friendship. Not any kind of personal intercourse is truly worthy of enjoyment.

This manner of looking at values is certainly in line with his criticism of hedonistic utilitarianism. He clearly supports his belief that the desirable is not only what is desired, but what ought to be desired. But it is hard to reconcile this disregard of empiricism with his refusal to ground morality in metaphysics. This "thing" which ought to be desired and against which actual desires must be measured is for Moore an "ideal" yet to be achieved. But where does the ideal get its status as the correct ideal if it is not simply that which men do, in fact, think ideal? In insisting that values are not reliant upon an individual's valuing them, and that "truth" can be applicable in statements of value, Moore seems to give transcendent status to values. Values are discovered, not invented. They do not rest solely upon the fact of desire, but upon an apparently inherent "ought." If a person could be found who honestly did not desire to appreciate beauty in art and nature, or who did have a feeling akin to appreciation of beauty, but applied it improperly or to improper objects, it would be appropriate to claim that, regardless of the emotions he did in fact have, there were other, different emotions he ought to have.

If it is conceded not only that a particular aim is the truly moral aim, but also that that aim can only correspond to values that

have a "real" existence outside of our private apprehension of them, it seems but a short step to the conclusion that the Good must be transcendent, and that it must refer to a really existing state of affairs. If it is possible for an object to contain beauty outside of human recognition of it, then the beauty of that object must exist independently of men's thoughts, needs, and wishes. The only other possibility of being wrong resides in the definition of beauty as that which a majority of people find beautiful or pleasing. That gives a type of objectivity to beauty such that a man can be said to be wrong if he is in the minority. Outside of these two possibilities, "right" and "wrong" seem to be meaningless apart from their subjective, emotional content.

Moore firmly rejects the move to define beauty according to majority opinion. He also refuses to consider morality as being purely emotive. This would seem to leave him no choice but the first; but he rejects the possibility of the transcendent existence of the Good on the grounds that it is merely another way of obtaining an "ought" from an "is." Moore obviously believes that there is substantially no difference between a transcendent "is" and an immanent one. In the same way that it is pointless to rebel against nature if morality depends on immanent reality; if morality depends upon a transcendent reality, then reality becomes the "stone wall" against which it is useless to rebel.

The problem is this: if Moore wants to hold onto the ideal he formulates as being the only valid aim of morality, such an ideal implies that there is a truly existing state of affairs that does not depend for its reality on men's thoughts or desires -- in other words, there is a sense in which the truly good transcends mankind, and

insofar as morality hopes to attain that which is truly good, it is aimed at this transcendent. No objectivity is possible for morality if it cannot be anchored in some reality, either natural or supernatural.

But even if Moore were to admit the transcendent status of intuition, he would still not find an end to his difficulties, for he now shines a light on one of the most frustrating elements of morality:

> It is often pointed out that I cannot at any moment distinguish what is true from what I think so: and that is true. But though I cannot distinguish <u>what</u> is true from <u>what</u> I think so, I always can distinguish what I mean by saying <u>that</u> it is true from what I mean by saying <u>that</u> I think so. For I understand the meaning of the supposition that what I think true may nevertheless be false. [16]

In other words, though the truth may be independent of my thoughts and desires, my thoughts and desires are the only possible access I have to discovering the truth. So that while what I "feel" or intuit to be the "Good" may not in fact be so, the fact that I think it so, is, for me, all important. Thus, Moore casts doubt on the possibility of ever assuring the commensurability of personally experienced obligation and objectively obligatory "duty," yet gives us no access to the objectively obligatory other than the subjective experience of obligation.

Moore's practical ethics are based upon this dichotomy between truth and what is thought to be true. It is here that his morality becomes noticably immanent and relativistic. In practical ethics, he believes that it is quite possible for a person to be mistaken not only about those things which are intrinsically good, but also about the way in which it is possible to attain what is felt to be intrinsically good. From the beginning then, Moore feels it is only reasonable to forget about attaining the "absolute good" and aim for the "human good" since it is the only kind of good to which we have direct access. In fact, he

believes the "absolute good" is far too abstract a notion to have any meaning for men in practical ethics.

Moore's reasoning leads him to conclude that due to the relationship between "goodness" as a simple property, and the "good" as an integrated and complex whole, "...it follows that the best whole may be one, which contains none of the positive goods with which we are acquainted."[17] Thus, there is no practical way to use the absolute good as a guide to conduct. It may be beyond our means to obtain it, since we must aim at goodness which we do perceive as goodness, and not that which we do not perceive as such. If the absolute good were something of which we were not aware, it would be irrelevant to men in conducting their lives.[18]

Of necessity, the goal of practical ethics is to discover, "...which among a few alternatives possible under certain circumstances, will, on the whole, produce the best result."[19] But at this point, Moore discovers yet another problem. It is not all that easy to decide which, among the alternatives men can be reasonably expected to take into account, is the best possible action to choose. We can never be completely sure that the action we take is, in the long run, the best one open to us. The range of our knowledge of the consequences of our actions is limited both in time and space. Our actions, however, are not so confined in their effects and reverberations. The only mitigation to this claim is the likelihood that our actions will not adversely affect the Universe since, "...there may be a probability that after a certain time all the effects of any particular action become so nearly indifferent, that any difference between their value and that of the effects of another action, is very unlikely to outweigh an obvious

difference in the value of the immediate effects."[20] For Moore, then, although we can never be sure, we can have good reasons for supposing that one action will probably produce better results than another action in the immediate future; and that the difference between their long-range effects will be so negligible as to be of no concern to us.

But here, again, Moore must somewhat amend his original goal of producing the greatest amount of actual good possible. The probability of producing better results can only arise within a particular social context. We cannot hope to produce universal maxims which will always and everywhere produce the greatest balance of good in the future, we can only aim at those maxims which will generally produce good in the particular social context in question.

Moore concludes that under the pressure of this very vague arena in which moral actions take place, we can only prove the <u>probability</u> of an action <u>generally</u> producing good in the <u>immediate</u> future within the <u>circumstances</u> of a given context. From this, he draws the further implication that the only rules of which it is possible to prove the general utility are those which are both generally acknowledged and practiced. The correlate of this is that for those laws not generally practiced it is "...very doubtful whether a case for their general utility can ever be conclusively made out."[21] Therefore, despite his original goal of universality, we have no way of comparing the differing rules societies may have -- those are simply "givens." All we can do is consider the effectiveness of those rules in realizing a particular socially defined end, and even here we are limited in our ability to predict the consequences of rules not practiced.

A further and even more startling implication of this view is

that given the improbability of being certain that any particular action will have better over-all effects than another alternative, no individual is ever justified in acting otherwise than in accordance with those rules generally practiced in his society -- even though his rule-defying action would seem to tend to bring about better over-all results. The reason:

> It seems, then, that with regard to any rule which is generally useful, we may assert that it ought always to be observed, not on the ground that in every particular case it will be useful, but on the ground that in any particular case the probability of its being so is greater than that of our being likely to decide rightly that we have before us an instance of its disutility.[22]

By now, it should be evident that Moore's practical ethics have lost all contact with his prior delineation of "goodness" and the "Good." Goodness, as a simple intuitive property, is no longer the sole criterion of judgment. The Good is no longer an objectively real ideal to be universally pursued, but a socially determined goal which may differ radically from society to society. In short, he ends up advising men to disregard the intuited goodness of particular cases in order to bring about a broader probability of utility based upon a generalized intuition, that is in turn mediated through a society's actual practices. The direct and individual intuition of an ideal (which he originally uses to justify morality) has somehow got lost in the shuffle.

Men are first told that their only true duty is to aim at bringing into existence those things which are self-evidently good:

> ...it is only for the sake of these things -- in order that as much of them as possible may at some time exist -- that any one can be justified in performing any public or private duty; that they are the "raison d'etre" of virtue; that it is they -- these complex wholes themselves, and not any constituent or characteristic of them -- that form the

> rational ultimate end of human action and the sole criterion of social progress: these appear to be truths which have been generally overlooked.[23]

Perhaps Moore is guilty of overlooking these truths as well, for he proceeds to declare that though these are the only legitimate aims of duty, they are aims which men cannot pursue in practical ethics except insofar as they agree with generally accepted and practiced moral codes. And this because, although there is a distinction between seeming and being, an individual can never be certain whether he is pursuing what "is" good or what "seems" to be good. Theoretically, we can differentiate these two, but practically, we cannot. So, it becomes necessary for practical ethics cautiously to pursue general rules aimed at a probable general utility, rather than individual actions aimed at the absolute good.

Regardless of the claims made by his ideal ethics, Moore's practical ethics seem entirely snared in the status quo. And, in spite of his own protests against it, the "is" of his practical ethics in large part determines the "ought" of his ideal ethics. An individual's actions are not, in the final analysis, based upon what is thought by him to be good -- that is disallowed as a possible criterion. Moore's theory leaves the individual as straight-jacketed by rules as Kant's theory of the categorical imperative, without Kant's justification of intrinsic goodness. Moore gives up any notions of that kind when he admits:

> The question whether the general observance of a rule not generally observed, would or would not be desirable, cannot much affect the question how any individual ought to act; since, on the one hand, there is a large probability that he will not by any means be able to bring about the general observance, and, on the other hand, the fact that its general observance would be useful could, in any case, give him no reason to conclude that he himself ought to observe it, in the absence of such general observance. [24]

Might we conclude that although Moore believes friendship to be intrinsically good, it would not be incumbent upon anyone to act from motives of friendship unless he had good reason to believe that such actions were generally condoned and acted upon? In that case friendship is dependent for its goodness and not good in itself. In Moore's view, the only consideration which finally decides our duty must be custom and observance. Though there may be something which can be said to be the absolutely good, it is not "practical" to act upon such suppositions.

Here again, we run into a morality which insists on mediating between the individual and his intuitions and feelings concerning morality. This time, "general observance" becomes the "stone wall" of morality beyond which individuals must not go, despite their own personal perceptions. The sensibility of order is once again in evidence. Moore rejects individual intuition because of its uncertainty and danger, and accepts the safer path of custom. His fears seem to be much the same as those voiced by Walter Stace:

> But to allow my mind to be in this way entangled in the endless ramifications of future circumstance, in the maze of all possible, probable, or improbable consequences -- this is a profoundly dangerous proceeding. It is so fatally easy to twist such considerations into an excuse for doing what I want, a justification of myself for deviating from the straight and narrow path. It is better to avoid all this, to keep my eyes fixed upon the safe rule -- "Do not lie" and to turn them steadily away from all else. It is generally better to do what the rule tells us is right, and to let the consequences be what they may. 25

The experience of a personal obligation to obey rules regardless of their apparent obtuseness is particularly evident in this passage. The obligation appears to be not only a practical one, but a moral one. It is immoral to knowingly put oneself in the ambiguous position Stace describes. This same moral element is evidenced in many of Moore's own statements, such as the following:

> For it is impossible for any one to keep his intellect and sentiments so clear, but that, if he has once approved of a generally wrong action, he will be more likely to approve of it also under other circumstances than those which justified it in the first instance. [26]

Moore also seems to think that reliance upon personal intuition is a dangerous proceeding, and one that cannot be trusted to produce morality. Intuition must be mediated through custom.

Two things of especial importance have surfaced in this look at Moore's ethics. First, it becomes evident that unless some appeal is made to a transcendent ground of moral judgments, moral distinctions collapse into being the products of subjective emotional preferences, and the only claim to objective status comes from an appeal to what "most" people like, prefer, or feel is right. Insofar as moral claims do more than describe a peculiar emotional state or a "normal" psychological profile, they seem to imply transcendence.

Second, we again discovered the particular moral sensibility which finds it desirable to avoid the difficulties and danger of relying on individual moral intuition and feelings to discover moral duties. Moore bases his fear of intuition on two grounds. First, he agrees with Kant that emotions being what they are, we can never be certain of the purity of our moral decisions. It is always possible for selfish motives to slip unaware into what we take to be strictly moral decisions. Second, Moore points out that it is never possible for an individual to distinguish what <u>is</u> true from what he <u>thinks</u> to be true. The distrust of intuition is particularly striking in Moore, since his theory is in large part dependent upon intuition. He does not succeed in banishing it, but he does succeed in mediating it through the customary. However, it is this mediation of custom and social order which leads Moore to make such claims as this:

> There is, therefore, a strong probability in favour of adherence to an existing custom, even if it be a bad one.[27]

Here, order triumphs over the personal intuition of the individual to an extent which seems at first glance, "immoral."

Edward Westermarck

As we saw in the last section, Moore is unwilling to build his moral theory on top of a metaphysical and transcendent reality. His reasons are compelling inasmuch as his idealistic ethics emphasize morality as what should be rather than as what is. But he is caught between the need to account for man's personal relationship to morality implied by the word "ought" -- and the need to account for an impersonal element in morality which is "there" regardless of what men desire or feel.

Moore's determination to keep morality free of the "stone wall" syndrome is one with which our own observations have been sympathetic. It is futile to imagine morality as being a "fact" entirely unrelated to human sentiments. Further, when morality is imagined to be independent of that which is experienced as moral, the notion of "obligation" becomes problematic, and the line between "force" and "right" is blurred. On the other hand, when morality is totally unrelated to an exterior reality of some kind, it becomes a flimsy and highly subjective concept.

In rejecting both naturalism and supernaturalism, Moore finds himself in a dilemma. It is hard to understand how the morality he describes can be in any sense "objective" without falling into either naturalism or supernaturalism.

A. J. Ayer, in his work, Language Truth and Logic, similarly

rejects naturalism and supernaturalism; however, he does not continue to insist that morality is in any way objective. Explains Ayer:

> In admitting that normative ethical concepts are irreducible to empirical concepts, we seem to be leaving the way clear for the "absolutist" view of ethics -- that is, the view that statements of value are not controlled by observation, as ordinary empirical propositions are, but only by a mysterious "intellectual intuition." A feature of this theory, which is seldom recognized by its advocates, is that it makes statements of value unverifiable. For it is notorious that what seems intuitively certain to one person may seem doubtful, or even false, to another. So that unless it is possible to provide some criterion by which one may decide between conflicting intuitions, a mere appeal to intuition is worthless as a test of a propositions validity. [28]

Ayer obviously would agree with our own indictment of Moore. He agrees that the search for a non-naturalistic, objective ethics seems to inevitably lead to a theory of intuition as insight into ultimate reality. However, he rejects such a theory because of the impossibility of verifying such a claim. At this point, instead of clinging to an unjustified and unverified notion of morality as objective, he turns in the only direction left him, that of a non-naturalistic, emotivist ethics. He continues his explanation:

> We can now see why it is impossible to find a criterion for determining the validity of ethical judgments. It is not because they have an "absolute" validity which is mysteriously independent of ordinary sense-experience, but because they have no objective validity whatsoever.[29]

Ayer insists that moral statements are nothing more than "...expressions of emotion which can be neither true nor false."[30]

Given the inconsistencies inherent in Moore's view, Ayer's seems the more internally consistent. Despite the fact that men "feel" they are referring to something beyond their own feelings; if morality can be neither naturalistic nor supernaturalistic, it can have no claims to objectivity at all.

Ayer retains the uniqueness of morality (since, according to him, morality cannot be reduced to non-moral statements) and the individuality of the moral experience of obligation (since morality is based on personal perceptions of obligation) but he does this only at the cost of making morality completely meaningless, except as an interesting psychological phenomenon. Internally consistent as his theory is, it is inconsistent with men's perennial experience of morality. Could Ayer, himself, regulate his own life on the basis of the intellectual convictions he espouses in Language Truth and Logic? Is it possible for men to think of morality as being merely an interesting psychological phenomenon and still continue to take their own moral convictions seriously -- to shape their lives in obedience to demanding and difficult moral claims? Could a man "enlightened" on the subject of morality continue to consider his own actions in the light of duty and obligation? Would not a thorough-going familiarity with Ayer's ethical theory effectively destroy the inspirational power of morality, and morality itself, as most men experience it? It would seem so. And yet, objects, actions, and attitudes stubbornly persist in presenting themselves as right and wrong, good and bad -- even to men so enlightened.

Edward Westermarck provides an interesting example of the ineradicability of the moral response. He could adequately be described as a "vicious" relativist. He clarifies this ethical stance when he explains,

> ...the same act can be both good and bad, according as it is approved of by one individual and disapproved of by another. [31]

The important thing about such a claim is that he is not merely observing with Moore that what seems good to one person may seem bad to

another, he is claiming that there is no objectively correct claim independent of seeming. To "seem" good is the equivalent of "being" good. Westermarck accounts for the "feeling" of moral transcendence in this way:

> The only reasonable explanation of the intimate connection between so-called intuitions and the presence of emotional tendencies is, so far as I can see that the intuitions actually <u>are</u> these tendencies formulated as judgments that are calculated to give moral values an objectivity that they do not in reality possess. [32]

Further, Westermarck claims that since morality is based solely upon irrational, emotional responses, individuals have no real control over their attitudes of approval and disapproval. He states,

> We approve and disapprove because we cannot do otherwise; our moral consciousness belongs to our mental constitution, which we cannot change as we please....[33]

Here is the ultimate "stone wall." Individuals cannot help but experience these feelings of approval and disapproval even though they understand that these "feelings" correspond to no objective reality beyond the "objective" reality of their subjective feelings. Though this explanation of morality is designed with the unique place of personally experienced obligation in mind, it does not adequately express the individual's experience of morality as being meta-subjective. In fact, in the final analysis, such an explanation is acceptable neither to societies nor to individuals within them. Westermarck himself well illustrates both these points.

The most obvious complaint to be brought against this concept of morality is the chaotic social implications of such a personal and subjectivist doctrine. No individual could ever, on this account, be "wrong" in the usual sense of the word. Thus, it would seem difficult to ever justify public censure or moral disapproval. Though it seems

plausible to censure an action which is erroneously thought to be right, it is harder to justify censuring an act which "is" right. No matter how outrageous a person's behavior, chances are, he would only claim to be doing what was "right" in Westermarck's special sense.

However, as many relative theorists quickly point out, it is not the case that societies do (or even could) operate upon such an individualistic basis. In actual point of fact, societies designate actions, etc. as "good" and "bad," "right" and "wrong" on the basis of general approval and disapproval. Rewards and punishments are meted out on the basis of how closely an individual conforms to the norms of his group. Westermarck explains:

> It must not be supposed that, by deriving the characteristics of moral disapproval from its connection with custom, I implicitly contradict my initial proposition that moral emotions are at the bottom of all moral judgments. Custom is a moral rule only on account of the disapproval called forth by its transgression. In its ethical aspect it is nothing but a generalization of emotional tendencies, applied to certain modes of conduct and transmitted from generation to generation. [34]

But try as he might, Westermarck cannot disguise the fact that on this second formulation, what is right or wrong for an individual no longer precisely coincides with his moral emotions or what he personally approves or disapproves, rather, it coincides with what his society approves or disapproves. The personal perception of obligation has been replaced with a more objective and orderly version of morality. Unfortunately, unlike the similar shift in Moore's case, Westermarck's shift to the social concept of morality cannot be based upon the claim that the customary is more likely to be right than the view point of any dissenting individual owing to the fact that his initial definition of right and wrong is based upon individual approval and disapproval and not upon some objective version of morality. The most that

Westermarck can claim is that the group perception of morality usually coincides with individual perceptions since society molds personal sentiments. With the standard of personal approval or disapproval as the only background for morality, the fact of majority approval or disapproval can only relate to superior force, not to superior insight -- or even superior probability of insight.

In fact, given its emphasis on conformity, this social formulation of relative morality would seem inevitably to lead to the strictest suppression and repression of individuals, and the most stringent form of social reactionism. Nonetheless, Westermarck advocates the adoption of his thesis because he feels that it would be beneficial in "liberalizing" the otherwise repressive absolutistic notions of morality. He explains:

> ...it seems to me that ethical subjectivism, instead of being a danger, is more likely to be an advantage to morality. Could it be brought home to people that there is no absolute standard in morality, they would perhaps be on the one hand more tolerant and on the other hand more critical in their judgments. [35]

This statement is confusing in several respects. It is confusing in regard to the social aspect of morality raised by Westermarck. By its very nature, a society cannot tolerate any and all attitudes, actions, and dispositions without ceasing to function as a society. How is a society to discriminate allowable differences from unallowable ones? If custom is the only standard of morality, anything outside of the customary is definitionally immoral.

On the other hand, if each individual is his own standard of morality, and each individual feels it incumbant upon him to tolerate every other individual's concept of morality, then the application of moral terms becomes gratuitous. Tolerance would lead to the ludicrous

position of insisting upon the acceptability of even those things which "are" wrong. With no criterion for discriminating between them, we would have to tolerate murderers and thieves as well as homosexuals and prostitutes.

The former attitude is too strict to admit of tolerance at all, and the latter is too liberal to make any critical discrimination between the acceptable and the unacceptable -- one would even have to tolerate intolerance as a legitimately "moral" attitude.

Westermarck's statement is additionally strange when juxtaposed against his claim that people approve and disapprove of things on the basis of mental dispositions over which they have very limited control. In advocating the moral attitude of tolerance, he seems to be advocating the kind of change in mental attitude which, he indicates in other statements, is largely beyond the control of individuals.

Perhaps most puzzling of all are the value claims implicit in his statement. It is difficult to interpret exactly what Westermarck has in mind by claiming that the acceptance of ethical relativity would prove an "advantage to morality." From the tone of his comments it is easy to suppose he means that ethical relativity is "better" than ethical absolutism, or even that men "ought" to adopt the relative viewpoint. He seems to be claiming that ethical relativity is morally superior to ethical absolutism, but on the basis of ethical relativity alone, he has no grounds for such a claim.

According to his own moral theory his claim might be reduced to either one of two statements. It might be reduced to: "Relativity is better because I have an emotionally approving attitude towards it" or, it might be reduced to: "Relativity is better because most people in my society have an approving attitude towards it." The question is, does

either reduction serve as a good reason for encouraging others to adopt a similar moral position?

While the first interpretation may reveal something about Westermarck himself, it reveals nothing about what the rest of us "ought" to do. And while the second interpretation tells us something about what is "right" for men who happen to be a part of that particular society which approves of tolerance and critical thinking, it says nothing about what is right for anyone outside that society, and, presumably, it is toward these people that Westermarck aims his suggestion. In addition, it explains nothing about the place of a dissenting individual's own feelings of approval or disapproval.

If Westermarck's claim is simply an appeal to "common sense," if he means something like, "Well of course it's better to be tolerant and critical than to be intolerant and uncritical," does he only mean it is better to be tolerant and critical if we happen to approve of those attitudes or if we happen to approve of the kind of world such characteristics would foster? Or does he mean that we <u>ought</u> to approve of those characteristics and seek the kind of world they would foster? If it is the latter, what reasons could he bring forth to support this claim? Why ought we to want that kind of world or approve those characteristics? Because Westermarck does? Because it is somehow inherent in men to approve those things? Because <u>most</u> people approve them?

Westermarck finds it irresistible to make statements of comparative moral value. The problem is to discover exactly what he means by calling one thing "better" than another. Even more important is to discover whether or not his "reasons" constitute valid grounds for expecting others to share his views.

If morality is anything like the kind of thing which Frankena described in Chapter II, it must be possible to give reasons for moral judgments.[36] On the other hand, if morality is simply an irrational, emotional response, as Westermarck and Ayer seem to indicate, an individual could not be expected to produce reasons for his moral beliefs and that would put an effective end to any rational discussion of morality. But on what grounds and for what reasons could any man urge that others adopt or share his own emotional preferences? As C. S. Lewis claims in his work, The Abolition of Man, such urging "...would be either a fool's or a villain's undertaking unless they held that their approval was in some way valid or correct."[37]

Since we have no reason to suppose that Westermarck is either a fool or a villain, it seems he cannot recommend certain actions or attitudes to others without implying that there is something really commendable about them. And not every reason is sufficient to call one's own personal approvals and disapprovals "good" in more than a private sense. The fact that we approve something is not, in itself, a good reason for others to approve it. Most of us can remember at some point in our lives being reprimanded for excusing our behavior by reference to a friend's approval or with cries of "But everybody does it!"

In recommending that people "ought" to be more tolerant and critical, Westermarck betrays his own moral convictions -- and these are out of joint with his expressed ethical theory. Westermarck illustrates the tenacity of the feeling of moral transcendence. Even if we grant the relativity of other person's moral values, it seems that our own retain the special "feeling" of being really correct, good,

and appropriate. Why else would we hold onto them? Why else recommend them to others? If we did succeed in convincing ourselves that our own values were likewise relative, there would be very little standing between us and a totally nihilistic view of the world. Why remain enslaved to an irrational emotional response? Why bother to obey an illusion? Westermarck uses the words "good" and "bad," "better" and "worse" as though they are meaningful for others and not for himself alone.

Some Conclusions

Westermarck's ethical theory points up quite well the difficulty of coordinating and accounting for the subjective and the objective, the intuitional and the orderly in morality. His attempt to order morality by reference to custom jars with his attempt to base morality on personal approval or disapproval. In securing one, the other is lost. In this problem, he is reminiscent of Moore who also ends by justifying what can only be interpreted as a reactionary concept of morality.

Time and again during the course of this investigation the vote has come down in favor of "order" -- at the expense of personal sentiments and intuitions. We saw it happen in Kant, in Rousseau, in Moore, and in Westermarck. In Kant, the individual is overwhelmed by reason; in Rousseau, by the general will; in Moore and Westermarck, by custom. The thing these men would seem to have in common is their insistence that order is a necessary part of morality, and even <u>the</u> most important aspect of morality. Without it, morality becomes a chaos of conflicting feelings, opinions and emotions. Absolute morality induces

order by making all individuals subservient to transcendent and absolutely binding laws. Both "vicious" and objective relativism dismiss the idea of such an absolute law as being, at the same time, philosophically unwarranted and a stifling intrusion on individual moral freedom. However, the strange consequence of relativity lies in the fact that, in order to escape the charge of turning morality into a simple subjective egoism, and a social chaos, it is forced to be rigorous in enforcement of rules, and hesitant to make exceptions. This is true in regards to vicious relativism (as was seen in discussing Edward Westermarck) but (as may be less evident) it is also true of varieties of objective relativism.

For instance, much of the criticism leveled at utilitarianism is to the effect that it opens the door to pure subjectivism. Many utilitarian reformers (including G. E. Moore) insist that a direct application of utilitarian principles on the part of individuals would defeat the point of utilitarianism. As John Rawls explains:

> Practices are set up for various reasons, but one of them is that in many areas of conduct each person's deciding what to do on utilitarian grounds case by case leads to confusion, and that the attempt to coordinate behavior by trying to foresee how others will act is bound to fail. As an alternative one realizes that what is required is the establishment of a practice, the specification of a new form of activity; and from this one sees that a practice necessarily involves the abdication of full liberty to act on utilitarian and prudential grounds. [38]

Such reasoning obviously must stifle individual initiative and discretion in favor of the utility of generalized rules. Utilitarianism is thus a social tool aimed at generalized social morality and is not a tool to be used by individuals except insofar as it forms the background for their acquiescence to the need for order. Individuals must more or less limit themselves to obeying the rules already set out for them.

Here it is that ethical absolutism and ethical relativity join hands. Just as there can only be one absolute and universal truth for absolutism; general social conformity is the parallel requirement of relativism. Faction and disagreement are the enemies of relativism because of the importance placed on general agreement in establishing an objective basis for morality. If morality is ultimately traced to majority opinion -- regardless of whether such opinion is based on what most men desire, think good, or approve -- then the moral man can only be the man who conforms. Even if morality claims to be objectively based on "human nature," how is the content of "human nature" to be discovered except by reference to most men? Once again the key is in commonality.

If one does not believe in goodness which transcends both individual and collective beliefs he would seem to have two options: (1) he can either submit himself to irrational emotivism, in which case morality is ultimately seen as a psychological delusion from which men suffer, or (2) he can admit that morality is ultimately reducible to non-moral concerns where "right" is synonomous with the status quo, majority opinion, social power, or more usually, a combination of these three. What is important about these two options is that they both mark the death of "morality" as a personally significant experience of obligation.

In the first option, there is an implicit denial of the moral dimension to life. Such a morality constitutes a "de facto" description rather than a "de jure" obligation. Values are purely subjective in the sense that they are matters of individual or cultural taste and have no claim to any other objective reality. A preference for

beating children becomes just that, a preference. A preference for being kind to children is neither a better nor worse preference, it is merely a different preference.

Of course, no society which acted on such a conviction could long endure as a unit. Societies are defined by a certain amount of unity and solidarity; thus, in the name of civilization, some rules must be established.

This leads us to the second option in which, for the sake of making "morality" more orderly and more substantial, the strong emphasis placed on individual feelings and emotions in emotivism gives way to a type of morality in which individual emotions do not count, unless they coincide with some predetermined definition of morality. This definition may be something like: "Moral actions include all actions which tend to produce more happiness for more people than any other alternative action;" or, "Moral actions are those actions which most people approve;" or even, "Moral actions are those actions which will bring into existence more good than any alternative actions" -- but as long as these definitions cannot refer to any transcendent guidelines they all come down to the same thing, "Morality is whatever a majority of people in any one society say it is."

What has become more and more evident in the course of this study is that in any immanent relativistic moral scheme, the most important criterion for calling actions and attitudes "moral" is the very criterion that is rejected by the transcendent absolutists, that is, the criterion of social sanctions. Moore and Westermarck seem miles apart when they begin their inquiries, but they end on a surprisingly similar note, that of conformity to commonly accepted practices. If

order is to be maintained, if morality is not to be a "name" applicable to any and all behavior, then there must be strict guidelines which personal feelings are helpless to change.

On this point, all of the moral philosophers we have looked at (with the exception of Ayer) agree. In order for the concept of morality to make sense, there must be rules defining proper attitudes and actions which apply at least on an intra-social level. But the need for moral order goes beyond the social level. For an individual, the lack of strict guidelines leads to confusion about motivations, aims, and desires. Without rules, the individual can never be certain about what is the "right" thing to be done. A lack of rigorous moral order leads to the possibility -- perhaps even the probability -- of self-deception. Kant, Moore, and Stace in particular stress this feature of morality.

For all these men, at the heart of the meaning of morality is the concept of order. If the world is to be considered as a place in which morality is possible, it must be ordered. If men are to have the possibility of acting morally, they must be capable of "ordering" themselves and their actions on the basis of known and accepted rules.

However, as was pointed out in the second chapter, not every way of ordering life is a moral way. Even if we grant that order is a necessary condition of morality we need not grant that it is a sufficient one. Some ways of ordering life come into conflict with the other important condition for morality, the intuition of personal obligation.

Morality involves an imposition of duties and requirements that is at least theoretically (if not actually) distinct from natural

inclination. In that sense, morality must be an "objective" and external ordering. But the required manner of objective imposition in morality is quite unique. Morality cannot be imposed from above or from without regardless of the sentiments, needs, and welfare of those upon whom it is imposed. Morality must be self-imposed, and so must arise from an experience of personal obligation.

Transcendent theories of morality suffer from the defect of exterior imposition when they insist that individual cases, situations, personalities, and sentiments have absolutely nothing to do with discovering what our moral duties are.

Immanent theories of morality suffer from the defect of exterior imposition when, in order to insure a meaningful content to morality, they enshrine such objectivizing features as majority decree, customary behavior, or unbending law.

If the rigorous, law-abiding interpretation of morality is to be upheld, there can be only one explanation which will reintegrate this type of moral theory with the moral experience of personal obligation. That is, of course, the moral sensibility of order, which includes the experience of a personal, moral obligation to obey general laws even when the point of the particular law, or the application of the law in a particular instance is not clear. This is the path to life that Hans Castorp describes as "regular...direct, honest."[39]

Such an explanation accounts for the experience of morality as being personally obligatory as well as accounting for the complementary need for the obligation to transcend the merely personal. It is personal in that order itself is experienced as a desirable moral state which should appropriately be sought by the individual. It transcends

the merely personal in that the need for order comprehends all peoples, and calls for the renouncement of all desires which conflict with the possibility of "orderliness."

The sensibility of order displays the characteristics of moral experience. It includes activity undertaken in response to the personal apprehension of a transcendent "oughtness." In the case of Kant, this "oughtness" includes the conviction that individuals "ought" to respect the dictates of the universal categorical imperative regardless of their own feelings. In the case of Rousseau, this "oughtness" includes the conviction that individuals "ought" to will as the general public wills regardless of their own private will. In the case of G. E. Moore, this "oughtness' includes the conviction that it is better to conform to existing norms than to risk the unlikelihood of having correctly intuited a better response. In Edward Westermarck, the "oughtness" of social morality is indicated by his admission that individual approval and disapproval is inextricably tied to social customs and cannot be severed except at the expense of one's being culturally and socially disinherited.

ENDNOTES

[1]Immanuel Kant, Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, p. 82, "Furthermore, the idea of a pure intelligible world as a whole of all intelligences to which we ourselves belong as rational beings (though on the other side we are at the same time members of the world of sense) is always a useful and permissible idea for the purpose of a rational faith."

[2]John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1957), p. 10.

[3]Ibid., pp. 10-11.

[4]Ibid., pp. 44-45. "No reason can be given why the general happiness is desirable, except that each person, so far as he believes it to be attainable, desires his own happiness. This, however, being a fact, we have not only all the proof which the case admits of, but all which it is possible to require, that happiness is a good, that each person's happiness is a good to that person, and the general happiness, therefore, a good to the aggregate of all persons." I call Mill's a "doubtful" conclusion because there does not seem any reason to conclude anything further from the fact that each man individually desires his own happiness than that every man desires his own happiness. It is unclear how Mill jumps from the first statement to the claim about the general happiness.

[5]Ibid., p. 44. "...I apprehend, the sole evidence it is possible to produce that anything is desirable is that people do actually desire it."

[6]G. E. Moore, Principia Ethica (London: Cambridge University Press, 1959), p. 67.

[7]Ibid., p. 7.

[8]Ibid., p. 40.

[9]Mill, Utilitarianism, p. 25.

[10]Moore, Principia Ethica, p. 113.

[11]Ibid., p. 113.

[12]Ibid., p. 121.

[13]See pp. 20-21 above.

[14]Moore, Principia Ethica, pp. 188-89.

[15]Ibid., p. 190.

[16]Ibid., p. 132.

[17]Ibid., p. 184.

[18]See Chapter II, pp. 2 -2 above.

[19]Moore, Principia Ethica, p. 151.

[20]Ibid., p. 153.

[21]Ibid., p. 160.

[22]Ibid., pp. 162-63.

[23]Ibid., p. 189.

[24]Ibid., p. 161.

[25]W. T. Stace, The Concept of Morals, pp. 114-15.

[26]Moore, Principia Ethica, p. 163.

[27]Ibid., p. 164.

[28]A. J. Ayer, Language Truth and Logic, p. 106.

[29]Ibid., p. 108.

[30]Ibid., p. 103.

[31]Edward Westermarck, Ethical Relativity (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1932), p. 145.

[32]Ibid., p. 263.

[33]Ibid., p. 58.

[34]Ibid., p. 111.

[35]Ibid., p. 59.

[36]See Chapter II, pp. 11-12 above.

[37]C. S. Lewis, The Abolition of Man (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1947), p. 40.

[38]John Rawls, "Two Concepts of Rules," in Problems of Moral Philosophy, 2nd ed., ed. Paul W. Taylor (Encino, California: Dickenson Publishing Company, Inc., 1972), p. 270.

[39]Thomas Mann, The Magic Mountain, p. 596.

CHAPTER V

THE IMMORAL MORALISTS

In the last two chapters, the question of "How am I to act morally?" was answered by recommending obedience to general laws regardless of the various ways by which these laws were discovered. Such obedience, however, is devoid of moral significance unless it is motivated by a personal recognition of a moral obligation to relinquish personal feelings, needs, and intuitions in the name of some "real" and transcendent moral value. With this stipulation in mind, the achievement of social and personal order and the clarity and certainty such order brings may well be judged to be a moral value, and the urge for order demonstrated by Kant, Rousseau, Moore, and Westermarck may be judged to be a moral urge.

Yet, there is another urge which is found in morality, one which is a constituent part of the urge for order, even though "order" often suppresses it. That is the urge of personal intuition. The orderly sensibility rests upon the personal intuition of an obligation to fix a stable method of mediation between the individual and his impulses. But the moral sensibility dominated by intuition rejects as an encumbrance any form of mediation between the individual and his personal moral insights. Nicolas Berdyaev expresses one such approach to morality when he claims:

> Moral life must be eternal creativeness, free and fiery, i.e. perpetual youth and virginity of spirit. It must rest on primary intuitions free from the suggestions of

> man's social environment which paralyzes the freedom of his moral judgments.... The ethics of creativeness is not the ethics of development but of youth and virginity of the human spirit, and it springs from the fiery first source of life -- freedom. Therefore true morality is not the social morality of the herd. [1]

This view of morality rejects the possibility of simply conforming to an intractable rule, or merely reiterating patterns of living. It assumes that every situation and every person is different. For every unique situation and every unique person there is a personal and appropriate response. It is the duty of the individual to be open to the invitation of this particular appropriateness, and since each invitation is personally extended, it is not adequate to follow general rules -- it may even be necessary to step outside the realm of general rules in order to be able to hear the call.

To step outside the circle of light cast by general rules and social sanctions is, as both Kant and Moore point out, to step into shadows and doubts.

Thus far, we have emphasized the morality of order and such traits as conformity, certainty, safety, reasonableness, and caution. This chapter, dealing with the morality of intuition, will emphasize such traits as doubt, danger, unreasonableness, and risk. It will deal with those who, as Dostoyevsky's Underground Man puts it:

> ... refuse to follow the safe, well-trodden path and search for another one, an unreasonable one, stubbornly working their way along it in the darkness. [2]

The morality of such men usually takes the form of rebellion against morality interpreted as conformity to general rules. Such "morality" is considered by them to be the domain of the dumbly conforming masses, of the average, and even -- of the sanctimonious hypocrite. "True morality" is seen to lie in a rejection of all that

is "safe," "conforming," and "prudent." True morality lies in the willingness to open oneself up to and to act upon those deeply felt intuitions and "feelings" and in so doing, risk everything.

To understand the repugnance experienced by individuals of the intuitive sensibility towards all that seems fearful, "small-souled" and begrudgingly parsimonious in the moral philosophers previously discussed is to grasp what Hans Castorp might have had in mind when he said that morality is to be found "...in sin, recklessness, what is hurtful, what destroys us."[3]

The Spiritless Morality

The state of modern morality is such that men, by and large, have rejected absolute morality based on authority, and find it impossible to base it on such a thing as "pure practical reason."[4] They are apparently left to account for morality by reference to social custom, majority opinion, prudential concerns. However, none of these can possibly account for the special feelings which accompany morality and mark it off from other concerns men may have. No kind of relative morality can account for the presence of such feelings in the total absence of a final, non-hypothetical, intuitive "ought," unless the account refers to such feelings as "illusory residue." If men really come to believe that such feelings are sheerly superstitious, then morality will lose its unique position as a motivator. Without the personal sanction of moral sentiment men are not obliged to act or be in any way but the way which pleases them -- unless "obligation" takes the guise of force. They may conform to moral rules from fear of the consequences of non-conformity, but such conformity is not "moral" in content.

Once men have rejected the transcendence of morality there is nothing that binds them to act in certain ways except a concern for their own welfare. Since "welfare" does not consist in the relationship between the individual and the transcendent, it must consist in the relationship between the individual and his environment. "Welfare" becomes the satisfaction of desires. But desires are only subjective experiences. Anything anyone desires is desirable and constitutes a legitimate end to be pursued. What could be sufficient to stop a man from pursuing a desired goal? Only force, or the appeal to a more basic goal. If the welfare of the group coincides with his own welfare, then and only then can a man be reasonably obliged to take it into account. Still, the word "obliged" seems too strong. It would be "prudent" of him to promote his own welfare by whatever means seem best; but it is in no way required of him to do so, except under duress.

To say that morality is relative is only to say that all moral actions are hypothetical. All a man needs do is reject the end in order to be able to reject the means as well. Now, while this can be equally said of absolute morality; to reject the end of absolute morality is tantamount to rejecting the "truth" and it is certainly easier to reject ends which are believed to be symptomatic of instinct and majority preference than ends which are believed (rightly or wrongly) to be indicative of the "truth."

To accept ends based on instinct and majority opinion is to be ruled by our instincts and other peoples preferences. The instincts are not something which we can choose to ignore, so it makes no sense to speak of duty in respect of them. Likewise, the preferences of the

majority have no more obvious right to obedience than do our own preferences. In either case, man is a slave of appetite -- either his own or other people's. Thus seen, there can only be three reasons for accepting the moral codes of society. A man could accept them because: (1) he is, as yet, unaware of the nature of such codes; (2) they happen to exactly coincide with his own wants and needs; or (3) he could accept them even though his own desires and needs are frustrated by social codes, simply because to refuse to accept them would be to insure himself a life of hardship and ostracism. In this latter situation, a man is liable to violate in secret what he upholds in public. Thus men may be seen to direct their lives in conformity to social codes either through ignorance, prudence, cowardice, or hypocrisy.

If morality is supposed to direct our lives, if it is to form the center of our being, the source of our conviction; if all our actions are to be seen as springing from this vital source; if who we are is largely determined by the ideals and goals which lead us on, then it seems repugnant that morality be illusory or that it stem from conformity, unthinking habit, or mere prudence. If morality is to remain a vital and driving force in human lives it must be because it is personal, significant, and clearly faced.

If <u>morality</u> is really impersonal, insignificant, or illusory, then perhaps <u>immorality</u> (the opposite of conformity, unthinking habit, and prudence) constitutes the truly inspiring life. Immorality would thus become the project which could be said to be personal, significant and clearly faced. With this shift in attitude we can see the strange phenomenon of the morality of immorality emerging. In one definite sense, those who reject morality reject it because they see it as

immoral. It is immoral because men accept it primarily because it would be uncomfortable to reject it. They are no longer inspired by it, it is simply easier to flow with the tide than to swim upstream. Morality is seen as cowardice and a refusal to accept the challenge of freedom.

Hermann Hesse gives us one description of such a conforming morality:

> Now what we call "bourgeois," when regarded as an element always to be found in human life, is nothing else than the search for a balance. It is the striving after a mean between the countless extremes and opposites that arise in human conduct. If we take away any one of these coupled opposites, such as piety and profligacy, the analogy is immediately comprehensible. It is open to a man to give himself up wholly to spiritual views, to seeking after God, to the ideal of saintliness. On the other hand, he can equally give himself up entirely to the life of instinct to the lusts of the flesh, and so direct all his efforts to the attainment of momentary pleasures. The one path leads to the saint, to the martyrdom of the spirit and surrender to God. The other path leads to the profligate, to the martyrdom of the flesh, the surrender to corruption. Now it is between the two, in the middle of the road, that the bourgeois seeks to walk. He will never be a martyr or agree to his own destruction. On the contrary, his ideal is not to give up but to maintain his own identity. He strives neither for the saintly nor its opposite. The absolute is his abhorence. [5]

The "bourgeois" chooses conformity to rules, because to do otherwise would be to give up his moral comfort for the hard demands of the absolute. It would be to surrender to the formlessness of a world without "given" values. The bourgeois is incapable of doing either, and calls this incapacity "morality."

It is this view of morality as "incapacity" which is so offensive to the moral consciences of those who lean in the direction of the intuitive sensibility. Such morality has no spirit, no vision, no vitality. Nietzsche gives expressive voice to this sense of repugnance:

> And thus spoke Zarathustra to the people: "The time has come for man to set himself a goal. The time has come for man to plant the seed of his highest hope. His soil is still rich enough. But one day this soil will be poor and domesticated, and no tall tree will be able to grow in it. Alas, the time is coming when man will no longer shoot the arrow of his longing beyond man, and the string of his bow will have forgotten how to whir!
>
> "I say unto you: one must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star. I say unto you: you still have chaos in yourselves.
>
> "Alas, the time is coming when man will no longer give birth to a star. Alas, the time of the most despicable man is coming, he that is no longer able to despise himself. Behold, I show you 'the last man.'
>
> "'What is love? What is creation? What is longing? What is a star?' Thus asks the last man, and he blinks.
>
> "The earth has become small, and on it hops the last man, who makes everything small. His race is as ineradicable as the flea-beetle; the last man lives longest.
>
> "'We have invented happiness,' say the last men, and they blink." [6]

The "last men" settle for safety, security and happiness. They are the ones who have become convinced that "happiness," in Dostoevsky's words, is "an answer to all this talk about virtue and duty, and other ravings and superstitions."[7]

Immorality can be seen as a moral project when it is undertaken in response to the "immorality of morality." But, to constitute a moral project, immorality must be undertaken in response to a "felt appropriateness" and as a duty and a discipline. If it is merely the result of indulgence, whim, or prudence, it cannot qualify as any kind of a moral conception.

Nietzschean Morality

For instance, Nietzsche takes the defiance of the morality of "the herd" as his starting point and urges men to glorify the individual.[8] According to him, most deplorable of all is the mediocrity which results from both relative and absolute morality when they submerge all

individualism in favor of generalized rules. It is the "duty" of the individual to fight against this pressure to conform; to be "good." However, it is worthwhile to point out that by individualism, Nietzsche does not have in mind the claim of moral equality which results in the unqualified assertion of the right to do just as one pleases. He does not intend to construct an ethic of indulgence. His moral man still lives under the regimen of duty. As George A. Morgan explains: "'Duty,' for the elite at least, consists in self-dictated means for the attainment of self-chosen ends."[9]

Nietzsche's glorification of the morality of individualism depends upon his conviction that morality cannot be justified by reference to a transcendent realm, and his unwillingness to justify it on the grounds put forth by the immanent relativists. In his rejection of transcendence, he exceeds what have been established here as the dual requirements for morality -- that is, the meeting of the immanent and the transcendent in the moral experience. According to Nietzsche, transcendence is an "illusion" which had been necessary to inspire men to discipline themselves to take morality upon their own shoulders.[10] It is yet to be seen if Nietzsche can himself throw off the "illusion" of transcendence.

Nietzsche, as we know, rejects the morality of mediocrity which utilitarianism fosters. Nietzsche's "morality" is not to be undertaken in the name of comfort and convenience. It is egoistic, but he does not believe that egoism entails the identification of pleasure with duty. Nietzsche still identifies duty with the need for order, effort, and discipline. Nietzsche's "moral" man disciplines himself with the aim of reaching a self-defined goal. To meekly accept a goal given in

transcendence (as with absolute morality) or given by social mores (as in relative morality) is slavish.

But how does the individual pick a goal toward which to aim? Any goal here seems to be a possibility. What reason does a man have for selecting one goal over another? And once he has selected it, is it not slavish to submit to it? To avoid slavery here seems to be to opt for complete irrational indulgence, and is not that a type of slavery too?

Nietzsche apparently thinks that such self-defined goals are not slavish because they require a continual reassertion of will to attain them.[11] But what purpose might there be in attaining these goals? Nietzsche must claim that the attainment of these goals is good in itself, and such a claim points in the direction of transcendence. If he wants to claim these ideals are good because they make men better, it would be legitimate to ask, "Better than what?" Without a standard provided by transcendent reality, or an empirical, objective standard provided by majority opinion, human nature, etc., Nietzsche's use of "better" or any other evaluative term seems particularly suspect. The similarity of Nietzsche's stance to the vicious relativist's stance is hard to ignore. Yet it is harder still to classify him with theorists like A. J. Ayer. Despite his rejection of transcendence. Nietzsche seems to insist upon a "real" value, and a "real" merit to (for instance) the type of life his hero, Zarathustra, lives. Zarathustra is "better" than other men. But where does the "reality" of this merit come from? It cannot come from social norms. Zarathustra scorns them, and is in turn scorned by those who uphold them. It cannot come from transcendent approval, or coincidence with a transcendent reality;

Zarathustra rejects such fictions. Nietzsche rejects transcendence, majority opinion, and custom and is left only with the bare assertion of value. The "better" man is the man who is best able to assert his inexplicable preference. The "better" man is the man who prevails.

This morality (it almost goes without saying) is not open for everyone. The vast majority of people will have to continue to obey the commands of others, rather than their own. The vast majority will continue to be slaves -- only now they will not be slaves to the "truth" or even to the majority welfare, but slaves to the inexplicable preference of strong individuals -- slaves to whatever forces hold sway in the world.

Something is dreadfully wrong with this conception of morality. It asserts individual meaningfulness only to have it limited to those few individuals capable of dominating, and then (limited as it is) devoured by the arbitrariness of value. Nietzsche may claim that the ideals chosen by individuals are completely nonrational and that the only meaningfulness that can be assigned them resides in the eventual success or failure of the man who holds them. But, if he does that he would seem to imply that that which prevails <u>ought</u> to prevail; and this notion is inevitably tied to the status quo, since what <u>is</u> now, ought to be. But the fact that a thing "is" a certain way is no reason (and certainly no "moral" reason) for asserting that it ought to be that way. Such a moral theory reduces to claiming that the sky ought to be blue merely because it is. Even a superficial acquaintance with Nietzsche disabuses one of any illusions regarding Nietzsche's acceptance of the status quo.

On the other hand, Nietzsche may claim that values are completely

irrational and meaningless, in which case any value judgments he makes regarding the relative merits of Zarathustra and the common man are likewise irrational and meaningless. Here again we are faced with the problem of interpreting morality as being one of two unappealing extremes. Either it is solidly tied to inescapable facts which render moral terms ludicrous; or else morality is not tied down to any objective thing at all, in which case moral terms become equally gratuitous. In either case, Frankena's criterion that moral actions should be accompanied by moral reasons seems to go by the wayside. Nietzsche rejects rationality, intuition, even "common sense" and so cannot provide what are normally recognized as "reasons" for the selection of moral ideals and values.

Like Moore, in rejecting both absolute and relative morality, Nietzsche rejects any explanation that would make it understandable for a person to choose one set of values rather than another. For Nietzsche "morality," i.e., that which is appropriate and good, is the assertion by men of strong will of their irrational preferences. However, Nietzsche's claim is still "moral" by virtue of the fact that he insists that men "ought" to assert their will. He sees a certain appropriateness and goodness in asserting one's will, and urges it upon men as a "duty."

Nietzsche's morality is "created" by the individual out of his "will to power." Like Berdyaev's, it stresses the creativity of the individual. Karl Schmid explains the moral significance of this concept of creativity:

> Thus it comes about that the concern with the unhampered creativity of the psyche finds its antagonist in the ethical decrees of the social consciousness, or more exactly, in the acts which purport to postulate morality. Where concern

> for the fullness and vitality of the human psyche predominates, and where its narrowing and atrophy are regarded as the foremost danger...the question of what is good or evil in the eyes of the collectivity is bound to lose its cogency. All thinking oriented toward "the creative" is inevitably "beyond good and evil." [12]

Schmid goes on to say further that this conception is linked with "...a definite feeling that 'the creative,' and hence, of course, 'the creative unconscious,' is good, in fact, the summum bonum, while the consciousness of the collectivity, the 'they' who posit morality, is bad."[13] So, in fact, Nietzsche's conception is not "beyond good and evil" at all. He merely redefines good and evil and in so doing goes beyond commonly accepted accounts of the two concepts.

Nietzsche takes creativity one step beyond the realm of creativity Berdyaev spoke of earlier. Berdyaev associates the creativity of morality with direct and individual intuition of the transcendent. This association gives him a firmer judgmental base to work from than has Nietzsche. For Berdyaev there is a final objectifying element, the truly Good. Beyond the sphere marked off by this concept, an individual's creativity becomes misguided. The truly good marks the boundary beyond which no man dares go. A man cannot use his power of creativity and his ability to dominate to do absolutely anything at all.

On the other hand, Nietzsche seems compelled to draw the conclusion which the transcendent moralists reject -- the limits of morality coincide only with the limits of power. Nothing can be said about what a man should or should not prefer, only about what a man can and cannot do. For Nietzsche there can be no objectifying element except the limits of the will to power. The only justification for any course of action is its success. It can be measured against no other exterior limit.

According to Schmid, the conception of the creative individual as "good" and the social realm, which limits and defines him, as "bad" is a disastrously dangerous notion.[14] In the light of our comments on Nietzsche, it is not difficult to see what would lead him to this conclusion. Such a conception is dangerous because it releases the individual from the restraint of laws and codes and gives him a "moral" justification for indulging his desires. It is evident that Nietzsche's conception of morality in which the creative individual is limited by nothing outside himself is (to the extent to which it is less limited) more dangerous than Berdyaev's. The individual cannot be a law unto himself. Morality is more than passion, and more than disciplined striving. Again we must refer back to the two essential features of morality, intuition and order. Order is itself an intuition. The virtue of disciplined striving is an intuition of order. How can Nietzsche reject the meaningfulness of intuition and still accept his goal of individual fulfillment through disciplined striving? If there is no transcendent better and worse (nor even any immanent better or worse based upon survival, social norms, happiness, etc.) then the life of individualism is no "better" than the life of the herd -- it is only different. We, as individuals, are certainly under no obligation to prefer one sort of life to the other, and the mere fact that we do can create no obligation in us. Nietzsche's morality becomes the morality of might makes right. Such a morality is only a denial of the meaningfulness of "right." There is no "right" and no "duty" there is only power.

The Nietzschean account of morality is not simply a reinterpretation of morality, it destroys what men have meant by morality and then

attempts to replace it with an entirely different schema.

However, Nietzsche does help us to understand morality by pointing out what we cannot mean by morality. He emphasizes the individual in morality, and properly shows that morality is oppressive when it is impersonal and intractable, and decadent when it consists solely in the indulgence of passions. He also properly points out the importance of passion and emotion in morality and the uninspiring and belittling nature of that on which the relativists wish to base morality. He sneers at the superficiality of lives dedicated to conformity and prudence. As he sees it, such morality either becomes a knee-jerk response, or a piously spouted hypocrisy which is forgotten as soon as it becomes difficult or unprofitable. Morality is meaningless when it becomes something which is not personally and profoundly related to the individual. However, Nietzsche (unwittingly) demonstrates that that which is personally related to the individual, and which inspires him to act and "be" in certain ways, cannot be only a subjective part of the individual. The dangers inherent in such a position of subjectivity are legion. The only discriminations possible in a world where such an attitude prevailed would be made on the basis of power.[15] Subjective sensibility must be thought to reflect an appropriate "objective" order which transcends the individual and stands as an arbitrator between conflicting subjective desires; otherwise the equation of morality with passion plus power cannot be avoided.

However, the dangers inherent in relying so heavily upon subjective experiences and feelings to direct morality (the dangers of arrogance, solipsism, and indulgence) are not restricted to Nietzsche alone. Berdyaev makes the individual's unmediated confrontation with

the absolute and transcendent appear very innocent through his use of terms like "youth" and "virginity." On the contrary, such a confrontation (or at least the possibility of such a confrontation) takes place in a strange and foreboding atmosphere. During such a confrontation there can be no socially or generally imposed boundaries on which to depend. The emphasis on morality as individual and unique questions the need for individuals to be subordinated to a universally binding law.[16] Though Berdyaev does limit the individual by submitting his will and actions to judgment by a transcendent and absolutely good being, access to this being is a slippery and ambiguous affair. Such access must reside in the individual's intuitions since it cannot be had by reference to codes of law, majority opinion, or the like. Any project of morality which rejects reliance upon general moral formulations is subject to dangers even if the original aim of the morality is taken to be correspondence to an objective ideal. The failure to recognize this danger, is itself a great danger. In his comments, Berdyaev displays something of this dangerous naivity.

It is the danger of the path of personal intuition which makes the rejection of the mediated path of order an ambiguous affair. Reliance upon individual moral intuition can be a "profoundly dangerous proceeding."[17] It is to set oneself above and beyond the rules given by a communal moral code. Against the communal certainty and safety of majority opinion, tradition, or the concrete demands of law, the individual posits his own dubious "sentiments." Ought he to act on the basis of these? Is it "moral" to let oneself be guided by these?

On one hand, it would seem to be sheer cowardice to ignore these feelings out of fear -- either fear of public reaction or fear as a

lack of faith in yourself. On the other hand, is it not moral arrogance and pride to disregard the opinions of others, the traditions of society and the demands of law in favor of one's own (always doubtful) insights?

The very obscurity of transcendence and its even more obscure relationship to personal intuition is a lure and a snare for the unwary. To view morality as an individual invitation to personal growth independent of social sanctions is not as unambiguously positive as either Nietzsche or Berdyaev make it sound. It involves risks. It is the sense of this "risk;" the sense of "traffiking with evil," which gives much of modern literature its strange combination of moral superiority and immorality mentioned in the opening chapter of this thesis.

In his novel, The Magic Mountain, Thomas Mann describes some of the risks of creative morality while he explores the ambiguities and the "questionableness" of the path of unmediated intuition. Although the novel is both long and complex, and its symbolism plentiful, an examination of a few of Mann's interwoven themes (no matter how inadequately they represent the novel as a whole) will help us to better understand the virtues and demerits of the intuitive sensibility as contrasted with those of the sensibility of order.

The Magic Mountain

The Magic Mountain is the story of Hans Castorp, a somewhat frail and unambitious, upper middle class orphan who has been raised by his Grandfather and his Uncle, Consul Tienappel, to take his place in the busy commercial world of Hamburg. He is about to begin his apprentice-ship as an engineer with a ship building firm when his chronic anemic

condition requires a three week period of rest and recuperation. Sensibly enough, it is decided that Hans should spend these three weeks visiting his cousin, Joachim Ziemssen, who is recovering from a bout of tuberculosis at the International Sanatorium Berghof, high in the Alps.

As the novel opens, Hans impatiently sets off to wait out the three week interruption. However, once there he is taken captive by the liesurely pace of life, and the freedom from social restrictions offered to those who lead their lives isolated from the everyday concerns of life below. He is also captivated by the "Kirghiz" eyes of Clavdia Cauchet, an undisciplined and aristocratic patient at the sanatorium.[18] Subtly drawn toward the voluptuous life of passion and indulgence, of which Clavdia is the symbol, Hans suspiciously enough contracts tuberculosis and remains on the Mountain for seven "hermetic" years; drawn away only by the shock of the beginning of World War I.

During his seven year stay on the Mountain, Hans is drawn in two essentially contrasting directions. On one side there is the Mountain, Clavdia, passion, mystery, and indulgence. On the other side is the Flat-land and home, clarity, duty, and rationalism. For our purposes, these two may be equated with the creative morality of intuition and the law-abiding morality of order. The Mountain is associated with the freedom which is necessary for individual and creative morality and its dangers. The Flat-land is associated with the safety, security, and reasonableness of social codes, and the order such codes betoken. The story of Hans' education is the story of the battle waged between these two sensibilities over possession of his being. Involved in the battle are, in addition to Clavdia, Hans' fellow patients, Ludovico

Settembrini, Leo Naphta, Joachim Ziemssen, and Mynheer Peeperkorn.

Settembrini is a Freemason, a humanist, and a man of letters. He stands for progress, democracy, enlightenment, rationalism and clarity. He strongly opposes Hans' attraction to Clavdia and all for which she stands. Immediately upon Hans' arrival on the Mountain, Settembrini urges him to return to the Flat-land. Naphta is a Jesuit dialectician who opposes Settembrini and upholds mystic community, passion, and spirit. He disdains the bourgeois notions of morality embraced by men in the Flat-lands. Joachim, Hans' cousin, longs to resume his military career in the Flat-lands and is a model of devotion to health, discipline and duty. And finally, Mynheer Peeperkorn, a latecomer to the sanatorium, is a magnificently imposing (if somewhat incoherent) "personality" who stands in contrast to the "cerebralism" of Naphta and Settembrini. He is a lover of the "simple gifts of life." According to him, not to "feel" to the utmost is a sin against those gifts. He represents the mentality of the creatively moral person at its best.

During his prolonged visit, Hans is exposed to a world of ideas, emotions, and experiences about which he knew nothing in the world below. His stay on the Mountain changes him profoundly; but for the better, or for the worse? The answer one gives might well rely upon one's own moral sensibility. At any rate, his transformation is worth following.

In the opening of the novel, Thomas Mann describes the situation of his hero, Hans Castorp, as being that of an ordinary and practical young man, well-settled in his orderly routine and well-satisfied with his situation in life. However, Mann goes on to tell us, this practical and satisfied young man has stirrings of something else deep inside

him -- something which he hardly knows he possesses -- a sense of rebellion against his own and his society's complacent mediocrity. During the course of the novel these secret stirrings are unfolded and given articulation. Mann, however, hints at a larger, symbolic meaning to Hans' situation:

> A man lives not only his personal life, as an individual, but also, consciously or unconsciously, the life of his epoch and his contemporaries. He may regard the general, impersonal foundations of his existence as definitely settled and taken for granted, and be as far from assuming a critical attitude toward them as our good Hans Castorp really was; yet it is quite conceivable that he may none the less be vaguely conscious of the deficiencies of his epoch and find them prejudicial to his own moral well-being. All sorts of personal aims, ends, hopes, prospects, hover before the eyes of the individual, and out of these he derives the impulse to ambition and achievement. Now, if the life about him, if his own time seem, however outwardly stimulating, to be at bottom empty of such food for his aspirations; if he privately recognizes it to be hopeless, viewless, helpless, opposing only a hollow silence to all the questions man puts, consciously or unconsciously, yet somehow puts, as to the final, absolute, and abstract meaning in all his efforts and activities; then, in such a case, a certain laming of the personality is bound to occur, the more inevitably the more upright the character in question; a sort of palsy, as it were, which may even extend from his spiritual and moral over into his physical and organic part. In an age that affords no satisfying answer to the eternal question of "Why?" "To what end?" a man who is capable of achievement over and above the average and expected modicum must be equipped either with a moral remoteness and single-mindedness which is rare indeed and of heroic mould, or else with an exceptionally robust vitality. Hans Castorp had neither one nor the other of these; and thus must be considered mediocre, though in an entirely honorable sense.[19]

Hans Castorp represents the "average" man in the modern secular age. His life is a comfortable affair of unoffending routines and habits. He conforms to the expectations of his family and friends without an excessive amount of exertion. He obeys the laws, except in those small and harmless cases (such as smuggling duty-free cigarettes) where he can benefit himself without risking disapproval.

He accepts and lives by standard social practices without questioning them. He indulges in small pleasures without infringing the pleasures of others. In short, by all standard measurements, he is a "good" man.

Yet Mann describes the circumstances in which Hans lives as being "prejudicial to his own moral well-being."[20]

Why?

Hans Castorp is a man reared in a world imbued with the immanent, relativistic view. This encourages him to believe (if he thinks of it at all) that "morality" consists in conforming to prevailing social standards while still providing, as best he might, for his own comfort. Hans does what he must to get along comfortably in the world, but little beyond that. He drifts in the direction of least resistance. As Mann explains: "...strain, indeed, was something to which he was quite definitely disinclined, whatever the circumstances of the object of his effort; less out of fear of hurting himself than because he positively saw no reason, or more precisely, saw no positive reason, for exertion."[21]

Immanent, relativistic morality pushes inevitably in the direction of morality as mediocrity. Such an ethic is obviously not oriented towards the extraordinary. The extraordinary can only be elicited by a "singlemindedness which is rare indeed and of heroic mould" or else by "an exceptionally robust vitality."[22] Hans' epoch is prejudicial to his moral well-being because it is uninspiring. As a result, Hans is less than he could be. He has nothing to which to dedicate his life. Nothing for which to strive.

William James distinguishes two different moral moods which might help illuminate the modern moral predicament which Hans illustrates:

> The deepest difference, practically in the moral life of man is the difference between the easy-going and the strenuous mood. When in the easy-going mood the shrinking from present ill is our ruling consideration. The strenuous mood, on the contrary, makes us quite indifferent to present ill, if only the greater ideal be attained. The capacity for the strenuous mood probably lies slumbering in every man, but it has more difficulty in some than in others in waking up. It needs the wilder passions to arrouse it, the big fears, loves and indignations; or else the deeply penetrating appeal of some one of the higher fidelities, like justice, truth, or freedom. Strong relief is a necessity of its vision; and a world where all the mountains are brought down and all the valleys are exalted is no congenial place for its habitation.[23]

Immanent, relativistic morality is a great leveler. It has no standard of measurement beyond the norm. It takes the shock of the mountain and the strength of his feeling for Clavdia to awaken the strenuous mood in Hans.

Hans begins his journey as an ordinary young man -- having no reason to be otherwise -- but he ends it as rather an extraordinary one. Mann describes Hans as an unlikely hero.[24] This is true in two senses. It is true in the beginning because he is so ordinary, so bourgeois. It is also true at the end of the tale, but now it is true because Hans' behavior is more reminiscent of an "anti-hero" than a hero. He is not a "good" man any longer; and he could not be considered "heroic." He dabbles in suspiciously immoral doings and dwells in a realm Mann describes as "highly questionable."[25] Hans rejects traditional moral codes and seeks his own kind of creative morality. His life on the Mountain is experimental, and like all experiments, it is liable to failure. The Magic Mountain tells of his growth; it is the story of his journey from the "Flat-lands" to the heights. It is a journey fraught with dangers and risks. Sometimes it is uncertain whether Hans will survive at all, and it is always open to question as to whether the journey is made for good or evil.

Mann expresses this ambiguity in a number of ways -- in fact, ambiguity could be said to be a major theme of the novel. Even the title of the novel hints at this ambiguity. "Magic" is a subtle but pervading theme, and conjures up two contrasting types. On one hand, there are the black arts, witchcraft, sorcery, and evil. On the other, there is beauty, enchantment, airiness and light.

In the context of the novel, the reference to the mountain also takes on a tone of ambuguity. Mountains usually signify goodness, majesty and health. This mountain is inhabited by "sick" people. Mountains usually represent an "up" as contrasted with the "down" symbolic of evil. Nevertheless, during the first meeting between Hans and Settembrini there are allusions which indicate that in spite of the heights Hans now seems to inhabit, he has actually gone downward. First, Settembrini refers to the Director of the Sanatorium, Hofrat Behrens, and his assistant, Krokowski, as Minos and Rhadamanthus -- two of the judges of the lower world.[26] And if that is not specific enough, the dialogue continues:

> "You are bold indeed, thus to descend into these depths peopled by the vacant and the idle dead--"
> "Descend, Herr Settembrini? I protest. Here I have climbed up some five thousand feet to get here--"
> "That was only seeming. Upon my honour, it was an illusion," the Italian said, with a decisive wave of the hand. "We are sunk enough here, aren't we, Lieutenant?" [27]

From the very beginning both Hans and the reader discover that, in the world of the Magic Mountain, things are not always what they seem, appearances may mask another, deeper truth. Nothing is as straightforward and open as it is in the Flat-lands. Everything is riddled with ambiguity.

Hofrat Behrens also hints at the ambiguity of the Mountain when

he explains to Hans:

> "Now: our air up here is good for the disease -- I mean good against the disease, you understand -- you think so, don't you? Well it is true. But it is also good for the disease; it begins by speeding it up, in that it revolutionizes the whole body; it brings the latent weakness to the surface and makes it break out." [28]

The ambiguity and danger; the "questionableness" of Hans' sojourn on the Mountain is summed up in a very brief conversation between Naphta and Hans -- a conversation about alchemy. According to Naphta, the chief goal of alchemy went far beyond the turning of base metal into gold; such a quest was only the allegorical statement of the true goal which was, "...purification, refinement, metamorphosis, transubstantiation into a higher state,..."[29] And the primary symbol of alchemic transmutation "...was par excellence the sepulchre."[30] Naphta goes on to explain:

> "The path of mysteries and purification was encompassed by dangers, it led through the pangs of death, through the kingdom of dissolution; and the learner, the neophyte, is youth itself, thirsting after the miracles of life, clamouring to be quickened to a demonic capacity of experience, and led by shrouded forms which are the shadowing-forth of mystery."[31]

Naphta might well be describing Hans' own journey to the mountain; a journey which Settembrini describes as a visit to the realm of the dead. The goal of Hans' journey is transubstantiation and the path of the journey leads through dangers -- death and dissolution.

In short, the Mountain and its atmosphere are capable of producing health, but also, disease. They are capable of turning ordinary base metal into "gold" -- but also of destroying and dissolving the original material. In Hans they first produce disease. There is no question of that. The question is whether or not this "disease" is a stage on the way to a higher health. Read on both a literal and symbolic plane,

Hans' body and soul are ripe for revolution, and the Mountain brings this "latent weakness to the surface and makes it break out."[32] On one hand, he contracts tuberculosis; on the other, he "contracts" dissatisfaction with life in the Flat-land. The danger in both these diseases lies in the fact that he may succumb to them. Disease may lead only to disease; to tuberculosis and to an idle and self-indulgent life isolated from the world and productive activity.

The ambiguity of the Mountain takes on a further nuance during a discussion between Hans and Peeperkorn on the nature of poisons. Peeperkorn claims:

> ...the truth was, in the world of matter, that all substances were the vehicle of both life and death, all of them were medicinal and all poisonous, in fact therapeutics and toxicology were one and the same, man could be cured by poison, and substances known to be the bearers of life could kill at a thrust, in a single second of time. [33]

Finally, Hans himself comments on the ambiguity of the Mountain when, in reference to the drunken Peeperkorn, he remarks, "Still, his drunkenness was not debasing, there was no loss of dignity; rather it combined with the nobility of his nature to produce an immense and awe-inspiring effect.... Everything depended upon who was drunk -- a drunken personality was far from being the same as a drunken tinker."[34]

The Mountain and its freedom from normal restrictions are like poison and drunkenness: their effects differ. For some, it is disastrous. Settembrini describes for Hans what may happen:

> "Six months at most after they get here, these young people -- and they are mostly young who come -- have lost every idea they had except flirtation and temperature. And if they remain a year, they will have lost the power of grasping any other; they will find any other "cruel" -- or, more precisely, ignorant and inadequate."[35]

The release from the bonds of "form" and exteriorily imposed restraint

may lead to such a phenomenon as Caroline Stöhr, a fellow patient about whom Hans states: "no, illness and affliction had had no power to refine Caroline Stöhr."[36] She represents the disgusting possibility of vulgar self-indulgence. Mann illustrates the undisciplined indulgence of her nature in the following excerpt:

> She began to talk about how fascinating it was to cough. It was a solid satisfaction, when you felt a tickling come in your chest, deep down, and grow and grow, to reach down after it, and get at it, so to say. Sneezing was much the same thing. You kept on wanting to sneeze until you simply couldn't stand it any longer; you looked as if you were tipsy; you drew a couple of breaths; then out it came, and you forgot everything else in the bliss of sensation. Sometimes the explosion repeated itself two or three times. That was the sort of pleasure life gave you free of charge. Another one was the joy of scratching your chillblains in the spring, when they itched so gorgeously; you took a furious pleasure in scratching 'til the blood came; and if you happened to look in the glass you would be astonished to see the ghastly face you made. [37]

Such self-involved voluptuousness is one of the critical dangers of the Magic Mountain and Hans acknowledges this danger to his own moral well-being as reflected in Frau Stöhr: "Caroline Stöhr was dreadful. If anything had power to distract our young Hans Castorp, in the course of his sincerely felt spiritual strivings, it was the personality, the very existence of this woman."[38]

Yet another danger of this indulgent life is represented by Herr Wehsal. "Wehsal" is German for suffering, and suffering is what Wehsal does best. He, like Hans, is in love with Clavdia Chauchet. He, like Hans, indulges these feelings. He represents that which Hans himself might well become -- a voluptuary. Wehsal enjoys his torment and hugs it tightly to him. He represents a more refined and "spiritualized" voluptuousness than Frau Stöhr's, but a voluptuousness still to be avoided. He comments to Hans:

> "There are many kinds of torture, Castorp, and whichever one you are under, your one desire and longing is to be free of it. But the torture of flesly lust is the only one you can never wish to be free of, except through satisfaction. Never, never in any other way, never at any price."[39]

When Hans admonishes him for his excesses, he insists on his right to dwell on and to express his "feelings." Hans replies: "And every human being has the right to do it, too, if you like. But my dear Wehsal, it seems to me there are certain rights a man simply does not assert."[40] Seeing himself in Wehsal, Hans begins to see the desirability of discipline in the matter of emotions and feelings.

On the other hand, a release from the social bonds of form need not lead to self-indulgence of either kind; it may lead to a Pieter Peeperkorn. Whereas Frau Stöhr's excess is petty and Herr Wehsal's is morbid, Pieter Peeperkorn's excesses are "on the grand scale."[41] The words repeatedly used in connection with him convey this "grandness" -- words like: kingly, regal, imposing, noble, majestic, over-whelming, and commanding. Hans, in attempting to describe the awe-inspiring quality of Peeperkorn comments to Settembrini:

> "But I ask you. Can you deny that he puts us all in his pocket? That's expressing it crudely, perhaps -- but, so far as I can see, you can't deny it. He puts us all in his pocket; somehow or other, he has the right to laugh at us all -- but where does he get it? Where does it come from? How does he do it? Certainly it's not that he's so clever. I admit that you can't talk about his cleverness. He's inarticulate -- it's more feeling with him, feeling is just his mark, if you'll excuse my language. No, as I say, it's not out of cleverness, not on intellectual grounds at all, that he can do as he likes with us. You would be right to deny it. It isn't the point. But not on physical either. It's not the massive shoulders, or the strength of his biceps; not because he could knock us down if he liked. He isn't conscious of his power; if he does take a notion, he can easily be put off it with a couple of civilized words. --So it is not physical... But the result is what we see, the dynamic effect -- he puts us in his pocket. We've only one word for that -- personality. We use it in another, more regular sense too, in which we are all personalities -- morally, legally,

> and otherwise. But that is not the sense in which I am using it now. I am speaking of the mystery of personality, something above either cleverness or stupidity, and something we all have to take into account: partly to try to understand it; but partly, where that is not possible, to be edified by it. You are all for values; but isn't personality a value too? It seems so to me...it seems positive and absolute, like life -- in short, something quite worth while and calculated to make us trouble about it." [42]

Hans is aware that the nature of the Mountain is to free and intensify both one's good and bad points. Some persons cannot survive the relaxation of external form; others are made richer and better by possessing more individual freedom of expression. Yet, Hans is not entirely in good faith about his <u>own</u> possibilities and his <u>own</u> danger because of the powerful lure of Clavdia and the Mountain. Mann expresses this bad faith thus:

> What a creature is man, how idly his conscience betrays him! How easy it is for him to think he hears, even in the voice of duty, a license to passion! Hans Castorp listened to Herr Settembrini out of a sense of duty and fairness, in the idea of hearing both sides; with the best of intentions he tested the latter's views on the subject of the republic, reason and the "bello stile." He was entirely receptive. And all the while he was finding it more and more permissible to give his thoughts and dreams free rein in another and quite opposite direction. Indeed, to give expression to all that we suspect or divine, we think it not unlikely that Hans Castorp hearkened to Herr Settembrini's discourse in order to get from his own conscience an indulgence which otherwise might not have been forthcoming. [43]

The content of this powerful attraction which can so demoralize Hans as to involve him in deliberate self-deception is best described by Herr Albin, a fellow patient who, aware of his near approach to death, describes the pleasure of being able to relinquish the need for striving and for making distinctions, the need for order and discipline:

> "Incurable, ladies, as I sit here before you, an incurable case; the Hofrat himself is hardly at the pains any longer to pretend I am not. Grant me at least the freedom which is all I can get out of the situation. In school, when it was settled that someone was not to move up to the next

> form, he just stopped where he was; nobody asked him any more questions, he did not have to do any more work. I am in that happy condition now. I need do nothing more, I don't count, I can laugh at the whole thing."[44]

Hans, from his balcony above, overhears this conversation and its effect on him is powerful.

> He had an indistinct notion that Herr Albin was a puppy, yet could not resist a certain envy. In particular, the school-days comparison made an impression on him; he himself had stuck in the lower second and well remembered this situation, of course rather to be ashamed of and yet not without its funny side. In particular he recalled the agreeable sensation of being totally lost and abandoned, with which, in the fourth quarter, he gave up the running -- he could have "laughed at the whole thing." His reflections were dim and confused, it would be difficult to define them; but in effect it seemed to him that, though honor might possess certain advantages, yet shame had others, and not inferior: advantages, even, that were well-nigh boundless in their scope. He tried to put himself in Herr Albin's place and see how it must feel to be finally relieved of the burden of a respectable life and made free of the infinite realms of shame; and the young man shuddered at the wild wave of sweetness which swept over him at the thought and drove on his labouring heart to an even quicker pace. [45]

There is no doubt but what Hans is powerfully drawn toward the life offered him on the Magic Mountain, a life virtually free of the restraints and demands of society. After only a few weeks time, he is already in danger of losing contact with the flat-land and his life as a productive citizen there. First, he succumbs to tuberculosis and takes to his bed; then he comments to Settembrini:

> "No, I don't think you, for instance, as homo humanus, would feel very comfortable down there; it often struck me that it was pretty strong, as I can see now, though I am a native of the place and for myself have never had to suffer from it. If a man does not serve the best and dearest wines at his dinners, people don't go, and his daughters are left on his hands. That is what they are like. Lying here and looking at it from this distance, I find it pretty gross. What were the words you used -- phlegmatic and -- and energetic. That's very good. But what does it mean? It means hard, cold, and what do hard and cold mean? They mean cruel. It is a cruel atmosphere

> down there, cruel and ruthless. When you lie here and look at it, from a distance, it makes you shudder."[46]

To which Settembrini replies:

> "...the reproach of cruelty rests upon somewhat sentimental grounds. You would scarcely even have leveled it while you were in that atmosphere, for fear of being ridiculous in your own eyes. You left it to drones to make, and rightly. That you make it now bears witness to a certain estrangement, which I should be sorry to see increase; since he who makes it is in danger of being lost to life, to the manner of life to which he was born."[47]

Settembrini fears Hans' nature. He fears his attraction to the indulgent Clavdia, and to "idle" speculation concerning the mysteries of the universe. Both show a tendency to inexactness, and a refusal to make distinctions. With this in mind, Settembrini warns Hans against the tendency to think in terms of paradoxes, calling them "the greatest depravity of all!"[48]

> "Have respect," he adjured him, "for your humanity, Engineer! Confide in your God-given power of clear thought, and hold in abhorrence these luxations of the brain, these miasmas of the spirit! Delusions? The mystery of life? Caro mio! When the moral courage to make decisions and distinctions between reality and deception degenerates to that point, then there is an end of life, of judgment, of the creative deed: the process of decay sets in, moral scepsis, and does its deadly work." [49]

Settembrini equates Hans' attraction to physical voluptuousness with a kind of "mental voluptuousness" which consists in dwelling on fathomless mysteries and ambiguities until one is lost in a maze of arguments and speculations. It is the charge of "voluptuary" which he also levels against Leo Naphta, the Jesuit dialectician; and it is obvious that the charge has more than a little to do with Naphta's religious beliefs and the mysticism that goes along with them. And there is every reason to believe that such a charge leveled at Hans at least has some validity. Hans, carried away with his metaphysical wanderings in

the infinite goes so far as to declare, "Form is folderol,"[50] the implication, of course, being that "feeling" is all.

Hans' safety depends upon his balancing between two dangers. On the one side is form and on the other is feeling. To abdicate to form would be to fearfully reject the new thoughts and sensations he has experienced on the mountain; to return to the flat-land and to his narrow, safe, and well-ordered existence. To abdicate to feeling is to risk complete dissolution of the form which is the individual conscience.

Even though Hans is powerfully attracted to the indulgent life of passions, he is also attracted to the "formal" side of life. Tradition and formality also exert a powerful influence on his life. This attraction is best revealed in an often repeated episode from his childhood involving a christening basin which is a Castorp family heirloom. The child, Hans, often made his Grandfather show him the basin and read the names of the successive owners engraved on it:

> The old man named each one to his grandson, pointing with beringed index finger. There was Hans Castorp's father's name, there was Grandfather's own, there was Great-grandfather's; then the "great" came doubled, tripled, quadrupled, from the old man's mouth.... That great-great-great-great -- what a hollow sound it had, how it spoke of the falling away of time, yet how it seemed the expression of a piously cherished link between the present, his own life, and the depth of the past! [51]

This attachment to the past and its traditions is an illustration of one type of the "orderly sensibility." However, during his stay on the Mountain Hans tries the limits of tradition, custom and order and finds them lacking. He calls the world below, "hard and cruel." Settembrini, with his mixture of literary classicism and pragmatic humanism, he describes as a "windbag and a hand-organ man,"[52] "forever blowing on his penny pipe of reason."[53] Still, Hans is attached to Settembrini and

ridicule him as he may, he finds his presence comforting: "...he leaned upon Herr Settembrini, set great store by his character and opinions; and the thought of being cast off would have weighed upon his spirit more heavily than that remembered boyish feeling of being left behind at school and not counting anymore, of enjoying, like Herr Albin, the boundless advantages of his shameful state."[54]

For his part, Settembrini represents one variety of the moral sensibility of order -- rational, anti-metaphysical, humanistic order. He replies to his critics that, "He had been accused of exaggerating the importance of form. But he who cherished beauty of form did so because it enhanced human dignity...".[55] He also typifies the utilitarian notion that morality is merely a human structure aimed at producing the happiness of all. He expounds this position in the following way:

> What are we? Master-builders and builders on a building. The purpose of all is one, the good of the whole the fundamental tenet of the brotherhood. What is this good, what is this building? It is the true social structure, the perfecting of humanity, the new Jerusalem. [56]

The Jesuit Naphta expresses a dissatisfaction with this view (a dissatisfaction shared by Hans) when he retorts:

> And this morality of Herr Settembrini's, what was it, what did he want? It was life-bound, and thus entirely utilitarian; it was pathetically unheroic. Its end and aim was to make men grow old and happy, rich and comfortable -- and that was all there was to it. And this Philistine philosophy, this gospel of work and reason, served Herr Settembrini as an ethical system. As far as he, Naphta, was concerned, he would continue to deny that it was anything but the sheerest and shabbiest Bourgeiosiedom. [57]

However, Haphta's suggestion that true morality consists in submersion in "mystic community" is hardly more acceptable to Hans. Naphta claims:

> "...the principle of freedom has outlived its usefulness... All educational organizations worthy of the name have always recognized what must be the ultimate and significant principle of pedagogy: namely the absolute mandate, the iron bond, discipline, sacrifice, the renunciation of the ego, the curbing of the personality. And lastly, it is an unloving miscomprehension of youth to believe that it finds its pleasure in freedom: its deepest pleasure lies in obedience.... Liberation and development of the individual are not the key to our age; they are not what our age demands. What it needs, what it wrestles after, what it will create -- is Terror."[58]

Leo Naphta represents the orderly sensibility in the guise of transcendent absolutism. The word of God is law; there are absolutely no exceptions. The problem is that "the word of God" must be interpreted by humans, such as Naphta, and the God he sees is stern. Hans complains:

> Absolute authority, iron discipline, coercion, submission, the Terror! All that might have its own value, but it paid scant homage to the individual and the dignity of his critical faculty...it was rigid, it was devout, to the very marrow. [59]

For Naphta, the personal feelings of the individual are not important. When personal intuition is pitted against "authority" authority invariably wins.

Hans is hard put to decide which position is the worst, Naphta's or Settembrini's. He comments on their constant arguing:

> They forced everything to an issue, wrangled bitterly over extremes, whereas it seemed to him, Hans Castorp, as though somewhere between two intolerable positions, between bombastic humanism and analphabetic barbarism, must lie something which one might personally call the human. [60]

But once again, as we saw in the last chapter, in spite of the apparent antagonism between Naphta and Settembrini, there is a peculiar blending of their opposing positions. They finally join hands on the issue of individual freedom -- just as do the relativists and the

absolutists. Naphta's position on this matter is apparent from the quotations attributed to him. However, Settembrini, with his talk of democracy, human rights and human dignity, surprises Hans a bit when he finally is forced to the issue and explains in answer to Hans' question:

> "I bound myself to an answer. You are speaking of a unity which we seek to bring about, but which today, alas, does not exist. If it comes to exist -- and I repeat that we labour with silent assiduity upon this great task -- then indeed the religious creed of the Freemason will be unanimous, and it will be 'Ecrasez l' infame!"
>
> "Will that be obligatory? It would hardly be tolerant."
>
> "The problem of tolerance, my dear Engineer, is rather too large for you to tackle. Do not forget that tolerance becomes crime, if extended to evil." [61]

If one reads between Settembrini's carefully chosen lines, what emerges is that his vision of the world and morality has no more place in it for the dissenting individual than does Naphta's. Naphta himself explicates Settembrini's position when he explains to Hans the significance of Settembrini's membership in the Freemasons:

> "The idea of the society is rooted in and inseparably bound up with the absolute. By consequence, it is terroristic; that is to say, anti-liberal. It lifts the burden from the individual conscience, and consecrates in the name of the absolute every means even to bloodshed, even to crime." [62]

Naphta's Absolute, his "stone wall" is his rigid religious code. Settembrini's Absolute, his "stone wall" is his conception of the perfect society; or what might be called, his "science" of humanity. Hans finds both intolerable. Between the rigours of ethical absolutism pushed to its logical conclusion and objective ethical relativism pushed to its logical conclusion there is no breathing space for the individual. Both conceptions end in a military strictness, and as Hans is quick to point out, he is a "civilian" and as a

civilian, he has his own "duties" to perform.

But in what do these duties consist? It is here the ambiguities of Hans' delicate position begin.

At the time Hans' cousin, Joachim, finally departs the sanatorium Hans is faced with the choice of going with Joachim back down to his old life in the flat-lands, or staying in the Mountains with Clavdia and his metaphysical wanderings. His own internal argument runs, in part, like this:

> On the contrary, Joachim's rash departure did -- in honesty -- offer his cousin a support, now, before the impossible should become utterly so, a guide and companion on a path which of himself he would never, never find again. Ah, if one consulted humanistic pedagogy, how humanistic pedagogy, would adjure him to take the hand and accept the offered guidance! But Herr Settembrini was only a representative -- of things and forces worth hearing about, it was true, but not the only forces there were. And with Joachim it was the same. He was a soldier.... But for him, [Hans] the civilian, the thing was different. For him -- ah, here was the right idea, the thought which he had set himself to evolve, as he lay out in the cold and damp -- for him the real desertion would lie in his taking advantage of the occasion to dash off unlawfully -- or half unlawfully -- to the flat-land. It would be the abandonment of certain comprehensive responsibilities which had grown up out of his contemplation of the image called 'Homo Dei;' it would be the betrayal of that appointed task of "stock-taking," that hard and harassing task which was really beyond the powers native to him, but yet afforded his spirit such nameless and adventurous joys; that task it was his duty to perform, here in his chair, and up there in his blue-blossoming retreat.[63]

Hans cannot "desert to the flat-lands." He cannot accept the military and orderly outlook of Naphta, Settembrini, or Joachim. He must pursue his newly-found freedom even though it leads through an abyss from which he may never return. Hans comments:

> "The more I think of it, the surer I am that the bed of repose -- by which I mean my deck-chair, of course -- has given me more food for thought in these ten months than the mill down in the flat-land in all the years before. There's simply no denying it." [64]

The "formal" life Hans rejects is apt to lead either to shallowness and superficiality or to inhuman and "immoral" rigor as it does in the cases of Settembrini and Naphta. But it may lead to a clean and healthy life. Joachim illustrates this last possibility. He is a well-mannered, universally well-liked, even admirable fellow. He might well be considered to be the most sympathetic character in the novel. He studiously avoids anything which would lead him off the straight and narrow path he has chosen for himself. Correspondingly he is not "adventuresome." He expresses his own defining attitudes when he admonishes Hans:

> "Oh, you, with your learning! Getting wiser all the time, with your biology, and your botany, and your continual changing from one idea to another! You began philosophizing about time the first day you came. But we didn't come up here to acquire wisdom. We came to acquire health, to get healthier and healthier until we are entirely well, and are free to quit, and go down below where we belong.... You will find that when people discuss their views nothing ever comes of it but confusion worse confounded. I tell you, it doesn't matter in the least what a man's views are, so long as he is a decent chap. The best thing is to have no opinions, and just do one's duty." 65

The adventurous life of questioning accepted standards and delving into one's own feelings and intuitions, the life which Hans takes upon himself, may lead to a "higher" healthiness -- the healthiness of a commanding personality like Peeperkorn; or, it may lead to the common and indulgent voluptuousness exemplified by Frau Stöhr; and the tangled and self-depreciating consciousness of Herr Wehsal. Hans does not know, and cannot know which type his own indulgence will lead to. He is not even quite sure which type he truly hopes will triumph. Such mixed emotions and motivations are the very stuff of ambiguity.

In addition to the dangers represented by Frau Stöhr and Herr Wehsal, the danger of withdrawing from the relative safety of the

orderly sensibility is compounded by the imperative need for morality to have some kind of objectivity. "Order" provides that objectivity; but if morality is thought of as a function of subjectivity, it tends either toward complete chaos, or towards an equation of "might" and "right" as we saw in the case of Nietzsche.

Mynheer Peeperkorn illustrates both the merits and dangers of the intuitive sensibility. In his role of "personality" and champion of "feeling" he is somewhat reminiscent of a Nietzschean "over-man," and he faces similar problems. He scorns conventional morality and seeks his own path. He, as does Nietzsche, thinks in terms of challenge and struggle. Hans says of him: "...he is sort of military, a bit like my poor cousin, in that he has a point d'honneur, a sore spot, as it were, which is feeling, life."[66] The challenge Peeperkorn sets for himself is to experience the simple pleasures of life to the full, and in so doing, pay appropriate homage to them. As he explains to Hans:

> "Feeling, you understand, is the masculine force that rouses life. Life slumbers. It needs to be roused, to be awakened to a drunken marriage with divine feeling. For feeling, young man, is godlike. Man is godlike, in that he feels. He is the feeling of God. God created him in order to feel through him. Man is nothing but the organ through which God consummates his marriage with roused and intoxicated life. If man fails in feeling, it is blasphemy; it is the surrender of his masculinity, a cosmic catastrophe, an irreconcilable horror--" [67]

Peeperkorn speaks the language of absolute demands, but, unlike the case of the orderly sensibility, the intuitive sensibility has no obviously accessible objective limit to its demands -- either for good or bad. The demands the intuitive sensibility makes upon itself; the demands Peeperkorn makes upon himself are limitless, and therefore definitionally incapable of satisfaction. So, in addition to all the other dangers connected with the intuitive sensibility, there lurks the

danger of despair. It is this danger to which Peeperkorn falls prey, and it is this danger which Thomas Mann illustrates when he has Peeperkorn die by his own hand. The healthiest example of the intuitive sensibility found in the book commits suicide. Such a resolution to the Peeperkorn episode certainly sheds an ambiguous light on the moral status of that sensibility.

The book itself ends on a similarly ambiguous note when the hero, Hans Castorp, finally leaves the Magic Mountain at the outbreak of World War I. After all of his discoveries and adventures, the reader is left uncertain as to his fate. The implication is that he goes to an almost certain death; the worry is that he never does, perhaps never could, reach that higher state of health and that all his adventures have been in vain.

Mann does not clear up the ambiguities of the two differing moral experiences found in The Magic Mountain. He merely presents them to the reader as ambiguous. Critics have interpreted the novel in differing ways. R. Hinton Thomas explains:

> The Flatland, one might be tempted to generalize, is the sphere of morality, the Magic Mountain that of its negation. But the principle of interdependence of morality and sin is explicitly enunciated in the novel as in Mann's statement a little later that true morality presupposes adventuring in the realm of sin. [68]

But it is possible that Thomas has been tempted to over-generalize. Though it is true that the novel in many ways lends itself to Thomas' interpretation, the theme of the novel and of morality is more tangled than that. Mann's own feelings about the two sensibilities represented in the novel are more ambiguous than Mr. Thomas allows for. J. Lesser quotes Mann as explaining, "What I do and write is concerned with the antithesis of romanticism and rationalism, the one of which I suspect

and the other of which I despise...".[69]

Friedrich Carl Sell elucidates those two sensibilities which Mann claims to respectively suspect and despise in the following manner:

> Rationalism comprehends and guides life preferably by reason; it appreciates reality. The classical Greek civilization, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and the technical age are its outstanding representations. Irrationalism believes in religious feeling, in the creative genius, in visions, in music, in instinct, in intuition, in unconscious vitality. Early Christianity, medieval Mysticism, Gothic art, the ecstasies of the Counter-Reformation and the Baroque, and Romanticism mark its phases. [70]

If it is the case that Romanticism (i.e. intuition, feeling, and rebellion against the restrictions of form) inevitably leads to a higher health, why does Mann "suspect" it? Why refer to it as the "realm of sin?" Yet, if he is truly suspicious of it, why disparage classicism and order? Even though Mann claims to "suspect" romanticism and to "despise" rationalism, it is not always clear that he does either. Mann's love for and affinity to romanticism whelms up over and over again in The Magic Mountain, and is climaxed in his creation of Myhnheer Peeperkorn. Though he may suspect the romantic attitude, he, like Hans, is obviously and powerfully attracted to it.

In the case of rationalism, Mann may be seen to withdraw (in part) from his earlier condemnation of it during the course of his writing of The Magic Mountain. Explains Sell:

> Der Zauberberg was intended to be, the author says, "a book of good will and of resolution, a book of farewell to many beloved things, many a dangerous sympathy, a book ...of educational self-discipline. Its service is service of life, its will is health, its aim is the future...". This was the author's intention; whether he succeeded in making it completely clear in his extraordinary book is perhaps another question. [71]

That it is not clear that Mann decides against romanticism in favor of classicism is evidenced by Mr. Thomas' interpretation of the theme of

the story as being the "interdependence of morality and sin."[72] Mann does not say a final farewell to intuitionism, and unconscious vitality -- he stands his ground with Naphta in believing in the possibility of transubstantiation. Such a possibility is not "normal" or "healthy" but as Mann explains: "Disease is a mere category which derives its meaning from what it is coupled with, whom it belongs to. What matters is who is sick: an ordinary blockhead, in whom the disease has no intellectual or cultural aspects -- or a Nietzsche, a Dostoevsky."[73]

Mann obviously believes in the possibility of creative genius setting itself above social morality. But, he also warns us of the dangers of such abnormality. Creativity cannot survive and prosper within the bounds of strict social morality which reduces everything to mediocrity and conformity; but creativity cannot be boundless either. Mann portrays the dangers of placing oneself outside the bounds of the social conscience and the sensibility of order. He elucidates the dangers of inwardness and subjectivity; the dangers of involving oneself in deciphering feelings and their ambiguous motives and meanings. Such a quest is, by nature, self-involved and voluptuous. It is a quest which is boundless in its demands and so, given to the possibility of despair. These dangers include some of those pointed out by Moore and Kant in their rejection of the intuitive sensibility.

As Mann has Hans Castorp pronounce: "There are two paths to life: one is the regular one, direct, honest. The other is bad, it leads through death -- that is the 'spiritual' way."[74] The regular, direct, and honest path is the path of the sensibility of order. This is the path of the Flat-lands. It is a path which may fall into a

kind of immorality should it cease being the result of an individually experienced feeling of an appropriateness which transcends the individual and his particular and idiosyncratic feelings and desires. It is a path which is appealing in many ways. Even the Jesuit Naphta says of it: "There was much to admire in the monumental respectability, the majestic Philistinism of the middle-class consciousness. But one must never forget that as it stood, straddle-legged, firmly planted on earth, hands behind the back, chest well out, it was the embodiment of irreligion."[75] The danger of the orderly sensibility is a loss of contact with the transcendent, a self-righteous strictness with others and a complacency toward the self which is far from moral.

The path Hans calls the 'spirituel' path is the path of the sensibility of intuition. The dangers of this path make it understandable why Hans might proclaim that true morality consists in what hurts and destroys us. It is not a path which should be taken by everyone; and even when it is taken, it should be taken in fear and trembling. The ultimate danger of this path lies either in the self-deception of contact with the transcendent used as an excuse to act as one wants; or in the abandonment of the concept of transcendence and the resultant self-indulgence of desire.

An important fact to keep in mind concerning both these paths is the need of both for elements of the other. The sensibility of order must be the result of a moral intuition. The sensibility of intuition must have as its ultimate guide a moral order, and it must seek to impose that order upon itself. These two sensibilities can only be wholly abstracted in thought. In reality, their existence is intricately interwove. Separation of the two can only be a method of

describing moral tendencies. It is the intricate interweaving of intuition and order which produces the ambiguity of morality.

ENDNOTES

[1]Nicolas Berdyaev, The Destiny of Man, p. 142.

[2]Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Notes from Underground, p. 106.

[3]Thomas Mann, The Magic Mountain, p. 340.

[4]To arrive at moral knowledge and certainty through the use of "pure practical reason" was, of course, the goal of Kant. As we noted in the third chapter, pure reason did not prove adequate to the task.

[5]Hermann Hesse, Steppenwolf, trans. Basil Creighton, updated by Joseph Mileck (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1969), pp. 59-60.

[6]Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra: Part I in The Portable Nietzsche, trans. and ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Viking Press, 1968), pp. 129-130.

[7]Dostoyevsky, Notes from Underground, p. 98.

[8]In Nietzsche's, The Genealogy of Morals, he discusses the origin of the words "good" and "bad" in their respective hierarchical class senses of "aristocratic" and "common" (p. 162). He then goes on to discuss the triumph of the "common" man over the "aristocratic" and the subsequent usurpation of moral terminology by the common man to refer to his own values. This usurpation results in the formulation of morality as "the commonly accepted" and the "average."

> --But what is all this talk about nobler values? Let us face facts: the people have triumphed -- or the slaves, the mob, the herd, whatever you wish to call them -- the lords are a thing of the past, and the ethics of the common man is completely triumphant (p. 169).

Nietzsche is appalled by the triumph of the herd instinct and urges a return to the older sense of moral terms. "All truly noble morality grows out of triumphant self-affirmation" (p. 170).

Friedrich Nietzsche, The Geneology of Morals in The Birth of Tragedy and The Geneology of Morals, trans. Francis Golffing (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956), pp. 162, 169, and 170 respectively.

[9]George A. Morgan, What Nietzsche Means (New York: Harper and Row: Harper Torchbooks, 1965), p. 190.

[10]Ibid., p. 188. "In this respect, Nietzsche gives much credit to Christian morality. It over-tamed man, but it tamed him. Its fundamental 'errors' mitigated the destructiveness of his passions; 'the beast in us has to be lied to -- morality is an emergency fib.' Also, the 'errors' have ennobled man and raised him above the animal level, by causing him to think of himself as a creature of another order, and to impose on himself, therefore more rigorous laws."

[11]Nietzsche rejects the idea of irrational indulgence and would seem to agree that it is a slavish ideal. As was discussed in the preceeding note, he thanks the conception of morality as absolute command for establishing in men the ability of discipline and restraint. However, he feels the time is ripe for men to impose an individual discipline upon themselves rather than having a discipline imposed from without. What Nietzsche fails to take into account is the resemblance of these self-imposed disciplines to the exteriorly imposed disciplines. It is only in the case of automatic and unreflective obedience that exterior laws become any less dependent on self-discipline than do self-imposed laws. On the other hand, it seems quite possible for self-imposed disciplines to fall to the level of habit and routine. If it is slavish to deny oneself in order to obey exteriorly imposed laws, why is it not slavish to deny oneself in order to obey self-imposed laws?

[12]Karl Schmid, "Aspects of Evil in the Creative," in Evil: Studies in Jungian Thought, ed. James Hillman (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1967), pp. 230-231.

[13]Ibid., p. 231.

[14]Ibid., pp. 242-243. Schmid makes the not unusual comparison between the theory of Nietzsche's "Ubermensch" and the Third Reich. Says Schmid: "What happens when anti-rational spontaneity oversteps the confines of art to become the watchword of a nation? What happens when -- to put it bluntly, without ifs and buts -- the idea of spontaneous genius, bound by no law, enters the field of politics, when it takes its place on the battleground of history, when it makes history? ... When in the twentieth century, more radically than ever before, undeterred by the slightest respect for convention, the instinctual depths of the nation -- its myth, its blood, its soil, its oldest passions -- were collectively worshipped as creative, what happened was the Third Reich."

[15]The definition of morality as power leads to the conclusion that whatever prevails is good; but the description of what "is" the case as being what "ought" to be the case strikes one as being superfluous. If it "is" regardless of our feelings toward it, the judgment that it is also "good" is either beside the point, or else it implies another standard besides its sheer facticity by which it is judged to be good or bad. Nietzsche, in affirming power rather than just acknowledging it, slips from the amoral world of power to the moral world of judgment, and this equation of morality with power leads to just the sort of atrocity Karl Schmid denounces. Atrocities would be better committed simply in the name of power than in the name of moral

value. Nietzsche leaves us a choice between a completely amoral world and a world in which might makes right. As Ralph Barton Perry claims, "...it is necessary to distinguish the qualities of fidelity, discipline, perserverance and enthusiasm which lend vigor to any cult, from the specific content of the moral cult. One must be prepared to reject the edifying associations of the word 'ideal,' and recognize that ideals may be moral, immoral, or unmoral. Similarly, morality does not consist merely in having principles and scruples, but in the nature of that to which obligation is felt and sacrifice is made." Ralph Barton Perry, Realms of Value, p. 87.

It is just this type of discrimination for which Nietzsche provides no help.

[16]Berdyaev, The Destiny of Man, p. 92. "The fatal consequence of the legalistic discrimination between good and evil is tyranny of the law which means tyranny of society over the person and of the universally binding idea over the personal, the particular, unique and individual. The hard-set crystallized forms of herd life in which the creative fire is almost extinct oppress like a nightmare the creative life of personality. The law thwarts life and does violence to it."

[17]W. T. Stace, The Concept of Morals (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), p. 115.

[18]"Kirghiz" refers to a Mongolian race dwelling chiefly in west central Asia. Mann obviously has in mind the slant of Clavdia's eyes. Clavdia, a native Russian, seems to stand for the East, a place Mann associates with a certain laxity both in thought and action. He is continually playing the mysterious and indulgent East off against the industrious and progressive West.

[19]Mann, The Magic Mountain, p. 32.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid., pp. 31-32.

[22]Ibid., p. 32.

[23]William James, "The Moral Philosopher and Moral Life," in Essays on Faith and Morals, ed. Ralph Barton Perry (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1970), pp. 211-212.

[24]In the opening of the novel, Mann continually emphasizes Hans' mediocrity, describing him as "neither genius nor dunderhead." The Magic Mountain, p. 31.

[25]"Highly Questionable" is the name of a division in Chapter VII of The Magic Mountain, but it is also an aura which pervades the entire book. From the beginning of Hans' investigations on the Mountain, the reader is struck by an indefinable sense of indiscretion and perversity which seems to hover over the novel.

[26]Mann, The Magic Mountain, p. 57.

[27]Ibid., pp. 57-58.

[28]Ibid., pp. 181-182.

[29]Ibid., p. 510.

[30]Ibid., p. 511.

[31]Ibid., pp. 511-512.

[32]Ibid., p. 182.

[33]Ibid., p. 578.

[34]Ibid., p. 565.

[35]Ibid., p. 198.

[36]Ibid., p. 553.

[37]Ibid., p. 172.

[38]Ibid., p. 298.

[39]Ibid., p. 615.

[40]Ibid., p. 617.

[41]Ibid., p. 568.

[42]Ibid., p. 583.

[43]Ibid., p. 160.

[44]Ibid., p. 80.

[45]Ibid., p. 81.

[46]Ibid., p. 198.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Ibid., p. 221.

[49]Ibid., p. 667.

[50]Ibid., p. 267.

[51]Ibid., p. 22.

[52]Ibid., p. 478.

[53]Ibid., p. 496.

[54]Ibid., p. 355.

[55]Ibid., p. 58.

[56]Ibid., p. 515.

[57]Ibid., p. 464.

[58]Ibid., p. 400.

[59]Ibid., p. 467.

[60]Ibid., p. 523.

[61]Ibid., p. 516.

[62]Ibid., pp. 508-509.

[63]Ibid., p. 421.

[64]Ibid., p. 376.

[65]Ibid., pp. 385-386.

[66]Ibid., p. 585.

[67]Ibid., p. 603.

[68]R. Hinton Thomas, Thomas Mann: The Mediation of Art (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), p. 101.

[69]J. Lesser, "Of Thomas Mann's Renunciation, II," Germanic Review 26 (February 1951), p. 23.

[70]Friedrich Carl Sell, "Thomas Mann and the Problem of Anti-Intellectualism," Germanic Review 15 (February 1940), p. 281.

[71]Ibid., p. 285.

[72]Thomas, Thomas Mann: The Mediation of Art, p. 101.

[73]Thomas Mann, "Nietzsche's Philosophy in the Light of Recent History" in Last Essays, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959), p. 144.

[74]Mann, The Magic Mountain, p. 596.

[75]Ibid., p. 463.

CHAPTER VI

THE AMBIGUITY OF MORALITY

The preceeding chapters have pointed out that morality is composed of two concepts: order and intuition. A moral life is one ordered in a peculiar way; and the peculiar way in which it is ordered depends on a man's intuitions as to what is appropriate and good. Some men have seen order as the most important aspect of morality. "Order," for them, is itself appropriate and good. Others have seen personal intuitions and feelings as being the most important -- the distinguishing mark of morality. Nowhere does the reliance of the concept of morality on these two aspects become more explicit than in the case of the two extremes of moral relativism -- one of which accounts for morality solely in terms of individual feelings; the other of which defines morality solely in terms of social norms or "order."

Up to this point, it has been the purpose of this thesis to explain and illustrate morality in terms of the two moral sensibilities or order and intuition and to demonstrate that the concept of morality must, in some way, incorporate both of these sensibilities. As we found in Chapter II, morality must be both personal and extrapersonal, immanent and transcendent, subjective and objective. The difficulty of hitting upon a satisfactory explanation of morality resides in the difficulty of adequately capturing both aspects of morality in one concept. We account for order and lose the immediacy of personal

intuition. We enthrone intuition and lose the power of stability and discrimination afforded by order. In short, the most revealing aspect of the dual demand of morality for both intuition and order is that the two are, at best, ambiguously related. Order seems to be an intuitive moral concept; yet, in many ways, individual intuition and order seem antagonistic. To rely upon individual intuition to decide moral problems seems to be to step out of an already "given" order. To rely upon a system or an order to decide moral questions seems to be to disregard, in advance, the importance of moral feelings and intuitions.

How is it possible for these two to function together? What does the existence of these contraries at the very heart of morality reveal about the nature of morality? First, let us examine in detail the implications of both moral intuition and moral order to determine their relative importance and the manner in which they interact. We will begin with the possible meanings of intuition, since, in one obvious respect, intuition is prior to the concept of order.

Three Possible Meanings of Intuition

There seem to be three basic possible interpretations of the phenomenon of moral intuition. The first two are variations on a psychological theme. One stresses the importance of individual desires and ways of seeing; the other stresses sociological pressures on the individual. The third possibility stresses the experience of the self-evidence of subjectivity as the standard of objective reality. My purpose in comparing the three is not to determine which interpretation is the correct one, it is rather to determine the logic of the word "intuition" and to see how the word must be understood if the

concept of morality is to survive as a distinctive and meaningful experience.

It is always possible that intuition is a psychological trick human beings play on themselves. A person may want something to be the case so intensely that he envisions that desire as a type of external commandment rather than as a personal whim. Desire may even be so strong that he detects confirmation of the truth of the externality of the commandment in sources outside his own interior states. It seems as though the feeling could not be merely subjective whim or preference because it is so strongly felt, and because the truth of the intuition seems to be confirmed in the world and in his experience. When someone makes the claim, "That could not be right!" or "Surely this must be good!" he feels as though he were claiming something about the way the world is and must be; not something about the way he is. For the person who intuits the truth of such claims, they could not be reduced to "I want that not to be right!" or "I strongly desire that this be good!" However, if intuition is only a strongly felt interior state which we project upon the world, these two sets of claims are actually identical. This is the position taken by A. J. Ayer and other moral emotivists.[1]

The second possibility is that the socialization process is so strong and complete that when individuals claim to have an "intuition" or to "know" right from wrong, what is actually occurring is something similar to that described above. In this case, however, the individual and his desires, likes and dislikes are not so much personal idiosyncracies as social ones. The moral tastes of the individual (except in rare cases of complete social anomaly) are completely formed by the

interiorization of social norms. Once these norms have been interiorized, they are then projected outward -- coloring not only the way an individual sees his own society, but the way he sees the world in general. In this case, the claim "That cannot be right!" is equivalent to "I don't want that to be right because my society has so molded my desires." In this second case, the "felt" experience of intuition is identical to the "felt" experience of the man who confuses strong personal preference with what must, in fact, be so. This is essentially the position of Edward Westermarck and other social relativists.

What is striking in both of these interpretations of intuition is that a person confronted with the required translations of his experiences would probably be reluctant to accept them and, if really convinced that these translations were adequate, he would probably be unable to regard his former experiences of "intuition" in the same compelling moral light. "Intuition" would inevitably lose intensity and urgency.

There is, however, a further problem involved in the second interpretation of intuition: What causes a society to adopt just these, and no other social norms? It could be the general agreement of personal preference, as the customary moralists, such as Westermarck, delineate it. It could be the most effective means of peaceful survival, as the social contract theorists variously outline it. Or, it could be that social norms are themselves based upon a type of "social" intuition.

In the first two explanations, intuition as social enculturation is still fundamentally illusory. The special emotional fervor which has come to be attached to the "moral" actions explained by either of

these two theses is neither organically nor logically attached to the explanations themselves. Moral feelings are merely "tacked on" to the fundamental meaning of social norms. It is only in the third explanation that the emotion seems appropriate to its cause. If it is the case that social norms are the products of moral intuition, it is possible for individual moral intuitions to correlate exactly with social norms and still not violate the "meaning" of intuition. The agreement between social norms and individual intuitions would be based on a similar perception of identical data and not on the confusion of two different phenomena (i.e. the confusion of personal desires or social enculturation with the objectively and transcendently "true" or "good").

This leads us to the third possibility of the origination of intuition. It could be that intuition represents the ability on the part of an individual to be "grasped" by the "Truth" and a corresponding ability on the part of "Truth" to "grasp" individuals. This possibility suggests the meeting of the immanent and the transcendent spoken of in Chapter II.[2] It is, it seems, this third possibility which most people have in mind (with varying degrees of clarity) when they claim to have had an intuition.

It is a prominent feature of the criticism aimed at many ethical codes that they somehow or other violate this "intuitive sense." Further, this manner of criticism is widely accepted as a legitimate procedural method. The charge is raised against both Kantian absolutism and Utilitarian relativism. As a method of deciding between alternative moral codes, or alternative actions in specific situations, "intuition" is too well used to be ignored. Moral choices often depend primarily

upon what "feels" right. But, moral intuition should not be so frequently invoked in ignorance of its possible meanings and the implications of those meanings.

Regardless of whether or not any specific case of intuition is a case of being grasped by, or grasping the "Truth," that it is such a case is what people imply by claiming to have an intuition. That is the only alternative among the possibilities discussed which makes sense as a defense for or an argument against a piece of moral reasoning. It is not a reasonable argument to claim that a piece of moral reasoning is true or false because it is aligned with or in opposition to our own preference -- regardless of whether those preferences are the result of personal idiosyncracy or enculturation. Such a claim is not so much a reason as it is a refusal to give a reason.

To involve a "moral" claim, a piece of reasoning has got to get back to some intuitive "ought." Morality can not be based on what men could do if they desired some end or another. It must be based on what men should do and should desire. If we examine the meaning of morality as purely hypothetical, we discover that we cannot legitimately judge the ends of a proposed action -- any end seems a legitimate candidate -- we can only judge as to the effectiveness of the means. We could argue that the means a person is using or wants to use would not get him the end he has in mind, but we could not argue that the end he proposes is unworthy or immoral. On what basis could such a claim be made, if not on the objective existence of some transcendent good? Our own peculiar preference? That of our societies? Morality here is translated into bigotry and suppression.

In hypothetical morality, the necessary moral "ought" is reduced

to a matter of practical consideration on a level with the ought involved in the statement: "If you want to reach the top shelf, you really 'ought' to use this stool." Morality primarily makes claims about the "goodness" of reaching the top shelf, not about the most effective means of reaching it. Means, of course, play a part in morality, and effective means are a legitimate concern for the moralist; but effectiveness is not the only consideration in a choice of means. Sometimes an effective means of attaining an end is ruled out, even though the end is a desirable one, for the simple reason that the means themselves would destroy the desirability of any goal obtained under their auspices. Further, the "goodness" of an end (as opposed to the effectiveness of a means) seems to be apprehensible only by way of intuition. An end is thought to be right or good simply because it presents itself to the subject as good and right. Thus it seems we can rule out any system of morality which does not include the trait of being based on a final, non-hypothetical, intuitive "ought."[3] Morality says something about what we ought to desire, not only something about what we ought to do to get that which we do desire.

Further, it is clear that no "intuition" or "feeling" is a proper explanation for why one should or should not do something, unless that intuition is considered to be, in some way, an insight into the "Truth." The intuitive "ought" seems to be an integral part of morality; and it is not to be confused with the hypothetical ought. Morality requires that persons "feel" certain ways about the tasks and commitments undertaken in its name. Even though moralities which rely upon the hypothetical ought account for the presence of strong feelings,

the account they give is incommensurate with the feelings produced. Once a person has become aware of the "true" foundation of his feelings, the only way such feelings could continue to be attached to such "moral" conceptions is if the person with such feelings either is curiously deluded by his own motivations; or if, though he knows better, he cannot resist the pull of such feelings and continually finds himself subconsciously endowing "morality" with a status which he has consciously renounced.[4]

Once again, this is not intended so much to bring forth a claim about the origination of morality, as it is intended to describe what is irresistably true about the "felt" moral experience. Insofar as ethical relativists do make claims about the origins of morality, and infer from those claims that morality is only what those origins imply, they commit the genetic fallacy. While it may be true that the origination of morality is one of the relativistic sources discussed, such origination says nothing about the truth or falsity of the transcendent status of morality. Further, morality, as a felt experience, cannot be understood or believed to be equal to personal preference or pleasure -- either our own, or that of past generations; our private, or the conglomeration of private. Nor can we reduce morality to the mere struggle for survival unless we are willing to grant that struggle the moral "ought." Morality can not be reduced either to preference or practicality without losing the special feeling which marks off moral considerations from other considerations and lends morality its special urgency and demand.

Intuition as Insight into Truth

Regardless of the direction in which we turn in our efforts to comprehend the moral experience, we are confronted with individual moral intuition. In order to qualify as a moral stance, a position must be based on a direct, personal intuition of the inherent goodness or "badness" of an act, an attitude, or an end. A moral intuition, like any other intuition is a type of "feeling." But what kind of "feeling" is it? Is it purely subjective? Normally, feelings are apprehended subjectively and are aimed at subjective experience. They indicate a "felt" interior state, and as such, do not necessarily reflect any exterior state. However, as we have already seen, interpretations of intuition which make it purely subjective cannot account for intuition as a reason for moral action without destroying the personal significance which moral actions have for us. It is only insofar as all feelings are experienced subjectively that moral intuition is also subjective. Insofar as moral intuitions are thought to reflect transcendent truth, they surpass mere subjectivity. There are feelings, and then there are "Feelings." We have already examined the dangers of allowing mere subjective feelings to dominate one's attitudes and relationships in the world. When the unrepressed expression of feelings and desires becomes an individual's over-riding concern, the result may be far from "moral."

A moral intuition (unlike pure subjective feeling) carries with it the concept of duty. It cannot only be that you want to do something and want to do it very badly. It must be that you feel you ought to want something (whether or not you do) and feel it very strongly. Moral intuition cannot be completely equated with disposition,

whim, desire, need, or any other of the usual categories used to delineate subjective experience. It could be likened more to a call or an invitation than to either the conformity to rules suggested by some moral theories, or the indulgence of desires and emotions suggested by others. That such "calls" or "invitations" are possible and do happen is what is indicated by the use of moral intuition as a criterion for moral action. Moral argumentation reveals the concept of intuition as central in making sense of morality.

However, what possible method is there for distinguishing cases of actual intuition from cases of intense personal feeling, social enculturation, or perhaps yet other "feelings" which might mistakenly be labeled intuition? Perhaps the frustratingly inadequate answer is that it is impossible to establish a method apart from the actual experience of intuition. This answer begs the question insofar as it is not possible to use the experience of intuition as a measuring stick of the validity of any questionable intuition since it is the experience of intuition which is itself in question. Intuition must be a self-validating experience and as such always contains the possibility of deception. Moral intuitions can be more or less clearly perceived, but there always remains a nagging doubt about their authenticity. When individual intuition happens to coincide with social custom, majority opinion, or legal or religious codes; fears are lulled by the comfort of social support. But when intuition leads the individual away from such supports, then the self-doubt and anxiety reach their peak. Moral intuitions are often acted upon in fear and trembling.

The object of moral intuition is moral "Truth." We have already seen the impossibility of possessing moral knowledge in the form of

indubitability, but knowledge and Truth are not synonymous here.[5] While it is true to say that to possess certain knowledge one must possess the truth of something, it is not conversely true to say that to possess "Truth" one must also possess certain knowledge. Knowledge is given in certainty; "Truth" may be given in doubt. As G. E. Moore says, we can understand the difference between our thinking something true and its actually being true.[6] Knowledge is socially verifiable. "Truth" (in the form of intuition at least) is given individually and cannot be verified socially. The burden of intuitive "Truth" falls to the individual in the depths of confrontation with the self and the world. Intuition focuses attention on the personal and individual recognition of duty rather than the social recognition of duty.

In the interpretation of moral truth as intuition, conformity to rules and laws may act as a barrier which stands between individuals and morality. Law mediates between the individual and his intuitive perceptions of goodness, and may make him hesitant to act on his own intuitions. Rules act as the objectifying elements of morality. They turn the equation of moral truth and doubt into the equation of moral knowledge and certainty. The security law offers is appealing, but it may be immoral if it is acquired at the expense of truth.

Moral intuition represents the position of the individual in direct, unmediated relationship with goodness. However, it is precisely because the intuitive approach to morality stands either prior to or outside of "form" that it is a dangerous project. Laws, rules, traditions, etc., give shape and guidance to personal actions. Without them one is left in a dark void with only an inner voice to guide him. This voice is not always clear, and even if it is clearly

heard, one can never be sure that what he hears represents a true intuition (i.e., a true insight into the good). There is no sure way of disentangling a true intuition from that which merely appears to be an intuition. This notion of morality as intuitive has trouble when it makes morality depend upon the presence of "true intuition" and then provides no clear and obvious way to determine true intuitions from false ones. To establish such a clear and definite method would be to establish a rule or law, and this is just the thing the intuitive method rebels against.

Any morality which bases the goodness of actions, thoughts and ways of being upon the feelings and intuitions of the person acting, thinking, and being; is also bound to have trouble delineating the guiding motivation of the moral agent amidst the tangled web of his emotions. When the only formulation of morality we can lean on to guide us is "Seek the good and avoid evil," and the only way we have to decipher what is good from what is evil is to consult our feelings and intuitions; it is dangerously easy to mistake our own motivations and hence to fail to do good.[7] With law as our guide, our personal motivations may be in doubt, but the act itself (insofar as it is in conformity with the law) is secure. Without law, not only is the motivation behind the act in doubt, the very act itself is in doubt since the motivation (i.e., the intuition of goodness and our will to act on it) is the sole authority for the act. There is nothing against which to "check" our motivations and our intuitions.

Thus, to seek this type of morality is to launch oneself on a sea of doubt and indefiniteness. It can be a profoundly disturbing and even compromising experience. This much was illustrated by Hans'

experiences on the Magic Mountain. There is such comfort in the clean, definiteness of uncompromising rules. There is such reassurance in the assurance of conformity to "the Good." Man seems to have a real need to grasp "Truth" with certainty rather than to have it always maddeningly elude him. A man likes to know where he stands.

As soon as intuition is examined, it forces itself upon us as the basis of the felt experience of morality. It alone can provide for the possibility of a transcendent morality whose demands are binding yet at the same time, non-coercive and completely individual. For instance, intuition makes it possible to take circumstances into consideration without altering the absolute demand to act "well." The goodness of an act can depend on circumstances without becoming any less transcendent. Intuition further accounts for the importance of feelings without making morality lose the status of duty. The necessary distance between what I want and what I ought to want remains present without being debased into exterior constraint. What is intuited is the duty to act and "be" in certain ways. The duty of the moral person is to strive to align his natural desires and tendencies with those which he feels he should have, in addition to acting in accordance with intuited demands.

By and large, as is evident from the above comments, this notion of internal restraint depends upon a prior notion of man as divided. In most cases, men both want and do not want to act in accordance with what they perceive to be moral. Human feelings are, in that sense, ambiguous. As Søren Kierkegaard explains in Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing:

> ...when the person who desires is himself the obstacle that keeps himself from getting his desire fulfilled, not by

> giving it up, for then he would be at one with himself, but both by not willing and yet by willing to continue to desire: then the doublemindedness is clear....[8]

The moral battle is waged within a man, and the constraint signified by duty is not external but internal. It is thus that a man is both free and obligated. He is free because no outside force decides his moral attitudes and actions; he is obligated because the intuition to which he responds is felt to transcend his own feelings and needs, and also because the duty he intuits is not the only feeling or emotional pull he feels. We have already noted in Chapter II that the very meaning of duty depends upon the notion of constraint. If a man's desires pointed in one direction only, then morality would never enter his world. It would not matter whether the whole of his desires were aimed at the good or whether they were aimed at what is evil; in either case the notion of morality is superfluous, for such a single-minded being could not conceive of "duty."

Strangely enough, the moral stance turns upon an odd mixture of desire and reluctance. In most men, the moral feeling seems to vascillate between a desire to fulfill oneself by striving towards some ideal state of existence, and a reluctance to take upon oneself the discipline and sacrifice involved in such a program. It is not so much "desire vs. will" (as Kant outlined it) as "desire vs. desire." It is the acknowledgment of transcendence and appropriateness which gives (or ought to give) one desire precedence over another. Even when a man chooses the less worthy of two desires, he may do it while acknowledging the superior moral status of the unchosen desire. This acknowledgment takes the form of a guilty conscience.

The morally ideal creature "wills one thing." He wants to do what

he should do, and feels no tension between these things. Here, constraint is not applicable; such a person is beyond "law" and "duty." The coincidence of duty and desire signifies the achievement of the ultimate moral end of "being" moral rather than merely "acting" morally. It is, as Hermann Hesse puts it, a life "unconditioned" by anything outside itself.[9] Thus, such a life would be, at the same time, fully expressive of the individual and fully reflective of the transcendent.

The moral feeling we have been attempting to describe finds its model in the ideal concept of a transcendent being who is fully good, fully free, and fully individual; and who is accessible through "moral intuition." Moral intuition does not stand against desire as a general category; it recognizes "moral desire" as a very real desire, while at the same time acknowledging that not all desires are equally moral. Without the category of moral intuition (that is, a category of feelings which are set off from other feelings by their transcendent character) there would be no basis on which to choose between conflicting desires except by weighing the comparative strengths of the desires.

This, then, is an ethic of personal growth, but the growth is directed toward a transcendent reality which gives it an "appropriateness" it would otherwise lack. Growth which is merely "chosen" always retains a suggestion of arbitrariness. This is essentially the creative morality espoused by Berdyaev. The goal of morality is to grow in some uniquely individual, yet ideal way. The ultimate aim is to become whole, and wholly authentic; to integrate all thoughts and actions; to order oneself appropriately and in accordance with a transcendently "good" realm of being. The ethic of individual intuition is the "duty"

to become some particular being whose actions, thoughts, and feelings all flow from one source -- willingness to do the good, and to "be" good.

That is the ideal. Unfortunately, men's moral lives are ambiguous. They both will and don't will to do the good. Their desires are ambiguous. The duty of the man seeking morality is to attempt to work through this ambiguity as best he can. He must examine his conscience and his will in an attempt to clarify his feelings and motivations. However, as Kant indicates, this is never completely possible:

> ...in fact even the strictest examination can never lead us entirely behind the secret incentives, for, when moral worth is in question, it is not a matter of actions which one sees but of their inner principles which one does not see. [10]

Search as we might, we never uncover our motivations as clear, unambiguous and definite.

It is within the unavoidable complexity and ambiguity of our motivations that the compromising danger of individual moral intuition lies. Not only is reliance on personal intuition and conscience a lure to do the good; it may be a lure to do evil as well. It is a lure to misapprehension, deception and bad faith. You may recall W. T. Stace's indictment of it:

> But to allow my mind to be in this way entangled in the endless ramifications of future circumstances, in the maze of all possible, probable, or improbable consequences -- this is a profoundly dangerous proceeding. It is so fatally easy to twist such considerations into an excuse for doing what I want, a justification of myself for deviating from the straight and narrow path. [11]

Substitute the word "motivations" for the word "consequences" and the perils of the intuitive sensibility stand revealed.

The Morality of Order

In The Symbolism of Evil, Paul Ricoeur identifies four mythical types having to do with the origin and end of evil. "According to the first, which we call the drama of creation, the origin of evil is co-extensive with the origin of things; it is the 'chaos' with which the creative act of the god struggles."[12]

Chaos is the complete absence of order. It is the lack of defining boundaries. If chaos is essentially immoral (as our own investigation of moral theories has seemed to indicate) then morality must be essentially orderly. It is the god's struggle with chaos which introduces order into the world. If we draw this comparison a little further, it seems possible that the meaning and purpose of "law" is to introduce order into the chaotic realm of feelings and desires. Thus the importance of law is both social and personal. Chaos is possible on either level, and on either level it is seen as a menace. In this orderly interpretation of morality, it is the ambiguity and doublemindedness of men which threatens their moral being. Consequently, this morality seeks to avoid meddling in that which is ambiguous. This evasion includes avoidance of the ambiguity implicit in the intuitive approach to morality.

If we contrast the order of nature and its laws with the freedom implied by man's existence outside the absolute control of instinct, we can perhaps envision moral law as the "giver of limitations" in the same sense that instinct guides animal behavior with a minimum of confusion. Without the moral law to guide them, men would be immersed in unclear and even contradictory feelings and emotions. One envisions such human existence as a maze through which men wander; or as a dense

fog in which men grope for stability. To be uncertain is to be in danger; it is to open up the realm of possible actions and responses in too vast a number. This much freedom is frightening, and men wish to escape from the burden of it.

It is also immoral. Confusion is both foreboding and seductive. To give into confusion is to relax; to cease attempting to make distinctions; even to insist that distinctions cannot be so roughly and readily made. It is to "flow" and "feel." The physical metaphor of "wallowing" perhaps conveys something of this. It is indulgence; the thing to which Hans is so attracted and Settembrini so fears.

Health, cleanliness, strength, clearheadedness, definiteness: these are the descriptions of morality implied by law. It is the intuitive identification of these qualities with morality which constitutes the orderly sensibility found in the ethical theorists discussed in Chapters III and IV. "Order" is a moral intuition. It is the insistence of the moral theorists on order and clarity which is in back of their insistence on defining morality in terms of formulae. How is definiteness to be achieved in moral action? Kant turns to the universalization formula. Rousseau appeals to the general will. Moore and Westermarck look to general social practices.

Perhaps the great stress laid on tradition and custom in morality is explicable as a moral intuition when seen from the point of view of order. An orderly existence can be easily obtained by reliance on past customs and traditions to guide behavior. As W. B. Yeats points out in his poem "A Prayer for My Daughter," there is a calm beauty and innocence about such a traditional existence. The poem concludes on this wish:

> And may her bridegroom bring her to a house
> Where all's accustomed, ceremonious;
> For arrogance and hatred are the wares
> Peddled in the thoroughfares.
> How but in custom and in ceremony
> Are innocence and beauty born?
> Ceremony's a name for the rich horn,
> And custom for the spreading laurel tree.[13]

Tradition and custom are moral because they keep life within bounds, stop it from being "messy," from floundering in the indefiniteness of human passions. They keep a man on the surface of life, and out of the labyrinths of ambiguity. Gesture, ritual, manner, law, all are given a meaning and a definiteness.

In contrast to the terms symbolic of orderly morality stand the terms symbolic of immorality: disease, defilement, confusion, ambiguity, indefiniteness. Paul Ricoeur claims that: "Dread of the impure and rites of purification are in the background of all our feelings and all our behavior relating to fault."[14] The physical symbols of "stain," of filth, and the messiness these imply are carried onto the moral plane. "Cleanliness is next to Godliness." Ricoeur adds, "Perhaps there is no taboo in which there does not dwell some reverence, some veneration of order."[15]

Chaos, filth, uncertainty, ambiguity, indefiniteness, disease -- are all interpenetrating symbols of a "slackness" which is a term of moral retribution. They stand in opposition to moral health which implies discipline, limitation, and clarity. The need for order goes beyond the social need for order. Individual morality also demands order. Without it, the individual is subject to chaos, "slackness," and the self-indulgence associated with immorality.

The following examples of the opposition between health and disease, definiteness and indefiniteness, form and formlessness; and

their relationship to the opposite pairs, morality and immorality, may help clarify this point.

In his work, The Romantic Rebellion, Sir Kenneth Clark quotes Goethe as having replied, when asked to explain the difference between classicism and romanticism: "Classicism is health, romanticism disease."[16] The associations here should be fairly evident. Classic art strives for balance, harmony and proportion. It is usually a static, idealized art. Romantic art portrays human emotions, or hopes to evoke them in its audience. It is a pulsing, active art, seemingly intent on breaking out of its confinement. It is, in brief, far more chaotic, emotional, and involved than is classic art. Classic art is the art of disciplined and assured expression. Romantic art is the art of the individual in rebellion.[17] Classic art is, in the above sense, more "social;" romantic art more "personal." Health, clarity and assurance are public possessions. They gain their bright reality from social agreement. What everyone "knows" or can understand must be clear and unambiguous. Disease, obscurity and perversity are individual possessions. They gain their uncertain and dark tone from truths discovered in solitude and silence.

Another example of the symbolism of disease and health comes from Nietzsche's The Genealogy of Morals. Nietzsche gives us an insight into a correlary and not totally unexpected thesis. For him, the healthy individual is amoral. He is the one who does not ponder his motivations, but acts. There is in this immediacy a nobility and beauty which can only be described as a higher morality, or what Nietzsche calls a "second innocence."[18] This manner of looking at morality should not be unexpected since both it and the more ordinary

ideal of moral order aim at an innocence which flows from an avoidance of just the kind of soul-searching which was discussed in relationship to the intuitive sensibility. Classical moral theorists obtain this innocence by making duties clear and unproblematic. Nietzsche obtains it by emphasizing the innocence of immediate and unreflective response. Notice the air of questionable morality with which he imbues the scrupulous conscience:

> Among the priests everything becomes more dangerous, not cures and specifics alone but also arrogance, vindictiveness, acumen, profligacy, love, the desire for power, disease. In all fairness it should be added, however, that only on this soil, the precarious soil of priestly existence, has man been able to develop into an interesting creature; that only here has the human mind grown both profound and evil.... [19]

To dwell on your actions, to ponder your motivations, to strive to uncover your innermost feelings and to discover meaning and significance in all things is unhealthy and dangerous. It is to lose oneself in endless and confusing ramifications. Better to cling to a clearcut, social morality. In that path lies duty and clarity. Or, one might, as Nietzsche seems to recommend, cling to the superficiality of amorality. Amorality, when it suggests the healthy and immediate expression of desires, discloses a new innocence. In either case, however, the refusal to contemplate the symbolism of personal action is evident. Our feelings and actions reveal the types of persons we are; but feelings and actions can be interpreted in various ways. It is the personal symbolism of actions which seems to be the dangerous component of the intuitive sensibility. The two obvious ways of denuding actions of their symbolic, and thus of their dangerously ambiguous nature can be summed up thus: First, morality can be converted into legality, whereby it is social and legal and has nothing to do with personal

growth, feelings, or emotions. Nothing is immoral, it is simply illegal. This reduces morality to an easy-to-use formula. One does not do certain things and it is fairly clear which things one ought to avoid by simply consulting the laws or the customs of one's society. There is no particular reason to delve into such messy and unsavoury issues as personal motivations.

Second, the symbolic function of actions can be denied altogether. This "normalizes" actions and makes them harmless. They become only a surface phenomenon. There is nothing to get to the bottom of and so no need to seek out the underlying meanings of our actions. There are none. There is just innocent, wholesome and meaningless preference. It is the delving below the surface (so necessary to the intuitive sensibility) which leads to man's becoming, as Nietzsche says, "both profound and evil...."

Both of these denuding processes are prominent in moral theories. In the case of absolutism, morality is made definite by the use of formulae, codes, rules, etc. In the case of relativism, morality is made impersonal and non-symbolic by its tendency to explain morality as a "natural" phenomenon rather than a "spiritual" one. However, even in the case of most relativist theories, a genuinely symbolic and moralistic thrust may be traced. It is the symbolic power of the search for order, clarity, and uninvolvement.

The incarnation of evil is the un-nameable, the uncategorizable, the indefinite and the ambiguous. A man can only "keep himself clean" and act rightly if he is given clear and distinct ideas about what constitutes right action. The "form" of morality gives that to him. Laws and rules stand as guides to right action. Inside those rules,

men find something concrete with which to deal. "Right" and "wrong" become accessible with the tool of law. Here there is no need to probe beneath the surface of acts to arrive at the motivating spirit of the agent. "Right" consists in an equivalence of the demands of law and the exterior compliance of the agent. Ideally, law is rather like a transparency which can be laid on top of any situation in order to obtain an answer to the question, "What ought I to do?"

The Inadequacy of Form

However, "form" alone cannot adequately account for morality. Two intuitive beliefs weigh heavily against this possibility. First, if "form" were the only requirement for morality, then it would be a matter of complete indifference as to which "form" was taken up. Second, if "form" were the only requirement for morality then all of the moral decisions derived from the application of a particular "form" would be inevitably moral. Let us take up these difficulties one at a time.

The first thing that strikes one in regard to the first difficulty is its counter-intuitiveness. It certainly seems to matter greatly which form of laws we take up. The organization of life through law is not an end in itself (or should <u>not</u> be an end in itself). Rather, law is a particular method for achieving some end beyond mere "ordering." It is perhaps fairer to say that organization aims at a certain quality of life. We organize not simply to organize, but in the hope of achieving some goodness by the method of organization.

It is easy to imagine (as has often been done in literature) highly organized societies which have for us the quality of nightmare.[20] If order were in and of itself good, this would not be the case. It

might even be fair to say that there is a limit beyond which it no longer seems positively good to be organized even if the organization is aimed in the right direction. It may even be that too much organization is positively bad.[21]

This brings us to two important observations. First, it appears self-evident that not all forms are equally acceptable. We can in fact imagine certain forms that we would intuitively reject as the basis of a possible "moral" order. Form alone is not enough. The specific content of the form is at least as important to morality as the form itself. Further, we have observed that "form" may have a point beyond which it may not go. "Form," in the world of morality, may have its own law of diminishing returns. There may be such a thing as being too orderly.

Though the need for order may originate from a moral impulse, form for the sake of form has within itself the seeds of evil. In emphasizing "form" the content of the form may be forgotten or overlooked. The "spirit" of the law may give way to the "letter." It was this trait which Christ had in mind when he condemned the Pharisees (those men who knew and observed the laws with such zealousness) saying:

> Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. [22]

One of the seeds of evil which form contains is its tendency to emphasize the exterior at the expense of the interior. Rules and laws pertain to what appears to the eyes and not necessarily what appears in the truth of inwardness. An undue emphasis on form -- on rules, laws and customs -- has a tendency to descend to the level of mere hypocritical

show. A show made doubly immoral by its immorally harsh, unbending, self-righteous and uncharitable attitude towards others.

With this observation, we have shaded over into the second objection weighing against the identity of morality and order. Given a form of which the content seems generally to tend towards the good, experience shows that a rigorous application of the law tends toward immorality rather than toward a more complete morality. We have already discovered this to be so in our examinations of Kant, Rousseau, and Moore.[23] Moore even admits that we can expect a rigorous enforcement of law to result in abuses.[24] One might add that any form of morality, no matter how carefully, extensively and meticulously designed, would likewise face this problem of abuse. In essence, what this means is that no set of regulations, no formula of morality is by itself adequate to describe the phenomenon of morality. This is not merely a descriptive claim about current moral theories, rather it is a claim in principle about any possible moral theory.

Rules, laws, and formulas are by their nature, inflexible. They do not discern, they do not make fine and subtle distinctions; only beings sensitive to situations and desirous of doing good and acting well are able to do that. Moral actions stem from moral persons, and not from moral rules. If and when "form" becomes autonomous and absolute, it loses touch with the moral point of view. Thus, although "form" is an essential part of morality, it stands as a constant threat to morality. It is both a condition of morality and a barrier which stands between individuals and morality.

Rules have a natural tendency to harden and become insensitive. They become a way, not of opening oneself up to moral feelings, but of

placing an obstacle between oneself and feeling -- a way of distancing and protecting oneself from feeling. Gabriel Marcel refers to a similar phenomenon in a slightly different context, but his words seem appropriate here:

> There is always the risk of the hardened, transmissible expression of the illumination growing over the illumination like a sort of shell and gradually taking its place. This is true at all levels, true where ever anything has been revealed, for instance about a work of art, a landscape, and so on.... It is just as if the initial, living experience could survive only on condition of degrading itself to a certain extent, or rather shutting itself up in its own simulacrum; but this simulacrum which should only be there on sufferance, as a kind of locum tenens, is always threatening to free itself from its proper subordinate position and to claim a kind of independence to which it has no right; and the serious danger to which thought itself is exposed is that of starting off from the simulcrum, as an existing basis, instead of referring itself perpetually to that invisible and gradually less and less palpable presence, to indicate which (and to recall it to our memories) is the sole justification of the simulacrum's existence. [25]

Order, in the moral world, is just such a simulacrum as that of which Marcel speaks. It is the "hardened, transmissible expression" of the "illumination" which is the experience of an intuitive moral insight. Behind every moral theory which attempts to schematize and regulate morality through the application of rules and principles there stands a more direct, if "less palpable presence" against which we measure the results of such applications. If any of the moral theorists we have looked at had been right in their interpretations of morality, then how could their formulas of morality ever fail to bring satisfactory results? It is only because men tend to measure the results of the applications of such things as the categorical imperative, majority opinion, or social custom against some vague, but nevertheless present, intuition of "true" morality that the results they produce are ever capable of offending us.

Moral intuition, as an insight into the transcendent realm of value stands behind any reasonable explanation of the moral experience that does not merely dismiss the experience as illusory. Without such a reference, morality either loses the "special feeling" associated with morality and becomes arbitrary or cautiously prudential; or else, it retains that "special" feeling only at the cost of losing contact with the necessary orderly quality of morality. When morality has become entirely subjective and personal, it has ceased to be morality. On the other hand, when morality has become entirely equated with a set of rules or a principle or principles which can be mechanically applied to situations almost as though men were machines and not men; when every moral feeling save the feeling for form has been eliminated, it is doubtful whether what is left over can be properly called morality.

The Relationship between Intuition and Order

When the form of morality solidifies and takes the place of the initial and vital intuition which it represents, and to which it ought to be subordinate, there is the danger that the initial intuition will be altogether forgotten and that the rules and laws, cut off from their informing source of meaning, will become dumb and intolerably repressive for the individual. Such is the case with traditional approaches to both absolute and relative morality.

It is true of relative morality because it dismisses the notion of a transcendent morality which can stand as a limitation to individuals and is left only with the understanding that morality, in order to exist at all, must take a shape and a form beyond the whims of

individuals. This inevitably tends toward a suppression of all that is unique or "different" in individuals.

It is true of absolute morality because the form becomes of paramount importance. The laws, rules and regulations become the be all and the end all. They come to take the place of the vital relationship between the individual and the transcendent realm of value, and crush the individual beneath their weight.

How does this occur? Marcel explains: "It is just as if the initial, living experience could survive only on condition of degrading itself to a certain extent, or rather shutting itself up in its own simulacrum...."[26] The shell of law, it seems, is a kind of protective covering over the vital and sensitive intuition. But why does intuition need to protect itself, and from what is it protecting itself?

The explanation of this leads us back to the dangers we have already uncovered in the intuitive sensibility. First of all, intuition needs to be protected from self-deception, self-indulgence and the abuses of excessive emotionalism.[27] It also needs protection from the immensity of the moral project it carves out for itself.[28] This latter problem arises from the formlessness of the most basic of all moral intuitions, which amounts to the command that good should be done and evil avoided. How is this to be accomplished? Here it is that law steps in to calm the anxiety of the one seeking to be moral. Paul Ricoeur further explains the relationship of law to the intuited demand to do good and avoid evil.

> This tension between the absolute, but formless, demand and the finite law, which breaks the demand into crumbs, is essential to the consciousness of sin: one cannot just feel oneself guilty in general, the law is a 'pedagogue' which helps the penitent to determine how he is a sinner....[29]

The demand of the transcendent on our lives is infinite. The command to act well, and in accordance with the good is likewise infinite. On the other hand, the law is finite. One has hope of fulfilling the demands of law; there can be no hope of fulfilling infinite demands. By defining our duties and limiting them, law tells us how good may be done, and which things are to be avoided. The stumbling block to this solution is that law, in the process of limiting and defining our duties deforms them. It deforms them by externalizing what should properly be internal; and by making finite what is properly infinite. However, to leave men without the guidance of the law is also dangerous. The experience of such formlessness, as we noted earlier, is seen as the archetype of evil.

The difficulty of describing morality such that it is at once clear, accurate and true to the actual experience of morality lies in the circumstance that, from man's point of view, "true morality" seems to consist of two incompatible things. True morality ought to be both fully personal, issuing from an intensely subjective experience; and fully impersonal (by which is meant fully real outside any subjective experience of it). The difficulty of explaining the interplay of these two traits without (practically speaking) emphasizing one feature at the expense of the other is the perennial difficulty of both descriptive and prescriptive ethics.

The law gives to duty the form men find necessary to their own well-being and to their belief in the exterior quality of morality. Law can be easily handled. It can be taught to others and passed down to coming generations. This is not the case with intuition. Men can pass down the "formula" or shape their intuitions take, but not the

intuitions themselves. The original intuition which gives law its meaningfulness must be discovered and rediscovered by single individuals. What this indicates is just what Marcel pointed out in the passage quoted earlier.[30] The survival of the original intuition seems to depend, as Marcel claims, on its perverting itself by fastening around its tender and ephemeral heart the hard shell of law. Even Nicolas Berdyaev admits: "But in actual life it is difficult to break through to this youth of spirit. Most of our moral actions and judgments do not come from that primary source."[31]

Intuition is a necessary and vital part of morality. But intuition must be protected from formlessness. Without the covering of law, intuitions cannot long survive in their pristine state -- however, they cannot survive in that state with the law either. Ambiguously enough, absolutist theories may well become suppressive and dumb by doing what they feel they must to keep moral intuitions alive and well -- pervert them. In actual moral practice, a perfect balance of these two is simply not possible. A man can never be satisfied that his intuitions are infallible or that they truly reflect what they seem to reflect. Neither can he rely on rules, laws, and formulas to always and adequately reflect what ought to be. Since neither is adequate by itself; the combination of the two is even more problematic. When ought one to rely on his intuitions and disregard the rules? When ought the opposite be done? These are the questions which beset the individual intent on making his life a moral one. However, these are the very questions which are answered, if at all, so unsatisfactorily by moral writers. The questions themselves are not fashioned for a general reply. It is up to the individual to decide which of the two

paths Hans Castorp outlines for us is his proper path. It may well be that not every man could or should take the same path. Maybe it is well for the health of morality that not all men do take the same path.

For the morality of a society to remain alive and vital some of the exuberance, the willingness to take a risk, and the passion of the intuitive sensibility is necessary. So is it also necessary that social morality have access to a stable and definite set of values by which individuals can measure what ought to be done. Within the wider social realm the two sensibilities (though finally irreconcilable) should at least respect each other and know that the other is a necessary watchdog against excesses.

Within the individual the conflict is not so easily dismissed. No attempt at explanation could ever do justice to the proper balancing of the intuitive and the orderly. Balance, here cannot be a mechanical seeking of the middle of the road. It seems inevitable that one of the two sensibilities prevail within the heart and mind of an individual; but whichever path the individual chooses he must choose it because of its perceived appropriateness, and he must remain aware that both paths are fraught with dangers for the unwary.

A world directed only by personal feelings would be a world experienced as "slack" and indulgent. A world directed only by exterior compulsion would be intolerable. Somehow, which ever path is taken, "intuition" and "order" must be combined to create a morally comprehensible world in which men are both "free" and "duty-bound." Such a world can only be accounted for by combining order and intuition in an attempt to reflect a transcendent good. In his work, The Revolt of the Masses, Ortega y Gasset describes the danger of a world in

which such a combination is not possible:

> Human life, by its very nature, has to be dedicated to something, an enterprise glorious or humble, a destiny illustrious or trivial. We are faced with a condition, strange but inexorable, involved in our very existence. On the one hand to live is something which each one does of himself and for himself. On the other hand, if that life of mine, which only concerns myself is not directed by me towards something, it will be disjointed, lacking in tension and in "form." In these years we are witnessing the gigantic spectacle of innumerable lives wandering about lost in their own labyrinths, through not having anything to which to give themselves. All imperatives, all commands, are in a state of suspension.[32]

Some Conclusions about Morality

By now it should be clearer why it is so difficult to be clear about morality. Morality is (from our standpoint in the world) internally ambiguous. It is not simply that men have spoken ambiguously about it; morality itself defies clear and definite conception. In fact, to present morality as clear and definite is to misapprehend its nature.

The moral experience involves the subjective apprehension of an (apparently) objective and transcendent moral order which appears to be both significant and appropriate. The absence of any of these attributes (subjectivity, objectivity, transcendence, order, significance, and appropriateness) leads to a distortion of the moral experience. If morality is distorted in the direction of subjectivity it is in danger of becoming solipsistic and losing contact with the necessary "hardness" of an objective, transcendent order. Morality becomes messy, obscure, indefinite, self-indulgent, and loses contact with the necessarily objective pole of the experience of "duty" when it is centered entirely in subjectivity.

If morality is distorted in the direction of objectivity it encounters the "stone wall" syndrome spoken of earlier. Without proper attention paid to the subjective experience of the individual, morality becomes merely an exterior imposition and the experience of duty and obligation lose their moral tone and become examples of force and suppression. Morality must be a freely made, interior recognition on the part of the individual or the unique tone of morality cannot be maintained.

The necessity of transcendence is found in the sought for balance between objectivity and subjectivity. If the objective pole of morality is located either too near us or too far away (as seen, in objective relativism, morality is totally immanent and practical; or, in certain species of religious absolutism, morality is located in a being Who is totally transcendent and Whose commands may be totally inscrutable) the individual's experience of morality becomes illusory. In both cases men's experiences of morality have nothing to do with what is actually happening. In the first case men experience as transcendent that which is actually immanent; and they experience as "duty" that which is actually given as "necessary" in the world. In the second case, men have experiences -- feelings and intuitions -- which seem to make the good directly accessible to them when in fact, their subjective experiences have nothing to say about what ought to be done.

If objectivity and subjectivity do not truly meet in the transcendence of the moral experience then that experience is illusory and should be ignored or put away. However, the transcendent aspect of moral experience is tenacious (as we have seen) and consists in the

perception of an accord between what is transcendently true and what is subjectively and immanently experienced as true. Transcendence is ambiguous in that we feel compelled by our experiences to posit its existence as a reality outside our subjective experience, yet we know of its existence only through our subjective experience of it. This leads to the dilemma of attempting to reject (in the case of both types of relativism) what we cannot reject; or, attempting to accept (in the case of transcendent absolutism) what we cannot in good faith accept absolutely. The orderly sensibility cannot, in good faith, accept the absolute exteriority of moral law nor the mandate of no exceptions to moral law. The intuitive sensibility cannot, in good faith, reject every externally imposed constraint in favor of equivocal moral feelings and intuitions.

The need for order may become so unbalanced that it loses contact with the need for morality to be personal, significant and appropriate. Order cannot be for its own sake but must be for the sake of something beyond mere order. And, whereas morality has got to be experienced as personally significant and appropriate, it cannot be thought that whatever <u>appears</u> to one as personally significant and appropriate must, for that reason, <u>be</u> significant and appropriate.

The two prominent features of morality, intuition and order constantly struggle for the upper hand. A perfect and infallible balance of the two cannot be found, and yet that is what morality seems to demand.

Whichever sensibility dominates our moral life must be recognized as inadequate to explain morality. The intuitive sensibility can never be quite at ease with itself nor quite comprehend the desire to be

moral because it necessarily does an injustice to the real desire for order. It involves an often queasy and dizzying scrutiny of the self and its motivations which is essentially messy and ambiguous. The intuitive sensibility cannot but be aware of the dangers it courts and long for the security, the comfort, the simplicity and cleanliness of "order."

The sensibility of order cannot quite rid itself of a nagging feeling of shallowness and inadequacy. Just as morality is too hard to attain in the sensibility of intuition, it is too easy to be moral within the sensibility of order. Simple rule-abiding behavior cannot account for the complexities of the moral experience. Exterior compliance is not enough.

At the same time each sensibility is attracted to the other, each haughtily feels itself superior to the other. The sensibility of intuition disdains the orderly sensibility as insensitive and complacent. The sensibility of order disdains the intuitive sensibility as self-indulgent and voluptuous.

In reviewing the literature of morality, these two sensibilities can be seen in constant interplay. Neither sensibility can totally ignore the other, but neither can either sensibility (by its very nature) totally account for and satisfy men's longing for the other.

Morality as personal obligation attempts to account for two poles (i.e. the transcendent and the immanent, the objective and the subjective) which cannot be balanced -- given man's limited viewpoint and nature. The two sensibilities, each of which tries to encompass the whole of the moral experience, fail to do so for similar reasons. It is impossible to adequately account for morality by reference to

either order alone or intuition alone. At the same time it is impossible to find an infallible compromise between the two. For these reasons morality remains and will always remain ambivalent, ambiguous, and to a certain degree, inexplicable.

ENDNOTES

[1]Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic, p. 107. The position of the moral emotivists can be summed up in Ayer's claim that:

> "The presence of an ethical symbol in a proposition adds nothing to its factual content. Thus if I say to someone, 'You acted wrongly in stealing that money.' I am not stating anything more than if I had simply said, 'You stole that money.' In adding that this action is wrong I am not making any further statement about it. I am simply evincing my moral disapproval of it. It is as if I had said, 'You stole that money,' in a peculiar tone of horror, or written it with the addition of some special exclamation marks."

[2]See pp. 23-24 of this thesis.

[3]This intuitive "ought" exists in every moral conception if only in such a general form as "I ought to do what my society says I ought to do," or "I ought to do what I feel is proper;" or even "I ought not to allow my society or my own feelings of appropriateness hinder my actions," etc. Without this final non-hypothetical ought the whole concept of morality disintegrates, since morality rests on the ability to distinguish a "duty" in some actions and not in others.

[4]The incorrigibility of the moral response was illustrated earlier by using Edward Westermarck's seemingly contradictory claims that all moral duties are derived from subjective feelings (none having more "truth" value than others) and later claiming that nevertheless there are certain dispositions that men "ought" to have.

[5]Knowledge is, by nature, something which must be possessed in an indubitable way. If one "knows" that 2 + 2 = 4 it is expected that he could demonstrate this knowledge in a convincing manner. That 2 + 2 = 4 is a "public fact." However, while it may be true that personal humility is good, that truth could never attain the status of impersonal indubitability. It could never be a "public fact," it must remain a personal belief which may be more or less clearly perceived.

[6]Moore, Principia Ethica, p. 132.

[7]Here again Hans Castorp's distinction between the path of danger and the path of safety comes into play. Though both paths have their own dangers the dangers of the path of intuition are more immediately experienced by an individual seeking that path. He treads it carefully because of his apparent danger; whereas the path of order appears to

those who walk it as straight and sure, though, as we have seen, it is not as safe as it may appear.

[8]Soren Kierkegaard, Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing, trans. Douglas V. Steere (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1956), p. 80.

[9]Hesse, Steppenwolf, p. 62.

[10]Kant, Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, p. 23.

[11]Stace, The Concept of Morals, pp. 114-115.

[12]Paul Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, trans. Emerson Buchanan (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 172.

[13]William Butler Yeats, "A Prayer for My Daughter," in The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), stanza 10, lines 1-8.

[14]Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 25.

[15]Ibid., p. 43.

[16]Kenneth Clark, The Romantic Rebellion (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1973), p. 95.

[17]Ibid., p. 32. According to Kenneth Clark, "...totalitarian art must be a form of classicism: the State which is founded on order and subordination demands an art with a similar basis. Romantic painting, however popular, expresses the revolt of the individual." It is interesting to note that the classic is aligned with social repression, and with the calm and orderly; while the romantic is aligned with the individual, the emotional and the irrational.

[18]Nietzsche, The Geneology of Morals, p. 224.

[19]Ibid., p. 166.

[20]Classic examples of such highly organized societies are found in Alduous Huxley's Brave New World and George Orwell's 1984.

[21]There are several ways to illustrate the way in which too much organization may be positively bad. One way will be taken up in the discussion of the second difficulty involved in taking order to be necessary and sufficient for morality. Another pertinent illustration of this positive badness can be found in a short story written by Muriel Spark entitled "You Should Have Seen the Mess."

In it the young heroine, Lorna, is so insistent upon order and cleanliness that her life is in danger of becoming totally sterile. She cannot enjoy friendship, love, or even imaginative speculation since all of them appear to her as unpredictable, cluttered, messy and unorganized affairs. Muriel Spark, "You Should Have Seen the Mess,"

in Man and His Measure, ed. Francis Connolly (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1964), pp. 145-149.

[22]Matt. 23: 27-28 (R.S.V.).

[23]Kant's rigorous application of the categorical imperative renders him insensitive to certain claims upon his moral sympathies. The classic example of this blindness was discussed in Chapter III, pp. 41-42. Here Kant insists on telling the truth even when it will endanger the life of a friend.

This trait of Kant's ethics can be found in any ethics which insists on the application of a rule, a law, or a more regardless of the consequence of such application. Rousseau falls into this category if interpreted to mean that the will of the people ought always to prevail. Such a reading (though dangerous due to the many ambiguities of Rousseau) is certainly indicated by Rousseau's statement that: "Besides, in any case, the people are masters, and may change even the best laws, for, if that body is disposed to injure itself, who has a right to prevent it?" The Social Contract, p. 49.

Moore falls into a similar moral dilemma when he admits, "In short, though we may be sure that there are cases where the rule should be broken, we can never know which those cases are, and ought, therefore, never to break it." Principia Ethica, p. 163.

[24]See Moore's discussion in Principia Ethica, pp. 162-164.

[25]Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. I, p. 66.

[26]Ibid.,

[27]Such abuses were illustrated earlier by several of Thomas Mann's characters; in particular Herr Wehsal and Frau Stöhr. See pp. 123-129 of this thesis.

[28]Mynheer Peeperkorn illustrates the danger of trying to meet a too rigorous demand. See p. 136 of this thesis.

[29]Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 59.

[30]Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. I, p. 66. The quotation from Marcel is found on p. 171 of this thesis.

[31]Berdyaev, The Destiny of Man, p. 142.

[32]José Ortega y Gasset, The Revolt of the Masses, trans. Anonymous (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1932), p. 141.

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