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A MODERN THEORY OF ETHICS

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A MODERN THEORY OF ETHICS

A STUDY OF THE RELATIONS OF ETHICS AND PSYCHOLOGY

BY

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METHUEN & CO. LTD.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON

First Published in 1929

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

PREFACE

WHETHER this book is 'modern' in the good sense or the bad sense of that irritating word is for the reader to judge. I have tried to produce an ethical theory which should be both impregnated by the polliniferous wind of contemporary thought, and yet not without roots in the past. But since the roots do not appear above the ground, I may perhaps be charged with ignoring much ancient and invaluable wisdom, and lending an uncritical ear to modern jargon. There may be some truth in such a charge, since to attend closely to one thing entails a corresponding neglect of others. My chief aim has been to consider a distinctively modern and urgent, though theoretical, problem; and, through concern with the modern, I may perhaps seem to have been unduly silent about Greece and Palestine. There are, no doubt, respects in which modern ethical thought is simply a reformulation of ancient problems, and other respects in which the modern has begun to wither through the blocking of those channels whence it should receive sap from the past. But to work out this theme would be a different task from that which I have attempted. I have chosen to examine certain modern ethical theories (which themselves seek to embody what is best in ancient thought about the good), and these I have considered in relation with other contemporary movements of the mind. Yet, though the overt exfoliation of my theme is thus wholly modern in spirit, I hope I have been influenced by ancient wisdom enough to avoid merely perpetrating a fresh example of modern barbarism.

Just as modern thought, even when it is concerned wholly with contemporary matters, must ever be rooted in the past, so each writer is indebted to his teachers, even when he has no occasion to make detailed reference to them. It is a sad pleasure to acknowledge here my debt

to the late Professor Alexander Mair, both in respect of his patient and critical guidance throughout my early philosophical studies and for helpful criticism of the first experiments which led up to the writing of this book. Whether he would have approved of this, its final form, I do not know. There is much in it with which he would deeply disagree, though with his usual kindly tolerance of heresy. This was bound to be; but I fear that, were he to read this book, he would also discover in it even more weaknesses of thought and obscurities of expression than those of which I am myself painfully aware. Certainly this book is the worse for lack of his continued help.

I am greatly indebted to the Master of Balliol for reading the whole manuscript and making extremely important criticisms; and to Dr. J. E. Turner and Dr. L. A. Reid, who also read the whole manuscript and gave much detailed and helpful advice. To Professor G. C. Field, also, I am grateful for valuable comments, and to Professor A. M. Carr-Saunders for advice on those chapters which refer to biological principles.

The Introduction is very largely based on an article which appeared in *The Open Court* of April 1927. Most of Chapters IV and VI appeared as two articles in *The International Journal of Ethics* of July 1926 and April 1928. I wish to thank the Editors of these journals for permission to reprint.

W. O. S.

January 1929

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A MODERN THEORY OF ETHICS

CHAPTER I

THE NEED FOR ETHICS [1]

IT is a commonplace that ours is an age of disillusionment, and that we follow on an age of complacency. In the days before the war, optimism was maintained only by setting the telescope to the blind eye. For, apart from the social problem, which few even in those days could entirely shun, there loomed three troubles less urgent but more subtly disturbing.

First, even by the plain man it was beginning to be suspected that the universe was indifferent to human desires. Man, it seemed, must outgrow his trust in a celestial protagonist, and must depend on himself alone both for his daily comfort and for the achievement of his ideals.

Second, it was already rumoured that man was doomed not only to failure but to insincerity. He was charged with being at heart careless of everything but the satisfaction of crude animal instincts. He valued his ideals, we were told, only in so far as they afforded 'symbolical fulfilment' to his primitive cravings.

Third, and most unsettling, if this view of human nature were true, all judgments of ethical good and evil were vitiated. For whenever we judged anything to be objectively good, our value-judgment was determined (it was said,) not by the objective character and relations of the thing itself as a whole, but by some superficial and

[1] Based on an article which appeared in *The Open Court*, April 1927.

irrelevant feature which happened to stimulate instinctive or childhood cravings. Thus the considered judgments from which the ethical distinction was derived appeared invalid as data for ethics. And this view, that the distinction between good and bad was, after all, meaningless, was also strongly suggested by the chaotic state of ethical theory itself. For some writers defined 'good' in one way, some in others; and some said it was indefinable; and some explained it in such a modern and 'scientific' manner that they explained it away. Thus the very distinction on which any ideal must be based, the distinction which religion and common sense alike had assumed to be objective and universal, was beginning to seem arbitrary. All causes, all ideals, all obligations and enthusiasms, were suspect in the suspicion that 'goodness' itself was, after all, meaningless.

Such were the three doubts, cosmological, psychological, and ethical, that were creeping into the minds of thoughtful persons even in that distant age which ended in 1914. To-day they are more prevalent.

Now the first of these questions is perhaps of no great importance. During the rise of modern science, thoughtful persons began to wonder whether the world was really good, bad, or indifferent; or whether it was 'on our side' or not. When the more intelligent were as yet only beginning to wake from the dreams of the more naïve religious orthodoxy, this issue was bound to seem urgent. To-day we are perhaps no nearer an answer than in the days when Huxley first opposed the human to the cosmical; but we are more ready to shelve the question and tackle other matters. For it becomes clear that, if by 'world' we mean 'the whole of being', the answer must wait until we know something of the real nature of that whole. Moreover, the ultimate fate of our race and our ideals seems now more remote and less important than in the days before we realized the vastness of the future. But if by 'world' is meant the physical or 'natural' world, we are becoming reconciled to the knowledge that Nature, our ever-fascinating mother, is more resourceful than virtuous.

We begin to cease from looking to her either as a model or as a protagonist. True to the modern fashion in filial piety, we are prone rather to correct than respect her. It is for us, not for her, to say what it is that is good, and to discover if possible whether or not goodness is but a delusion. As to her maternal protection, we are alternately braced and grieved to find that we must depend on ourselves alone. But we are no longer appalled.

The cosmological question thus deserves less attention than perhaps it gets. For, granted that the good-bad distinction is valid, Nature, as our intellectual and moral inferior, must simply be brought to heel, animal that she is. But as to the Whole, whether it is 'on our side' or not, how dare we pass judgment on it? For, granted the validity of the ethical distinction, none but a universally informed mind is entitled to judge the universe. It is possible that, though in our ethical distinction we truly grasp a universal principle, yet *that which* in the cosmical view must be seen to be good is far beyond the appreciative powers of our little minds. Much that seemed to Queen Victoria very bad is judged by us to be very good. Yet (though some of us easily forget it), the difference between the Queen's horizon and our own is perhaps less than the difference between ours and the span of all being. Who are we, that we should judge the heavens by our childish values? Shall we, because the gods neither please us nor make themselves intelligible to us, dub them insensitive or stupid? Parents, it is said, are justified in fulfilling, not merely in pleasing their children. And the gods, if there be such, are to be justified not by the sweets they give us, who indeed are very simple children, but by the judgment of the fully enlightened mind, which may (conceivably) be theirs, but very surely is not ours. For these reasons it is as well to leave the cosmological question untouched.

But the other two questions rightly become more insistent in the plain man's mind every year. In the days when the teaching of the churches was accepted at least intellectually by the congregations (and even by the great

uncongregated), there was no ethical problem in the plain man's mind. Spiritual advisers told him what was good, and he accepted their verdict, in theory, if not in practice. Love was the good ; and the plain man accepted it as the good, not because he saw that it was so, but because the churches said that God had said that it was so.

Even before the war, however, very many had already ceased to take their professed religion seriously, even on the side of theory. The startling and bracing discoveries of science began to make us incredulous of the old teaching, even if also far too credulous of the new. But perhaps the main effect of science was that it made the old hopes look trite and even childish. For the doctrine of science was austere ; while the doctrine of the old faith was by now padded over with comfortable devices. Comfort cannot stir us to loyalty. Thus, while to some the orthodox view was merely unbelievable, to others, though they accepted it as true, it had ceased to be commanding. Consequently, while in some quarters there was a purely intellectual scepticism, in others there was a purely emotional disillusionment. Elsewhere these two dissatisfactions were combined. And so the ethical questions began to whisper themselves in many minds. Those who felt most strongly the objective validity of the good-bad distinction but had lost the old faith, craved most eagerly an ethical theory not incompatible with their new cosmology. Those who were still intuitively convinced that love was the best thing in the world, sought some justification other than the word of a God whose existence they were beginning to doubt.

Then came the war. It gave us something large to do and vivid to think. It pushed those doubts from the focus of our attention. Already in the years before the war the only vivid and widespread ideal was nationalism, and patriotism was the only compelling religion. The one thing bigger than themselves which most men could both believe in and care for was their 'country' ; and they readily accepted the war as the supreme religious rite of sacrifice to their romantic god.

It is true, of course, that the motives that led men to

fight were diverse. Not in all, perhaps not in many, was this strictly religious impulse the main factor. Many, no doubt, went simply to stamp out a conflagration that seemed to threaten their homes and all whom they loved. Some, on the other hand, went to escape the tyranny of the economic mill; some to escape mere boredom; some to be quit of their families or their friends; some to assert their manhood in the eyes of women. The white feather flicked their self-esteem, and drove them to accept without enthusiasm the sacrament imposed by the only living orthodox faith, the faith in nationalism. But these, who fought primarily for their own good name and not for the romantic ideal, would never have been herded into khaki had they not *assumed* that to shirk this ordeal was in fact shameful. Self-pride alone will not force normal persons to swim Niagara or swallow poison. They must feel that the deed is expected of them, and rightly expected. They must expect it of themselves. In fact, they must feel that to serve in the cause really is obligatory on all self-respecting persons. They must *admit* the 'ought', even though they fulfil it only for self-pride. Of course, there were many who went to the front for no reason whatever, but in response to herd-suggestion—with no more loyalty than sheep who follow their leader. But how did that suggestion ever come into being? It arose amongst those for whom 'duty' was a meaningful word, who judged, however reluctantly, that there is something other than the person of each that has a 'claim' on each because of its intrinsic goodness.

Some of us, perhaps, are over cynical about the war, or at least about the motives of those who fought. For we incline to forget that, in an age when the spur and the comfortable promises of religious faith were both of them less compelling than of old, when the objectivity of good was doubted and the hope of immortality fading, men freely gave themselves for the only ideal which seemed to claim them. As the religious faiths waned, the national faiths waxed. Traditions of national dignity, righteousness, and might seemed less improbable than the doctrines

of the churches, and far more vivid. Moreover, patriotism was well within the capacity of the schoolboy culture, which alone was general, even among the educated. For the appeal of nationalism was twofold. It was easily assimilated to our egoism; yet it offered us something to serve, something other than, and greater than, our private selves. This was just what we craved: on the one hand salvation for our self-esteem (so crippled in the petty round of life), and on the other hand a clear obligation, a duty of service, however humble, in a great and vivid cause. Had the war offered satisfaction to one only of these impulses, its hold would have been less constant. But it fulfilled now the one and now the other as our need varied; and in no mood could we escape it.

Had the peoples been able to take Christianity to heart, they would not have needed the psychical 'release' afforded by passionate nationalism. Their egoism would have found fulfilment in the certainty of eternal salvation; and their loyalty might have found in the Christ-god an object both vivid and universal. But since this could not be, the nation was taken as a substitute, and war as the great rite. And the war, even if it has done nothing else of value, has, I should say, underlined in red two facts of human nature. It has shown, on the one hand, how subtly egoism can disguise itself even from itself, accepting even agony and death for mere pride. But, on the other hand, it has shown that self-disregarding loyalty is a quite normal capacity of man, and a capacity which can become active even on a superb scale when a clear call comes. 'Cant!' says the sceptic. But is it cant? Looking back to those days, remembering the details of the behaviour of our friends, and for that matter our own heart-searchings, can we deny that each of us was determined to a greater or less extent by the cognition of values in relation to which our private needs were seen to be irrelevant?

But the nation is a sorry substitute for the God of Love; and the war disillusioned many. Nationalism, of course, is not yet seriously in decline. Even to-day most of us but seldom and hesitatingly transcend it. Indeed, on the

fringes of our Western civilization it spreads alarmingly; and now it threatens to inflame even the East. But, in the regions where it was born, patriotic zeal is perhaps tempered slightly. Even Fascism, its most modern and extravagant phase, may be regarded as a final, though long-drawn-out paroxysm, the last and hopeless protest of barbarians, who at heart feel themselves to have been mentally outdistanced. Even if this is too optimistic a view, we may hope that, as the world becomes more and more unified culturally, nationalism may be reduced from a conflagration to a wholesome warmth in our hearts.

But the failure (or impending failure) of nationalism as a faith, and of the nation as the supreme object of practical loyalty, forces once more on the attention of thoughtful persons those ethical problems which, in a period of urgent action, they had sought to ignore. Those who are consciously troubled about these questions are indeed few; for most folk consider ethical inquiry a priggish and futile occupation. Yet these questions lurk in the background of all minds; and so they tend to get themselves answered inattentively, and to become the secret source of prejudice and savage behaviour.

Consider the outstanding movements of the day. Apart from the slow but sure conquests of the intelligence in many fields, the most remarkable features of our age are Fascism, Bolshevism, and a recrudescence of the more superstitious and preposterous 'religious' sects. Fascism is accepted by those who, still paying respect to the older religion of Europe, but finding in nationalism the only commanding ideal, can conceive loyalty only in terms of fear and hate of rival nations and parties. Fascism assumes its ideal uncritically. It also uncritically assumes the validity of the fundamental ethical concept. It offers a faith, and exacts devotion; and therein lies its power. Bolshevism equally makes ethical assumptions. Although it affects to despise ethics and metaphysics, and to reduce obligation to egoism, yet it is evidently *felt* as a faith, and as an ideal which has an absolute claim on the faithful. Thus in days of widespread disillusionment any ideal,

however crude, however rationally indefensible, is felt to be better than no ideal at all.

Both these movements owe their strength in part to a dread of doubt that increases as doubt becomes more insistent. Both win adherents by satisfying the craving for activity in a cause conceived as objectively important. This phobia of uncertainty is perhaps also one source of the increase of the cruder kinds of religious fanaticism. In this case, of course, as in the others, one motive is the desire for mere personal salvation, in this world or another ; but it can scarcely be questioned that the average fanatic, of whatever persuasion, does honestly feel that it is supremely important, not merely for him but for the world, that the flood of doubt be dammed, and that his policy be followed as the only means to world-salvation. And thus it happens that an age of increasing scepticism is also an age of increasing fanaticism. Very many persons have desperately shut their eyes and swallowed whole whatever comforting or commanding creed was available. They have willingly exposed themselves to religious suggestion, or political suggestion, till in time they have attained a real, but artificial, state of faith. On the other hand, an increasing number have definitely freed themselves from every kind of theological allegiance ; while on the political side also there are signs of a growing disillusionment with established social ideals. Thus in both spheres, religious and political, it is lip-service that wanes ; faith and frank unfaith alike increase.

It is not surprising that in an age of intellectual perplexity men should take refuge either in irrational dogma or in a hand-to-mouth pursuit of pleasure. And mere pleasure-seeking is evidently an increasing fever to-day. The old-fashioned, unreasoned restraints are being removed ; and there is an unabashed claim to free life, free thought, and even ' free love ' ; in short for the free ' creative ' exercise of all human faculties. In literature and art, war is waged against authority and restraint. We are familiar with the crusade for spontaneity, instinct, the subconscious, and with the cult of the creative and non-rational ' life

force', which has been well called 'the dark god'. All this is wholesome as a reaction from an age of stuffy clothes and stuffy morals. But is freedom an end or a means? To the released captive it indeed seems for a while a sufficient end; and to those who lack pleasures, pleasure seems the end. Yet pleasure grows stale; and an aimless freedom becomes a prison. It is being well proved in these days that a life of mere impulse leads nowhere, and moreover is strangely unsatisfying. In our present disillusionment the only freedom to be sought is, it seems, a free fling before the crash. Surely it is this conviction of the futility of all things that is at the root of our fever to snatch joy before we die.

Some indeed have assumed a very different attitude in the general disillusionment. They have devised a stoical ideal, which, by emancipating man from all passing impulses, should enable him to gain a kind of tragic triumph over the universe. They have said: 'Man himself creates the distinction between good and evil. We will take as our ideal (just because it pleases us to do so) freedom from the tyranny of desire, and fearless contemplation of reality.' Clearly if pessimism is intellectually justified, this is the only sane attitude. And even if the pessimistic view is mistaken, pessimism is a wholesome error. It was very necessary that we should learn not only the irrationality of the older optimisms but also their banality. The only way to an optimism of finer mood, if it be intellectually possible at all, is perhaps through heartfelt acceptance of pessimism.

What, then, is the most significant feature of our age? Shall we be remembered chiefly for our social conflicts, for our international confusion, for the brilliant adolescence of science, or for our disillusionment? These are the features that we, who are immersed in to-day, see most clearly. Yet there is a more memorable fact about the modern world, a fact which we scarcely notice. Ours is the age, not simply of disillusionment, but of the vindication of man's capacity for loyalty even in the teeth of disillusionment. For what has been happening since the

days of secure faith? First, when the ancient fear of hell was removed, men were discovered on the whole not less but more responsible. And when later all the old beliefs began to seem legendary and even petty, men did not plunge into individualism light-heartedly. Desperately they made of individualism itself a kind of topsy-turvy ideal, and tried to be loyal to it; or at the very least they found excuses for it, as being a means to some universal end. But presently they began to tire of it, and to look round for some more commanding object of loyalty. And so to-day, alongside of the old religious objects, and the old uncriticized individualism, thrive the cults of nationalism, bolshevism, fascism—movements which, though deeply infused by man's self-regard, would none of them be what they are, were they not also irradiated by his unquenchable capacity for loyalty. But of these faiths bolshevism is the most glorious example of devotion in disillusionment. Sown in contempt of human nature, it flowered into a self-forgetful enthusiasm by which, in spite of its intellectual wrong-headedness, human nature is vindicated.

None of these faiths can withstand dispassionate criticism. Each in turn must sooner or later seem incoherent and petty. And so, in conflicting waves of disillusionment and devotion to new objects, and again disillusionment, we live out our stormy age. Never before, perhaps, have the objects of loyalty been subjected to such keen criticism. Never before has loyalty been driven so desperately from object to object in search of that which, of its own nature, can command allegiance. Even when, in the last extremity, men try to live without any devotion whatever, they prove their essentially loyal nature by a sense of futility and guilt that they cannot explain away. On the other hand the stoic, disillusioned with all other objects, is driven to conceive in his own mind an ideal of conduct, and to achieve a precarious peace by *pretending* with all his might that this, which he believes to be a figment of his personal taste, is yet somehow of intrinsic and universal excellence.

Thus on all hands man's loyalty is vindicated. But to

see that loyalty is a real factor in human nature is not to answer those ancient ethical questions with which all thoughtful persons are confronted to-day. Indeed, the mere prevalence of devotion to causes does not itself prove that loyalty ever is, as it purports to be, actually called into being by the intrinsic value of its object, and not merely by some secret and primitive itch of the experient himself. Still less is it clear that the ethical distinction between good and bad, on which loyalty claims to rest, is an intelligible distinction. What do we really *mean* when we speak of things as good and bad absolutely or universally? What, if anything, *can* we mean intelligibly by such phrases? Has 'good' ultimately no meaning at all, save 'good *for*' some conscious being or other? Or is our delight in the goodness of a thing, not prior to its goodness, but consequent on it? And in what sense 'ought' a man to act so as to bring goods into being and abolish bads? What does it mean to say that he ought to do so whether he wants to or not, and even that the act itself ought to be done whether anyone admits the obligation or not?

And further if the ethical distinction is not simply a delusion, what *kinds* of things is it that in this actual world are good, and what bad? And what is it that would be the ideal, the best of all? What is the end for which we all ought to be striving? These latter indeed are the really interesting questions; but clearly the others are more fundamental. And perhaps the true answer to these fundamental ethical questions might turn out to be after all simply that they are meaningless.

Such briefly are the well-worn theoretical problems which, I suggest, have to-day become practical problems. Just because no ethical theory is now taken for granted, a sound ethical science is needed, whether its findings be positive or negative. Ethics has not hitherto been a live issue; and so books about ethics have mostly been abstract and remote. Only lately has ethical scepticism been not merely propounded but deliberately put into practice. Only lately has it begun to break down well-established habits of behaviour. For to-day, while much human

conduct is still based on the old assumption of the universality of good and bad, much also springs definitely from the conviction that this distinction is invalid. Now that theoretical differences are carried into practice, our practice becomes more radically and bitterly discordant than ever before. May our theory in turn be revivified by its new practical import!

Not all of us, indeed, are aware of the ethical problems explicitly. But all our lives are influenced by the fact that there is no agreement about them; and probably every intelligent person is at some time or other painfully conscious of them. They have, of course, been faced many times in the past, and many times answered in terms of successive cultures. Yet they remain for most of us still unsolved, and we cry out for a solution of them in our modern speech. For just as physical science is finding itself no longer able to avoid philosophical questions, so politics, social reform, and even private life, are being influenced by doubts whose nature is philosophical. In fact there lurks in the background of every mind to-day a profound ethical perplexity.

Ethics is a hackneyed, treacherous, tedious, and, many would say, a stagnant and profitless subject. It offers none of the ceaseless adventures of physics, nor the shocks of psychology. But to-day we are 'up against' ethics whether we will or no. It is an obscure little matter that has somehow to be cleared up, or remain a secret and spreading rot in the foundations of our thought and practice. The trouble has perhaps been that ethics has been too sternly isolated as a self-contained science. In the recent somewhat disorderly advance of biology and psychology fierce battles have been fought on the borders of ethics. Some claim that ethics has been annihilated, others that it has established its sovereign independence. While agreeing with the latter party, I hold that ethics cannot afford to isolate itself, but must seek mutually profitable intercourse with its neighbours. Biology, psychology, and ethics are certainly distinct sciences; yet if we would properly understand the principles of any

one of them, we must bear in mind the principles of both the others.

In this book, though I shall try to show the bearings of ethics on psychology, my chief aim is to envisage in the light of biology and psychology the basic ethical problems themselves. First, however, it will be necessary to consider ethics as an isolated subject, and to form some opinion about various contemporary ethical theories. We shall then be in a position to correlate whatever seems sound in these theories with recent thought in biology and psychology. Thus I hope to get a clearer view of the basic principles of ethics itself.

Problems of the logical nature of ' good ', and the logical ground of obligation, constitute the more abstract and perhaps the less interesting ethical task. Having come to some opinion on these subjects, we should be able to discuss with more assurance, though only schematically, the concrete character of the ideal implied in the nature of our world. Such a discussion I shall attempt towards the end of this book. And finally, since our subject inevitably leads on to metaphysical questions, I shall indulge in some highly speculative thought upon the status of ' good and bad ' in the constitution of the universe.

CHAPTER II

SELF-FULFILMENT AS THE GROUND OF ETHICS

IT will be convenient to begin by discussing the ethical theory that is usually associated with philosophical idealism. I am not concerned to give a full historical account of this great system as it was expounded by particular thinkers, but only to state and criticize what I take to be the essential basis of all idealist ethical theories. And this I seek to do because, though this basic idea appears to me subtly false in one respect, in others it is immensely significant. Criticism of idealist ethics is apt to be more pert than shrewd; and I am reluctant to seem to join in the outcry. But it is very necessary to criticize certain aspects of the theory if we are to profit by it as a whole; and with this aim I shall single out that presentation of it which seems most clear and rigorous, namely, the ethics of Bradley; and I shall try to show that its solution of the basic problems is dependent on the use of the word 'self' in two different senses, namely sometimes as experient, and sometimes as that which is experienced.

(A) PLEASURE AND THE ENDURING SELF

Bradley's first concern in ethics is to criticize hedonism, the theory that goodness is identical with pleasure. This he effects by a psychological analysis of 'pleasure' and of 'self', in order to reach an understanding of 'desiring one's own pleasure'. The self for the hedonist is a series of momentary mental states; and the pleasure that is sought is the longest possible sequence of the intensest possible momentary states of being pleased. But, in fact, says Bradley, the self that is to be pleased is not a series of discrete moments. It is an enduring unitary thing, in some important sense identical to-day and yesterday and

to-morrow. If this were not so, there would be no point in sacrificing to-day's pleasure for the prospect of a keener or longer pleasure to-morrow. The self of to-day and the self of to-morrow would be as mutually indifferent as the self of Brown and the self of Jones. The pleasure that I have in the prospect of to-morrow's pleasure is dependent on the fact that the self to be pleased to-morrow is the same self as the self to be denied to-day. And I choose to-morrow's pleasure because I expect therein the fulfilment of the self which is identical on both days. The prospect of to-morrow's pleasure is pleasant to-day *because* to-morrow's pleasure, when it occurs, will be a felt state of fulfilment of the enduring self. Thus pleasure is essentially a felt state of self-fulfilment, whether in small matters or great.

Sometimes small fulfilments may be sought to the exclusion of greater fulfilments, as when the schoolboy forgets the consequences of over-eating, or when the adult ignores his generous impulses for the sake of his egoistic impulses. For the self has various kinds of needs; but all of them are aspects of the need for continuance, expansion, fullness of being. We may, of course, take pleasure in acts which do not, in the circumstances, make for our self-fulfilment. But the fact that we do get pleasure in such acts is apparently due to the fact that, at some time or other, acts of such a kind have generally made for self-fulfilment, whether in ourselves or our ancestors. Pleasure is thus seen to be not identical with, but a *sign* or *symptom* of, self-fulfilment. Displeasure, pain, grief, are signs or symptoms of self-negation. That which we desire is not, in general, pleasure, but self-fulfilment. And the felt realization of self-fulfilment may be conveniently called happiness. It is true then, that, though we do not always desire pleasure, we do always desire happiness. And further we may say that pleasure is in fact desirable only when, and in that, it does actually arise from self-fulfilment; and pain is undesirable only when, and in that, it does actually arise from self-negation.[1]

[1] Cf. F. H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, p. 118 *et seq.*

(B) THE SOCIAL SELF

But the self which a man cannot but seek to fulfil is not simply his private self, which stands over against the selves of others. For the normal man is essentially social. It is a plain matter of fact that he cannot be happy in merely fulfilling his own person while ignoring others. The content of his self is very much more than his private person with its egoistic needs. He includes within himself at least some few intimate other persons, and cannot attain self-fulfilment apart from the fulfilment of these. And this is true even if he is a thoroughly selfish man; even if, whenever his private needs conflict with the needs of his friends, he always sacrifices the latter. For such a person sacrifices one part of himself in order to fulfil another part. Thus he inevitably falls short of self-fulfilment; for he does *need* the fulfilment of his friends, even though he may *desire* more eagerly the fulfilment of his own private ends.

But indeed a man's private ends, and his private self, are mere abstractions. For, according to the theory that we are considering, every man is intrinsically, not extrinsically, social. His social relations are internal to him, not external. There is nothing whatever in him which is not social as well as private. If he were not by nature a social animal, and by nurture a social mind, he would be something radically different from what he is. His most private acts are determined by his social environment, and would be other kinds of acts in another society. The content of every one of his desires owes its character on the one hand to his social environment, and on the other to an inherited nature, which is itself the product of a social ancestry, and demands in him a social fulfilment. Through heredity and environment society has made him. He simply *is* society (so we are told), thinking and willing in the particular centre called by his name. When he seeks to be nothing but his private centre, he seeks to be something which he cannot be without denying the major part of himself, without ceasing to be what he really is.

The idiot alone succeeds in denying his social nature. But even his nature is social in essence; since he, like us all, is social in origin. He has indeed no social interest, and seeks no social fulfilment; yet he is such that there can be no happiness for him without the exercise of the social rudiments or vestiges of his nature. It is irrational in him to ignore his internal relatedness to society. For a private mind is not merely, nor primarily, a private mind. It is potentially the mind of society; and its interests are potentially the interests of society. In Bradley's words, society 'is the objective mind which is subjective and self-conscious in its citizens: it feels and knows itself in the heart of each.'[1]

It is in terms of the essentially social nature of every self that orthodox ethics describes moral obligation. In the first place it is insisted that moral obligation is in fact felt, and that it is not to be denied or explained away. Human beings do feel that they *ought* to behave in certain manners or serve certain ends, whether (in the ordinary sense) they want to or not. But moral obligation cannot be merely obedience to a law externally imposed, since, unless the agent himself recognizes the rightness of the law, he is not moral in obeying it. Moral obedience must be free obedience. To be moral we must ourselves will the good. Yet the good is not just whatever we actually will, or whatever we desire on the whole and in the long run. For the essence of morality is to distinguish between what we happen to desire and what is intrinsically good, and to seek to conform our desire to the good. Thus there is a dilemma. For, if we are to be moral, we must will the good, and yet when we are moral we may have to do what we desire not at all to do. Moral behaviour must be on the one hand freely willed, and on the other hand obedient.

(c) THE ACTUAL WILL AND THE REAL WILL

This dilemma is said to be avoided by the theory of the actual will and the real will. Actually I may be intensely

[1] Cf. F. H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, p. 167.

desiring to do what I know to be wrong, while really, in my heart of hearts, according to my true nature, I will to do only the right. Potentially, or at heart, we are all moral beings, who will only the good. When I desire to do what I know to be wrong, the 'I' that desires so is only a mood, a partial, limited, somnolent mood, of the true 'I', who will only the good.

We shall understand the theory better, and subsequently be able to criticize it more justly, if at this point we study an important double distinction upon which it is based, namely on the one hand the distinction between will and desire, and on the other that between the actual will and the real will. A desire is a subjective attitude or act, which may or may not express fully the individual's will, may or may not take into account all the needs which occur within his actual mental content. Thus a man may desire a glass of beer even while his will, his deliberate decision in relation to the circumstances of his whole life, is to refrain from alcohol. And under the stress of temptation the momentary impulse may possibly triumph over his will.

But in addition to the distinction between desire and will there is the distinction between the actual will and the real will. Both wills are in some sense objective, in that both are mental content, not mental process; though exponents of the theory sometimes seem to impute to the actual will characteristics which belong to process rather than content. For certainly in a sense the individual's real will and his actual will are not equally objective. His actual will is constituted, or at any rate determined, by those needs which he actually recognizes (or seems to himself to discover), within his actual mental content, with all its limitations, and errors, and prejudices. His actual will, therefore, is thus far shot through with subjectivity. But his real will is for the objective good, and is without subjective limitation or bias. Implicit in the form of his actual will, though not explicitly willed, and certainly incompatible with many of his desires, is the will to be a fully-grown personality; and since this goal cannot be

attained while any discord or limitation remains within his mental content, his real will is necessarily for the objective good. What he really needs, and therefore what at bottom he really wills, is, in the last resort, his fulfilment as the universal self.

Thus the real will, which is the good will, is identical in us all, and characterizes the true self of each. It is identical, not as a particular threaded through other particulars, but as a universal identical in its instances. Each of us is distinct and individual, and the real will expresses itself differently in each of us; but in all it is a fundamental identity of form. Our actual wills are merely incomplete, partial, and so far unreal, approximations to the real will; since in respect of our limitations and prejudices we fail to fulfil our true nature as rational beings. Yet *some* limitation we must have. The real will must be expressed in some particular manner or other. Only by being a peculiar and distinctive individual can a man be actual at all.

It is now possible to see more clearly the relations of desire and will. A desire may fall short even of the actual will, or it may truly express the actual will; or again, in so far as the actual will may be in some respects identical with the real will, a desire may express not only the actual will but also the real will, may in fact be a morally right desire. Of course the actual will cannot be, even in any one respect, exhaustively identical with the real will, since they are organic wholes of different character. Every expression of each must therefore be transfused by, or characterized by, the distinctive whole that each is. Yet they may approximate in certain respects sufficiently to involve identical actions.

On this theory, then, moral choice is free activity on the part of the true self, since it expresses the real will of the individual. But on the other hand it is activity in conformity with an objective principle. It is obedience to something other than the desire or whim of the moment, and to something greater than any mood which is not expressive of the whole self. It is free conformity to the

will implied in the objective content. It is obligation on the part of a partial self, or mood, to the whole and true self.

If these two selves were distinct centres of consciousness, there could be no obligation felt by the one towards the other. But they are only distinct as a temporary mood is distinct from the whole united self. The lesser self is an unreal abstraction. Its logical fulfilment is that it should become the higher. While I am only my partial, momentary self, I am indeed seeking some things which it is my true nature to seek ; but I am seeking them while I ignore other things which it is also my true nature to seek. In the glamour of my partial mood I neglect the greater, more real objects, without which I cannot be my true self.

The ground of obligation, then, is not external law ; it is the self, the real self which alone can fulfil even the partial self of the actual will, and the fleeting selves of momentary desires. I must be moral, according to this view, *because* only so can I fulfil myself, be my true self. But what kind of a self is it that demands fulfilment ? We have seen that it is not the sequence of my states of mind. I do not fulfil myself by gaining pleasures and avoiding pains. Nor am I merely to contrive harmonious satisfaction for *my* actual instincts, or *my* actual interests of whatever kind, in such a way as to achieve as much satisfaction as possible with as little internal conflict as possible. My actual self, as we have seen, cannot be permanently satisfied by the mere satisfaction of its actual cravings. It can only be satisfied by being transformed into a greater self. It cannot permanently rest content with its own private fulfilment, considered as the fulfilment of one person among others. For if it fulfils itself at the expense of others, or even merely without fulfilling others, it violates its own true nature, which is social. Part of its actual content remains unfulfilled. And even if it had never partaken of a social environment, part of its inherited nature would cry out in vain for fulfilment.

But the ground of obligation is not merely in our inheritance of social impulses ; it lies in our rational nature.

We are able to take an outside view of ourselves, to transcend the bias of our own subjectivity, and regard ourselves and others as equally objective. For each active self is an approximation to a universal self which should include all actual selves as members within itself.[1] If my private self were to attain this perfection, this universality of content, it would no longer be limited by the merely negative private idiosyncrasies that it has now. It would be the self of no particular person, but the self of mankind, nay the self of the universe. And in so far as my self is not this universal self it is logically incomplete. It implies an immensity beyond its actual content. In isolation from all that it implies it is not real but an abstraction; just as a living hand considered in isolation from the rest of the living body is unreal, an abstraction.

It follows, then, that though our actual wills differ, the real will in us all is identical, since it is the will for the one universal good. For in the first place the real will in each transcends his private needs, and is the will of the society in which he lives. This does not mean that it is, so to speak, the voice of the majority speaking in him, or the resultant of all the actual wills of his compatriots. It is rather the good will, the best will, which is implied in all actual wills, but may be very different from the voice of the majority. It is the best will, in being simply the will for the fulfilment of the whole nature of the society, which (we are told) is not simply the sum of the natures of all its members. The general will of the society, or the spirit of the nation, is something immanent in each individual, a universal type of which each individual is an imperfect instance. And so the individual is only fulfilled by identifying his actual will with this general will, which is his logical completion. Our end, says Bradley, 'is the realization of the good will which is superior to ourselves; and again the end is self-realization. Bringing these together, we see the end is the realization of ourselves as

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 224. 'The lower is such because it contradicts itself, and is forced to advance beyond itself to another stage, which is the solution of the contradiction that existed in the lower, and so a relative perfection.'

the will which is above ourselves.'[1] This good will, in which alone we can fulfil ourselves, must be objective, not dependent on anyone's liking. And it must be universal, above all particulars and prejudices. And finally it must be concrete, not abstract. It must be realized in and through particular acts of particular persons. Thus society is said to be strictly an organism. And the will of society is ' the self-realization of the whole body, because it is one and the same will which lives and acts in the life and action of each.' But also it is ' the self-realization of each member, because each member cannot find the function which makes him himself apart from the whole to which he belongs ; to be himself he must go beyond himself.'

(D) MY STATION AND ITS DUTIES

Practical results follow from this emphasis on the will of society. The supreme moral precept turns out to be to fulfil ' my station and its duties.'[2] True it is a duty, says Bradley, ' standing on the basis of the existing, and in harmony with its general spirit, to try to make, not only oneself, but also the world better, or rather, and in preference, one's own world better.'[3] But it is wrong, ' starting from oneself, from ideals in one's own head to set oneself and them against the moral world.' For the moral world, he holds, is real : our private ideals are not. On the other hand the community of which a man is a member ' may be in a confused or rotten condition.'[4] And indeed, the best community is not perfect. Consequently, we are told, the morals of each nation must be criticized in the light of the morals of all others.

For indeed the real will, which it is our true nature to will, is not simply the will of *our* society. Societies themselves are but approximations to a more general ' will of mankind '. And this in turn is but an approximation to the universal will, which we may call the will of God. This it is which is the real will, identical in us all. This it is which is the sanction of our moral obligation, which

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 147. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 145. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 181. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 184.

imposes a duty on us to realize an ideal for the world. And this ideal is to be realized on the one hand in faithful fulfilment of our station and its duties, and on the other in striving to better even the will of the society in which we live.

But it is admitted (in the theory which we are considering) that there are certain ends to be fulfilled which cannot be justified as mere means to the fulfilment of society. These are the activities of art, and of scientific and philosophical inquiry. Such pursuits are judged good in themselves, and a society is judged partly in respect of its achievement in these spheres. In explanation of this we are told that these activities are modes of self-fulfilment, and that 'the moral end is to realize the self, and all forms of realizing of the self are seen to fall within the sphere of morality.'[1]

(E) SUMMARY

The foundation of the whole theory is evidently this: obligation arises from the recognition by the actual self that it is incomplete, incoherent. The whole of duty is thus the duty to realize oneself. But we are told that '"realize yourself" does not mean merely "be a whole", but "be an infinite whole".'[2] It is not sufficient to avoid contradiction within the self. It is necessary also to embrace all things within oneself, and form one's will in relation not to a parish but the universe. And this necessity arises from the fact that inevitably there are contradictions in the narrower self which entail the wide self for their resolution.

Such in brief is Bradley's theory of ethics. Now it may be that other idealists would not accept Bradley's account of ethics without serious modification. Bradley has described his theory with his customary rigour and precision. I confess that the pure essence of all idealist ethical theories seems to me to be contained in Bradley, and that the suggested modifications seem often merely to obscure the issue. This, however, is a historical question

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 206. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

with which I am not here concerned. What does concern me is to show that the theory described in this chapter needs not merely to be modified but, so to speak, to be turned back to front.

Bradley's theory reaches very far beyond hedonism. Not only is it based on a sounder psychology, but also, in deriving obligation from the self as content rather than the self as feeling, it more nearly does justice to the nature of moral experience. But I shall now argue that it does not carry through this objectification of obligation to its proper conclusion. In so far as it seems to solve the ethical problem at all, it does so by means of the concept of self-fulfilment; and this is plausible only because by means of the ambiguity of 'self' the object of knowledge is infected with the subjectivity of the moral agent. Thus the agent in fulfilling his content seems to be merely fulfilling himself, and the problem of obligation is evaded.

CHAPTER III

CRITICISM OF THE SELF-FULFILMENT THEORY

(A) EMOTIVE ASPECTS OF THE THEORY

WHETHER or not the ethical theory offered by Bradley is true, it is in many ways comforting. We are attracted by the hope that, in denying our private cravings for the sake of the good, we do after all in some sense save our souls. Sometimes, indeed, the conviction that only thus can we fulfil ourselves may incline us to righteousness when otherwise we should have erred. We are flattered, moreover, in being told that each of us is potentially the self of the universe. Just so was the private soldier pleased to think of the field-marshal's baton in his knapsack. For we all crave to be at heart larger and more important than we seem in our everyday clothes. We long to leave our pettiness behind, and become self-consistent and all-embracing. Thus, perhaps unfairly, does our egoism interpret this system of ethics to its own advantage.

On the other hand, we also want to be assured that goodness is something more than the gratification of desire. We want to believe that the distinction between good and evil is objective and universal, and that in keeping the moral law, or striving for the ethical end, we are not merely 'pleasing ourselves'. We want, moreover, to be able to issue moral commands to others and feel that, when we do so, the universe is backing us. For we are all at heart addicted to moralism. It is, therefore, cheering to be told that goodness derives, not from the pleasant tone of mental states, not from the nature of the process of consciousness, but from the nature of the content of consciousness, from that of which we are conscious. It would be ridiculous to suppose that idealist ethics makes

its appeal solely through its gratification of these common cravings, or that the great idealist philosophers unconsciously deceived themselves into thinking that their theory was rational when it was merely pleasing. Nevertheless, this emotive aspect of the theory should make us doubly cautious in estimating its intellectual value.

(B) THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

Now emphasis on the content rather than the process of consciousness is the real achievement of idealist ethics. It is in virtue of this that it so strikingly outstrips hedonism. But the full implications of this new emphasis have not, perhaps, been rigorously accepted. The theory of the real and good will is supposed to do justice both to the fact that moral conduct is essentially determined by the agent's own moral nature (not by an external authority), and to the fact that moral conduct is determined in relation to an objective order. But in truth, by an unfortunate false stress upon ' self-fulfilment ', it has failed to do justice to the objectivity of obligation, or at least has failed to grasp its full implications. In spite of all assertions to the contrary, it shows morality as essentially the egoistic business of saving one's soul rather than as the world's invasion of the experient. Or, at least, owing to the form in which the theory is expressed, it is always liable to this interpretation. My aim is not simply to prove the theory false ; for it may reasonably be regarded as true, under suitable interpretation. But it is all too easily misunderstood. And this is due to the fact that its exponents have, almost in spite of themselves, stated it in terms of the experient rather than in terms of that which is experienced. Hence springs its unfortunate taint of egoism. Moreover, as I shall presently argue, in so far as the theory is true, it fails to solve the problem of obligation, and in so far as it claims to account for obligation it is false.

Idealist philosophers would, no doubt, vigorously deny this charge that their ethical system is tainted with egoism.

They would insist that they regarded the individual as a mere abstraction from his society, and ultimately from the Absolute. But in this reply they fail to meet the point. For in their theory the individual's obligation is derived from *his* actual disposition to seek harmony. Only because *his* real will is for harmonious fulfilment *ought* he to seek it. Moreover, it may well be argued that in reducing the individual to a mere aspect of society Idealists have erred ; for, though surely society fashioned him, he is now what he is, and no mere appearance of society. And though in the last analysis he might turn out to be in some sense an expression of the Absolute, he is just that one expression which he is, and not the others which he is not. The distinction between him and the Whole is vital from his point of view. Though conceivably he may be in some sense contained in the Absolute, the Absolute itself is not wholly contained in him, nor is the universal will in any strict sense involved in his actual will. And in the present connexion the charge is that, in deriving moral obligation from the individual's will to be fulfilled, Idealist philosophers derive it from something which is not even implicitly identical with the world's need to be fulfilled.

Moreover, in the reduction of the individual to a mere mode of society there is, of course, a great practical danger. For the consequent moral precept that we should try to fulfil ' our station and its duties ' is but a half-truth, and may, as has often been pointed out, lead to an excessive reverence for the established order and culture, and an excessive distrust of adventure in morals and politics. Had men clung strictly to this ideal, blood sacrifice, slavery, and a thousand other barbarous customs would never have been criticized, and indeed the religion of love would never have been preached. Doubtless, it is the momentum of society's culture that forces the more backward individuals up to a certain level, and prevents the unbalanced from a too rampant eccentricity. But clearly whatever advances have occurred were initiated by critical and daring individuals.

There is, of course, another serious danger in this over-emphasis of society. Not only does it lead to a disparagement of the individual's contribution to the life of society, but also it suggests that society should be the end of all activity, and that the individual is of no account save as the instrument of society. Thus the members of society come to be regarded as members of an orchestra, and organized social life as the symphony which controls, even while it is created by, their co-operative activity. It is this symphony, this *form* of social mentality, which justifies their existence as mere particular mental processes. In a land, however, that has been scared by 'Prussianism' there is, perhaps, no need to dwell on the danger of this glorification of the state.

It is instructive to note how orthodox ethics deals with those activities which, though deemed desirable, cannot be plausibly said to owe their value primarily to their contribution to social life. Science, art, and philosophy, we are told, are valuable because they are modes of self-fulfilment. For the good *is* primarily self-fulfilment. All that contributes to the fulfilment of the individual is good; but better is that which contributes to the fulfilment of the social self; and this in turn is but an approximation to the universal self, which is the end (and source) of all. Thus, though these activities are not to be justified merely as being processes having social utility, their justification is none the less indirectly social. For they are means for the enrichment of the individual, and the individual is to be enriched that society may be enriched.

Now this reduction of science, art, and philosophy to modes of self-fulfilment is only less artificial than their direct reduction to modes of social advancement. It is true, of course, that they *are* modes of self-fulfilment, just as it is true that incidentally they make for social advancement and harmony. But they are not necessarily practised *because* they are modes of self-fulfilment, nor is their value experienced as *consisting* therein. The scientist or philosopher who should pursue his inquiry merely to enlarge his mind might well be said to lack the true scientific

or philosophical spirit. Even he who should make his aim the advancement of human culture would have missed the mark. He, perhaps, comes nearer to the true spirit who feels obscurely just that the world *ought* to be known and understood, that the universe itself cries out in him for this completion, and that he and all mankind are justified in these pursuits, not primarily because these activities fulfil man, but because, in some slight degree, they fulfil the universe. The artist also seems to be most true to his calling when he feels that he, and all mankind, owes, in some sense, loyalty to the aesthetic objects, even if they are objects which happen to be created by his own mental activity.

Perhaps this is mere superstition. At a later stage I shall venture on a more detailed but highly speculative inquiry into this suggestion. But, meanwhile, whether it can be rendered intelligible or must finally be abandoned as an unjustified projection of our own cravings, the actual experience of the value of scientific, artistic, and philosophical activities certainly has this flavour of objectivity; and, consequently, we cannot but suspect that this kind of value is not fully explained by the self-fulfilment theory.

Many who hold the ethical theory under discussion would agree with the view that the universe itself demands completion in us in worshipful contemplation. But they would also insist that this claim only *applies to us* because in worshipful contemplation we fulfil *ourselves*, or begin to fulfil ourselves. This is surely perverse. It may be true that we fulfil ourselves in this activity, which may be called worship; but we ought not, and indeed we cannot, worship *in order to* fulfil ourselves. If worship fulfils us, it does so as being the attitude demanded in us by an intrinsic value. That value is not to be judged worshipful merely for the very reason that the worship of it fulfils us.

(c) THE AMBIGUITY OF 'SELF'

It is true that primarily what we call good is the fulfilment of needs felt as our own needs, felt as needs within

our own content. But we do not mean that this fulfilment is good *because* it falls within our experience, or because it is an element in the fulfilment of a certain experienced system. In this sense, then, the fulfilment is good, not because it is *self*-fulfilment, but just in being fulfilment at all. Similarly with regard to universal self-fulfilment, it is true that the good, the ideal, can only be rightly asserted by one who takes all things into account. It must, that is, be judged good in relation to the content of the hypothetical universal mind. But this does not mean that it is the good *because* it would be so judged by the universal mind, or because it would be felt to fulfil the need of the universal self. It is the good not because it is universal *self*-fulfilment, but just because it is universal fulfilment.

If 'self' be taken to mean the whole real of which any mind's content is a distorted appearance, then indeed what we mean by good is the fulfilment of that real, and is 'self-fulfilment'. Or rather by 'good' we mean the fulfilment of any tendency or capacity of that real, and by 'the ideal' we mean the greatest possible fulfilment of the real whole, of which a mind's content is a distorted appearance. But if this is what is meant, it is confusing to use the word 'self' at all; goodness is simply fulfilment, and the ideal is universal fulfilment. Of course, it is true in a sense that every good is a case of the 'self-fulfilment' of something or other; and that the ideal must be the fulfilment of the universe 'itself', and is therefore universal self-fulfilment. But such contentions are pointless. The only significant meaning of 'self' involves experience; and self-fulfilment must mean the *experienced* fulfilment of all needs that are members of a certain system of experienced needs. We all do will self-fulfilment in this sense. We all do will to experience complete and harmonious fulfilment. But this is not what we mean by the good.

The phrase 'self-fulfilment' is essential to idealist ethics; for it is used to bridge the gulf between the real will and the actual will. Each, we are told, is an expression of the will for self-fulfilment; but the one achieves, and the other misses, the goal. Immoral behaviour, we are

told, is immoral precisely in that it misses the goal which it itself is really seeking. The phrase ' self-fulfilment ' is used in quite different senses in these two connexions. In moral behaviour the ' self-fulfilment ' sought is the fulfilment of the real, of which the mental content is a distorted fragment ; but in immoral behaviour what is sought is not the fulfilment of the real, even so far as it is known, but the fulfilment of that system of *felt needs* which happen at the moment to constitute the private self *within* the whole mental content. The intrusion of other needs is resisted just because they are not felt as members of the self, just because their fulfilment would not fulfil the self as it is actually felt to be, but would thwart it.

If this be so, it is not enough to say merely that the two kinds of conduct are expressions of the identical will for self-fulfilment, though the one seeks to fulfil a smaller, and the other a greater, self. Such a statement is true, and even important ; but by itself it is grossly misleading. What is important is not the identity, but the difference, of the greater and lesser self. And no theory which slurs this difference can even state, let alone solve, the problem of obligation. The vital question is this : how comes it that a greater ' self ', whose fulfilment is *not* actually willed, exercises authority over the subject which actually wills only a lesser and incompatible ' self ' ? The answer is said to be that after all they are one and the same ' self '. But the point is that, whatever the truth be about them, the subject does not *experience* them both equally as ' self '. The one course is experienced as promising self-fulfilment, and the other as promising self-negation, to the self as it is actually felt to be. Is the key to the problem that, while in moral conduct what is willed is the fulfilment of the objective real, in immoral conduct what is willed is merely an illusory experience of fulfilment ? No, for though this will for mere pleasurable experience is doubtless often a cause of immoral conduct, the issue is not strictly between objectivity and subjectivity. The essence of immorality is that in immoral conduct the fulfilment of part of the *objective field* is willed to the exclusion of the

rest, while in moral conduct the will is for the fulfilment of the whole; and not merely the whole content, but for the real whole of which any individual's content is but an erroneous appearance.

The obvious objection may be made that a man cannot will the fulfilment of his total objective field unless he himself, the desiring subject, needs the fulfilment of his total objective field, and that thus moral conduct reduces once more to the will for subjective fulfilment. But this objection is trivial. Of course, a man cannot will the fulfilment of his total objective field unless *he* needs its fulfilment; but this is only to say that he cannot will it unless he does will it. We must not first distinguish between him and the objective field, and then try to explain his will to fulfil the objective field by means of a 'something in him' which makes him will it. Rightly we distinguish between him as a bare experient and the object that he experiences; but his needs, one and all, even his bodily needs and his private 'mental' needs, are objective needs rightly or wrongly cognized by him. For instance it is an objective fact, cognizable by him and by others, that he, considered as an organism, tends to self-maintenance, whether he, considered as an experient, desires self-maintenance or not.[1]

I said that his needs were one and all needs of the objective field cognized truly or falsely by him. In a manner it would have been better to say that his needs were *all but one* needs of the objective field. For one need he has which is strictly subjective, and not primarily a need of that which is object to him. This is the need that arises from his own nature as an experient, as a bare centre of cognition and conation. As an experient he needs to experience free activity, or fulfilment of felt objective needs, and to shun hindrance of felt objective needs. The objective needs themselves, whose fulfilment he as subject needs to experience, are simply the tendencies and capacities of the world which he cognizes, including his own organism's established 'behaviour-set'.

[1] The objectivity of need will be discussed in detail at a later stage.

But he, as a process of conscious subjective activity, needs to experience the fulfilment of objective needs. He needs, in fact, to maintain and fulfil himself as a harmonious system of psychic activity. He craves for its own sake successful conation and consequent pleasure (which is felt fulfilment); and shuns for its own sake unsuccessful conation and consequent pain (which is felt hindrance). This one need, then, emerges directly from his own subjectivity, and not from the nature of that which is object to him.

But this need to experience fulfilment is not to be thought of as the source of all his activity; rather it is a consequence of the fact that objective needs awaken in him the capacity for conation and affection. Still less is 'good' to be logically derived solely from this subjective need. Idealist ethics, however, in spite of all efforts to the contrary, seems after all to derive moral behaviour from this will to *experience* fulfilment. The will for self-fulfilment, in fact, is an attribute of subjectivity. That is to say, moral behaviour is derived in the last resort, not from the actual will's objective aspect (and so from the real will), but from its subjective aspect, which reduces to desire. The starting-point of the whole theory is that every individual consciously desires fulfilment for himself. He desires that whatever needs he experiences *as* needs shall also be experienced as fulfilled. In fact, his aim is essentially to be a freely and harmoniously active experient. The theory admits, indeed, that the self which in moral behaviour is fulfilled is the objective mental content. But it implies that this desire to fulfil the needs that arise within the content of the self is the expression of a fundamental 'will for self-fulfilment' which inheres in the nature of every experient. Now the word 'will' here is ambiguous. The theory uses it generally to mean the objective demands of the mental content. But if 'the will for self-fulfilment' is to be used as the logical ground of obligation, it must have a subjective significance; it must mean the subjective activity of desiring. Were it not for this will for an experienced harmonious free activity

or fulfilment, we should not (it is said) will the fulfilment of objective needs. We will objective fulfilment *because of* the nature of our own subjectivity, which seeks the experience of fulfilment. We cannot fully attain this experience of harmonious fulfilment save by harmoniously fulfilling whatever needs are felt within our mental content. And since our content is an abstraction from the whole real, we can only attain self-fulfilment by willing universally. *Therefore* it is, according to the theory, that we all ' really will ' the universal good.

The criticism which I am attempting to make against idealist ethics may perhaps be clarified as follows. We must distinguish, not merely between mental process and mental content, but also between the real world as it in fact is, and that fragmentary and illusory excerpt from it which is the individual's content. Idealists rightly insist that content is in principle continuous with, nay identical with, reality itself, though it is but an abstract factor in the total real. But by using the phrase ' mental content ' they obscure the stark objectivity of this ' content '. While insisting that it is objective, they insist also that it is ' the self ', and import into it a certain character of subjectivity, namely, they tend to regard the conative process as an activity *of the content itself*, rather than an activity of a subject (or if it be preferred an organism) in relation with an external world. Thus by the use of the concept ' mental content ' they are able to offer a solution, but only an illusory solution, of the dilemma of ethics. Moral conduct, they say, accepts a principle which emerges from the nature of content, and is therefore objective, and derived from the real world. On the other hand moral conduct, they say, merely fulfils the real will of the agent himself. It is implied in the nature of content as something *mental*, as consisting in a system of *felt* needs, as expressing itself in conative activities. Thus moral conduct is an expression of the need to *experience* harmonious fulfilment, which emerges from the nature of subjectivity itself.

But this is to have your cake and eat it. *Either* what

is good is essentially the fulfilment of the capacity of the ontologically objective, or real, world, and therefore 'of content' merely because content is an aspect of the real world; but in this case obligation cannot be derived from the process of willing self-fulfilment, which is essentially the expression of the agent's own subjectivity. *Or* what is good intrinsically is the fulfilment of the agent's subjective activity, and therefore of content only in virtue of its relation to that activity, and not in virtue of its identity with the ontologically objective real world; but in this case obligation cannot be derived from the nature of the real world. But if obligation is not derived from the real world, it is illusory. Even if it were true (and later I shall argue that it is not) that good 'emerges' at the level of consciousness, we should still need to insist that the moral agent's obligation toward other conscious individuals cannot be simply derived from his own will for self-fulfilment. It must be derived from that which is objective to him epistemologically, and in the last resort from that which is ontologically objective. If it is the world that imposes obligation on the individual, obligation cannot be derived from the will to self-fulfilment. If, on the other hand, obligation is derived from the will to self-fulfilment, it is not imposed by the real world, and is not in strictness obligation at all.

If the 'will for self-fulfilment' were strictly and simply the activity *of* the mental content, i.e. of part of the real world, then it might be true that the 'will for self-fulfilment' implied the will for world-fulfilment. If this were the case, however, 'immoral' conduct would not occur; for why should the content ever act so as to achieve less than complete fulfilment of itself? The essence of immoral conduct is that it is activity on the part of something *other* than the mental content, which takes into account part of the content but not the whole. In fact, the will for self-fulfilment is not strictly and simply the activity of the mental content. It is the activity of the subject, or the organism, *in relation to* a mental content or cognized environment. And in this the will for

world-fulfilment is not implied. Hence the whole problem of obligation. The source of all the trouble is clearly revealed in Bosanquet's account of the will as 'the conception of a system of ideas working themselves out into a connected whole'.[1] This description follows on his analogy of the will and ideo-motor action, which gives rise to the contention that ideas 'work themselves out'. If this is so, and if ideas are in principle identical with objective reality, will is the activity of objective reality in us. And immoral conduct is a failure on the part of objective reality to work itself out fully in us. But the analogy with so-called ideo-motor action is false. Nor can it do justice to the experience of moral obligation. In a sense, indeed, it is true that reality works itself out in our wills; but it does so through the subjective activity of an organism, not automatically.

(D) IMPLICATES OF THE ACTUAL WILL

Waiving for the moment this general problem of the nature of conation, we will now inquire more closely into the psychological theory that in our actual wills there is, as a matter of fact, implied a 'real will' for self-fulfilment as the universal self. It is essential for the theory to establish this as true, for it is said to be the logical ground of moral obligation. It is said that we are under moral obligation just *because* our real will is in every case the will for the universal good.

In the first place, then, does the theory of the real will describe an actual state of affairs (as it claims to do) or only an ideal?[2] It is certainly true in an important sense that a man's permanent will is something other than his desire at any one moment. But this permanent will of the man is not the 'real' will of idealist theory; it is only the 'actual' will. The man's passing desire, or whim, may often conflict with his permanent will; sometimes the one, and sometimes the other, may control his behaviour.

[1] *The Psychology of the Moral Self*, p. 80.
[2] In this connexion cf. Ginsberg, *The Psychology of Society*, Chap. V.

An artist may sacrifice his work to drink ; yet it may be true that in a sense his will is for art. But in this sense he can only be said actually to will his art if on the whole and in the long run he does will it, does actually desire it. Though on most occasions he may choose drink rather than art, yet, if his will is for art, he must even on these occasions *admit* that he is sacrificing the greater to the less good, that he is giving way to a momentary temptation. Or, perhaps, on every such occasion he may say to himself, 'On other occasions, art ; but this time, drink.' If his devotion to art did not rise even to this height, we should not say that his will was for art rather than drink. Otherwise, we might as well say that, if on any occasion a man delights in colour and form, his will is to be an artist, whether he ever desires to be an artist or not. And if he has ever liked boating we should say his will was to be a sailor. And if ever he showed a spiteful disposition we should have to say that his will was hate. A man's will, then, is something more than his passing desires ; but it is not wholly independent of his desires. It is based on a generalization of all his desires ; but it is only *his will* if he himself actually conceives an enduring desire in accord with this generalization.

Will, in this sense, is obviously not the 'real' will but only at best the 'actual' will of idealist theory. Then what of the 'real' will ? It is certainly true that in a man's 'actual' will something else which may perhaps never be desired by the man, is in some sense 'implied' ; and of course this implicate of the 'actual' will may be called the 'real' will. Thus if a man's actual will is to be an artist, it is 'implied' in that actual will that his 'real' will is to become not merely a dabbler, but a sincere, sensitive, and skilled creative artist, and to undertake whatever experiences and activities are needed to school him for this end. And this is implied although, so far is he from desiring this consummation, that he does not even *know* what kind of experiences and activities are thus 'implied' in his first naïve interest in art. But to say that his 'real will' includes all this is at least to court

misunderstanding. For this is not in any ordinary sense his will at all. All that we can say without ambiguity is that the *ideal* for his will is that he should, little by little, come to will all this ; or that as a matter of fact only thus can he achieve fully the kind of activity which in his early stage he conceived and willed only in a very crude or partial manner.

If this argument is correct, it follows also that we are not entitled to say that a man's real will is social, or for that which is good in the universal view, unless, however much he succumbs to temptation, he does actually will 'the good of society', or the universal good. Further, this can only be said to be his actual will if, when he is not subverted by temptation, he experiences an actual enduring *desire* that society should thrive ; and at all times he must at least judge 'the good of society' or the universal good to *be* good. He must actually *feel* in his 'heart of hearts' that to will hurt to society or to the ideal is to thwart his own permanent will. But, alas, it is very far from certain that only those whom we call 'mentally defective' are defective in this respect.

These objections, it will be said, are beside the mark. For, according to the view that we are considering, a man's 'real will' is not just the resultant of his actual desires, or the will that he wills on the whole and in the long run. It is the logical implicate of his mental content, whether or not he ever actually desires what is thus involved in all his desires. In desiring anything he embarks upon an enterprise which must be incoherent and self-contradictory unless it can be expanded into willing that which is good in the universal view. What he craves at every stage, and on every occasion, is something which cannot be attained save in the fulfilment of the ideal. Thus it is that the good will is 'implied' in his actual will, and *is* his real will.

In what sense is this view justified ? Taking it in one sense, we must, I think, seriously doubt whether the logical implicate of every person's actual will is the will

for one and the same thing, namely, for that which is good in the universal view. It is certainly true that some actual *desires* would have to be, not merely transformed, but utterly rooted out for the sake of a good which is absolutely incompatible with their essence. For instance, it would seem that the desire to take one's sport in the suffering of others ought to be both resisted and destroyed. May there not, indeed, be whole systems of desires, and even (just possibly), whole personalities, whole actual wills, which should be condemned as ruled by impulses essentially opposed to the good? Is it not possible that there are some of us who, perhaps owing to an adverse environment, have so developed that their actual wills do not in any sense logically imply the good will? Perhaps they were not born damned, but their environment has damned them; so that it is a travesty to say that, willing what they do will, the universal good is still the logical implicate of their actual wills. Such persons, it would seem, can only become even potential willers of the good by being first stripped clean of those dominant desires which express their actual wills, and reduced once more to that featureless undirected capacity to will *something or other*, that bare principle of conativity, which in them was hopelessly misdirected by their inheritance or their environment. And, as I have already suggested, this bare subjective capacity is no sufficient ground for the obligation to achieve objective fulfilment.

Perhaps none of us are so utterly lost as this. Perhaps in all of us our actual wills, in order to accord with the good will, need not to be destroyed, but only developed. Yet, even so, it is misleading to say that the good will is implied in our actual wills. Every desire, doubtless, *originates* in a desire for some intrinsic good; but if that good is sought to the detriment of greater goods, the original desire for a good has given birth to a desire for a positive evil. Though the desire for an evil thing is doubtless *caused* by a desire for some good thing, once it has come into being as a desire for an evil, there it is. And in no significant sense is the will for the universal

good implied in a desire for a positive evil. A person's evil desires are just as integral parts of him as are his good desires. And, as we have noted, there may be cases in which the evil desires preponderate, and express the whole will.

It may indeed be true that as a matter of fact no self can conceivably attain complete harmonious fulfilment save by embracing within itself the whole universe, and willing the fulfilment of universal needs. In fact, perhaps there is no way of enjoying true self-fulfilment short of being fulfilled as the universal self, or short of achieving the Ideal. But we should not say that therefore the will for the good is implied in the actual will of each individual. It does not follow that, because the only possible way to fulfil *any* self is by achieving the universal good, therefore this actual self could be fulfilled in this way. For this actual self is what it is, and not something *else* that it might be. And perhaps *it* simply cannot be fulfilled at all. Maybe that, with its actual will, which constitutes what it is, the only possible kind of fulfilment is a precarious illusory sense of fulfilment which can only be preserved in blindness to the world.

(E) IMPLICATES OF THE NATURE OF SELFHOOD

It may be protested that this whole discussion misses the mark. For, it may be said, however depraved a self may be, it is still a self; and it is *in the very nature of selfhood* that the good will is implied. Whatever is a self at all is something that seeks fulfilment; and fulfilment for it simply consists in becoming the universal self. A self which embraces only a narrow content and rejects universal values is yet truly a self, in that it embraces some content and some values. Being of this nature, *whatever* its actual content and values, it necessarily wills 'really' the only possible fulfilment of selfhood, namely, the logically completed self whose content were the universe and its values universal values. Anything less than such a universal self is inherently self-contradictory. Its content

is a mere ragged abstraction from the whole of things; and its values are, so to speak, nursery approximations to the only values which are coherent and final. This is the sense in which, even in the 'lost soul', the good will is implied. And because this is the only possible fulfilment of selfhood, every self, no matter how distorted, is subject to moral obligation.

Now it is certainly true in a sense that the good will is implied in the very nature of selfhood; since to be a self at all is to crave harmonious fulfilment, and very likely this is, as a matter of fact, not fully attainable short of the universal good. But to say this is only to say that *the ideal* for selfhood is to be capable of willing the universal good. It is not to say that in any important sense the will for the universal good is actually a factor in every self. All that is a factor in every self is a will for experienced self-fulfilment; and it does not follow that every actual self *would* experience fulfilment in experiencing the good. In fact, it is practically certain that no actual self would do so; for every one of us, no doubt, is in some way or other positively perverted. And the perverted part of him is as much himself as the unperverted.

But if the idealist theory of obligation is to hold, it must be shown that the actual self, as it stands, does in some way will, not merely fulfilment of itself as an experienced system of needs, but fulfilment of the world. And even if this were so, we should still be left with a view of obligation which is violently opposed to the naïve moral experience. For the theory would still be maintaining that we ought *because* we really will. And this is opposed to the naïve moral experience, which suggests rather that we ought *whatever* be our real will.

The theory certainly declares, in effect, that we ought to do right just *because* we really will to do right; or that we ought to will what is good in the universal view just *because* only so can we attain self-fulfilment, and what we really will is self-fulfilment. In hedonism obligation is reduced to a form of the desire for pleasure; and in idealist ethics, in spite of appearances to the contrary, it is reduced

to a form of the desire for self-fulfilment. Thus if the real and good will were not implied in our actual wills, we should not be subject to moral obligations at all. But even if it be true that the real will of each is the good will, is this itself a sufficient reason why we *ought* to will the good? Ought we to will the good just because at heart we do will it, because not to do so is to betray our own nature as experients; or ought we to will it simply because the end is good in itself? Ought we to seek to *be the universal self* simply because only so can we be our own true selves; or ought we to seek to *fulfil the universe* because *it* claims fulfilment?

Or perhaps the issue should be put thus: Is the good really good just because it alone can fulfil my nature as an experient; or is it good because it alone can fulfil the world? Does good emerge from the nature of the experient or from the nature of that which is experienced? Or again, which is the more fundamental idea, 'I ought to do so and so,' or 'So and so ought to be done?' We may imagine a world in which there were great evils (such as physical pain) and yet no beings capable of a real will for the universal good. Would it then be meaningless to say of such a world that those evils ought to be abolished? Many philosophers would answer, yes. For in such a world, devoid of 'moral beings', it would not be incumbent on anyone to undertake the reform. The concept of obligation, they would say, includes the concept of a being who recognizes the obligation. And of course in some sense it does. Obligation is essentially a binding, and involves two terms. But just as a hand may be stretched out for help though there is no one to grasp it, so a claim may occur though there is no one to recognize it, or no one capable of fulfilling it. And though it is true that in such a world devoid of moral beings, there would be no one who ought to fulfil the claims, it is also true that in such a world of unfulfilled claims there *ought to be some one to fulfil the claims*. The point is that, whether in fact there are moral beings or not, the occurrence of a need is such that (apart from conflict with greater needs), whatever

is necessary for the need's fulfilment *ought to be*. Therefore moral beings ought to be. This curious nature of need we intuit when we carefully inspect our moral experience. Let us suppose that, though in our imaginary world there *were* moral beings, there were no physical possibility of abolishing the evils. *Ought* not the evils to be abolished? Surely, in the only serious sense of the word 'ought', they ought, although they could not be. Do we not often say that an abuse ought to be reformed but no one can do it? This suggests, and rightly I think, that 'ought' should be derived from goodness alone, and not from the moral agent's capability. Some, no doubt, would argue that in such cases as the above what we really mean is that *if* there were moral beings, or *if* there were any possibility of effecting the reform, *then* certain persons ought to do it, and should be blamed if they do not. But this sense of 'ought', in which praise and blame are involved, is secondary, not primary. We must feel that an end ought to be attained before we feel that we or anyone else ought to undertake the work. And as to blame, we do blame a man for not fulfilling an obligation which he recognizes; but also we may blame him for not recognizing an obligation which, we think, ought to be recognized.

It is of course admitted in the orthodox ethical theory that the most striking thing about moral behaviour is that it is 'self-sacrifice', the deliberate denial of wants felt in the self. It is granted, nay insisted, that in true self-sacrifice we do indeed resist the impulses of the self, and do indeed transcend the self. But we are told that this is done *in order* to bring about a new and greater self. I sacrifice myself that *I* may be enlarged. I lose my soul, to save *it*. If sacrifice were not to promise salvation, it would be folly to sacrifice. This amounts to a denial that genuine self-sacrifice ever occurs. And an ethical theory that is based on self-fulfilment is forced to this denial sooner or later. Defenders of the theory would, no doubt, consider this a caricature. They would insist that the self that is sacrificed is private, and the self that is saved

is universal and objective. Then why still call it the self? And anyhow what claim can this universal self have over the actual self which is other than it and definitely incompatible with it?

Psychologically, of course, it is true in a sense that even the martyr accepts martyrdom simply because of a felt discord within himself, and that in this acceptance the discord is resolved. But anything that he feels at all is bound to be felt 'within himself'. It is a mistake to attribute his action to the need for self-fulfilment simply because it is he that feels and wills to abolish the discord. And ethically it is a mistake to derive his obligation simply from the fact that there is discord within his objective *self*.

Ethics, indeed, seems to suffer from an obsession with selfhood. This interest perhaps has its psychological explanation in the history of Christianity. For the achievement of Christianity might be said to be that it stressed the strictly moral necessity of self-denial while it insisted that in losing our souls we save them. There arose in consequence a tradition in which morality appeared as essentially self-denial for the sake of salvation. In the extreme view self-denial came to be thought of even as the one and only means to salvation. Philosophers, certainly, have not fallen into this error. But they, like the rest of us, have been infected with the general obsession with self, and have come to take it for granted that moral obligation must be grounded in the need for salvation.

But is it not rather the case that morality has no essential relation either with self-increase or with self-denial, save psychologically? For moral conduct is not essentially self-increase any more than it is essentially self-destruction, whether for an ultimate increase or for the sake of something other than self. Its effect on the self is incidental. Its essence is surely self-oblivious loyalty to something judged intrinsically good. And to call this something just a greater self is to beg the question. Moral conduct is essentially loyal conduct; and loyalty is felt, primarily,

not to a better part of oneself, but to something whose existence and whose value are experienced as logically prior to its acceptance or espousal in an act of conation. Doubtless morality is loyalty not to an individual or a nation or a cause, but to the universe, or to whatever is believed to be the supreme good. But the point is that such loyalty is moral by virtue of its object, not by virtue of its being experienced as demanded for self-fulfilment.

(F) SUMMARY

The foregoing criticism of idealist ethics may be summarized as follows. In spite of their distinction between desire and will, idealists base their theory of moral obligation on the ambiguity of the word ' will '. What has to be accounted for is the individual's experienced obligation to perform subjective acts of a certain sort, namely, those which are demanded in the objective ' real will '. If it were true, as it is not, that the subjective act of conation were the act *of* the mental content, i.e. of the environment in so far as it is cognized, then the moral situation might be expressed by saying that the content succeeds or fails in expressing *itself* in so far as *its* subjective activity conforms or not to *its* needs. Thus in immoral choice *it* would be acting so as to defeat itself. But since subjectivity is not the act of content, but of an organism acting in relation to an environment, this account is false. Thus it is precisely because the idealists fail to distinguish constantly between the subjective and objective meanings of ' will ' that they suppose themselves to have solved the problem of obligation. They say that the actual will is but an approximation to the real will; but the point is that in immoral choice the actual will gives rise to an actual desire directed toward a merely partial objective fulfilment, while the real will fails to achieve any effective desire at all. My claim is that the theory derives obligation from the nature of subjectivity; whereas the only way in which it can be explained without being explained away is by deriving it from the dynamic nature

of objects, and assigning to subjectivity merely the powers of intuiting the object's need as a moral claim, and acting in service of it. This theory will be elaborated in the course of this book.

CHAPTER IV

PLEASURE AS CONSTITUTIVE OF GOOD[1]

(A) FEELING REINSTATED IN ETHICS

CRITICISM of orthodox ethics has taken two opposite courses. Some have argued that, though good is indeed not simply identical with pleasure, it cannot be defined without any reference to the felt satisfaction of desires. Others have declared that good is entirely independent of any subjective activity, and is on the contrary a simple character of objects themselves. In this chapter we will consider the attempt to reinstate pleasure as an essential factor in good.

The ethical theory that Professor Hobhouse gave us in his book *The Rational Good* is essentially a development of idealist ethics. But from that orthodox system it differs in this insistence that 'good' is meaningless if it has no relation whatever to pleasure. 'In judging an experience good,' says Professor Hobhouse, 'so far as the judgment is truly our own, and not a recognition of the judgment effectively passed by some one else, we express towards it a mode of feeling which may generically be called favourable; that is to say, it has the generic character of pleasure.'[2] And again, 'if an end is genuinely conceived as good it means that we have at least some feeling for it.'[3] And it is this feeling, he holds, that disposes us to action.

We must not, of course, abstract the feeling from the whole 'object-felt', and suppose that what is good is pleasure alone; for thus we should fall into the snares of hedonism. But, on the other hand, we must not ignore

[1] Based on an article which appeared in the *International Journal of Ethics*, July 1926.

[2] *The Rational Good*, p. 75. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

feeling, and suppose that objects can be good in themselves; for such a statement is (we are told) meaningless. We do, indeed, in ordinary thought project our feeling into the object, and speak as though goodness were strictly a quality of the object. But such language is inaccurate. Goodness is a quality neither of objects alone nor of feelings alone, but of wholes which consist of object and feeling. Or more accurately, by the term 'good' the individual 'signifies something which, in the connexion in which it is applicable, moves feeling, and through feeling disposes to action'.[1]

Thus the judgment that something is good is not only a judgment. It is also 'an acceptance which may be expressed in the most general terms by saying that something fits in or harmonizes with a mental disposition'.[2] When the child's exploring fingers encounter the candle flame, the effort of exploration is broken in upon by an unexpected experience. 'There is disharmony between the effort and its end',[3] and in the moment of disharmony, and essential thereto, pain. 'Pain characterizes the feeling involved in disharmony, and the mental attitude concerned in the process of checking and cancelling effort.'[4] On the other hand, if the explored object turns out to be a sugar plum, there is harmony of effort and result, and the feeling is pleasant and culminates in satisfaction. 'By harmony is meant, in the last analysis, a form of mutual support. Generally speaking, it is that relation of parts in a whole in virtue of which they maintain and (if they admit of development) further one another.'

Such is the foundation of Professor Hobhouse's theory of goodness. I suggest that it implies a false view of conation; and that, consequently, his ethical system, though it contains much of real importance to ethics, is subtly vitiated throughout. For, in spite of his protestations, his theory fails to disentangle itself from hedonism. He assures us that feeling alone does not constitute goodness; what is good is an object, felt as pleasant. Yet by 'good' the individual is said to mean something which

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 67. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 67. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 68. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

'moves feeling'.[1] Objects, then, are good *in that* they afford feelings. Of course feelings cannot as a rule be obtained without objects; and so objects are necessary to goodness. But it is implied that objects are only good in so far as they give feelings. It seems to follow after all that *if* feelings of pleasure were possible without objects they themselves alone would be good.

It may be said that this is a false interpretation of the theory. Neither objects alone nor feelings alone, we may be told, are good; for 'good' is a predicate which applies only to 'organic wholes' composed of object and feeling. The same view might be expressed by saying that, though feeling is not itself good, 'good' is a character which 'emerges' only on the plane of consciousness. But this view is not justified. When we say that anything is good we mean what we say, namely, that *it* is good, not that what is good is the whole made up of it and our pleasure in it. We mean that *it* has a certain character, which we call 'good', not that it has the property of affording us, or some one, a certain feeling. The feeling which we have in regard to it is consequent on its having a certain character. It is a mistake to suppose that the only kind of thing which can afford us that feeling must itself have feeling as a constituent in it.[2] The only reason for making such a contention lies in a faulty introspection of 'pleasure' and a false theory of conation.

Professor Hobhouse is led to his theory of ethics by his belief that it is essentially through feeling that we are disposed to action. Now so far as I can see this is only superficially true. It is never feeling, in its own right, that disposes us to action. On the contrary, pleasure and unpleasure are in principle merely consequent on the success and failure of behaviour-tendencies. We are pleased when our activity is favoured, displeased when it is thwarted. The ground of conation is not feeling, but something that is prior to feeling. We are all indebted to Professor McDougall for his insistence on this 'hormic'

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

[2] This criticism is derived from Prof. G. E. Moore; but at a later stage I shall seek to modify his theory somewhat radically.

principle, even though we may have to criticize very radically his over-emphasis of instinct.

Of course it is true that in many cases we do shun 'pain' and seek 'pleasure'. But the pleasurableness of pleasant things is constituted by the success of our impulse to pursue them, and the offensiveness of unpleasant things is constituted by the failure of our impulse to avoid them. The states which we seek and shun are pleasurable and painful in that they are occasions of success and failure. Sensory pleasure and pain, indeed, seem often to be sought and shunned for their own intrinsic characters, independently of any expectation of benefit or damage to the organism. But this fact can be interpreted in a strictly 'hormic' psychology. Sensory pleasure and pain are to be thought of as 'how we feel when we are tending to pursue or shun certain stimuli'. In this view we do not seek sensory pleasure-stimuli and shun sensory pain-stimuli *because* they have intrinsic characters of pleasantness and painfulness; on the contrary we find them pleasant and painful *because* we tend to seek and shun them.[1]

On higher levels of experience it is more obvious that pleasure and displeasure are but symptoms of success and failure. So far from being the ground of conation, they presuppose conation. Failure is grievous because we have striven for success.

Perhaps the real source of the whole ethical dispute lies in the ambiguity of the words 'good' and 'bad'. We seem to mean by the word 'good' two essentially different things. In the one sense pure hedonism is justified and in the other even Professor Hobhouse's theory, which is at heart hedonistic, must be rejected. When the question is asked, 'Can there conceivably be anything good in a world wholly unrelated with conscious beings?' common sense replies at once that there cannot. This answer constitutes the solid base of pure hedonism; and hedonists

[1] Cf. W. McDougall, 'Pleasure, Pain, and Conation,' *The British Journal of Psychology*, January 1927. The sensory quality, sweet, he says, is pleasant only so long as we tend to eat sweet things. When satiety occurs, pleasure is no longer present.

cannot believe that any sane person can answer otherwise. But all depends on what is to be meant by 'good'. The questioner himself invariably *means* by good precisely pleasure. And the form of his question almost inevitably leads the answerer to reply in the same vein. And certainly if 'good' *means* pleasure, there can be no good apart from conscious beings. But 'good' also means 'that which can, or could, be valued'; and though many things that are most valued include consciousness as a constituent of them, that which could be valued may in principle exist apart from conscious beings.[1]

The denial of this contention, though common, seems to be based on faulty introspection of 'pleasure'. When I examine my own experience as carefully as possible I seem to discover that pleasure is essentially consequent on an act of valuation. Or, more precisely, it is the affective aspect of an act in which the cognitive and conative aspects are logically prior to the affective. Pleasure presupposes value; value does not presuppose pleasure. Pleasure is consequent on conation. And conation (by which I mean a *conscious* activity), is consequent on a cognitive act of valuation which cognizes the relation of the object to some behaviour-tendency. And the behaviour-tendency is itself essentially objective to any act of 'espousing' it, or desiring its fulfilment. This schematic account of conation is doubtless very debatable. It raises more problems than it solves. At a later stage I shall attempt to formulate and solve those problems, and to construct a satisfactory theory of conation to serve as a basis for the psychology of moral obligation. Meanwhile these few remarks are perhaps enough to indicate the kind of criticism which I would make of Professor Hobhouse's ethical theory.

If the hedonist maintains that only entities that contain

[1] Mr. R. B. Braithwaite has pointed out that this 'unobvious' ambiguity of 'good' is at the bottom of many ethical disputes. ('Verbal Ambiguity and Philosophical Analysis,' *Aristotelian Society, Proceedings*, 19 March 1928.) He also reminds us that the word is very often used without any significance, or perhaps we should rather say with a significance which is merely accidental and confusing. But in spite of such emotive use, and in spite of its ambiguous significance, 'good' does appear to have one meaning which is essential to ethics.

consciousness as a constituent can be valued, he is in error ; just as the epistemologist were in error who should say that only entities in which consciousness were constituent could be known. But if he maintains that apart from consciousness there can be no valuation, he is justified. And further, while he is justified in maintaining that apart from pleasure and pain there can be no valuation, his justification lies simply in the fact that pleasure and pain are aspects of the acts of valuation.

We seem, then, to have found two entirely different senses of the word 'good'. Which shall we adopt? Doubtless in practice we shall all continue to use both, according to the demands of the subject of discourse. But for strict ethical inquiry one sense is the more significant, namely, that in which 'good' refers, not to acts of valuation, but to the objects of those acts. Common sense uses the word 'good' in both manners, and does not see that these are inconsistent. On the whole probably 'good' as involving consciousness is more familiar to common sense than 'good' as the object of valuation. Nevertheless I suggest that whatever we do in fact generally mean by 'good' in ordinary speech, we confuse our thought by using it to mean states of enjoyment, or even pleasurable impulse-satisfaction. Let us either abolish the word entirely from serious discourse, as hopelessly ambiguous ; or let us mean by 'good' strictly that which is valued. And let us recognize that 'that which is valued' is not essentially states of enjoyment or conscious satisfaction of our active nature, but the actual fulfilment itself of these activities and tendencies which are essentially prior to desire, and prior even to pleasure, and to consciousness of every kind.

(B) RATIONALITY OF THE IDEAL

But let us for the present waive this basic objection to Professor Hobhouse's theory of the nature of goodness, and study his account of *the* good, and of moral obligation. In calling anything good, he says, we 'express towards it a mode of feeling' which has 'the generic character of

pleasure '.[1] Now a man's pleasures are often incompatible ; or rather the objects which afford pleasure are often incompatible. In such a conflict three courses are possible. First, now one and now the other object may be sought, according to the alternating strength of uncriticized impulses. Or, secondly, one impulse may permanently conquer the other, not indeed succeeding in annihilating it, but preventing it from gaining satisfaction. Or, finally, some activity or some object may be discovered which will satisfy harmoniously both impulses. Thus neither, perhaps, will attain the crude and direct satisfaction that it demands ; but the sum of satisfaction will be the greatest possible in the circumstances. Such ' integration ' of conflicting impulses in harmonious satisfaction is the way of prudence, and the ' rational ' solution of conflict. And in every conflict of impulses it is true that, whatever course is *judged* to be best, there is one course which would *as a matter of fact* afford the greatest possible felt satisfaction in the long run. This, within the economy of the individual's interests, is the prudent course.[2] It is prudent because it is rational. If you seek impulse-satisfaction it is rational to take that course which will afford as much impulse-satisfaction as possible.

Let us, then, first consider the nature of rationality in general before we see its application in ethics. We may agree with Professor Hobhouse's account of the matter, namely, that to be rational a judgment must fulfil three conditions.[3] In the first place it must be internally coherent, or self-consistent. Secondly, we must be able to connect it with something that goes beyond it, in fact, with other regions of our experience. It must, that is, be not arbitrary but ' grounded '. Thirdly, it must not be based merely on emotion or desire or any attitude of ours. It must deal with the objective order.

The search for grounds suggests that all judgments must be ultimately based on certain distinct, isolated, and ungrounded judgments, such as immediate sense-experience.

[1] *The Rational Good*, p. 75. [2] Cf. R. B. Perry, *The Moral Economy*.
[3] *The Rational Good*, pp. 56–7.

But even these are not entirely ungrounded ; for we may appeal from one sensory judgment to another, and from one man's experience to another's. We may criticize sense-experience in the light of other sense-experience. But ' we must not deny all value to direct sensory judgment ; if we are going to trust the system formed by such judgments, we must allow each such judgment provisional value, such that when confirmed by interconnexion with other judgments of similar provisional value it becomes for us a confirmed or established judgment '.[1]

Besides ungrounded judgments of sense there are also ungrounded judgments of a general character, intuitions which we call self-evident. But even these intuitive self-evident judgments are not exempt from criticism. Each of them, so long as it is unconnected with others, has only provisional value. Thus to the uninitiated it may be self-evident that the shortest route from Kerguelen to a point due east is the due easterly route. But in fact the shortest route is along a great circle which, starting toward the south, gradually inclines north. Those judgments, then, are considered true which combine together in mutual support or consilience in a vast system. Only in partial systems is there need for any ground outside the system. In the final ideal whole of knowledge the ground lies entirely within the whole, ' in the very connectedness of parts each claiming immediate acceptance '.[2]

This account of rationality in general is very useful, and can easily be applied in the sphere of experienced impulses for the description of the prudential ideal. Thus far, however, we have considered only the individual's interests without reference to the interests of other individuals. Rationality, which is seen to be the principle of harmony in this sphere, applies also, we are told, as between the satisfaction of different individuals. Rationality is essential to the nature of the good, and turns out to be the ground of moral obligation. ' The rational good must be a consistent scheme of purposes interconnected by universal relations in which subjective disturbance is eliminated.'[3]

[1] *Ibid.* p. 58. [2] *Ibid.* p. 61. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 6, Contents.

To be rational, purposes must not conflict. If they do, harmony must somehow be found. Further, that which is good must have a universal ground. If it is good in given conditions, it must be good in such conditions always, wherever and in whomsoever found.[1] But further, self-evident principles which are the grounds of value-judgments, will themselves require grounds; and their grounds will consist in 'the fact that they sum up and generalize more specific and concrete ends so far as these are mutually consistent'. Thus interconnexion is itself the rational principle. The rational good must form 'a connected whole in which no part is isolated but in the end every element involves every other'.[2] In order to be universally grounded it must be objective. It must not depend on any individual's peculiarity. Thus a double harmony is involved. For, in the first place, there must be an internal harmony of feeling with feeling within the mind itself; and, secondly, there must be a harmony of the mind with the world. The rational principle cannot rest with a narrow harmony; it must embrace the universe.

In order that the ideal may be achieved, many impulses will need to be modified.[3] Satisfaction will have to be given them in objects and acts which do not conflict with the satisfaction of other impulses, or at least with the organized satisfaction which is the rational goal. For there is 'a distinction between something radical in our impulses and something relatively superficial',[4] and alterable. Thus in the developed personality sex impulses may perhaps be fulfilled in behaviour very different from that which alone satisfies the crude animal instinct. In the rational good, then, it is essential that all our deep-rooted impulses should be satisfied; for only so can we have permanently the feeling of satisfaction. But the precise manner of the satisfaction of these deepest impulses will depend on their inter-relation in a harmonious system.

The ideal, therefore, is said to be the continuous development of personality in society, or the harmonious fulfilment of vital capacity as a whole.[5] The good is not simply

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 78. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 79. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 99. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 99. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 114.

harmony, any sort of harmony; it is essentially 'harmony with some disposition of mind', a 'harmony of mind with itself and with its object'.[1] In short, the good is described as happiness in the fulfilment of vital capacity in a world adapted to Mind.[2]

Now the foregoing account of rationality is indeed helpful to the student of ethics; but in his application of it in his own ethical system Professor Hobhouse is not convincing. There is a serious difficulty at the outset in this account of the rational good as the completest possible system of felt satisfactions in all minds. For on this theory, in order to know what is good, we must have some means of measuring one satisfaction against another, so that, if they are incompatible, we may know which to sacrifice. And, indeed, apart from our knowing, satisfactions must *be* in fact commensurable, if there is to be any such rational good at all. But it is hard to see how feelings of satisfaction can, as mere feelings, be compared even in theory.

Within the experience of one individual his satisfactions are in practice evaluated, not according to intensity of feeling, but in relation to the ideal of personal fulfilment. We approve, not simply the most intense pleasures, but those satisfactions which are felt in activities 'enlarging to the personality'. It is difficult to give a precise meaning to this phrase; but it certainly includes not only intensity of feeling but a reference to something objective. Personalities are 'great', or not, quite apart from the individual's own feeling on the subject. Further, we often distinguish between feelings which are grounded in reality and those which are based on mere phantasy. We incline to condemn a life of mere phantasy, however rich and delightful.

But the most serious difficulty occurs when we try to compare the felt-satisfactions of different individuals. By what right can we say that Jones's joy in a good meal is more than, or equal to, Smith's? In practice, even if we attempt such a comparison, we base no final value-judgment on it. Rather we evaluate, not felt-satisfactions,

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 116. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 117.

but the activities which afford them. And we judge those activities best which favour, not any vague ideal of felt harmonious satisfaction in all minds, but some tendency which we judge to be the supreme demand of our environment, whether the objective fulfilment of society's capacities, or the fulfilment of the nature of the universe, or (as some would say) the fulfilment of 'God's will'. In every such ideal we imply a reference to reality. Even a society would be condemned in which the goal of all activity were the undisturbed delight in mere phantasies.

(c) MORAL OBLIGATION

But let us for the moment waive these objections to the account of the rational good in terms of feeling. Admitting its validity, in what sense can the ideal be said to have a *claim* on us? Why *ought* we to strive to realize it? What of the consistent and unashamed egoist? I may feel that an essential element in the goodness of anything is that it is *mine*, a fulfilment of *my* impulses. I may set as my ideal, as my good, an internally consistent system of *my* judgments, *my* actions, *my* feelings.[1] Here, however, we are told, the principle of rationality intervenes. I must admit that *you* may set up a similar egoism of your own. Our systems will conflict. Both cannot be universal. But the good, to be rational, must be universal. If I am to prefer my own good to yours, what is the universal ground of my preference? There is none; and so egoism fails to be rational.

But what if I do not accept the principle of rationality? What if I have no desire to make my life externally and internally harmonious? I may be content to seek my private ends and damn the public consequences. If I choose thus, what claim has the rationality of the ideal on me? Am I in any sense under a moral obligation to be rational in my choice of ends?

The rationality of the ideal is itself, we are told, the ground of moral obligation. In the case of prudence we

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

saw that a certain course is in fact prudent whether I think it so or not, and whether I adopt it or not. In adopting the prudent course I am constrained by objective circumstances. Similarly, in the moral sphere a certain course makes for the rational good whether I think so or not, and whether I incline to take it or not. Its goodness is intrinsic. Its claim holds 'of' me, whether it holds 'for' me or not. The rule of morality is as objective as the rule of prudence. Yet, 'How', it may be asked, 'can anything practical hold "of" me if no impulse, no desire, no volition of mine urges me to it?'[1] It has been argued that all voluntary actions arise from feeling; in what sense then can a man be expected to act in a certain manner if he has not the feeling which alone can induce him to act? What meaning can there be in saying that he 'ought' to do so and so although feeling does not dispose him to do so?

To such questions Professor Hobhouse answers only that the rational good is a fact whether I admit it or not. Just as a danger concerns a man whether he knows it or not, so moral obligation concerns him whether he feels it or not. Even when it does not hold *for* him, it holds *of* him. In missing it 'he misses what is really good, the goodness that stands the test of rational examination'.[2] If this seems to reduce the matter after all to egoism and prudence, we must remember that 'the principle which I accept as binding must be one that appeals to me as a decisive ground for action, that is, one that overcomes other grounds for other actions, it being just this supremacy which the term "binding" expresses'.[3]

In this account of the good and of obligation there is, as in the idealist account, a subtle attempt both to have the cake and eat it. Goodness, we are told, is founded in feeling; yet the ideal, the rational good, is said to be the good whether anyone likes it or not. Of course, those who accept the theory answer that, though the rational good is the good whether anyone likes it or not, yet it is *constituted* by the sum of pleasant feelings which it would

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 86. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 87. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

afford in all persons. Pleasure is essential to it, though no single person's pleasure in it is essential to it. *My* pleasure is not the ground of the good, but pleasure is.

Now, waiving the difficulty of measuring feelings, let us grant that there is a certain possible course which would, as a matter of fact, give the greatest possible harmonious felt-satisfaction to all minds, and that this ideal does not depend on anyone's opinion about it. The question is, in what sense, if any, does the existence of this possibility constitute a moral claim over us? Why, and in what sense, ought we to strive to realize it whether it pleases us to do so or not? Professor Hobhouse says that morality concerns a man whether he feels its claim or not, just as danger concerns him whether he is aware of it or not. But, according to Professor Hobhouse's theory, danger only concerns a man because it threatens him with pain or other unpleasant feelings. True, it threatens him whether he judges the situation dangerous or not; but, on the theory, its dangerousness depends on the fact that what it promises is feelings of pain. Were he anaesthetic or a masochist there would be no question of danger. Thus, if the end of behaviour is feeling, there is after all no objectivity in the prudential ideal. A man may say (and how is he to be confuted?) 'even though it cripple me for life, I *prefer* this moment's thrill to an age of humdrum health'. You may tell him he will be sorry later; but perhaps he won't. Perhaps he will successfully console himself with a dream-life based on the past ecstasy. If his goal is pleasant feeling, in what is he imprudent? In what sense is he missing the good?

In the case of morality, it is insisted, the good concerns a man even if he happens to be morally anaesthetic. But surely if it is feeling that disposes us to action, and if morality is really in the same case with danger, there is an inconsistency in holding that a social ideal has any kind of *claim* on a man who is insensitive to his fellows. It is beside the mark, though true, that he is missing the only kind of goodness 'that stands the test of rational examination'. For, *ex hypothesi*, he gets more pleasure

out of egoism than out of altruism, in spite of irrationality.

Professor Hobhouse sees clearly that the 'reward' of moral conduct is not self-fulfilment.[1] He criticizes the idealists on this point. But he makes the mistake of supposing that there must be *some* sort of 'reward'. And of course this mistake follows from his theory that only feeling can move us to action. The 'reward', he says, 'consists in this, that the moral order is a connected system which is the basis of an inward as well as an external harmony'.[2] True, but if I do not desire this reward, why (in Professor Hobhouse's theory) *ought* I to seek it?

Clearly Professor Hobhouse's attempt to save obligation has split his theory into inconsistent theses. For while it is said that primarily things are called good, and sought, because of the feeling that they can afford, it is also said that the ideal is good and ought to be advanced whether anyone feels pleasure in *it* or not. Now clearly the individual judges the ideal to be good before he is pleased with it. He judges it good for some other reason than that it pleases him. To say that it would please others is not to the point. In this supreme case the individual's value judgment is admittedly prior to, not subsequent to, the individual's feeling. He takes pleasure in the ideal (if he does take pleasure in it) *because* he judges it to be intrinsically good. He serves it because he judges that it has a claim on him. His pleasure is nothing but an attitude of acceptance, or recognition, or applause, toward something which, he supposes, is demanded not by himself but by his world.

And if this is so in the judgment of the ideal, it is surely possible that pleasure is always and essentially, not constitutive of value, but an attitude appropriate to value. It is possible that the feelings of impulse-satisfaction, out of which it is proposed to build the rational good, should be regarded as signs or symptoms of goodness rather than as little units of goodness itself, to be pieced together.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 142. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 152.

And this is important. For if the goodness of the good is but a conglomerate of the goodness of its elements, it matters not what form the edifice be given, so long as we use as many bricks as possible, and avoid unnecessary strains within the structure. But if feelings are, after all, only attitudes of the builders, we must beware lest, like acrobats, we build a pyramid of human antics, which must collapse with every change of mood.

It would seem, then, that we must either reject the view that goodness is grounded in feeling, or exonerate the individual from moral obligation, and explain the curious illusion of duty in terms of some such mechanism as is offered by the psycho-analysts.

But if feeling is consequent on, not prior to, conation, and if conation itself is the outcome of objective tendencies embraced within the mental content; if, in fact, what is intrinsically good is not felt-satisfactions, but objective fulfilments; if conation is essentially, and in its very nature, a kind of disinterested loyalty to the nature of objects; then universal fulfilment has a very real claim on all conative beings, whether they are aware of that claim or not. For on this view objective fulfilment is *intrinsically* desirable. Not merely in the moral sphere, but equally in the prudential sphere, the tendency of active substances objective to the subject is intuited as having a claim on subjective activity.

It follows in the first place that, within a given mental content, there is an objective ideal, the greatest possible objective fulfilment. This is *intrinsically* the most desirable goal within the universe of discourse of the particular mental content. If owing to weakness of intelligence or the impetus of the organism's innate or acquired ' behaviour set ', this ideal is not desired, it is none the less intrinsically desirable. And any conation which favours a minor as against a major objective fulfilment, is untrue not merely to the nature of conation itself, but to the nature of the objective claim which, even in conating only the minor fulfilment, it has intuited and accepted. And in the second place, beyond the limits of each private mental content

are tendencies as essentially 'conatable' as those within. Therefore there is an objective ideal of 'world-fulfilment' which is intrinsically the most desirable of all desirables. It is the intrinsic desirability of this ideal which, in its own right, imposes a moral claim on all conative beings.

But it must be admitted that the theory here outlined needs very careful criticism before it can be accepted.

(D) ILLUSTRATIONS

To emphasize the insufficiency of feeling as the ground of goodness, and even as the essential constituent of goodness, let us imagine the absurd case of a world of sentient beings who have no impulses save the impulse to get gloriously drunk. Let us imagine further that in this absurd world it is possible for every one to indulge this impulse to the full extent without ever causing himself or anyone else any distress. Let us suppose that an intoxicating and sufficiently nourishing manna drops from the sky in such quantities that every one can spend all his time in devouring it. Let us suppose also that the universal tipsy bliss is never marred by a headache. And finally, let us suppose that each ecstatic toper has the comfortable knowledge that every one else is as happy as he, and therefore that there is nothing irrational in his behaviour. Here, it would seem, we have a perfect case of the felt harmonious fulfilment of impulse, and therefore a world wherein the rational good is realized. Are we then mistaken if we judge such a world to be less good than our own world, where there is less harmony of satisfaction? Is the truth just that such a world would not satisfy *us*, would not give beings like *us* harmonious fulfilment of *our* impulses? Or are we right in saying that such a world would be absolutely less good than ours?

It may be objected that this imaginary world fails merely through its paucity or monotony, through the fact that its inhabitants have only one kind of impulse to satisfy. It may be insisted that satisfaction must be not only harmonious, but also rich and diverse. The rational

good, it may be said, entails felt-satisfaction of as many kinds as is possible to the nature of mind. Let us, then, imagine a world in which the inhabitants have very many diverse impulses to play games, and no other impulses whatever. Let us suppose that they spend their time in ceaseless and eager pursuit of all kinds of sports, and further, that their sports are so many and so intricate and so diverse, and so physically difficult, that each person's time is fully occupied in learning and performing, and that each intelligence is fully taxed. Finally, as before, let us suppose that each has the feeling of perfectly harmonious satisfaction. Must we grant that the rational good is realized in such conditions? Or dare we insist that the *kind of object* in which satisfaction is felt is not good enough, and that sentient beings ought not to be contented with this kind of behaviour, even if it fulfils all their capacities? Can it be that these beings, though they are highly complex and are taxing their minds to the utmost with intricate knowledge and behaviour, have yet utterly missed the good?

Many persons certainly would insist that this is so. They would say that not all kinds of felt harmonious satisfaction are equally good, and that not even all kinds of equally extensive and equally various felt harmonious satisfaction are equally good. For all depends (they would insist) on the character of the objects which afford satisfaction. In the above absurd cases the good is unrealized because, though in each case there is the fullest possible satisfaction of existing impulses, these impulses themselves are insufficient, in that they are satisfied with objects of an insufficient kind.

To this it might be answered as follows. True, in these absurd cases *the* good is not realized. But why? Simply because the nature of mind is such that these satisfactions are not really all that it is capable of enjoying. These topers and sport maniacs would miss very much, though unwittingly. They would, for instance, be missing love, art, science, and philosophy. They would have attained harmony of satisfaction but no breadth of satisfaction.

The rational good is the fulfilment of all mind's capacities, not merely the fulfilment of existing impulses. In these absurd worlds the only possible good is realized which can be realized for such mentally deranged beings ; but *the* good can be realized only by beings with richer capacities.

But this answer is not altogether fair. For surely we may suppose that in our absurd world of games the beings have just as complex and diverse capacities as our own, though theirs are capacities for different kinds of activities from ours. As compared, say, with an ideal world of artists, scientists, philosophers, and socially-minded workers of all sorts, they do indeed lack many capacities ; but on the other hand they have other capacities for which there is no room in the ideal ' high-brow ' world. Indeed, we may suppose that the kinds of mental activities which they perform and enjoy are the same *kinds* of activities (and of the same complexity) as those of artists, scientists, philosophers, and socially-minded workers ; but that the objects in relation to which they act are different. Consequently *if* the one is better than the other, the difference does not lie in quantity of impulse-satisfaction, nor in kind of impulse-satisfaction, but rather in the kind of objects in which satisfaction is felt.

It may, of course, be that in judging some activities better than others, or in assigning to some a greater sphere in the good, and to some a less, we are merely satisfying our own prejudices. But it does seem that there is reason for supposing that some activities are better than others, or ought to be practised more than others, simply in respect of their objects, and quite apart from the amount of satisfaction which they may be expected to give. It seems that in condemning the absurd worlds we are moved by a vague sense that the satisfaction which they attain is in some sense illusory or objectively unjustified. For in them delight is found not in reality but in phantasy. Even though all the capacities of mind are exercised delightfully, they are exercised on vanities. Impulses are derived from, and directed on, and delight is taken in, minor aspects of the real, and minor aspects considered

in abstraction from the concrete whole which is reality itself.

The matter may be put thus. In our absurd cases the fault is, not that many capacities of mind are undeveloped and unsatisfied, but that so much of the universe itself is left out of account. The mental process of these beings is complete and satisfying; but their content is a mere fringe of the real. Beyond the objective tendencies and capacities which they 'espouse' in their conation lie, ignored by them, other tendencies and capacities in the fulfilment of which the real might express its nature more fully. Their value-judgments are therefore founded on insufficient data, and are erroneous. We feel obscurely that something better might be made of the universe than is made in these absurd cases. Art, science, philosophy, and the loving community are demanded, we are tempted to say, by the universe itself; they are not merely means to the satisfaction of impulses. But a logical ground for this conviction is certainly very hard to find.

CHAPTER V

GOOD AS AN UNIQUE QUALITY

(A) ETHICAL DIFFERENCES OF PROFESSOR MOORE AND PROFESSOR FIELD

HAVING considered the attempt to modify idealist ethics by a reinstatement of feeling as an essential factor in ' good ', we will now discuss the view that ' good ' is an unique, unanalysable, and indefinable quality of certain objects ; that, in fact, we cannot conceivably describe goodness in terms of any other character. By no amount of talking, Professor G. E. Moore insists, can we tell a man what goodness is, when, though he has experience of pleasure or understanding of ' personality ' or ' reality ', yet he has no intuition of the unique quality, good.[1] Of course, if he *has* that intuition, we may profitably confer with him as to what kinds of things are as a matter of fact good and what bad. And thus we may advance toward a better apprehension of the nature of the ideal, which would possess the unique quality, good, in the highest degree. But to define good is utterly impossible. We might as well try to describe yellow to a colour-blind man.

This unique quality, says Professor Moore, is easily confused with other qualities. For instance, we are apt to overlook the difference between judging a thing good in the ethical sense and merely being pleased with it ' It is very difficult to see that by " approving " of a thing we mean *feeling that it has a certain predicate*—the predicate namely which defines the peculiar sphere of Ethics ; whereas in the enjoyment of a thing no such unique object of thought is involved.'[2]

Many feel that this view is mistaken. Professor G. C. Field, for instance, declares that Professor Moore

[1] G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, p. 6 ff. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 60.

has after all given no reason in its favour,[1] and moreover that it is an unintelligible theory for the following reason. The goodness of a thing, according to Professor Moore, is itself the reason for our aiming at it. Just because a thing or event would have this intrinsic quality, goodness, we ought to try to bring it into being. This is what Professor Field finds unintelligible. For, he says, the mere *cognition* of an objective quality cannot possibly move us to valuatary action.[2] It is only the *desire* for it which can do so. If goodness is an intrinsic quality of things, the mere fact that things have, or may have, this quality, cannot influence us. Intelligence by itself, as Aristotle said, has no motive power. Action ' will not take place without the presence of a desire or some element of feeling or emotion.'[3]

It follows, then, that being an end is not a fact about things themselves at all. An end is necessarily an end for some one; things are made ends by being desired. To say that goodness is necessarily related to desire is to say ' that it makes its appeal to us because of a necessary connexion between something in it and something in our nature.'[4] It is this fact about the good ' which gives it a claim on us, which makes it a possible motive to action, which, in short, makes it of any interest to us at all.' Thus to call an object good *means* in the last analysis that it is ' an object which every one could not but desire if they realized its true nature.'[5] And ' the ideal is of a certain character because human nature is of a certain character.'[6] ' It is the fact of this relation to our nature that makes it good.'[7] Hence Professor Field judges that ' the conception of good necessarily contains in itself a reference to some conscious being.'[8]

Here then we have two thinkers who disagree about the fundamental datum of ethics. Professor Moore is chiefly impressed by the objectivity of the character called good; and Professor Field is no less certain that good involves in its very essence a reference to the desires of conscious

[1] G. C. Field, *Moral Theory*, p. 53. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 56. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 47.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 107. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 133. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 181.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 136. [8] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

beings. The former, as a protagonist of realistic epistemology, comes to ethics with a zest for eradicating all traces of subjectivism. For, if in cognition it is a mistake to suppose that the object exists only in being known, similarly in our apprehension of value it may be false to suppose that the goodness of things consists only in their relation to valuing beings. Of volition and feeling we are told that ' in so far as these words denote an attitude of the mind towards an object, they are themselves merely instances of Cognition ; they differ only in respect of the kind of object of which they take cognizance, and in respect of the other mental accompaniments of such cognitions.'[1] Therefore, since the object of a cognition must always be distinguished from the cognitive act which apprehends it, the particular kind of object called ' good ' cannot derive its goodness from ' being the object of certain kinds of will or feeling.'

Professor Field, on the other hand, though also a realist in epistemology, cannot accept the extreme realist view in ethics, since for him good is meaningless apart from desire. He says in effect that, though the ideal is what it is whether anyone likes it or not, yet desire is *constitutive* of goodness and of the ideal. And this view seems to him to follow from two facts, namely the fact that by ' good ' we all mean something which does or should move us to voluntary action, and the fact that only desire possibly can move us to voluntary action. This then is his central conviction for the sake of which he has to reject Professor Moore's central conviction of the absolutely objective nature of good.

(B) ESSENTIALS OF PROFESSOR MOORE'S THEORY

I believe it possible to accept the essential tenets of these two writers without contradiction, if we carefully reject from each what is unessential. The nerve of Professor Moore's doctrine is that good is unanalysable and that it is objective. Very cogently he argues that, though good *things* may be complex wholes, the quality

[1] *Principia Ethica*, p. 141

'good' is itself simple, and cannot be exhibited as a whole of parts that are other than the quality 'good' itself.

But there is a possibility which Professor Moore ignores. Let us grant that there is a certain simple quality which, when we are thinking about values, we call 'good.' Possibly, however, that very *quality* may be encountered in other contexts. And possibly, through a failure clearly to distinguish the essential simple quality 'good' from its accompaniments in ethical contexts, we may not easily recognize that something encountered in other contexts really is precisely the quality called 'good' in ethical contexts. In fact, while it is quite true that there is a simple quality that is the very essence of what we mean by 'good', neither Professor Moore nor Professor Field, I should say, has clearly isolated this quality from its concomitants in ethical situations. Professor Field has failed to distinguish it from its effects on consciousness. Professor Moore, though making this distinction, has been so busy with the conventionally ethical aspect of his 'unique quality' that he has failed to discover its essential identity with a certain quality encountered elsewhere.

Professor Moore insists that of every definition of 'good', it is always possible to ask whether the subject so defined really is good; and the mere possibility of such a question, he says, shows that the definition has only defined good things, not goodness itself.[1] Professor Field answers that, in asking the question, 'you are still thinking of goodness as that vague and undefined something which it was to you before you began your speculation about its real nature.'[2] The fact that you can ask the question 'means that you have not yet made up your mind about accepting the definition.'

This is true, but it is not quite a fair answer to Professor Moore. His point surely is that in definition you do not succeed in presenting the unique quality at all; you only present its relations; you only state the one kind of thing of which good is a predicate. If your definition claims actually to say what good itself *is*, your definition is

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 15. [2] *Moral Theory*, p. 54.

confuted simply by our ability to distinguish between good and the predicate of the definition. Thus any definition which defines goodness itself in terms of pleasure, or the felt satisfaction of desire, or any other quality, is necessarily false, unless, after due inquiry about the meanings of the terms, you see that the proposition is simply tautological, in that its subject and its predicate are merely different names for the same thing.

Nevertheless we must be careful at this point not to go too far with Professor Moore. For it is possible that, though the subject term and the predicate term do as a matter of fact mean one identical quality, in common parlance the terms are applied to that quality in different universes of discourse ; and that the identity of the quality in these two spheres has not hitherto been recognized.

Suppose that a certain simple quality, *G*, has been singled out as the very essence meant by ' good ' in ethical contexts ; and suppose that *G* turns out to be identical with a quality which, in other spheres, we call *F*. Then if we were to define *F* by means of its relations, what we had defined would be the identical quality called, alternatively, *F* and *G*. And if *F* were a quality of certain kinds of complex events, *G* might also be defined in terms of such events. Its *relations*, that is, would be defined by such events ; but *it* would be an unanalysable quality.

In these circumstances it would be reasonable to ask whether the subject of the definition really were *G*, only if we were still uncertain either of the accuracy of the definition of *F*, or of the qualitative identity of *F* and *G*.

An illustration may help. It is clearly possible that a certain curve or rhythm well known to artists, in their work, might turn out to be identical with one well known to (let us say) biologists or engineers in very different contexts. Or it might even be that the same man knew the curve in both spheres, but had not noticed its identity. Similarly, then, it is possible that *G* might turn out to be identical with *F*. And so it would be possible theoretically

to define *G* to a man who, having no experience of ethical situations, had at least encountered *F* in other regions.[1]

So far we have considered only Professor Moore's contention that good is a simple quality, and have accepted it with a *caveat* that sometimes this quality may not be recognized. His other important contention is that the quality 'good' is objective to the mental act which recognizes it or merely cognizes it. Whatever it is a quality of, it is not a quality simply of a feeling or a value-judgment. Nor does it exist simply in being the object of a value-judgment. Sometimes, indeed, good is a quality of a whole in which feelings or value-judgments are members. Love, for instance, is said to be good. But the very feeling which feels love as good, or the very judgment that judges love good, does not itself create the goodness of love.

(c) ESSENTIALS OF PROFESSOR FIELD'S THEORY

With part of this view, I expect, Professor Field would agree, but cautiously. He would perhaps distinguish between the feeling and the value-judgment, and declare that though good is not constituted by the value-judgment, it *is* constituted in part by consciousness of some kind.

[1] Mr. R. B. Braithwaite, in his interesting criticism of Prof. Moore read before the Aristotelian Society, in March 1928, uses an argument which is curiously complementary to the foregoing argument. If I understand him, his contention is that Prof. Moore's central argument is false because he ignores the ambiguity of the word 'good'. The statement that pleasure is good, says Prof. Moore, can be confuted merely by pointing out the possibility of asking whether after all pleasure *is* good. To this Mr. Braithwaite replies that in the original statement 'good' is intended to mean a relation to one's own feeling, while in the subsequent question it means an objective predicate. The upshot of Mr. Braithwaite's argument is that Prof. Moore's famous question is destructive merely of the contention that 'good *always* means pleasure', not of the contention that it *sometimes* means pleasure. Thus Mr. Braithwaite's argument rests on the possibility that though a person might know the meaning of every sentence containing the word 'good', yet he might not recognize that the word had not always the *same* meaning. On the other hand the argument which I have given above, while not denying that 'good' is ambiguous, recognizes that one sense of the word is all-important in ethics. It goes on, however, to suggest that though Prof. Moore uses the word strictly in that sense, he fails to recognize that the objective character thus signified may turn out to be identical with the objective character signified by some other word, or words, in certain other contexts which are not regarded as ethical.

I suggest, however, that his really important point is, not that good is relative to consciousness, but that it is relative to something which has indeed one essential feature of desire, though it is not essentially conscious. We may for the present call this something ' need ', if by that word we may explicitly deny all reference to consciousness. At a later stage I shall discuss ' need ' in some detail; but for the purpose of the present discussion I may elucidate the concept as follows. A wide view of all manner of biological phenomena seems to show that organisms act in manners which are, within limits, definitely teleological. In varying circumstances, though of course only within certain limits, they act in such manners that some constant result is attained. We may therefore say that they tend to behave in certain teleological manners. In abnormal environments they may indeed act so as to defeat their own normal teleological nature; but this irregularity does not affect the general truth that their nature is observably teleological. Needs, then, are laid down in the nature of organisms, and may be inferred from careful study of their behaviour. Similarly the needs of one's own nature may be inferred, up to a point, by careful study of one's own behaviour. But needs are of different degrees of importance. Some are relatively fundamental and permanent, while others, derived in the last resort from the former, are relatively superficial and fleeting. The superficial needs of one's own nature are easily apprehended; but the fundamental needs, of which the superficial needs are often very distorted expressions, are discovered only with difficulty. The needs of an organism are primarily needs for certain activities, such as (according to the nature of the particular organism) breathing, mating, intellectual inquiry, sociality, and so on; but we may also conveniently say that the organism needs whatever objects are necessary to the fulfilment of its activities. Thus it may need air, a mate, or books. Clearly since behaviour-tendency does not necessarily involve conscious conation, neither does need.

I am aware that Professor Field would object to this

account of need ; but his objections can best be faced at a later stage. He protests, quite rightly, I think, that it is meaningless to talk of goodness as being an intrinsic character of certain objects in precisely the same sense as yellow may be called an intrinsic character of objects. In every conceivable case a thing that is called ' good ' is so called either because it is a means to the fulfilment of a need, or because it is the actual fulfilling of a need. Something or other which is a necessary factor in all desire, but which (as I shall presently argue) is logically prior to desire, *creates* the possibility of goodness. The fulfilment, or progressive fulfilling, of this drive, or thrust, or tendency, or need, is the very character that we mean by ' good '. Were there no such drive towards fulfilment, the distinction between good and bad simply would not exist at all.

So much, but no more, in Professor Field's view seems to me valid and very important. But he goes beyond this. He does not, of course, assume that this drive or thrust or need, which is the objective ground of the distinction between good and evil, must necessarily be conscious desire. On the contrary he recognizes that it is rarely fully conscious. But he holds that only in so far as it is *capable of becoming conscious* can it be a source of the distinction between good and evil. Were there no consciousness, he thinks, the essential quality that we mean by ' good ' would not exist. I suggest that he ought not to say more than that the quality ' good ' would not exist, were there no ' drive ' in the objective world. It is true, of course, that were there no consciousness, value-judgment would not exist. And further it is true that, were there no living beings, very many extant good things would not exist. For living things have tendency, or need ; and so their extinction would abolish certain possibilities of good and bad. But need, or at least ' tendency ', the essential element in need, which (rather than desire) is the ground of good and bad—this does not, so far as I can see, involve consciousness.

There is another point on which Professor Field insists,

but which, if not actually erroneous, is likely to lead to error. Of the ideal he says, as we have seen, that it is the fact of its relation to 'our nature' that makes it good,[1] and that it 'has a certain character because human nature is of a certain character.'[2] He supposes that desire rises out of something 'in our nature.'

What does this 'in our nature' really mean? Consider first the case of mere cognition. Clearly, unless we had in our nature some faculty of cognizing, we should not cognize at all. But, for there to be cognition, something else is needed as well as this factor in our nature, namely objects. *What* we cognize is in no sense dependent on our capacity for cognition, but only on present objects and their relations to past objects that we have experienced. Similarly, then, with conation, unless there were something in our nature to make us capable of conating, we should not conate at all. But, for there to be conation, something else is necessary. Needs must be cognized. Conation (by which I mean always a conscious activity) is inconceivable apart from the cognition of a need; and to say that the needs which we cognize are part of our nature is to beg the question. They are embraced within our nature in being cognized by us and conated by us; but they are not constituted needs by the mere fact that we cognize and conate them. My body may need food whether I desire it or not. It is an object whose nature is to behave in a certain complicated manner; and that manner entails the maintenance of a metabolic equilibrium. Similarly, society may need my service whether or not I recognize the need and will the service. In neither case is the need primarily an element in *my* nature as a cognizing and conating process.

Bearing in mind our discussion of the use of 'mental content' in Idealist ethics, we must realize that a need is only an element in 'my nature' in the sense that it is an element in my content. It is not an element in my nature as a subjective activity. Nor is the subjective activity, or process, simply an activity of the content. It is the

[1] *Moral Theory*, p. 136. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 181.

subjective activity of an organism in relation to its psychological environment, in which environment the physical organism itself is an object over against its own subjective activity. Psychologically content is strictly and solely objective, and distinct from process. To describe our conation of the tendency of objects (including our own bodies) in terms of a 'subjective tendency to conate objective tendency' is barren.

When a child is hungry it is cognizing and conating a need of its body. Of course, it does not cognize it as a need to maintain a metabolic equilibrium, nor necessarily even as a need for food. If it is a baby, it may have no idea as to *what* it needs. Yet being hungry simply is the confused awareness of a bodily need. The essential nature of conation may be best seen in such simple activities as 'wanting to sneeze'. You do not only sense the irritant stimulus; you are aware also of the organism as tending to behave. And cognition of this tendency is the objective source of the conation. The subjective source is merely the bare, undirected, capacity of conating something or other.

Professor Moore, indeed, is not justified in saying that cognition and conation differ only in respect of the objects[1] of which they take cognizance. For, after all, there is a difference between cognizing a need and actually desiring its fulfilment. Often the cognition occurs without the desire. But conation does seem to *presuppose* cognition, however vague a cognition. One cannot, strictly speaking, conate at all without in some sense cognizing the tendency that is conated. This, I suggest, is the element of truth in Professor Moore's mistaken identification of cognition and conation. Unfortunately, he makes a further error. He ignores that the object of conation is always of a special kind. It is always something cognized (truly or falsely) as pressing in a certain direction, and requiring fulfilment. Often that which is cognized as thus

[1] Throughout this book I use the word 'object' in the epistemological sense. Whatever is, or might be, objective to the cognitive and conative subject is an object. I never use the word as equivalent to 'goal' or 'end' or 'aim'.

needing is one's own organism ; but often it is something else.

In deriving desire from 'something in our nature' Professor Field is clearly right in a sense ; but it is a sense ethically misleading, though psychologically important. In that all the needs that I conate are *ipso facto* made into my needs, it is true that the only good that I can recognize is relative to my nature.

Professor Field, of course, might reply to this account of need somewhat as follows. 'Can not you see that the concept of need involves consciousness just as inevitably as the concept of desire ? The only reason for saying that a man has a need for a thing is the belief that the thing would, as a matter of fact, whether he desires it or not, give him satisfaction. If, having got the thing, he did not after all experience any satisfaction, we should have to admit that after all this was not what he needed.[1] Even on your own showing the fulfilment of a tendency is only good in so far as the tendency and the fulfilment are cognized, or capable of being cognized. Thus it is not fulfilment that is good, even on your theory, but the fulfilment of *felt* needs.'

Though this account is plausible, I believe it to be mistaken. Any account of 'good' in terms of the satisfaction of desire reduces in the last resort to hedonism. For this insistence on consciousness and on satisfaction is essentially an insistence on *felt* satisfaction. It is implied that the *feeling* of satisfaction is the essence of 'good'. Professor Field does not, indeed, explicitly derive 'good' from pleasure. Indeed he would probably deny such a derivation. Yet this is the implication of his theory. The important point is that pleasure, or the feeling of satisfaction, is not the *ratio essendi* of a need ; it is only a *ratio cognoscendi*. At any rate it is just as plausible to say that we are pleased when the fulfilment of a need is cognized, as it is to say that we have a need for a thing when it is a fact that the thing would give us pleasure. Pleasure is essentially 'feeling satisfied' ; and satisfaction

[1] Cf. for instance *Moral Theory*, p. 126.

pre-supposes some need which is, or seems to be, fulfilled. A need, then, is essentially an unfulfilled tendency of some object within the agent's mental horizon. That object may be either his own body with its purely physiological needs, or ' himself ' as a person cognized as one individual among others, or some other person, or a group. And perhaps there are other kinds of active objects which may appeal to his active capacity.

(D) ETHICAL COMPROMISE BETWEEN MOORE AND FIELD

This psychological account of conation must be greatly expanded in subsequent chapters. But as it stands it is, I suggest, enough to indicate how we may accept and unify the essentials of the ethical views of Professor Moore and Professor Field. Good, we must hold, is relative not to desire but to need. And need turns out to be, not something rooted in our nature as conative subjects, but something rooted in the nature of the objective field which we cognize. By good we *mean*, in the last resort and essentially, fulfilment of some objective tendency or other. Every such fulfilment, simply as such and in isolation from other events, is a case of intrinsic goodness.

Here Professor Moore might of course point out that, since many things which are needed are not called good, and many things which are called good are not needed, we ought not to identify good with needed. But this only amounts to saying that, in the first place, many things which are needed may, when regarded in a wider context, be seen to conflict with more important needs ; while, in the second place, there are many things which would as a matter of fact fulfil needs, though no one recognizes that this is the case.

It is true also that some things which are judged good are not definitely *regarded* as fulfilling a need. But this only means that, though they are in fact apprehended as fulfilments, it is very difficult to *describe* just what the need is which they fulfil. Thus a great work of art is judged good, and its goodness consists in a complex of

fulfilments; but who can clearly describe the needs that it fulfils? At a later stage I shall discuss aesthetic experience from this point of view.

That quality, then, which in ethical contexts we call 'goodness', and in aesthetic contexts we call 'beauty', is after all the very same quality as that which, in other contexts we call 'fulfilment'. This quality itself is unanalysable; and in Professor Moore's sense it is indefinable. But it is a quality that occurs in certain definable relations in some of which an ethical aspect is easily recognizable, in some of which it is not.

The question may be raised as to whether we are entitled to speak of fulfilment as a quality at all. I think we are, for the following reasons. By 'fulfilment' we mean something pertaining to a certain kind of situation, namely that in which some object, tending to act in a certain manner, does so act. It is certainly in virtue of a common *character* that we call all such situations cases of fulfilment. Now this character we seem to know most intimately in the fulfilment of our own organic tendencies. For instance, in a successful sneeze we have a very definite acquaintance with fulfilment; we cognize a certain unanalysable quality which is the essential quality common to all fulfilment situations. We may say that we have a 'feeling of release'; but this quality is not merely the quality of a feeling. It is the quality of an objective situation. *What* we feel is a real release, not a 'feeling' which we 'project' into the physical body. And this quality, the quality of fulfilment of potency, is identical with that which we encounter in other cases of fulfilment and by other modes of cognition. Whether we know it by acquaintance, as in the sneeze, or by report, *it* is the same quality. For instance, it is the quality known when we learn of the triumph of any cause which we have embraced, or the victory of any thing or person or society to which we have rendered allegiance. And, being essentially the quality of fulfilment, it must be supposed to occur in every case of fulfilment, whether we recognize it as such or not. Often, however, we ignore it or deny it just because the

fulfilment in question conflicts with others to which we are loyal.

But, granted that fulfilment is indeed a quality, we have still to face the criticism that, after all, what is good is not every kind of fulfilment, but only the fulfilment of those tendencies that are cognized and conated as needs. Against this view, which will concern us more closely in the next chapter, we must meanwhile insist that in practice this is not what we *mean* when we call anything good. We mean neither that the conation of it is good, nor that it is good because, or in that, it is conated. We mean simply that *it* is good, that it, as Professor Moore would say, has a certain quality. But, when we examine closely the nature of our meaning, we find that the quality called ' goodness ' is the quality of fulfilment. The good thing is either an isolated case of fulfilment, and therefore of intrinsic goodness, or it is a means to fulfilment. And if, taking all things into account, we deliberately assert that it is good absolutely, or universally, what we mean is that it is itself a member in the ideal, an element in the greatest possible fulfilment of the universe.

CHAPTER VI

TELEOLOGY IN ETHICS [1]

(A) TWO THEORIES CONTRASTED

THE theory that good is an indefinable objective quality lies at the opposite pole of ethics from hedonism. All other theories are in a sense intermediate. We have considered two such theories, namely the idealist system and the theory of Professor Hobhouse. In this chapter I shall discuss a third possible intermediate theory, and shall contrast it with yet another, which is the theory which I shall finally adopt.

(1) In the former of these two theories it is claimed that, though 'good' is meaningless apart from mind, it is not to be derived from mind as feeling, but from mind as striving.[2] Feeling, it is argued, is an abstraction from the concrete fact of the felt success or failure of mind's conscious striving. Pleasure and pain presuppose activity or tendency to activity. We feel pleased and displeased *about* the success and failure of the activity on which we are engaged. This is in accord with that 'hormic' psychology which finds conation more fundamental than affection. From this position it seems to follow that *what* we value is primarily not feeling, but the success of our enterprises. And in this view the essence of what we mean by 'good' is not the abstraction, pleasure, but the more concrete 'achievement of willed ends', of those ends which are indicated by the hormic nature of mind. On the other hand it is insisted that what we value is the success of *mind's* enterprises, the success of conscious conations. In this view, as in Professor Hobhouse's, it is meaningless

[1] Based on an article, 'Ethics and Teleological Activity,' *The International Journal of Ethics*, April 1928.

[2] Dr. L. A. Reid has advocated this theory in his article, 'The Appearance of Values,' *The Monist*, January 1927. But I do not claim that the account which follows represents his view at all accurately.

to call the achievement of a process good unless that achievement is directly or indirectly related to consciousness. But whereas in his theory good derives ultimately from affection, in this theory it derives ultimately from conation.

I shall try to show that this view, though attractive, should give place to the superficially less plausible but actually more satisfactory view which I have already adumbrated, and will now briefly state as follows. (2) What we call 'good' is in the last resort the attainment of an end posited in the nature of some teleological process; but it is *not* essential to the goodness of such attainment that it should be related, either directly or indirectly, to consciousness. In very many cases, of course, consciousness *is* a constituent of events that we should call good, just because in very many cases the teleological process in question is a process in which consciousness is a factor, or the teleological end is an end in which consciousness is a factor. But essentially what we *mean* by 'good' is the fulfilment of teleological activity, whether or not consciousness plays a part in that activity, and whether or not there is awareness of its fulfilment.

In this view, then, good is entirely independent of consciousness; but on the other hand it is not simply a static character of certain objects in the sense that yellow is a character of certain objects. It presupposes teleological activity on the part of the object, and is essentially and in general the fulfilment of teleological activity. This is the theory which I shall adopt and work out in more detail in subsequent chapters. But finally, in the last two chapters of this book, I shall have to modify it considerably so as to do justice to a certain unique kind of experience which may be called ecstasy.

Whether we should say that in this teleological theory good involves the activity of *mind*, depends on our definition of mind. If by 'mind' we mean just that which is capable of spontaneous teleological activity, then clearly good involves mind. But if by 'mind' we mean more than this, if in fact mind necessarily involves *awareness* of teleological activity, or if it involves conscious conation,

then in the theory under discussion good does not necessarily involve mind. For my part I find the use of the words 'mind' and 'mental' without reference to consciousness very confusing and unnecessary.

Clearly the view which I have been describing demands a discussion of the meaning of 'teleological'. Can a process be teleological if it is not derived directly or indirectly from conscious purpose? If teleology involves consciousness, clearly a theory which relates good to teleological activity, yet denies that it is related to consciousness, is inconsistent. In this case we should have to revert to the first of our alternative ethical theories. But from this position we should, I think, be driven step by step through Professor Hobhouse's theory to hedonism. This would not matter if we could stay there. But we should soon be harried thence into the theory that good is an unanalysable objective character. And thence we should once more be driven into the alternatives now under consideration. It is worth while therefore to inquire into the nature of teleology so as to discover whether there is any initial impossibility in our second theory.

(B) TELEOLOGICAL ACTIVITY

Professor Broad defines teleology by means of a hypothetical reference to design.[1] A system, he says, is teleological 'provided it acts *as if* it were designed for a purpose.' But it still 'remains a question of fact whether the system was actually the result of a design in someone's mind.' Artificial machines do result from design in some mind; but organisms 'are teleological systems which seem nevertheless to arise without design.' The machine is a case of 'external teleology'; the organism is a case of 'internal teleology'.

How must a system act so as to fulfil the description that 'it acts *as if* it were designed for a conscious purpose'? Superficial examination of its form and behaviour, and detailed examination of its minute structure, says Professor

[1] C. D. Broad, *The Mind and its Place in Nature*, p. 81 ff.

Broad, must both suggest conscious purpose such as 'a rational being might be likely to entertain'. Now this definition is perhaps not very satisfactory, for it entails a purely subjective reference. How are we to say *what* purposes a rational being is likely to entertain? Perhaps a more objective definition of teleological behaviour may be devised. The sort of activity which we are tempted to call teleological is, in the first place, activity which, in varying circumstances, varies in such a manner as to attain an identical result. (Whether a rational being would approve the result is irrelevant.)

Now self-regulating machines obviously fulfil this requirement; but so also do certain sequences of events in nature. For instance rivers 'circumvent' obstacles, and finally reach the sea. Yet this, we say, is not teleological activity. Only if we saw the river jump the obstacles, should we *suspect* it of acting teleologically. This imaginary case suggests three possible explanations: (*a*) The jump might be a case of mechanical action according to physical laws unknown to us, and so not in fact teleological at all; (*b*) The jump might be produced by artificial machinery, acting in accordance with mechanical laws, yet designed by some purposeful mind. This would be externally teleological activity; (*c*) But, lastly, the jump might be an expression of the teleological nature of the water itself, and therefore a case of internally teleological activity.

It is tempting, then, to define internally teleological activity as activity which varies from the course prescribed by physical laws in such manners that a constant result is attained. But the violation of physical law is not essential to the concept of teleology. Where there is such violation, or where physical laws seem inapplicable, *we suspect* the presence of teleological activity, provided that there is also a constancy of result. But we need a definition of teleological activity itself, not of our reasons for inferring it. Let us then define it as activity which, *whether or not* it violates physical law, is as a matter of fact regulated in relation to a future state. In genuine teleological activity, events occur because they will produce or maintain a certain result.

But here let us distinguish between two very different possible kinds of genuine internally teleological activity. (1) Let us call the first kind 'direct' teleological activity, and define it as activity which, whether or not it violates physical laws, varies in varying circumstances in such manners that a certain state is either attained immediately or maintained all along. For instance, it is conceivable that organisms sometimes preserve their organization even when, by the operation of mere physical laws, they should disintegrate. (2) On the other hand, 'indirect' teleological activity may be defined as activity which is capable, not merely of violating physical laws, but also of foregoing an immediate partial attainment *of its own regulative end* for the sake of a more complete attainment at a later stage. Conscious purposeful activity is obviously of this kind; but we have no right to assume that consciousness is essential even in this case. It is not wholly inconceivable that this sort of unconscious teleology has contributed to biological evolution. These two possible kinds of activity are very different, and the former is far more intelligible than the latter. But for our purposes both may be included in the concept of internal teleology.

Now there may be in the world no such activity. On the other hand many persons suspect very strongly that the activity of living organisms is partly of this kind. Some would account for it in terms of an 'entelechy' or vital principle interfering with the course of mechanical events. Others would say that at the level of organization which characterizes living things this new way of behaving 'emerges'. For my part I much prefer the latter view; but this is not the place to discuss emergence.[1] Here I am only concerned to urge that activity of this kind, defined as teleological, does not necessarily involve any reference (direct or indirect) to consciousness, that it no more involves consciousness than the concept of physical mechanism does. We have become so familiar with the concept of physical mechanism (as Professor Whitehead

[1] All my ideas on this subject are obviously derived from the works of Prof. Alexander, Prof. Lloyd Morgan, Prof. Whitehead, and Prof. Broad.

has pointed out), that we often regard it as self-evident that things *must* interact according to the laws of physical mechanism; and when we suspect that things are not acting purely mechanically, we feel impelled to introduce conscious purpose to 'explain' their irregularity. We do not, however, think it necessary to say that atoms and electrons move as they do because they consciously want to get away from their preceding unpleasant conditions. We merely record the fact that they do act in certain manners, and that their actions can be adequately described only by reference to preceding conditions. Similarly, then, with teleological activity we are not compelled to suppose that an internally teleological system behaves as it does because some mind has conceived a conscious purpose with regard to it. We must merely record the fact that such an entity behaves (in certain respects) in such manners that certain results will be attained. We have to take into account, in describing its behaviour, not merely physical laws, but also certain teleological laws.

This point may be illustrated by an analogy. In Newtonian physics it was assumed that bodies left to themselves would continue in uniform motion in a straight line. Gravitating bodies do not do so; therefore it was necessary to postulate a 'force' of gravitation pulling them from the straight course. In Einstein's theory of gravitation, however, no force is needed. In a gravitational field a moving body follows a geodesic, i.e. the shortest possible course in space-time; but in the neighbourhood of matter geodesics are different from geodesics remote from matter. Similarly then with teleology. If we assume that matter 'left to itself' must always act mechanically, we must postulate some special extraneous 'force', in this case a hidden consciousness, to account for cases in which it observably acts teleologically. But apart from the initial assumption of pure mechanism there is no need to postulate consciousness to account for teleological behaviour. Rather we should simply say that, in certain configurations or organizations, matter assumes new ways of acting, namely teleological ways. Meta-

phorically we might say that the geodesic is different where matter attains certain kinds of organization. Of course this is not to deny that, where consciousness observably *does* occur, it may influence the course of activity.

Some perhaps would hold that *any* activity which is not necessarily guided by conscious purpose should be called mechanical, and that teleological activity, in the sense defined above, is merely a species of mechanical activity, in which, in some inexplicable manner, a future possibility is causally efficient. We need not here discuss the use of the words ' mechanical ' and ' mechanism '. Certainly, if that is mechanical which happens automatically without the intervention of the conscious act of volition, teleological activity, as defined, is mechanical. We may remind ourselves that Professor Whitehead has used the phrase ' organic mechanism ' to name his own version of emergence. In his view, it will be remembered, the organism's behaviour is an automatic expression of its nature, yet the laws of its behaviour cannot be stated in terms of ' physical ' mechanism. In organisms, perhaps, ' the molecules differ in their intrinsic characters according to the general organic plans of the situations in which they find themselves.'[1] This suggestive and important phrase, ' organic mechanism ', emphasizes the fact that the concept of mechanism need not necessarily exclude internal teleology, any more than it excludes the external teleology of an artificial machine.

Before returning to the discussion of our two types of ethical theory we may note one other point with regard to teleological activity. A full discussion of the relation of teleological activity to physical mechanical activity might lead to any one of three conclusions. (*a*) The defined difference between the two might continue to appear a fundamental difference. In this case good, according to my proposed ethical theory, would involve a particular kind of activity, namely teleological activity, and not the other, On the other hand, (*b*) full observation and discussion might enable us apparently to ' reduce ' non-conscious

[1] A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World.* p, 112.

teleological activity to the laws of physical mechanical activity. In this case we should have to say that some goods observably consist in the fulfilment of a particular kind of physical mechanical activity, namely that which is performed by organisms. And since in this case there would be no essential difference between the fulfilment of organic and other physical mechanical activity, we should have to say that good is essentially the fulfilment not of teleological activity but of *any* activity. But finally, (*c*) we might perhaps find in obviously teleological activity a key to the hidden nature of all activity, concluding that even physical mechanical activity was at heart teleological, in that it was determined by attraction toward an immediate end, not by impulsion from an immediate 'cause'; and, indeed, that the very concept of activity necessarily involved teleology. Such a conclusion would not justify a panpsychic view of physical nature, but it would force us once more to hold (within the terms of the ethical theory which I am advocating), that *every* kind of 'fulfilment of activity', or of tendency to activity, is in its degree good. This view would have been necessitated by our inquiry into the essential meaning of the word 'good', together with our inquiry into the essential nature of activity. This matter may be summarized by saying that if teleological activity and physical mechanical activity are essentially different, good is grounded in teleological activity alone, but if the distinction between teleological and physical mechanical activity is not ultimate, good is grounded simply in activity.

(c) TELEOLOGY AND CONATION

If the foregoing theory of teleology is correct, we may somewhat amplify our earlier accounts of conation as follows. The presupposition of every act of conation, whether 'blind' impulse or desire or fully self-conscious will, is a teleological activity or tendency distinct from the conative act itself. At the lowest level the activity is purely physiological; the impulse, in so far as it is mental

at all, is an acceptance of, or active espousal of, some activity of the body itself. Desire may set as its goal the realization of some such purely physical teleological activity of the body. At higher levels the teleological activity may be psychical. The goal of desire, or of considered will, may be the fulfilment of some psychical capacity. But in this case, no less than in the others, the activity of tendency whose fulfilment is desired or willed is strictly objective to, and logically prior to, the mental act of willing its fulfilment. For there to be any conscious conation at all there must be awareness of a hormic drive or tendency, awareness vague or precise, true or erroneous. For there to be not merely 'blind' impulse but explicit desire or will, there must be prevision, true or false, of the supposed goal of the activity—prevision sometimes merely of an immediate goal, at other times of a goal more remote. I shall discuss in more detail later the whole problem of tendency to psychical activity. Meanwhile it is enough to point out that in desiring, for instance, intellectual activity we cognize our nature *as entailing that activity for its free functioning*. Paradoxical as it may sound, the desire for a mental activity involves cognition of a certain condition of the organism, namely an *objective* tendency to perform a certain kind of *subjective* activity. Every conative act, then, consists in the acceptance or espousal of some cognized hormic activity or tendency; every case of feeling (pleasant or unpleasant) is consequent on the cognized success or failure of espoused hormic tendency.

We may conclude this psychological description by saying that: we feel because we 'espouse a cause'; we espouse the cause because we cognize it *as* a 'cause', i.e. as a teleological process of something within our ken; and finally we cognize the teleological process *as* a teleological process because (apart from errors of cognition) it really is so.

If it be asked how we come to espouse some teleological processes and not others, the answer in brief must be that we espouse more readily those teleological processes which are more in harmony with the established nature of the

organism, and that, when there is conflict between the less and the more familiar, we all too often accept the latter, even when objectively they are minor processes. The precise implications of this obvious fact call for very careful discussion at a later stage. Meanwhile we have only to note that conation does as a matter of fact tend to lag behind the advance of cognition. If conation were simply the activity of mental context, this fact would be wholly unintelligible. But I have argued that this is not the case. Conation is the psychical activity of the organism; and the momentum, so to speak, of the organism's innate and acquired 'behaviour-set' complicates the situation. We have habits and inherited behaviour-tendencies of acting in relation to the familiar, central, and objectively minor, teleological processes, such as those of our own body, even at the expense of others which we have come to cognize as objectively major. But even these various automatic behaviour-tendencies are themselves derived in the last resort from cognition of teleological processes. The whole moral progress of the race seems to consist in the advance from this 'automatism' by which we espouse the familiar and minor processes even when we *know* them to be minor and to be in conflict with major processes. And this advance is apparently due to the exercise of the unique mental fiat or integrative 'act of will' which, after a value-judgment has been made, can, for the sake of an espoused cause, transcend the automatism that would otherwise come into action.

With regard to the objectivity of teleological tendencies, the following objection might be raised. It might be admitted that in human and animal psychology every conscious act of conation involves a teleological tendency objective to the act itself; but, it might be argued, such teleological tendencies themselves presuppose conscious conation in the mind of God. We, in fact, are teleological solely by virtue of God's purpose; for, it might be insisted, teleological activity is inconceivable apart from conscious purpose in *some* mind. Thus teleological activity in the animal and vegetable kingdoms becomes evidence for theism.

To this argument we must reply as follows. The premiss is: That teleological activity is inconceivable apart from conscious conation. But we have seen that in human and animal psychology conscious conation itself presupposes objective teleological activity. We have then no reason to assume that in divine psychology the situation is reversed. If there is a God with conscious purposes, these divine acts of conation themselves presuppose teleological activity on the part of an active substance objective to the divine acts of conation.

The same argument may be used against McDougall's animism. For him, our conscious conation involves prior teleological tendencies outside our consciousness, but these tendencies inhere in something psychical, though beyond our consciousness. The only reason for asserting that this something is psychical is that it is teleological. But if we once grant that in us teleological activity is prior to *our* consciousness, we have no right to assume that it is *ever* essentially dependent on consciousness.

(D) ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF TELEOLOGY

I will now try to state the implications of our two alternative ethical theories in terms of the foregoing account of conation.

The first theory claims to state the facts of ethical experience in such a way that good appears as necessarily related to consciousness, yet as more fundamental than, and not dependent on, feeling. It asserts that pleasure, though a *criterion* of goodness, is not itself an essential constituent of everything that is intrinsically good. What *is* essential to the intrinsic goodness of anything is, according to the theory, that it should consist in the achievement of mind's conscious activity.

In relation to the view of conation stated above the first theory may therefore be described as follows. For value to emerge, it is not sufficient that there should be teleological activity. That activity must also be consciously willed. Thus, to use a phrase of Professor

G. E. Moore's, in this theory anything that is intrinsically good must be an 'organic whole' consisting of (*a*) a teleological process, (*b*) conscious espousal of that process, and (*c*) consciousness of the fulfilment of the process. No one of these factors is good by itself; for goodness is a characteristic of wholes composed of all these three elements. It might be questioned whether *consciousness* of the fulfilment of mental activity is essential to goodness. The reason for including it is that fulfilment of activity that is *mental* seems to *entail* consciousness of the fulfilment. Here I think we come upon a real inconsistency in the theory. For in insisting that the activity that is the ground of goodness must be mental activity, and that good is relative to consciousness, the theory does seem to imply that consciousness of fulfilment is essential to goodness. But consciousness *of* fulfilment is a case of cognition, and is in fact a value-judgment which asserts a value, but does not create it. Thus insistence or consciousness of fulfilment seems to result in hedonism.

In the second theory, on the other hand, it is claimed that the possibility of value emerges wherever there is a teleological process, whether or not there is conscious espousal of the process; and that, whether or not there is *awareness* of the fulfilment of the process, the fulfilment itself is essentially the sort of thing that we mean by 'good'.

Now the difference between the theories might be regarded as merely a verbal difference, arising out of the ambiguity of the word 'good'. I have already had occasion to note this fundamental ambiguity,[1] but the matter is so very important that we may profitably inquire into it somewhat more minutely in the present connexion. There is no doubt that we do as a matter of fact often use the word 'good' in each of the senses implied in the theories under discussion, and of course in other senses also. Sometimes people say that to be thrown upon his own resources would be 'good' for a certain boy whether he wills it or not. In saying this they sometimes mean merely that the boy would get more *pleasure* out of life

[1] Cf. Chapter IV, Sect. A.

in the long run if he learned to stand by himself. With this use we are not concerned, for in both theories it is held that pleasure is not constitutive of goodness. In both theories feeling is regarded as consequent on a value-judgment; and in both it is held that a value-judgment cannot itself be constitutive of the value which it values.

Sometimes, however, people mean (by such a statement as we are considering) something in accord with the first theory, namely that the boy would attain in the long run consciousness of fulfilment of more complex and diverse willed-teleological-activities. He would in fact become a richer, more developed, personality—and consciously so. Thus it is insisted that his being thrown out into the world is only to be justified in the last resort by his *consciousness* of rich and successful willed activity. (Of course it may be meant sometimes that he may become a more useful member of society, whatever happens within his own consciousness. But it is still assumed that consciousness is the essential ground of goodness, though in this case the consciousness of others.)

Sometimes, however, what is meant (by such a statement as we are considering) is something more in accord with the second theory. The boy is regarded as a being having certain capacities of development, and as in fact tending to develop teleologically into a more complex being. And it is held that, just because he is of this nature, it is good that he should fulfil his potentiality. It is good, whether he ever, in all his life, consciously wills to do so or not. In fact, for advocates of this view the goodness of his development is not relative to his consciousness at all, but relative to his hormic nature. If, *per impossibile*, he were to attain a high degree of development, yet always consciously to will to have remained in his childish state of undevelopment, yet his development would be intrinsically good. We may indeed imagine the case of a man who at the end of his life should look back on his career and say, 'I have known much, and I have done much. Few could have lived with the intensity and breadth that I have achieved. Yet I have ever longed to be quit of it

all. For the only blessed state is the insensitivity and passivity of a stone.' Of such a case some would maintain that, apart altogether from any service which he might have rendered to his fellows, and also in spite of his own perverse will, this man's life would have been intrinsically good. And further it would be maintained that this would be so, not essentially because his life consisted in rich activity of a *conscious* kind, but just because it consisted in a high degree of fulfilment of his nature's capacity. From this view it would follow that in the case of plants, even if they have no consciousness whatever, their free development would be an intrinsic good, just because it constituted the fulfilment of a teleological nature. The fulfilment of merely mechanical processes, however, would not, in this view, be good, unless indeed it were to be found either that mechanical activity itself ultimately involved teleology, or that teleological activity were reducible to mechanical activity.

Clearly the difference between these views about the boy might be regarded as merely verbal; and indeed the two ethical theories under discussion seem but to reflect the two common and incompatible uses of the word 'good'. For in our daily thoughts we do, as a matter of fact, often regard good as both relative to consciousness and yet as independent of consciousness. That we often regard good as relative to pleasure or to the felt achievement of purpose is obvious. Perhaps less obvious to-day, but no less common, is the assumption that certain kinds of conduct are intrinsically good quite apart from anyone's will, even apart from God's will. Now so long as we are aware of the various factors of the value situation, it does not perhaps greatly matter which of them we dignify with the word 'good'. On the other hand perhaps one usage of the word is more significant and more coherent than the other, and should alone be accepted in philosophy.

As I have already said, I believe this to be the case, and that this most significant meaning of the word 'good' is that which is involved in our second theory, for the following reasons. It is generally agreed to call 'good' that

state of affairs which *ought to be*. Within any limited sphere, or universe of discourse, to say that anything is 'good' implies always that it ought to be. This means essentially that, apart altogether from anyone's desire for it, the thing is in some sense needed for the fulfilment of the capacities of the sphere itself, whether that sphere be a limited region of existence or the universe. Now the concept of 'need' seems to imply a teleological activity working toward some end. But it does not, so far as I can see, imply consciousness of that activity or conscious espousal of that activity. An upholder of the 'mental activity theory' would of course object that the word 'need' and the phrase 'ought to be' can only be used significantly in reference to the conscious will of some one or other, in fact that what is good must be good *for some one*, for some conscious mind, and that good is a character of organic wholes in which consciousness is a member. But this view seems arbitrary if once we admit that, for conscious conation to occur at all, there must be some objective teleological tendency; in fact that what we desire is, neither states of pleasure nor states of fulfilled will, but the fulfilment of objective activities.

The intuitive apprehension that a certain state of affairs 'ought to be' is crucial for the understanding of what we really mean by 'good' when we are using the word seriously. To say that a thing ought to be is to imply (*a*) that there is a need for it, and (*b*) that there is no objectively greater need in conflict with it. The apprehension that a thing ought to be may fittingly be described as an apprehension that the thing is needed, within the sphere under consideration, whether that sphere be a limited universe of discourse such as the needs of one's own body, or whether it be the needs of the universe as a whole.

In the sphere of moral desire it is fairly easy to see that the moral choice is determined by the intrinsic needs of the moral situation itself. But in this sphere, though choice is seen to be determined by something objective to the moral agent, we are apt too to suppose that this

objective determinant, though independent of our own consciousness, is essentially relative to the conscious will of *other* individuals or of God, and that apart from this there would be no obligation. On the other hand in a more humble sphere, namely the desire for the fulfilment of one's own bodily processes, it is clear (according to the principles of a hormic psychology) that the relative desirability of the end is derived not from consciousness at all, but from something more fundamental, namely the teleological nature of the organism. But in this sphere it is less easy to see that this determination of conscious desire is just as strictly objective as in the case of moral choice. We are aware of the body's needs as in fact needs of one object (the central object) within our mental content, and *therefore* we desire their fulfilment.

The truth is that in each sphere we intuitively apprehend that a certain end is claimed, that (within the particular sphere) this end *ought to be achieved.* And upon the ground of this cognitive judgment we may proceed to desire, or will, the end. Many no doubt would deride the notion that the desire for food or sexual activity is essentially moral in the sense that it is objectively determined. But a strict discrimination between the subjective mental activity and the psychologically objective environment, which includes the body, forces us to this conclusion. Why should I will my body's free activity rather than the reverse? To say that something in my nature as a psychical subject makes me do so is no real answer. The fact is simply that I intuitively apprehend the teleological tendency of my body, and intuitively apprehend its free activity as good, as being, at least within a limited universe of discourse, that which ought to be desired.

(E) SUMMARY

Assuming on the one hand that good is not dependent on feeling, and on the other that it is not simply an unique character of certain objects, I have been led to consider, and reject, the theory that by 'good' we mean the

fulfilment of mental activity. I have also tried to show that essentially what we mean by good is the fulfilment or progressive fulfilling of the activities of teleologically active substances. This view is suggested both by our intuitive experience of moral obligation as objective, and by a psychological theory in which conscious conation presupposes teleological tendencies objective to the act of conation.

CHAPTER VII

TENDENCY IN PHYSICS AND BIOLOGY

(A) THE MEANING OF TENDENCY

IT is clear that the ethical theory which I have tentatively favoured in the preceding chapter demands a much fuller account of the nature of tendency than I have yet attempted. I shall therefore at this stage desert ethics for a while in order to discuss tendency in the physical, biological, and psychological spheres.

In this discussion two distinct points must be borne in mind. We must inquire more minutely whether there is any truth in the theory that conscious teleological behaviour involves prior unconscious teleological tendency. And further, if this is so, we must inquire whether, in order that unconscious teleological tendency may give rise to conscious striving, there must be cognition of the tendency as objective, or whether the unconscious tendency causes conation independently of cognition by simply occurring in consciousness as a conative act. But first let us consider the nature of tendency in general. A tendency is not an occult power residing in a thing and 'forcing' it to act in a particular manner. When we say that a thing tends to act in a certain manner, we mean usually no more than that it *would* act in that manner if it were not being prevented. From observation of many things of this kind we have induced that they do, as a matter of fact, always act in such a manner unless something hinders them; and therefore we conclude that this thing would so act if it could. One state of activity in the thing, or in the thing and its environment, issues in another state of activity, unless there are complicating circumstances. Thus to say that anything has a certain tendency is, in the first instance, merely to state a descriptive law of its behaviour, not to

explain *why* it behaves. On the other hand, behaviour is in a sense partially explained if it can be shown to be the kind of behaviour that one might expect as the compromise of two or more known tendencies which are applicable to the particular situation, but discrepant with one another.

The tendencies of a thing are objective facts which we may discover ; they are not mere conventions or matters of opinion. It is a fact that stones tend to fall, and that certain animals tend to reproduce their kind. Of course, we may make erroneous judgments about tendencies. We may mistakenly judge that a thing has tendencies which it has not, or that it has not tendencies which it has. Or a tendency about which we make judgments may turn out to be a very different kind of tendency from what we thought it to be.

Tendencies, then, are objective facts about things ; and the sum of the tendencies of an existent may be said to constitute the nature of that existent. Or perhaps we should rather say that the tendencies of an existent are aspects of, or expressions of, its nature, which is itself unique, and not itself a sum of tendencies.

What kind of being can a tendency have while it is not active ? Evidently its being is in some sense merely potential. A thing which tends to behave in a certain way, and is not so behaving, is a thing which *would* so behave were it not prevented. In the case of a stone supported on a table there may be said to be an inhibited tendency to fall ; and this tendency may be said to express itself indirectly in changes in the structure of the stone and the table. But these changes do not themselves constitute the tendency to fall ; they are merely a result of it. We need not here discuss the distinction in the physical sphere between kinetic and potential energy, beyond noting that the potential energy of a body is perhaps a hidden form of kinetic energy, which *might* issue in another, observable, form of kinetic energy were there not some resistant factor. Though the hidden kinetic energy does not itself *constitute* the tendency to issue

overtly in another form, we may say that a tendency to issue overtly does *inhere in* the hidden kinetic energy. In fact it *would* issue if it were not prevented.

Perhaps, then, there is, after all, something more in the concept of 'tendency' than in the concept of merely descriptive law. To say that a thing would do so and so, if it were not prevented, does very often imply that while it is prevented it is actively *tending*, thrusting, straining, toward the 'repressed' activity. There is, indeed, no implication of conscious striving. But clearly in practice we often mean by tendency something which, though not necessarily conscious, is conceived at least in terms of the experience of physical resistance to our volition. To say that a thing tends to do so and so, then, is to mean, not merely that certain events would occur, were it not for certain other events, but further that the thing is a dynamic thing, that its nature is to act freely in this way, and that while it is prevented it is in a state of tension.

Possibly physical science ought to avoid this obviously anthropomorphic concept of effort, and should mean by a tendency only a descriptive law. For physical tendencies are known only through their issue in overt activity of some sort; so that a tendency is simply an account of the possibility of action. But in psychology, and therefore in biology, which should not fear the help of psychology in this respect, we should frankly admit that the concept of tendency does involve tension. We should mean by a tendency a particular factor in the active nature of a thing, in virtue of which its behaviour is such as to be capable of generalization under a certain law; and in virtue of which, when such behaviour is impossible, the thing remains in a state of tension, directed, though vainly, toward such behaviour.

Let us, however, for the moment leave this matter and briefly consider the relation between tendency and environment. There are two ways of using the word 'tendency'. Either we may say (*a*) that an isolated stone has inherently a tendency to fall, or we may say (*b*) that, while an isolated stone has in itself alone no tendency to fall, 'a stone near

a planet' has such a tendency; or, better, that in the complex 'stone-near-planet' there arises a tendency for the two members to approach each other. If we adopt the first sense we fall into difficulties. For, applying the principle consistently, we must say that an isolated stone has tendencies to behave in every manner of which a stone is capable in all conceivable situations. Thus it has a tendency 'to choke a man who attempts to swallow it', and a tendency 'to disappoint a man who mistakes it for a mushroom'. But these complicated activities are not in any important sense the outcome of special tendencies in isolated stones. They are the outcome of total situations composed of a stone and a man in a certain mood. Every situation, every complex of existents, gives rise to some activity or other, or issues in a new kind of situation. But if the original situation is further complicated by some conflicting factor, the activity will be different. Yet the original situation may be said to have a tendency to act in the manner in which it *would* act in isolation. On the other hand, it cannot reasonably be said to have a tendency to act in manners in which it cannot act without the co-operation of an additional factor. We may significantly use the word 'capacity' to describe those situations in which, though the thing (whatever it be) has no intrinsic tendency to act in a certain manner, it would so act with the co-operation of certain other factors. Thus, though stones do not tend to choke men, they have the capacity of choking men when they interact in a certain manner with the human body.

The isolated stone, then, has no inhibited or repressed tendency to choke a man or to fall. But in the complex 'stone-near-planet' there is a tendency for the two members to approach, even when the tendency is resisted by an intervening table. On the other hand a bomb which is already timed to explode may be said to have a tendency to explode, even though it should be the only thing in the universe. If it were in the centre of the earth and therefore under immense pressure, it would still have a tendency to explode, but a tendency repressed by another

factor. But we should not say that a bomb has, in its own nature, a tendency to perform acts more complicated than simple explosion. It has, for instance, no tendency to kill a certain despot, or change the course of history, though, indeed, it has the *capacity* of doing so in co-operation with a certain kind of environment. We can allow only that a thing has tendencies toward those activities which it can perform of its own nature, without the co-operation of an environment.

(B) BIOLOGICAL TENDENCIES

Unfortunately, however, common usage is opposed to this principle, and there is good reason in its favour. We say that a bird has a tendency to build a nest, and that a man has in his own nature a tendency to eat. Clearly both these activities involve an environment, though in somewhat different manners. In general when we say that an organism has a tendency to behave in a certain manner, we mean that it responds to a certain kind of stimulus (external or internal to the organism) with a certain kind of activity which is possible only in a certain kind of environment. Sex tendencies involve for their normal functioning a partner, and social tendencies involve society. This usage certainly conflicts with our conclusions about the tendencies of the isolated stone. Should we insist that these so-called tendencies of organisms are in truth only capacities? Or is there something peculiar to the nature of organisms which justifies us in supposing that they themselves have tendencies whose functioning *demands* an environment?

There surely is good reason for saying that an organism's own nature involves an environment while a stone's does not.[1] Our observation of organisms suggests that their

[1] Even if we accept Prof. Whitehead's theory according to which every kind of physical object involves an environment, since it *is* a certain qualification of its environment, this distinction between organisms and non-teleological objects remains true. For while it is indifferent to the non-teleological object whether its qualification of the environment is of one kind or another, the nature of the teleological organism is to be expressed only in a certain very specific kind of qualification of its environment.

behaviour is regulated in relation to certain ends, such as the preservation and perpetuation of the race. For each species there seems to be a certain normal way of life which involves a certain normal environment. In order to make this point clear let us briefly consider the case of sexual perversion in pigeons.[1] Males kept in isolation from females have shown homosexual behaviour; and an individual kept in complete solitude has satisfied its sexual impulses on the human hand. In what sense can we say that pigeons have a 'tendency' toward normal sexual intercourse and that the abnormal behaviours are 'perversions'? If we apply to the pigeon the same principles as we applied to the stone, we must deny that the pigeon itself has any sex tendencies, normal or abnormal. Tendencies emerge from the conjunction of the pigeon and an environment. One kind of environment creates one tendency, and others create other tendencies. Thus normal and abnormal behaviour are set on an equal footing.

But if we take into account all the facts of the behaviour of pigeons, and of organisms in general, we cannot but suspect that, in some important sense, the normal behaviour is not only average, but 'natural', and that the abnormal behaviour is 'unnatural'. We should justify this suspicion by saying that teleological explanations are irresistibly suggested by the behaviour of organisms, and that, in the case of the pigeon, the normal sexual behaviour serves the biological end of procreation, while the perversions serve no end at all. Thus it seems that the pigeon is such that *it*, of its own intrinsic nature, tends to behave in the normal sexual manner, although it cannot so behave without an appropriate environment. Its body, considered as a teleologically active substance, *needs*, for the fulfilment of its own intrinsic nature, a certain kind of environment.

Thus the organism's capacity to reproduce its kind is, after all, not on the same footing as the stone's capacity to choke a man or disappoint him, although in both cases

[1] Tridon, *Psycho-analysis and Behaviour*, Chapter V.

an environment is necessary for the fulfilment of the capacity. The difference between the two cases lies in the fact that, while no teleological concept is implied in the behaviour of the stone, the behaviour of the organism cannot be even described coherently without teleological concepts. An artificial self-regulating machine, similarly, such as an automatically balancing aeroplane, cannot be coherently described without teleological concepts. In each case there is a complicated form and complicated functioning which is regulated in relation to an end, and is quite incomprehensible if the end is left out of account. Consequently, we are justified in saying that both organism and artificial machine do intrinsically 'tend' to fulfil certain ends, even though they cannot function without an appropriate environment.

Thus with regard to machines, we must alter our conclusion about the isolated bomb. For, since it would never have been what it is, had not a destructive purpose taken part in its making, clearly there is a sense in which, even in isolation it does 'tend' to destroy life, even if we are not justified in attributing to it a more specific tendency to kill the Czar of Russia or the British Prime Minister. Its nature is definitely regulated in relation to the end of destroying life.

We do not thus imply that, in the case of the machine, there is some mysterious 'entelechy' which, interrupting the mechanical behaviour of the parts, directs the whole to a teleological end. We merely observe that the machine, in functioning mechanically, functions also teleologically. Its mechanical parts are *so disposed* as to function teleologically. Similarly with the organism, in asserting it to have teleological tendencies we do no more than record an observable fact.

It may be that the teleological tendencies of organisms simply arise from a certain configuration of entities which, in other configurations, are manifested only as physical. It may be that, as Dr. Broad puts it, while artificial machines are externally teleological, organisms are in fact (as they certainly appear) internally teleological. Certainly

it is very important to insist that while the teleological tendency of the machine is an expression of something more than its own physical nature, and this 'more' originates beyond the geometrical confines of the machine itself, in the case of organisms on the other hand the teleology certainly appears to be internal. Anyhow, even if we should, with Rignano, derive all biological tendencies from the tendency of the organism to maintain itself in physiological equilibrium, it remains true that, however they are produced, biological tendencies *are*, as a matter of fact, teleological, whether externally or internally.[1]

Here, however, an important point arises. In the previous chapter we distinguished between physical and teleological activities, by pointing out that, while teleological activity observably involves reference to an end, physical activity does not. Teleological activity, we said, cannot be accounted for simply by reference to the preceding physical state; physical mechanical activity can. It is only because of this reference to a more or less remote future that teleological activity is opposed to physical mechanical activity. The biologist inevitably describes the bird's straw-gathering and weaving in relation to the end of building a nest, and this in turn in relation to the end of parenthood. Now in some teleological activity the end is more remote and in some less. When great engineering or building projects are undertaken, the end is very remote, and a vast amount of intervening behaviour is explained with reference to this end. But in a sneeze the end is almost immediate. Explanation in terms of the immediately preceding state is more plausible in the latter case than in the former. The end is more obviously regulative in the former than in the latter. But if our theory of teleological activity is correct, there *is* a regulative end in each case, though in one case the activity obviously varies from time to time according to the exigencies of the situation, while in the other it is stereotyped. In fact, though up to a point it is mechanized, it is mechanized in service of a certain biological end.

[1] Cf. E. Rignano, *The Psychology of Reasoning*, Chapter I.

Physical activity is even more stereotyped, and consequently appears even less obviously teleological. But let us remind ourselves that it is as easy to describe the physical activity of electrons and protons, and of atoms, in terms of the immediately succeeding state, or 'end', as in terms of the immediately preceding state or 'cause'. It is no more significant to say that the movement of an electron results from a mechanical impulsion than to say that in a given state it acts teleologically with reference to an immediate end. The distinction between teleological and mechanical activity is thus not absolute. All physical laws might be stated as low-grade teleological laws of the behaviour of very simple entities.

This mere statement of the facts, however, in which gross physical activity is stated in terms of 'microscopic' teleological activity, is not to be confused with the *theory* according to which the whole physical activity of the universe is the activity of a vast teleological machine whose end is so remote and 'macroscopic' as to be wholly beyond our detection.

(c) REDUCIBLE AND EMERGENT TENDENCIES

Tendencies may be classified as reducible and emergent.[1] In every subject-matter of study we must discover the laws of the behaviour of the elements by observation of the elements themselves in relation. Having thus induced the principles which hold good in all observable cases, we may be able to deduce the behaviour of other, unobserved, systems. Thus by observation of mechanical systems we induce mechanical laws, and can predict the behaviour of other mechanical systems. Mechanical tendencies, then, are tendencies of elements within a mechanical system. And the behaviour of any such system can be deduced from observation of the behaviour of the same kinds of parts in other mechanical relations.

But there are wholes of which it is not possible, even in

[1] I continue to follow approximately the account of emergence given by Dr. Broad in *The Mind and its Place in Nature*, p. 59 *et seq.*

theory, to describe events simply in mechanical terms. We have accepted the view that in a living organism vital behaviour cannot even in theory be completely reduced to the purely mechanical tendencies of its atoms. It is for instance impossible in practice to describe the behaviour of organisms without using the principle of teleology ; and this cannot have a place in pure mechanics. For though the laws of mechanics and of chemistry may be *used* by a purposeful being for the construction of a teleological system, they cannot themselves fully account for genuinely teleological behaviour, whether in an organism or in an artificial machine. This remains true even if the behaviour of electrons and protons be conceived as teleological behaviour toward an immediately succeeding end. For such ' microscopic ' teleological behaviour obviously has no relation to the relatively ' macroscopic ' ends of biological organisms.

It is, of course, possible that all the apparently teleological behaviour of living things could, if we knew more, be fully described in terms of the mechanistic physical sciences. Bearing in mind the vast periods of geological time, we should hesitate to deny the possibility that, by a unique but fortuitous concurrence of physical units, there may have been produced a system which, through purely chemical activity, necessarily maintained itself in equilibrium, and even proliferated into further systems. Such a system would be a sufficient starting point for biology ; and natural selection might conceivably account for the whole of subsequent evolution. But though such an explanation is not wholly improbable, and may turn out to be the true one, to-day it is certainly no more plausible than the explanation in terms of genuine teleology. And though one extremely important factor in evolution has certainly been the mechanical impact of the environment on living things, a dispassionate study of biology does to-day strongly suggest that the organic itself, upon which the environment operates, is irreducibly teleological. In view of the countless delicate adaptations of life, and more particularly in view of the fact that the fundamental

energy transformation of life seems very different from anything that normally occurs in the inorganic, the faith in a rigid mechanism which cannot be demonstrated appears farcical.

Moreover, the validity of teleological activity in nature seems to be confirmed by the fact that in our own consciousness genuine teleology does occur (namely, as conscious striving), together with the fact that conscious striving presupposes some teleological activity independent of consciousness—if the hormic principle is true. Thus the fact that we consciously seek food and shun danger shows that teleology is a genuine factor in our nature, and the hormic principle suggests that this teleological factor is more fundamental than consciousness.

I shall, then, assume that organisms are in part irreducibly teleological, and further that some of their teleological processes give rise to conscious conations, sometimes as ' blind ' impulse, sometimes as explicit desire.

In certain kinds of material systems, then, there ' emerge behaviour-tendencies which are not exhibited by the same kinds of parts when they occur in other relations. These tendencies are, in fact, tendencies of wholes, and not tendencies of parts in conflict.

There is, of course, no need to deny that the emergent tendency of the whole is *determined* by the nature of the parts in the special relation which constitutes the whole. It is merely denied that the tendencies of the whole can be logically *deduced from* the nature of the parts in isolation.

There is no need to ask here what tendencies are, as a matter of fact, strictly and logically emergent in the nature of wholes and what are theoretically reducible, although we in our ignorance cannot reduce them. Here I will only point out a consequence of this difference in the nature of tendencies. In the case of reducible tendencies the maximum possible fulfilment is the fulfilment of all the tendencies of the parts in isolation. But emergent tendencies, on the other hand, demand new kinds of fulfilment not demanded by the isolated nature of the parts. Thus in a whole in which there are both reducible

and emergent tendencies there is in principle a possibility of greater fulfilment than in a whole in which the same reducible tendencies occur without any emergent tendencies.

This conclusion, however, needs qualification. It is possible that the necessary condition for the emergence of emergent tendencies in a system of a given kind might be a state of tension between the parts, such that few, if any, of the isolated tendencies were fulfilled. It is, in fact, possible that the emergent tendencies of the whole might emerge only from the conflict and tension of the parts. We should not, then, be able to say that in such a whole the emergence of tendencies made possible a greater amount of fulfilment, for there would be no means of balancing the fulfilment of emergent tendencies against the resistance of the tendencies of the parts. The tendencies of the whole and those of the parts would be incommensurable.

On the other hand, we should be justified in saying that, in this imaginary case, that which is fulfilled is something more complex than that which is not fulfilled; for the emergent tendencies occur only in the systematic whole, while the tendencies of the parts are characteristics of simpler entities.

Moreover, there is perhaps a sense in which the emergent fulfilment is, after all, a greater fulfilment of the parts themselves than would be any fulfilment of their isolated tendencies. For though the emergent tendencies cannot be reduced to a complex of the tendencies of the parts in isolation, they are determined by the nature of the parts themselves, united in the relation which constitutes them a whole. By coming together to form the whole, the parts have, so to speak, assumed a new nature, namely, the nature of the whole. For the whole is not something distinct from its parts; it is simply the parts themselves in relation. Consequently, the tendencies emergent in the whole are, in an important sense, tendencies of the parts, though not of the parts in isolation. Thus the emergent fulfilment of any part in the whole is the fulfilment of a more complex entity than the fulfilment of the same part

in isolation could possibly be. Having assumed a more complex nature, *it* attains a more complex fulfilment.

The theory of emergence may be expressed in either of two ways. We may suppose, on the one hand, that the special relation which constitutes the whole 'evokes' properties of the parts which are 'latent' and unobservable in the isolated element. Some, indeed, would claim that such an account denies the essential idea of emergence; but this is a mistake, for the 'evoked' property could not, even in theory, be discovered from knowledge of the parts in isolation. On the other hand, we may suppose that the emergent characters and tendencies simply come into being with the constitution of the whole. These two accounts are no more than alternative expressions of a single concept. In the former view the fulfilment of the emergent tendencies is seen obviously as an added fulfilment of the parts. In the latter view the emergent fulfilment is at least seen as the fulfilment of a more complex entity than the sum of the parts unsystematized. But further, even on this view, it is the *parts themselves* that have assumed the new nature in the special relation; and it is the parts themselves that are fulfilled. Each of them has, in a sense, assumed the nature of the whole, and is fulfilled in the fulfilment of the whole.

Thus even in our imaginary case in which the emergent tendencies can only emerge from a conflict of the isolated tendencies of the parts, it seems true that there is a greater fulfilment than would be possible without the emergence.

(D) ORGANISMS AND SOCIETIES

As a matter of fact, when we consider one striking example of a whole in which there are emergent tendencies, namely, an organism, we find that, though there is of course much tension between the parts, and consequently repression of low order tendencies, there is also much low order free activity. Certainly in the case of an organism we are justified in saying that there is, in all, a far greater fulfilment than would be possible in (let us say) the same

multitude of molecules adrift and disorganized. For in an organism, whatever tensions there be, the ground which makes possible the emergence of physiological and biological tendencies is the continual *release* of 'pent-up' physical energy through the combustion of food. Thus in an organism it is essential that there should be fulfilment even on the lowest plane; while on the higher planes there are many kinds of new and very complex fulfilments.

But the case of organisms is complicated in another way. Organisms themselves are often units which combine into wholes wherein new characters and tendencies emerge. And in the case of social individuals it is clear that even the tendencies innately inherent in the isolated individual are tendencies which have in past generations emerged from social wholes. The social individual cannot fulfil his own private nature apart from society. Similarly within the economy of the individual's own body, an organ that were to be excised from the rest of the body could not fulfil its own private nature in isolation from the body. For both the organ and the social individual himself have a teleological nature which necessitates, for its fulfilment, a certain environment. It might be said that, after all, then, the tendencies of these wholes *are* reducible to the tendencies of their parts, that, for instance, the nature of society is deducible from the nature of social individuals. And this is true in a sense; but it is only half the truth. It is true that society is nothing but the interaction of its members, and that the body is nothing but the interaction of its organs; but the social tendencies of individuals are themselves the outcome of the social relationships which have made individuals to be such as they are; and similarly with the organs and the body. In fact, in certain biological wholes some of the tendencies of the parts themselves are essentially tendencies of *members in a whole.* And these tendencies are preserved in the nature of the individual even when the individual is isolated from the whole.

Now the nature of a thing may express itself more fully or less fully. Even a bomb which explodes in a desert

expresses its nature (in a certain sense) less fully than one which explodes in a crowd. For the purpose of destruction has partly determined its nature. We must not say that a thunder-cloud which discharges its electricity harmlessly expresses its nature less fully than one which works destruction; for there is no reason to suppose the cloud to be a teleological machine whose end is the destruction of life. But though this distinction between the nature of the bomb and the nature of the thunder-cloud is important, it is in strictness only metaphorically true that the bomb expresses *its own* nature more fully in destruction. Actually what it expresses is the nature of its maker. But in the case of things which are *internally* teleological it is obviously true in all strictness that they express their own nature in teleological activity. Thus of a child we are justified in saying that it tends to grow up into an intelligent adult, and even into a good citizen. With the bomb metaphorically, and with the child literally, a character of the environment is needed to call forth the full nature of these existents. This is not to say that in the unexploded bomb there was an unexploding explosiveness, nor in the harmlessly exploding bomb an undestroying destructiveness, nor in the child an immature maturity. It means only that the nature of each of these existents is such that it is unintelligible save in relation to certain ends. The more exact attainment of these ends is therefore a fuller expression of, or fulfilment of, the nature and tendencies of the existent. The child whose mental growth is arrested is therefore strictly less fulfilled than one who reaches intellectual maturity.

The question as to greater and less fulfilment of tendencies is certainly obscure. It is clear, perhaps, that in relation to a single tendency there may be greater and less fulfilment. The organic tendency, for instance, which is the objective source of hunger, may be completely or only partially fulfilled. In other words the physiological equilibrium which is normal to the organism may be fully or only partially restored by a certain instance of nutritive activity.

But by what right can we compare the fulfilments of different tendencies of different existents? Is there any sense in asking whether there is greater fulfilment in the bursting of a bomb or in the gravitational approach of a stone to the earth? Such purely physical fulfilments can perhaps be compared in relation to the amount of physical energy released in each case. But, indeed, the concept of the conservation of energy itself *assumes* the equivalence of certain quantities of different 'manifestations' of energy.

With organisms, however, the situation is different. Within a single organism we must compare the fulfilment of different tendencies always with reference to the fulfilment of the organism as a whole. For these tendencies are observed to be teleological, and to have as their end the maintenance of the organism. But how are we to compare the fulfilment of the tendencies of different organisms? Clearly if both are intrinsically social and members of one society (which is a whole emergent in its members), we may compare them with reference to the fulfilment of this emergent whole. For we have agreed that the greatest possible fulfilment even of the individual itself is fulfilment through an emergent whole of individuals. But if the individuals to be compared are isolated, we cannot compare them thus. We may, however, regard them as *potentially* social, and compare them in respect of the part which each *might* play in an emergent social whole. And having decided which was capable of the greater social fulfilment, we might conclude that even the private fulfilment of this individual was in a sense a greater fulfilment than that of the other, since it would be the fulfilment of a potentially greater individual. This problem will concern us in more detail when we come to discuss comparative evaluation.

CHAPTER VIII

TENDENCY IN PSYCHOLOGY

(A) BODILY AND PERSONAL NEEDS

HITHERTO we have considered tendency only in the physical and the biological spheres. It is now time to deal with tendency in psychology. Some organisms at least are capable of psychical activity, of diverse modes of cognition, conation, and affection. The field upon which this psychical activity operates consists of the organism itself (objectively regarded) and the external environment. Psychology deals with the diverse modes of this psychical activity, and the relation of subjective psychical activity to the objective mental content. In the higher organisms, mental content includes cognized tendencies to psychical activity. More precisely, though many of the activities of the higher organisms have both a bodily and a mental aspect, sometimes the one aspect and sometimes the other is more important, so that for practical purposes we may distinguish between bodily and mental activities. The problem of the status of objective psychical (or mental) tendency begins now to be urgent, and I shall deal with it in the course of this chapter.

We may distinguish, then, between the needs of the organism as a physical or biological entity and the needs of the 'person'. The needs which appear within the individual's mental content may be classified into those which arise from the nature of his body as a system of physical organs demanding certain conditions for their free activity, and on the other hand those which entail for their existence not only physical but also psychical function. Of purely bodily needs we may distinguish the general need of the body as a whole and the special needs of particular organs. Thus the general need of the body

to maintain itself in physiological equilibrium is sometimes in conflict with individual organs. For these, even if in the course of evolution they were called into being as means to fulfil the need of a unified body, have yet, in each individual, needs of their own. Their healthy functioning is necessary for the general need; but they are distinct entities with tendencies of their own. Thus in cancer certain cells, divorced from central control, regress toward the embryonic form and multiply, at the expense of the rest of the body. Similarly when the higher nerve centres are put out of action by lesion or disease, the lower, freed from inhibition by the higher, perform more readily and more vigorously those actions which depend only on their own constitution.[1]

Those needs, then, which entail not only bodily activity, but also psychical activity, may be called needs of the 'person'. These are in a sense secondary needs of the 'psycho-physical' organism, since, like the others, they are grounded in the nature of the organism, but in its psychical, not merely in its physical, activity. They emerge from the cognitive, affective, and conative activity in its operation on the primary physiological nature of the organism in its environment. Mostly they entail cognition of the distinction between the individual and his social environment; but this social factor is not essential to the existence of personal needs. It is indeed through this social distinction that we become aware of ourselves, and come to need respect, affection, 'understanding', in our social intercourse. But apart from this consciousness of self in society, we need also mental activity for its own sake. We need to exercise our cognitive, affective, and conative power, just as we need to exercise our muscles. Hence, among the personal needs must be included the impulse to know for the sake of knowing, and to create imaginatively, and the impulse to seek emotional experience for its own sake, and the impulse to undertake skilled activity for its own sake.

Thus from the psychical capacity itself, and from the

[1] Cf. H. Piéron, *Thought and the Brain*, p. 10.

cognition of the relation of the individual to society, emerges a great system of needs which cannot be derived simply from physiological needs, yet are needs of the individual *as* individual, not needs of society cognized by the individual.

It is important to note that these needs of the person, no less than the bodily needs, are prior to the value judgments which are made in respect of them. Those personal needs which have a social aspect arise out of the cognized objective relations of the individual to society; those which have no social aspect arise out of the tendency to psychical activity. And this psychical tendency, whatever its status, is objective to any value-judgment about it. Some hold that the psychical behaviour of organisms is evidence that, besides the merely physical structure, there is also an unconscious mental structure, or self, which behaves psychically. According to this view the psychical tendencies are tendencies, not of the body, but of the self, which is conceived as a system of innate and acquired 'dispositions'. On the other hand, it is possible to hold that the psychical tendencies are tendencies of a substance neither simply physical nor simply psychical, but manifested in physical activity and in psychical activity. This substance we may provisionally call the psycho-physical organism. On this view organisms which attain a certain complexity of physical arrangement are substances in which new characters and tendencies emerge, namely, tendencies toward psychical activity. There is thus no distinct mental structure which alone behaves mentally. There is merely a new way of behaving on the part of a whole composed of the original kinds of 'physical' entities in a new order. These 'physical' entities in a certain organization together assume a new psychical nature.

Or perhaps we should put the matter somewhat differently, by saying that the real substance of the universe *manifests* itself to us primarily as physical appearance, i.e. physical activity; but that it sometimes achieves, along with certain very complex physical configurations or

manifestations, another kind of activity, namely, mental activity. Such a foundation is obviously very imperfect. But full discussion of the body-mind relation is not possible here. The only point that concerns us is that the physical body is itself a system of activities and tendencies, and the mind is a system of other kinds of activities and tendencies; and that, just as what acts in the former case is not itself physical movement, so what acts in the latter case is not itself psychical process.

(B) CONATION OF PSYCHICAL ACTIVITIES

We are now in a position to face the problem of objective psychical tendency, or more precisely, objective tendency to subjective activity. But in order to do this adequately we must also discuss a more general matter which has not hitherto been squarely faced. Granted that conscious conation does involve unconscious teleological tendency, does the occurrence of conation involve also *cognition* of the tendency, as I have suggested, or does it emerge directly from the unconscious as conation?

According to our theory conation entails cognition of an objective tendency or activity. But surely, it may be said, this supposed objective tendency is often itself conative. What, for instance, is the objective tendency the cognition of which is the source of the desire to achieve success in business or politics? And in artistic activity what kind of tendencies are conated? In the case of sneezing and other bodily actions the theory of the cognitional sources of conation may seem plausible; for, *finding* ourselves sneezing, we do seem *therefore* to desire to sneeze. But in the case of mental activity what precisely is it that we cognize, and is the objective source of our desire? To say that even in these cases conation presupposes cognition of an objective *mental* activity or tendency is to say that a *subjective* act of conation presupposes an *objective* act of conation! Surely this is ridiculous. We do not first cognize a tendency to speculate on the Stock Exchange *and then* desire to do so. The

desire springs directly into consciousness from sources not open to introspection.

Moreover, the whole trend of modern psychology, we may be told, suggests that to put cognition before conation is to put the cart before the horse. Cognition itself is consequent on conation. *Because* we conate certain activities, we cognize the environment in so far as it is related to those activities; and we cognize it wholly in terms of those activities. Only so far as the environment favours or thwarts conation have we cognition of it at all, and what we cognize of it is not *it*, but only its relation to our activities.

Let us consider this last objection first, namely, that cognition itself is a product of conation. It may be admitted that cognition is in some sense the product of teleological *activity* on the part of an organism in an environment. But it does not presuppose *conscious conation*. And it will be remembered that I have throughout meant by conation a conscious activity. Even below the level of desire, even when the goal is not foreseen, conation is an activity that is psychical. It is at the very least a conscious facilitation of some activity which, without this psychical act, would not get done. It is indeed a conscious 'espousal' of some activity which is, without conation, a mere tendency. We may well suppose that cognition begins as a syncretistic awareness of the activity of organism and environment, and develops as a progressively detailed act of distinguishing between the contributions of each of these factors. We may in fact recognize that cognition is always relative to the activity of organisms, that it is essentially an apprehension of the external in relation to the needs of, and from the point of view of, some teleologically active knower, (though of course that 'point' of view may theoretically be so widened as to become the 'point of view' of the universe). But while recognizing this dependence of cognition itself on teleological activity, we must also insist that the actual conative act, being mental, entails cognition, either primitive syncretistic cognition of organism and environment

as a dynamic whole, or developed analytic cognition of a dynamic organism at grips with its environment.

Those who claim that conation is the direct expression of unconscious teleological tendency have omitted to introspect conation clearly. Having made a very important discovery, namely, that conation involves unconscious teleological tendency, they have failed to notice that the tendency must be cognized in order to give rise to the conation of it. Precisely in so far as the cognition is obscure or erroneous, the conation is an inadequate expression of the tendency. In morbid cases in which, through repression, true cognition of the tendency is impossible, the conation may be fantastically beside the mark.

Modern psychologists have done well to point out that introspection is very fallible. But they indulge in an extravagant dislike of introspection, and have consequently failed to do full justice to their own hormic theory. So long as the unconscious teleological activity is recognized as the starting-point of the whole process, the hormic theory is not weakened but strengthened by an admission of the part played by cognition. In my experience, at any rate, it seems clear that every kind of conation, that really is a psychical act of conation, has a cognitive side, without which it were inconceivable. To be hungry involves cognizing the organism as in a certain state of incipient or unfulfilled activity, namely, as tending to eat. To desire to have a swim involves cognizing the organism as ' tuned up ' for a swim. In each case the cognition is vague ; but in each case the agent knows, through past experience, what activity would complete the vaguely cognized incipient activity. And in these cases the conation would not occur without cognition of the organic tendency. All that could occur would be a blind restlessness, an impulse to ' do something or other, I don't know what '. And this impulse would be derived from a still more vague cognition of a general strain or incipient activity in the organism. Conation which does not amount to explicit desire is always either of this type, or else it is a mere acquiescence in an activity which gets

itself done independently of conscious facilitation. Such, we may suppose, is the baby's first sneeze.

The view of conation which is favoured to-day is at first sight very different from the above ; but it is not, I think, essentially opposed to it. No doubt most psychologists would insist that, for instance, instinctive conations are direct responses to specific stimuli, and that they do not presuppose cognition of the significance of the stimulus for the organism. This is certainly true. Professor Field points out that we do not first learn that things are dangerous, and then fear them.[1] On the contrary 'we are frightened before we know why, and before we know anything definite about the thing that frightens us except that it is frightening'. When the young blackbird first scurries from a cat it might say, 'I am frightened, and therefore I know that there are dangerous creatures in the world.' The emotion of fear is much more primitive than the knowledge of the dangerousness of any particular thing.

Such contentions are obviously true, but they may easily lead to error. If we are to see clearly the part played by cognition in conation we must analyse the emotional situation more fully. Let us take the normal fear reaction as typical. An external situation is cognized, and stimulates response. This response may be described as physiological preparation for flight, and a dynamic condition of the organism which constitutes the tendency to fly, or the state of incipient flight. This internal condition is also cognized. And even in objectless affect, though there is no cognition of an external situation as dangerous, there is, none the less, cognition of the state of the organism as tuned up for flight. In fact the emotion of fear would seem to be at least in part constituted by this cognition of an organic resonance and a state of incipient flight.

It is true, then, that the state of incipient flight does *not* involve a judgment of dangerousness. But on the other hand every kind of affect, every conscious emotional

[1] G. C. Field, 'Some Modern Proofs of the Existence of God,' *Journal of Philosophical Studies*, July 1928.

attitude, *does* involve cognition of the organism as either set for a certain kind of behaviour, or at least in a general state of tension. It involves also, of course, at least an incipient conative espousal of that behaviour, or of the obscurely cognized and undirected activity.

Having defended the view that conation involves cognition, we may now deal with the other criticism, namely, that the tendency which is presupposed in conation is itself often essentially conative, and that therefore we are committed to an endless regress. In order to meet this criticism we must analyse the conative situation somewhat more precisely. Let us take the case of a man who desires to accomplish some complex psychical activity such as standing for Parliament, solving a scientific problem, or producing a work of creative art such as a picture. It is, at any rate, clear that such desires do presuppose cognition of an objective situation having certain definite potentialities. These undeniably objective sources are presumably, for the politician the requirements of his party and his constituency in relation to his own political qualifications, for the scientist the conflicting theoretical potentialities of the material which he is studying, and for the artist the conflicting aesthetic potentialities of the significant colours and forms at his disposal. In each case, then, the desire is at least a desire to fulfil certain potentialities objective to the desire itself, and apart from these objective factors the desire could not exist at all. In each case it is, at least in part, *because* he cognizes these unfulfilled potentialities that he is moved to the particular desire.

But of course this is no solution of our problem. It is not said to be cognition of mere *possibilities*, as such, that gives rise to conation, but cognition, true or false, of some activity or tendency. The particular desires that we are discussing would usually be accounted for in terms of certain sentiments, and by many psychologists would be ultimately derived from certain instincts. These would be said to be the dynamic sources of the desire. Thus perhaps each of the three cases is in part an expression of

the self-regarding sentiment, and in part an expression of, respectively, sentiments for politics, science, and art. And each of these sentiments would be derived in some special and complex manner from such sources as instincts of self-assertion, sex, parenthood, curiosity, and so on. Now of course it is obvious that the individual does not first cognize a sentiment or a blend of instincts and then desire its fulfilment in relation to the particular objective situation. If this were the case, none but psychologists would ever desire anything! Sentiments and instincts do not enter into practical consciousness at all.

Yet it is very likely that in each of the three desires under discussion one factor is in some sense a more general 'disposition toward self-fulfilment', or self-expression, or the free activity of that which has been called the psychophysical organism. In each case also no doubt various special dispositions play a part; but let us concentrate for the moment on the self-regarding disposition. By this 'disposition' is meant that in some sense there is something in the individual's make-up in virtue of which, when he thinks of himself as one person among others, he desires, or tends to desire, the fulfilment of the activities or potencies of that one person rather than others. In fact one necessary source of the explicit desire for self-fulfilment is cognition of oneself as an active substance capable of fulfilment. Without self-consciousness there cannot be desire for self-fulfilment. But the crux of our problem lies in the fact that, to move to desire, this cognition must apparently have as its object, not merely the self as *capable* of these activities, but the self as in some sense actively *tending* to these activities, actively tending, for instance, to assert itself. In fact what is cognized must be shown to be no mere capacity but a tendency. But this cognized tendency, let us note, is not strictly a tendency to *desire* or *will* self-assertion, but a tendency to *behave* in self-assertive manners.

We may state our problem clearly in terms of the words 'desire' and 'need'. Is it true, as I have maintained, that desire, even for complex psychical activity, presupposes

cognition of need; or are we forced after all to admit that a need for such activity is itself but a generalization of certain particular conative activities, and that such a need thus presupposes desire? Are desires *essentially* based on true or false judgments of objective needs, or are needs sometimes mere generalizations about our desires? Or, again, do we in such desire for psychical activities first cognize ourselves as acting or tending to act in a certain manner, and *therefore* espouse the free activity; or is cognition of the tendency derived from the conation itself?

I have contended that in the conation of bodily activities, whether the conation be unforeseeing or be explicit desire, cognition of an objective activity is essential. And this formula I believe to be true of all conation, even when the activity which is conated is itself mental. In the case of the will to assert oneself in business or politics what is cognized is, in the first place, a social objective situation and, in the second place, oneself as a substance capable of certain kinds of activity (physical and mental), and actively tending to self-maintenance. Thus in fully self-conscious self-regarding behaviour it is because the individual cognizes himself as in general tending to self-maintenance, that he conates self-maintenance. And in 'self-regarding' behaviour of a less explicitly self-conscious kind, or of an entirely unself-conscious kind, what is cognized is some behaviour-impulse which *could* be classified as 'self-regarding' or 'self-assertive'. But this impulse which is cognized is not a 'tendency to desire'; it is a need. A certain possible act is cognized as a free act, or fulfilling act; and therefore it is conated. *It is in fact cognized as demanded for the immediate expression of one's nature.* Without conation it will not occur; but it is required, not because of the nature of conation, but because of the nature of that which is cognized.

Consider the case of one whose curiosity is aroused by some intellectual puzzle. Here we have an instance of a pure impulse toward intellection, which some would derive from an 'instinct of curiosity'. The environment presents the man with an unsolved problem, and this situation is

a stimulus to intellection. It would be generally admitted that the conscious impulse or conative act of tackling the problem is an act which, in some sense, springs from, or is done by, a pre-existent structure, whether mental or physical or both or neither. This structure is not itself conscious process, though it performs acts of consciousness. Now my contention is that conation involves, not indeed cognition of an instinct or a sentiment, or of any element of an inferred unconscious mental structure, but cognition of the 'pressure' (so to speak) of the structure of the organism itself in a certain direction, or *toward a certain activity*. Thus in order to conate intellection a man must in some sense cognize a movement of his 'unconscious nature' toward that activity; but 'his unconscious nature' is simply his nature as an active organism. Or more precisely, he must cognize the activity of intellection as expressive of his nature at the moment, or as an act necessary for the free functioning of a part of his objective self at the moment, namely, that part which consists of his own organism. It must be reiterated that conation is essentially a conscious activity. And in order to act consciously, the subject must in some sense cognize, not necessarily an end to be reached, nor even an overt activity in progress, but at the very least a tendency of his own objective nature, or of some other cognized object.

The phrase 'his own objective nature' thus covers Dr. Drever's system of innate dispositions, and whatever is true in the Freudian concept of 'the unconscious'. But it must be taken to mean, not an unconscious mental structure, but an organic potentiality of physical and mental activities. What is cognized, then, is simply the organism as tending toward certain activities. Some of these activities cannot be performed without conations, which themselves entail cognition of tendency. By virtue of something in his unconscious nature, then, a man tends to act both in the primary biological manners and also in very diverse acquired manners.

To return for the moment to self-regarding activity, all conation of this type presupposes, not indeed cognition of

a self-regarding sentiment, or instinct of self-assertion, but cognition of an ' impulse ' to act in a particular manner. This ' consciousness of impulse ' is not consciousness of a conation but consciousness of a need, of the ' fulfillingness ' of a certain act, or of the ' unfulfillingness ' of not acting.

Some acts, such as reflexes, get done without any conation whatever, though conation may inhibit them or modify them. Others, however, entail for their performance a conscious fiat ; and without this fiat they remain mere unfulfilled tendencies of the unconscious nature of the individual : between the two extremes are all degrees of conative efficiency. Certainly all the more complex forms of mental activity entail conscious conation. In these cases the unconscious structure, however much it be pressing toward the activity, remains inactive unless there be conation. And conation involves cognition of the activity as a ' fulfilling ' or expressive activity.

Recent work on the relation between brain lesions and disorders of speech and general behaviour reveals clearly that tendencies to perform such specific and complex activities as we are considering may inhere in a strictly neural ' mechanism '.[1] The evidence suggests an incredibly complex hierarchical system of neural co-ordination centres, or ' switch-boards ', or ' keyboards ', related in such a manner that a ' note ' of one will touch off a whole ' chord ' or ' melody ' on others. In terms of such a system we may conceive that any cognized and conated ' tendency of our unconscious nature ' is constituted by the relationship of nerve fibres. The automatic response of such a neural mechanism (scattered throughout the brain) may be either inhibited or ' espoused ' by the integrative psychical act of the brain as a whole.[2]

Thus, in the neural structure, an unconscious and objective tendency to the conscious and subjective psychical activity of intellection would be constituted by a tendency of the neural current to elaborate itself among the so-called

[1] Cf. H. Piéron, *Thought and the Brain*, especially Chapter I ; also pp. 176 and 177.

[2] This sentence, however, expresses an idea which M. Piéron would probably condemn.

associative centres before issuing in overt motor response. Evidence also suggests that the instinctive tendencies depend in part upon the tholamus and other special regions, including of course the autonomic and the endocrine constitution. The more complex acquired temperaments and sentiments may be conditioned *also* by areas in the frontal lobes. Whether this localization be correct or not in detail, it helps us to understand how the highly complex and various automatisms, innate and acquired, may inhere in the incredibly subtle inter-relations of nerve fibres. Thus the simple instinctive tendency to self-assertion, and the complex self-regarding sentiments, which involve past cognition of the individual in society, may be ingrained unconscious tendencies of neural mechanism to perform conscious activities. Similarly both primitive sexual responses and those developed sentiments in which sex is one factor, and again both primitive gregariousness and those developed sentiments in which sociability is one factor, may be regarded as strictly objective bodily tendencies to specific subjective, psychical, activities.

The nature of the conation of private needs may be clearly seen in certain psycho-neurotic symptoms. Thus in obsessive rituals an act is conated though even to the subject himself it seems irrational, (unless indeed he succeeds in ' rationalizing ' it). Here the act is cognized as demanded by his ' unconscious nature ' at the moment, and is *therefore* conated. But in this case the activity which is cognized as demanded is, it would seem, not the precise activity which is incipient in or demanded by the ' unconscious nature ' ; for this need is, owing to special causes, ' uncognizable ' or ' repressed '. What is cognized is an act ' symbolical ' of the needed act, a resultant, so to speak, of the repressed tendency and the repressing forces ; and for the very reason that this act cannot really fulfil the unconscious need, it does not permanently satisfy. In anxiety-neurosis and strictly objectless affect there is no cognition of an act as demanded by the ' unconscious nature ', and therefore there is no conation. But the ' unconscious nature ' *is* tending toward a certain act,

though the tendency is not cognized, and therefore not conated. And the unfulfilment of this tendency, owing to the lack of the necessary conative act, causes a state of strain, which appears in consciousness as general anxiety or objectless affects. Such symptoms as claustrophobia and agoraphobia, which are not strictly objectless affects, but obsessive responses to an external stimulus, are instances of the same mechanism. The external stimulus rouses a movement of escape, which is cognized and conated. If for any reason immediate escape is not possible, there endures a painful affect, which is indeed 'irrational', but not 'objectless'.

(c) INTER-RELATION OF ORGANISMS

We have considered the bodily and the strictly personal tendencies. It remains to discuss the more difficult problem of the tendencies which, entering the mental content of the individual, are derived not simply from his own bodily and personal tendencies but from the inter-relation of individuals. And in particular we must consider tendencies which emerge from the psychological inter-relation of individuals.

Tendencies which entail the inter-relation of organisms may be classified under three heads.

(1) There are those tendencies which are reducible to, or are particular manifestations of, the tendencies which are essential to the nature of all organisms. Individuals in the same region tend to compete for food. This tendency is reducible to the nutritive tendency which is essential to the nature of an organism. Further, individuals in the same region may, under certain circumstances, co-operate in the acquirement of food. This may occur without any strictly social activity whatever; for, while each may simply *make use of* other individuals for the attainment of his own ends, it may happen that in doing so he also serves the ends of others. Such a case as this would clearly be reducible to the nutritive tendency of individual organisms.

(2) There are also tendencies which are only reducible to the innate *social* nature of individual organisms. Sexual behaviour and some gregarious behaviour are of this kind. Not merely does any case of normal sexual behaviour involve the co-operation of an individual of the opposite sex; the sexual *tendency* involves the interaction of organisms in past generations. It is not reducible to the essential minimum which is the nature of an organism as such. Knowing merely this essential minimum, we could not deduce sexual behaviour. Roughly this minimum is the tendency of every organism to maintain itself as an organism. In the sexual co-operation of two organisms it may be that each does as a matter of fact find health, and that without it each would become to a greater or less extent disorganized. But the fact that each is of such a nature as to need sexual activity for its own healthy maintenance must be explained. And it can only be explained in light of the biological history of sexual individuals. In the distant past certain organisms, we suppose, 'found themselves' in a certain relation to one another; and from this special inter-relatedness of pairs of organisms emerged a new tendency, namely the tendency of individuals, produced in this way, to seek out mates, and to be organized in such a manner as to need mates even for their own healthy maintenance. Further, our general observation of the sexual behaviour of animals suggests that the regulative end is in this case, not the maintenance and growth of the individual, but propagation. It may nevertheless be true that in the first instance sexual conjugation was simply an expression of the need of the primitive individual cell to maintain its own organic equilibrium. But after conjugation there came the necessity of fissian, and the sacrifice of individuality. And in later stages of evolution the form of sexual and of parental activity becomes more and more definitely instrumental to propagation, rather than to the maintenance of the individual in organic equilibrium. Of course the nutritive tendency and the sexual tendency *may* be in a sense phases of one essential tendency of all

organisms, which we may name vaguely the tendency to perpetuate life. But the sexual tendency is certainly not *reducible* to this fundamental tendency alone; it emerges from the long-past inter-relation of organisms. And this inter-relation was strictly social in that it consisted in the subordination of each individual at certain seasons to the new regulative end.

Simple gregarious behaviour may sometimes be reducible to the strictly individual tendencies of organisms, as in the case of accidental co-operation for the acquisition of food, or for defence. But in most cases gregarious behaviour, like sexual behaviour, probably involves a social past. It must therefore be judged as not reducible to the tendencies of the organism as such, but as reducible to the innate tendencies of social organisms.

(3) We now come to the last kind of tendency which entails the inter-relation of organisms. These are tendencies which emerge from the *psychical* relation of the individual to his own social environment, and are not reducible simply to the inherited tendencies of social individuals, though they may be influenced by inherited tendencies. In this class come all the acquired social habits of individuals, together with all those habits which, though not strictly social, since their end is not a social end, nevertheless entail for their present complex form a complex social environment. Of the former kind are all habits of political thought and activity, such as party politics, individualism, socialism, nationalism, cosmopolitanism, and all social conventions such as the customs of a city, a club, an industrial organization, or of neighbours in a street, or again the institutions of marriage, domesticity, property, and indeed all the multitudinous and scarcely-noticed customs which enable us to live in touch with each other without excessive friction. Of habits which are not strictly social, but entail a social environment, the most striking are all those manners of thought which form our culture, such as our science, art, philosophy and religions.

(D) OBJECTIONS TO INSTINCT PSYCHOLOGY

Many psychologists would reject the foregoing account. They would say that tendencies which I have described as irreducible to the inherited tendencies of social organisms are, as a matter of fact, ' derived ' from those inherited tendencies. That there are in fact such inherited tendencies to complex and specific responses, is, I should say, undeniable. The disagreement of psychologists as to what instincts there are, is to be attributed not to the unreality of instinct but to the incompleteness of psychology. We have seen in the previous chapter how these complex automatisms may be conceived as being laid down in the inter-relation of nerve fibres. Supposed instincts are sometimes classified in relation to the biological end which they are thought to achieve, but such classifications depend largely on the theories of the classifier. A more psychological classification may be made in terms of the emotional accompaniments of the behaviour. Mr. A. Campbell Garnett rejects both these criteria.[1] In his view the psychological classification must be made in relation to ' the *end experience* in which the conative process finds its completion and in which the creature finds satisfaction.' Thus the conative process of hunting ends when the prey is killed, and that of eating when the food is swallowed. It is easy to see how such regulative ends might be laid down in the co-ordination of nerve cells according to the principle described by M. Piéron.[2] I accept Mr. Campbell Garnett's criterion; but I would add that, since conscious conation presupposes a prior hormic tendency not itself conscious, even ' conative completion ' and ' satisfaction ' are not *infallible* guides to the subconscious teleological nature of the individual. They might perhaps sometimes be illusory expressions.

But to admit the existence of instincts is not necessarily to derive all human behaviour from such specific innate tendencies. There is a sense in which all man's activity is ' at bottom ' instinctive, but a more important sense in

[1] ' A Conative Criterion for Discrimination of the Instincts,' *British Journal of Psychology*, January 1928.
[2] *Op. cit.*

which it is not. It is true that all biological behaviour is in a sense the outcome of the organism's own nature, and that in a sense its nature is determined innately. In a sense it can only behave within the limits of its own inherited capacity. But it is not true that its capacity includes only certain specific fixed modes of behaviour, to which all acquired behaviour can be 'reduced'. A human being's inheritance would seem to include a capacity for discovering and conating tendencies beyond the inherited nature of his own organism, or his own biological needs.[1]

Let us consider the case of a man's sentiment of love for a woman. This is surely an instance favourable to the interpretation in terms of instinct alone, if anything is. But we must insist that what is to be discussed is a genuine case of love in the fullest sense, and not *merely* of sexual desire. Now all will agree that in a sense the man's love is 'derived' from the sexual or reproductive tendency of a human organism. It is very probable that he would never have noticed the woman had he not been a sexual animal. But clearly his love is not simply reducible to the bare sexual tendency, which is strictly a tendency to behave in a certain manner toward certain objects, and does not involve love at all. By hypothesis he *loves* her; he has come to regard her not merely as an object on which to discharge his sexual interest and activity, but also as being *a centre of needs* which he himself conates just because they are hers. He regards her as a body and mind having certain needs, impulses and desires. In so far as he genuinely loves her, his knowledge (or opinion) of her needs invokes a system of conations in his own mind. He has accepted her tendencies, not simply because they are directly or symbolically like his own tendencies, but just because they are *her* tendencies.

Now his acceptance of her tendencies springs from a value-judgment which he has made with regard to her.

[1] In the following criticism of instinct I am greatly indebted to Prof. G. C. Field's article in *Mind*, Vol. XXX, N.S., p. 257, and to Mr. B. M. Laing's article in *The Monist*, January 1925, and to Dr. Ginsberg's *The Psychology of Society*.

How has he come to make this value-judgment? In relation to what demands has he made it? According to the instinct interpretation, in so far as her hold on him is not directly sexual, it is derived 'indirectly' from sexual or other innate tendencies. His value-judgment is made essentially in relation to his own primitive biological needs, even though it is a response subtly 'conditioned' by his experience. Thus some would have us believe that all love, if not all human behaviour, is reducible to the sex instinct. The source of all interests, they sometimes say, is the interest in sensory pleasure; and from this interest, by a process of 'conditioning', all others have developed. By 'affective transference'[1] interest gradually spreads from the end to the means and to all that is associated with the end or the means. Thus, according to Freud, the human being passes through interest in mere sensory pleasure and pain to interest in the organs that afford pleasure and pain, and so to interest in external objects, and especially to interest in other persons for the sake of their direct or indirect sexual significance.

Now in actual 'love' between the sexes the purely sexual element is very often predominant; and probably it plays an important part also in homo-sexual affection. And in passing we may note that human nature is no more 'debased' by being reduced to sex than by being reduced to any other instinct or pattern of instincts. But the ingenuity of the various psycho-analytical schools has made it very clear that, with sufficient patience and skill, *any* piece of behaviour can be 'derived' from *any* instinct whatever. Their fatal ingenuity has afforded the *reductio ad absurdum* not merely of pan-sexualism but of the whole instinct theory. The mistake common to all these schools seems to lie in supposing that a mode of behaviour is sufficiently accounted for by tracing *some* of its historical origins. It has not been realized that at each advance *a new kind* of behaviour comes into being through cognition of a new kind of situation. To reduce behaviour simply

[1] I borrow the phrase from Prof. Rignano, who derives all conation, by means of this principle, from the organisms' tendency toward 'physiological invariability'. Cf. *The Psychology of Reasoning*, Chapter I.

to specific dispositions in the nature of the agent himself is to reduce the human quite unwarrantably to the animal, and moreover to an unduly simplified and fictitious animal.

Some eminent psychologists tell us that the main root of all love is the parental instinct, which is the tendency to behave parentally toward, and feel the tender emotion toward, offspring.[1] Thus, in so far as a man's love for a woman is not merely sexual it is said to be indirectly parental. He finds in his relations with her a satisfaction for the innate craving to have something to serve, and an object for tender emotion. But this theory ignores an important difference between parental behaviour and love, and between the tender emotion and love. Parents do, as a matter of fact, often love their children ; but they do also often merely behave parentally toward them, and feel tender emotion toward them. The love of a parent for a child may be said to be 'derived' from the parental tendency, in the sense that this tendency first directed attention to the child, and made possible the subsequent *discovery* of the child as itself a living centre of tendencies. And it may well be that in all love there is something of this instinctive parental behaviour. But genuine love, for whatever kind of object, is very different from the tender emotion and from all strictly instinctive parental behaviour. The extreme of this behaviour and this emotion is perhaps seen in the bitch that devours her puppies rather than share them with other admirers. And even among human beings behaviour essentially of this type is not unknown. Genuine love, on the other hand, entails more than a value-judgment about another individual in relation to one's private needs. It entails an espousal of the other's needs in the same direct manner in which one espouses one's own private needs. Perhaps no one has ever fully succeeded in loving his neighbour 'as himself'. But in so far as anyone does *love*, that is what he does. And love is not wholly impossible to human beings. Merely instinctive behaviour is, so to speak, the conation of a tendency or complex of tendencies of the

[1] Cf. McDougall, *An Outline of Psychology*, p. 422.

agent's own body or person. Genuine love is the conation of tendencies of another person. Attention may be drawn to the other in the first instance as to a stimulus for instinctive behaviour; but subsequently, *if* love occurs, or in so far as it occurs, the other is regarded, not as a stimulus, but as a centre of tendencies demanding conation in their own right. This is a kind of behaviour which cannot be explained simply in terms of instinct.

There is another very important point that must be emphasized. It is true, as has been admitted, that the lover's value-judgment is made in the first instance in relation to ' his own ' needs. But it does not follow that even his own private needs consist simply of inherited instincts. Many of these present private needs are automatisms which have been grafted in him (so to speak) by his past environments, through the medium of his cognition. They were primarily needs in his environment, but by exposing them and habitually seeking their fulfilment he has moulded himself upon them. Even the private needs, then, (which first focus attention on another individual), cannot be reduced to instinct, since many of them originate in the extra-organic environment.

Further, we might go so far as to say that any actual case of love is an approximation, however distant, towards a certain type or norm. In this ideal type, the man's love, undistorted by special limitations or automatic impulsions, would be the expression of his whole mental content, not of the merely private core of his content. And since a man's mental content is simply his view of the world, his love would be an expression of his judgment of the nature of the world. The world, to speak metaphorically, would be loving her through him. For he would judge the world to be such that a certain attitude on the part of a woman was appropriate to it, or demanded by it. Perhaps this attitude would be one of humorous tolerance and tenderness combined with heroic stubbornness, or perhaps some other attitude. Some such ideal attitude he must, in the ideal case, find in her along with her directly sexual charm, and along with those habits and

manners which happened to fulfil his own private capacity for companionship. In this fanciful case, then, love is the outcome not simply of private needs but of needs *discovered* by the lover through his cognition of the world. This, doubtless, is but the ideal type of love, which is never attained in practice. But it must be insisted that all actual love has something in it of this nature.

In this account, however, there is danger of overlooking the simple essential nature of love itself. It is true that in the ideal love the lover must judge that the beloved's character is that which is demanded by, or is appropriate to, the world, and not merely that which is appropriate to his private cravings. But as was said above, love itself consists in valuing the beloved for her own sake, not for the world's sake. It is the espousal of the needs of an active substance in the same direct manner as one espouses the needs of his own person. In extreme cases this may entail the rejection of the claims of all other active substances, just as in extreme egoism the espousal of the personal self may entail rejection of all other selves.

Neither personal affection, then, nor those more complex social conations, which entail the apprehension of society as a system of minds, can be simply reduced to any specific innate tendency of the primitive individual, or to any complex of tendencies of the primitive individual. Social conations cannot, for instance, be fully accounted for as manifestations of 'herd instinct', nor as symbolical fulfilment of sex instinct or parental instinct. Nor, I venture to think, can they be *fully* accounted for even in terms of the highly complex system of inherited dispositions expounded for instance by Dr. Drever.[1]

Let us, for example, briefly consider the case of Joan of Arc, as an instance of extreme, yet apparently authentic, social-mindedness. A detailed account of her life can certainly be given in terms of instinct satisfaction. Indeed, various highly coherent and mutually exclusive accounts can be offered; so many accounts, in fact, that their very plausibility should make us suspect that no one of them is

[1] Cf. *Instinct in Man*, p. 169.

the truth. We may derive her defence of France from a religious sentiment, and this, in the Freudian manner, from repressed sex-craving. Or again, her constant protagonism may be traced to a 'freedom complex' contracted in childhood through her relations with adults. And this, in turn, we may derive either from sex (following Freud), or from the instinct of self-assertion. Indeed (following Adler), we may very plausibly suppose that her whole career is an outstanding example of that 'masculine protest' which is the counterpart of a sense of inferiority and is finally reducible to an instinctive 'will to power', or self-assertion. Equally plausibly, however, it may be said that her behaviour was the symbolical fulfilment of a thwarted parental instinct, and that she regarded herself as standing *in loco parentis* toward distressed France. Or, perhaps, her religious devotion, and consequently her defence of France, was an expression of the 'herd instinct' in its attachment to an idealized herd-opinion which she regarded as God's will. Or finally, and perhaps more convincingly, we may interpret her life in terms of the whole gamut of inherited dispositions suggested by Dr. Drever.

Now it need not be denied that Joan may have gained instinctive satisfaction of these kinds. But in discovering the instinctive satisfactions which a piece of behaviour affords incidentally, we do not account fully for the pattern of the behaviour. The most obvious and at the same time the most important fact about Joan's life was that it was regulated with reference to a single end, namely the freeing of France. This supreme sentiment dominated the whole of her behaviour, selecting now one instinctive reaction and now another. Thus it is certain that her instincts must have snatched much satisfaction by the way. But what precisely was the origin of the dominant sentiment itself? How was it that she ever came to care supremely for the freedom of France?

Surely, we shall be told, she would never have troubled about it at all had it not offered fulfilment to some deep needs of her own personality. And surely these persona

needs, however much they may have been modified by her experience, were essentially just the fundamental biological needs which she inherited. Joan's behaviour was the behaviour of a certain organism; and the sources of that behaviour must be found in the nature of the organism itself, not in its environment.

The first point to note in answer to this contention is that whatever the *origin* of Joan's will to free France, when once it had come into being, there it was—a conative attitude distinct from and dominant over all simply instinctive impulses. By one means or another the freeing of France became for her an end in itself. It is not to be supposed that she willed the fulfilment of France's need merely in those respects in which it would afford direct or indirect satisfaction to her own instincts. She willed *it*, at whatever cost to her instincts. Thus, if we believe that the real motive source was sexual, we must yet admit that she had come to care more for this symbolical sexual fulfilment than for direct sexual activity. If it was parental, she cared more for the service of the symbolical child, France, than for having real children of her own. The 'instinct' psychologist might, of course, point out that it was merely owing to the impossibility of direct parental satisfaction that she sought the symbolical satisfaction of mothering France. And similarly with her other instinctive cravings, patriotic behaviour was the only possible way of satisfying them all, though it could afford only symbolical satisfaction. But *why* was direct satisfaction 'impossible'? Surely all save those who are obsessed with the instinct theory must see that what prevented her from seeking mere instinct satisfaction was no mere indirectly instinctive motive, but just her cognition of needs objectively more important than the needs of herself as a private person. She cognized France as demanding liberation. Whatever the sources which directed her attention on France and initiated her dominant sentiment, that sentiment certainly did become the ruling factor of her life. And further, whatever its instinctive sources, her cognition of her social environment turned it

into something essentially different from any mere blend of instinctive impulses.

The chief weakness of instinct psychology is that it fails, in spite of all its efforts to the contrary, to do justice to the part played in behaviour by the environment. And this failure is most obvious in human behaviour. The theory starts with the assumption that all behaviour must necessarily be traced finally to specific 'dispositions' inherited in the nature of the agent, and that the environment, though it may modify these pre-formed dispositions, can never bring essentially new dispositions into being. Such an account is fairly plausible in the case of animal behaviour; but in the human case it entails one of two most unbelievable corollaries. Either human nature must be supposed to include 'inherited dispositions' to play golf, turn bolshevic or fascist, serve God, and indeed to perform all those highly complex acts which are in fact performed by civilized men. (In this case, the environment is credited only with 'releasing' the complex pre-formed dispositions.) Or, on the other hand, if this view seems extravagant, the attempt must be made to 'derive' all the more complex activities of man from the simple inherited dispositions of the typical mammal. This has been, in fact, undertaken by our instinct psychologists. They have performed the task with great ingenuity; but in doing so they have left out the really distinctive feature of human behaviour.

Of course, in a sense, every man throughout his life acts only in those manners in which his type of organism *can* act. And these manners are inherited. Thus he gets angry, frightened, elated, inquisitive, and so on. But this system of innate modes of behaviour has been fitly described as but the ground plan of his developed nature. It is that on which he is built, not a limiting framework within which he is imprisoned. Nor is it a system of specific 'energies' which alone are the source of his 'motive power'. These modes of activity are in a sense the only possible modes of activity alike for animal and man. But the *ends* in relation to which these are exercised in the

human adult are not simply the ends to which his inherited nature was adapted. Nor can they be simply 'derived' from those ends.

We may distinguish three ways in which in man innate behaviour is modified, namely: (*a*) Innate responses may be 'conditioned' to new stimuli. This is doubtless extremely important. (*b*) He may intelligently devise new methods for the better attainment of innate ends. (*c*) Through intelligent cognition of the total objective field, old ends may be modified and new ends discovered, and in consequence behaviour may be radically changed. To ignore this is to ignore what is distinctively human.

CHAPTER IX

PSYCHICAL CONFLICT

(A) THE OBJECTIVE SOURCES OF CONATION

SINCE we cannot admit that the acquired social tendencies of human beings are simply reducible to the inherited tendencies of social organisms, we must try to formulate another theory of conation to take the place of the instinct theory. Such a theory I have already frequently advocated. In the present chapter I shall seek to bring together and render as precise as possible all that has already been said on this subject; but my chief aim will be to formulate and solve a problem, consequent on this particular view of the nature of conation, which has not hitherto been faced. Any objective tendency, I have said, may in principle be conatively espoused for its own sake. How comes it, then, that in practice very few objective tendencies are espoused, and that those which are espoused are nearly always tendencies of the individual organism itself?

In the case of the simple organic tendencies I have argued that when the subject becomes aware of any momentary organic impulse he has at least an incipient conation of that tendency. Further, I suggested that when the subject comes to know or erroneously believe some more enduring organic tendency, he again has at least an incipient conation of that tendency. The very nature of conation seems to involve the true or erroneous cognition of some tendency objective to the act of conation itself. In the cases which we examined first the tendency was a tendency simply of the organism; but as cognition advances, (doubtless primarily in the service of the already established modes of conation), new objective regions begin to influence conation.

The awareness of an organic impulse is not different in kind from the awareness of any other objective tendency. The psychical impulse to sneeze and the psychical impulse to defend the state are alike in that in each case a tendency of a certain object within the mental content suggests a conation, simply in being cognized. In the one case the body is discovered tending to sneeze, and in the other the state is discovered tending to preserve itself. Of course, there are important differences in the two objects and tendencies in respect of complexity, and in the processes by which they are cognized. Awareness of organic impulses is immediate knowledge by acquaintance. And even a foreseeing desire for the fulfilment of an organic impulse, though it entails inference from past experience, is based upon immediate acquaintance with a present impulse. Awareness of all other kinds of objective tendencies, on the other hand, is mediated. But in each of these cases what happens is that an objective tendency is cognized and 'lived through' as a conation. I am suggesting, then, that the essential basis of conation is not that some tendency of the organism, or of a simple inherited mental structure, is the source (direct or indirect) of every conative act, but that *every* cognition of tendency *may* give rise to a conative act. Every tendency which is an element in the mental content suggests a conation, and is the ground of an at least incipient conation. If the tendency does not conflict with other and well-established conative ends, its fulfilment will be desired.

Of course, there are very many tendencies which are cognized as members of the mental content, yet their fulfilment is not *willed*. I may, for instance, be trying to drive a pig through a gate, and I may be well aware that the pig is persistently tending to go in the opposite direction. Clearly, I do not *will* the fulfilment of this recalcitrant tendency of the pig, although I am aware of it. The pig's tendency, after all, is only a minor element in my mental content, and it conflicts with other more weighty and more intimate tendencies. By 'weighty' and 'intimate' I mean that for some reason or other, yet to be discussed,

these tendencies do as a matter of fact bulk more largely in my mental content. But though I do not *will* the fulfilment of the pig's tendency, I may yet perform an abortive or incipient conation of the tendency, a conation which, for other reasons, I do not complete in overt action. Were I to know the pig's tendency in isolation from its consequences, I should definitely desire its fulfilment. Not, indeed, that there is any logical necessity why I should do so, but that observably this is the primary kind of relation between cognition and conation.

Thus, anyone watching a salmon persistently trying to jump a waterfall cannot but wish success to the enterprise. Anyone watching the incoming tide, as it extends its searching fingers along the mud channels, can scarcely help wishing that the runnel which he is regarding may circumvent or overwhelm all opposition. On the other hand, if he is attending rather to the land, and imagines a tendency on its part to resist invasion, he will find himself desiring that the resistance may be victorious. In fact, whenever we perceive, or think of, or image, any existent as tending to act in a certain way, and pressing against opposition, we inevitably incline to espouse the tendency to conate it. Of course, in so far as we apprehend the tendency in relation with other tendencies of our mental content, we pass a final judgment upon it and may will either its success or its failure. But in the mere act of apprehending *it*, we desire its fulfilment. If, for instance, we temporarily forget everything else, and regard it alone, we may find ourselves entering, for the time, whole-heartedly into it and actually willing its fulfilment. Indeed, any vividly or constantly observed tendency may sometimes exercise a hypnotic fascination over us, and draw all our attention upon itself till all else is shut out of our mental content, and we will only the fulfilment of the one obsessive tendency.

The objectivity of the source of conation is particularly well illustrated in certain abnormal states. Janet cites a young man who, when he passed a hat shop, became so exclusively aware of it as an opportunity for hat-buying

that he forthwith had to enter and buy a hat of which he had no personal need. On another occasion, he passed a railway station, recognized it as a place where one goes in 'to take a trip', entered, saw the name 'Marseilles' on a time-table, took a ticket to that city, and embarked on the journey. Only after he had travelled some distance did he realize the absurdity of his behaviour, and leave the train.[1] Such acts are, after all, only striking instances of a very common type of behaviour. The boy with a knife craves to cut something; the man with a gun craves to shoot something. Similarly, the man with a business under his control craves to make money. The woman who knows herself fascinating craves to make conquests. The theorist with a theory craves to apply it as widely as possible. The artist who has discovered a new beauty must express it in a thousand forms. Indeed, this principle, which might be called 'the principle of the new toy', is of very great importance.

It is true, of course, that we are sometimes 'contra-suggestive', inclining toward resistance rather than fulfilment of a cognized tendency. But this is a rare and complex reaction which is to be explained in terms of an acquired modification of self-assertiveness. When it occurs, we resist because we cognize the tendency as opposed to our personal activity. Resistance is ever consequent on a prior espousal of *some* active substance or other. Again we may indeed come to desire the resistance of an objective tendency or of an individual, simply as an end in itself; but such 'disinterested hate' is none the less causally derived from the hated individual's antagonistic relation to something within our content which is itself cherished. This antagonism itself may be forgotten, while the habit of disinterested hate persists.

We must, of course, distinguish between the conation which is derived from an existent tendency in some object, and a conation which is derived from an imagined tendency, or, again, from a potentiality of some object. Of the former kind is our sympathy with the leaping salmon or

[1] P. Janet, *Principles of Psychotherapy*, p. 125.

with the nation striving for liberty, and even our sympathy with the incoming tide. Of the latter kind is the boy's itch to use his knife, the woman's itch to use her charms, and the striving of the theorist and the artist. In the case of the woman we must distinguish between two sources of her 'will to conquer', namely on the one hand her cognized organic sexual tendency and her personal self-assertive tendency, and on the other the cognized possibility of exercising her charms. In the boy also we must distinguish between the tendency of his own person, whether manipulative or sadistic, prior to his intercourse with the knife, and on the other hand the cognized possibilities of the knife itself. Similarly, in every case, we must distinguish between sources in present cognized objects and sources prior to these.

Of course, a quite different explanation is usually given for these experiences. It is generally said that, when we thus sympathetically regard the efforts of the salmon or the activity of the tide, we desire their fulfilment not for their own sakes at all, but just because they are stimuli to our own tendencies. We project ourselves into the object (so it is said) and feel resistance to the object's tendencies as though it were resistance to our own tendencies. The only tendencies that we ever accept as conations for their own sakes are 'our own' tendencies. And our own tendencies are said to be all of them reducible to certain fundamental biological tendencies, such as self-maintenance, development, and procreation. All these fundamental tendencies are said to reside in the 'psycho-physical nature' of the organism itself. A theory which claims that *all* tendencies are possible sources of conation is ridiculous, we shall be told; for conation is essentially the outcome of, or expression of, the needs of the organism itself, and other tendencies are entirely foreign to the organism and the self of the organism; they can only give rise to conations in so far as they are taken as symbolical of, or have become associated with, needs of the organism.

To this objection we can only reply by insisting that, as a matter of fact, the more complex tendencies of selves

have characteristics which are not logically reducible to primitive needs, whether of the physical organism or of an inherited 'mental structure'; and that, since this is so, some other explanation is necessary. To say that our more complex conations are expressions not of a primitive but of a developed 'self' is doubtless true, but irrelevant. The question is, *how* does the primitive 'self' expand into the developed self. And the answer is that the most important way of expanding is by the cognition of a wider field of objective tendencies and the conative espousal of those tendencies.

(B) THE PROBLEM OF IRRATIONAL CHOICE

We are now in a position to face the problem of irrational choice. There are three kinds of mental conflict. In the first place, there is often a conflict between momentary impulse and the enduring tendency of which it purports to be a phase. Thus the impulse to eat a certain admittedly indigestible food conflicts with the enduring nutritive tendency of which it is a phase, and probably with other tendencies also. Secondly, there may be conflict between tendencies or impulses of equal rank. The impulse to eat now may conflict with the impulse to fly now from danger. Or the enduring tendency to preserve the organism may conflict with the enduring tendency to keep possession of a sexual partner. Thirdly, there may be a conflict between emergent social tendencies and the innate tendencies of the individual. Thus the tendency of the community to preserve itself may enter the mind of the individual, and give rise to a conation, which may conflict with conation of his innate tendency to feed when his stomach is empty.

The first kind of conflict, between impulse and enduring tendency, perhaps never occurs in the animal mind. For while momentary tendencies may often be known by direct acquaintance, enduring tendencies have to be inferred. The typical animal, at any rate, acts on impulse and knows nothing of enduring tendency. In man,

however, both impulse and enduring tendency may give rise to conations. The toper may both desire to get drunk now, and desire to assert himself against this temptation. And he may either succumb or successfully resist the temptation. If he resists, *what* he wills is the greater rather than the lesser fulfilment, the fulfilment of enduring tendencies rather than the fulfilment of a momentary symptom of one of those tendencies, a symptom which, moreover, is (so to speak) a distorted or dislocated appearance of an enduring tendency. What he wills, then, is greater in that it is something which will endure, not something evanescent; and, further, it is greater in that self-regarding or self-conscious activity is qualitatively richer, more complex, than the momentary satisfaction of an impulse; finally, it is instrumental to a more complete fulfilment of the whole field of tendencies within his mental content, and will entail less unfulfilment.

But what is it that happens when, instead of resisting temptation, he succumbs? Apparently he chooses the lesser rather than the greater fulfilment. His case is not that of the animal who knows nothing of enduring tendencies. He chooses with open eyes, and, as we say, against his better judgment. We cannot, then, simply say that a man always chooses the course from which he expects the greater fulfilment. It may be true that every tendency, which he knows or believes, gives rise to some degree of conation; but in conflict he does not always prefer the greater fulfilment.

Similarly, in the case of conflict between tendencies of equal rank, whether between organic tendencies or between emergent social tendencies, a man may choose that which he believes will afford the greater fulfilment, or he may not. Such conflicts may be reduced to the previous type. For the choice that he has to make is not simply a choice between disconnected tendencies. The one choice will (he knows) favour the *general* fulfilment of tendencies within his mental field, while the other will fulfil only an isolated tendency, and hinder the general fulfilment. Thus, in the individual sphere, the choice between the tendency to

preserve his own organism and the tendency to keep possession of his sexual partner may involve the choice between merely a sexless spell on the one hand and sudden death on the other. The man may or may not choose the former and more prudent course. Similarly, in the sphere of emergent social tendencies, the choice may be between an aggressive policy for his group and a pacific policy. He does not always choose that which he genuinely believes will give greatest fulfilment to his group, though he probably persuades himself that he is doing so. His choice may, of course, be biassed by private tendencies; but quite apart from this, it may also be biassed by genuinely social considerations which he knows must conflict with the goal of fulfilment. He may, for instance, choose a 'glorious' and hopeless war rather than prolonged development, just because of a habit of over-sensitiveness to points of *group* honour. And he may be thus over-sensitive to group honour even though in respect of his own private prestige as a person among others he is not over-sensitive at all.

Finally, in the case of conflict between emergent social tendencies and the innate tendencies of the individual it is very clear that a man may knowingly choose the course which will lead to the objectively lesser fulfilment. He may sacrifice another person to his own sexual craving, or his society's fulfilment to his own craving for self-advancement. And he may do so, knowing that he is choosing the lesser fulfilment of tendencies in the total object of his cognition. In the first case, he may knowingly choose momentary gratification for himself even at the price of crippling another for life. In the second case, he may knowingly choose the fulfilment of one individual (himself) rather than the fulfilment of many, and of the social whole which is an emergent character of those many.

Here a word of caution is necessary. The will of an individual may sometimes embody the need of the social whole more correctly than the will of the majority with which he disagrees. For instance the tendency of his

contemporaries may be to persecute and destroy an original thinker whose own tendency is to revolutionize and enrich the life and thought of the community. He, then, and not the majority, voices the real need of society. His mental content is richer than that of his fellows. He has known a wider field of tendencies and has evaluated them more accurately. His ideal constitutes a greater objective fulfilment than is desired by his persecutors. The first man who protested against ordeal by battle doubtless found himself in conflict with his fellows. But though they were legion and he was one, his mental horizon was the wider. His desire to abolish this practice was the expression of an objectively richer field of social needs than the contrary desire of his fellows.

But to return to our subject, in all types of conflict we do often choose that course which we believe will lead to the lesser fulfilment. We may, indeed, 'make excuses' for our choice, or persuade ourselves that what we are choosing really is the more prudent or more moral course, or that the fulfilment that we have chosen is, after all, the greatest fulfilment, in spite of appearances to the contrary. But, in the case to which I refer, the excuses are not the cause of our choosing; they are consequences of it. We do not choose thus because of the alleged reason; we look for a reason to support the choice that we have already made.

How, then, is this kind of behaviour to be understood? Hitherto, I have argued that conation presupposes an objective tendency as its source, and that an act of will is determined by those tendencies which 'bulk most largely' in the mental content at the time. But now it seems that there are very many cases in which the choice favours fulfilments which are not cognized as objectively the greatest possible fulfilments. Must we conclude that our theory of conation is false?

Let us state our problem more precisely. In every case in which a lesser fulfilment is deliberately chosen, that which is chosen is at least the fulfilment of *some* tendency which is cognized as a member of the objective mental content. Further, it is always either a fulfilment which

has been frequently chosen in the past, or a fulfilment which has frequently presented itself for choice in the past, even though it has been rejected. Conation is not simply the outcome of present experienced tendencies. We have formed behaviour-habits in the past, and these bias our present choice. Certain tendencies, which in past mental contents were cognized as dominant, may still be favoured, even when, in the present mental content, they are cognized as in fact subordinate to other, more recently discovered, tendencies. Thus, one who has contracted a habit of exclusively local patriotism may continue to favour the interests of his locality even after he has come to recognize the importance of the interests of a wider community. On the other hand, certain tendencies, although they have been even habitually cognized as actually minor, and therefore have never been willed, may yet have forced themselves so frequently into the mental content, that they have played a greater part in the history of the individual than those other less familiar tendencies to which they have been judged subordinate. In such circumstances, choice may come to favour that which dominates by familiarity rather than that which is judged objectively dominant. Thus, in a ' full-blooded ' nature the demands of the body, though habitually repressed because judged to be subordinate to the demands of a wider world, may, if ever circumstances accentuate them, triumph in spite of the considered judgment.

A special and striking type of the ' irrational ' choice which we are considering is seen in abnormal compulsive actions. A person suffering from kleptomania may be well aware that the tendency which his choice favours is in fact a minor and abnormal tendency; yet he chooses its fulfilment, and therewith he chooses the thwarting of the actually major tendencies. The tendency which he favours is perhaps emergent from a combination of his own organism, traumatic events of his own past history, and certain present objects, which he compulsively steals. The events of his past history are probably not now available to his consciousness, but they are an

essential element in the whole situation from which the compulsive tendency emerges. And in spite of the fact that the sources of the tendency are in part forgotten past events, the tendency to which they have contributed is now a present cognized behaviour-tendency of the organism-in-a-certain-environment. Our problem consists in the fact that the patient's choice favours this tendency rather than tendencies which he himself believes to be far more broadly based, such as the needs of the society in which he lives.

Evidently, we may summarize our problem in the following question. If it is true that conation is always derived from awareness of objective tendency, and that choice, in principle, favours the greatest possible fulfilment of objective tendency, how comes it that choice ever favours tendencies which, though they have played a very large part in the person's own experience, are yet cognized as in fact subordinate to other, less familiar tendencies? Choice is, in these cases, apparently determined, not in relation to the judgment as to the greatest possible fulfilment of *present* objective tendencies, but in relation to either the mere frequency or the insistence of the tendency in the total *past and present* experience of the individual. Moreover, this kind of behaviour is not exceptional but very common; it is as common, in fact, as imprudence and immorality when they are committed knowingly. We may cite as a dramatic instance of this behaviour the case of a man who, having a chronic disease, deliberately chooses a course which will alleviate his suffering rather than an alternative course which he believes would greatly favour the fulfilment of his society or of mankind. His will is apparently prevented, by insistent private tendencies, from accepting those social tendencies which he himself does definitely judge to be objectively far greater needs than any needs of his own body. How, on our theory, does conation ever thus fail to develop up to the full span of cognition?

It is tempting to say that when the major objective tendency is rejected it simply is not really cognized, and

that always the agent chooses what does actually seem to him the greatest objective fulfilment at the moment of choice, though sometimes in that moment he is *prevented* from 'really' cognizing the major tendency by the compulsive power of the familiar minor tendency. Were he to be able to hold the major tendency clearly in view, he would inevitably (it might be said) will its fulfilment. But such an account is simply not true to the facts of experience, and would be obviously an invention to prop up our theory. We all know quite well that we do often deliberately choose courses which we ourselves at the time admit to be imprudent or immoral, or in general to be unfavourable to the greatest possible fulfilment of known tendencies. It is true, of course, that when we act thus our choice is always for the fulfilment of *some* tendency; but it is not for the greatest objective fulfilment believed to be possible in the circumstances. It is noteworthy, too, that on such occasions we often deliberately cease from attending to the major tendency, just because, though we cognize it as major, we do not will its fulfilment. We shun it, lest, in cognizing more fully its nature and its implications, we should finally be captured by it and will it in spite of our present will! We thus recognize that mere cognition *may* influence the will, but we hope to prevent it from doing so by refusing to attend to it, and by refusing to allow it to obtain any extensive influence in our total mental content.

(c) AUTOMATISM AND FREE CHOICE

Such an account of the choice of the lesser fulfilment must, then, be rejected; and we must seek some other approach. What is it precisely that happens when a man sneezes in spite of his will not to sneeze? An act which is usually serviceable is performed by certain parts of his body in spite of the cognition that, on this occasion, the act is contrary to the need of the whole organism or the person. The active tendency is a tendency of a part; and the behaviour that occurs is the act of a part uncontrolled by the whole. Owing to their general usefulness

the sneezing mechanism and impulse have become an *automatic* response to a certain kind of stimulus. In sneezing the physiological machinery itself usually seems to act automatically, and may successfully rebel against volition. But in special circumstances possibly there might occur a true compulsive conation of sneezing. When the subject is aware that the automatic physiological tendency conflicts with some objectively more important tendency (whether organic, personal, or social) he may succeed in controlling it; or he may not. When the minor tendency is controlled, what controls it is the conation of a major tendency. When the major conation *fails* to control the minor (physiological) tendency, a part of the organism is working automatically. On the other hand in certain circumstances, though the minor tendency is at first successfully inhibited, it may become so urgent that finally, not merely does it function in spite of conation, but actually it 'over-persuades' the subject to conate its activity. This is a schematic account of all compulsive conation.

Automatism is not confined to the strictly reflex sphere. Just as certain special expressions of general biological tendencies have become fixed as innate reflexes of the organism, so also, within the lifetime of the individual, many personal and social tendencies, which have been often active, may engender automatic behaviour and compulsive conations. When, owing to an expansion of cognition, these familiar tendencies are judged to be after all subordinate to, and in conflict with, other newly-cognized and more important tendencies, this revised value-judgment may or may not succeed in controlling the automatism, may or may not succeed in preventing a compulsive conation. Thus habitual behaviour that springs from a self-regarding sentiment may or may not be mastered (through conation) by the cognition of the needs of the nation as being of objectively greater importance than the needs of the person. Or behaviour and feeling that is habitually nationalistic may or may not be mastered by the discovery of wider needs.

On the merely reflex level the automatic behaviour may take place without facilitation by conation. But on the level of instinct and habit the automatic tendencies themselves entail volition for their functioning. Also they are themselves of greater account in the mental content than mere reflexes. Consequently, when they resist control by the expanding cognition, they function, not simply as recalcitrant physical machinery, but as fully developed compulsive *conations*. The lower the rank of the rebellious tendency, the more easily does the subject regard it as something foreign, outside his ' self ', something which *he* cannot master. On the other hand, the higher the rank of the rebellious tendency, the more does he feel that it is a part of himself that is in revolt, or that his will is divided against itself. But when the whole of his everyday habit of behaviour is threatened by the cognition of some supreme social tendency with which it conflicts, he is likely to identify ' himself ' with the private rather than the social tendency, and to feel that ' he ' is in conflict with a greater and foreign need, whose claim ' he ' ought to admit. In fact, the subject regards as ' himself ', or ' his ' will, those tendencies which are *in general* the determinants of his behaviour. Those which are inferior in rank to his general determinants he regards as either fragmentary phases of himself or automatisms external to himself. Those which are superior to his general determinants he also regards as foreign to himself, though they have a ' claim ' on him. But the truth is that if by ' him ' we mean a process of subjective activity, *all* his determinants are equally foreign to him in that they are equally objective to, and prior to, the conations which they arouse ; yet also they are equally internal to his ' self ' in that they are embraced within *his* content, and *he* conates them.

We can now formulate more clearly the relation between free rational choice of the believed greatest fulfilment of objective tendencies and compulsive irrational choice of the believed less fulfilment. Two influences bear upon every choice, of whatever level of complexity. On the one hand, there are automatic behaviour-tendencies inherent in the

organism, or (if it be preferred), in the body and the self or ' mental structure '. But, as we have already seen, it seems unnecessary to postulate a distinct psychical structure of dispositions. It is enough to postulate an organism of a certain form in which a general psychical capacity is emergent. We may then derive the established specific ' psychical tendencies ' from this general capacity in its relation with particular organic needs and a particular environment. These already established tendencies, then, are in part due to the history of the race and in part due to the history of the individual. On the other hand, there is the present cognition of the total objective field of tendencies, in which the established tendencies of the organism are but minor members. The automatic behaviour-tendencies are, so to speak, the momentum imparted to the organism by past rational and irrational activities on the part of the individual and his ancestors. When automatic tendencies of the organism and the rest of the cognized field come into conflict, there occurs also a conflict in conation. In rational choice, the whole cognized field is taken into account ; the final act of will favours the greatest objective fulfilment. In irrational choice, only the automatic tendencies of the organism are taken into account. But there are two kinds of automatic functioning, and they are differently related to conation. If the recalcitrant tendency is purely reflex and physical, as in the case of a sneeze, there is automatic behaviour but rarely compulsive choice. But if the recalcitrant tendency is of greater complexity, such that it entails volition for its activity, it may compel the conative act without which it cannot function ; in fact there will be automatic behaviour initiated by compulsive choice.

All behaviour is behaviour on the part of the organism. And the organism has in its own nature certain innate and acquired tendencies to behave in relation to organic, personal, and social ends. But in the mental content at any time there are, besides these automatic behaviour-tendencies inherent in the organism, many other tendencies external to the organism. Rationally, the will should

favour the greatest objective fulfilment. Actually, it is often a compulsive acquiescence in the functioning of some automatic behaviour-tendency of one part of the total objective field, namely, the organism. But sometimes, on the other hand, the cognition of the objective ideal succeeds in mastering the automatic tendency, and even in establishing new and rational automatic tendencies.

(D) REPRESSION

One point must yet be made more precise in this account of choice of the less fulfilment. It seems that, quite apart from the impetus of familiar tendencies, the conation of simpler tendencies is sometimes intrinsically easier than the conation of the more complex tendencies. We may imagine the case of a man who, though he has habitually, over a long period, chosen social fulfilments at the expense of private or instinctive fulfilments, yet at last collapses into the more crude forms of conation. Since this failure is not to be attributed to habit, how shall we explain it? In such a case it is possible merely that the man's cognition has deteriorated, that he has ceased to know, and therefore to conate, those more complex tendencies which do, as a matter of fact, demand high cognitive powers. But, on the other hand, we must admit that, even though his cognition remain intact, his conation itself may deteriorate. It is not only in the cruder kind of fiction that the established saint or social enthusiast may unexpectedly succumb to the temptations (let us say) of a disastrous sexual adventure.

Such cases are sometimes explained in terms of repression. The man, it is said, has not granted his more primitive self its due fulfilment. Hence, there has been generated, under pressure, ' psychic energy ' at high tension straining toward release. Finally, this ' head of energy ' has broken down resistance and carried all before it. How shall we interpret these metaphorical expressions in terms of our theory? Evidently, just as over-exercise of the more primitive tendencies may set up habits capable of resisting the appeal

of the ideal, so also rigorous resistance of them may, in some sense, cause them in the end to capture the will. Evidently the higher, more impersonal, kinds of conation are only permanently possible so long as the more primitive tendencies are allowed a moderate fulfilment.

This impracticability of the higher conations while primitive tendencies are permanently repressed has been the main support of instinct psychology. For it has seemed that the higher conations were but luxuries embroidered upon the essential needs of the organism. But this argument from repression cuts both ways. Repression, when it breaks down, shows the primitive tendencies victorious ; but before it breaks down it shows them mastered in open battle by the cognition of higher tendencies. Consequently, it is no more reasonable to say that the outbreak of the primitive proves the primitive to be the real source of all conation, than to say that the control of the primitive by the higher conations proves that the primitive is but a blind approximation to the fully developed rational conation.

However this be, a sudden revolt against long-standing repression is quite intelligible on our theory of conation. We cannot, indeed, explain it in terms of the momentum of habitual choice ; but we can point to the fact that, though the repressed tendencies have not been espoused (owing to their antagonism with the dominant tendencies of the mental content), yet they have all along existed. Not familiarity of choice, but the insistence of the tendency itself, finally persuades conation. The repressed tendency may be an innate tendency which has been prominent in the history of the race, and in relation to which the present individual organism is fashioned. Or it may be an acquired tendency which, though perhaps it has never been willed, has been imposed upon the nature of the organism (or the person) by circumstances, whether in infancy or at some later stage. In either case the organism itself as a physiological machine has been all along tending to act in a certain manner, and has been prevented by the cognition of major tendencies. As this repression advances, the

organism gets into a more and more unhealthy state ; the resisted tendency becomes more nearly irresistible, and finally breaks into action and compels the will. All behaviour is behaviour on the part of an organism. Cognition of the objective field of tendencies cannot issue in behaviour unless it has mastered the organism's automatisms ; nor can it issue in a completely unified will.

Familiarity, then, is not the real source of compulsive conation. The essential point is that the agent is the organism itself. And the organism itself at any moment has certain behaviour tendencies of its own, due in part to its own innate form, and in part to modifications brought about in its form by the operation of its past cognition and activity. Often, then, there is conflict between these established modes of behaviour and the demands of the total cognized field. And since conation is essentially conation by the organism (in its psychical capacity), not by the external world, any advance in conation has to be achieved in opposition to the organism's own established nature.

Another aspect of this matter may here be noted, though it must be more fully developed at a later stage. When we are tired or in ill-health the more complex mental processes are apt to give way to the simpler. Cognition which is precise, and takes into account a wide field, dwindles into vague and narrow cognition. Similarly, then, conation which takes much of the objective field into account apparently entails more 'energy' (physical energy, perhaps) than conation which takes into account only the primitive and central part of the objective field, namely, the established organic tendencies. It is only when we are 'wide awake' that we can approximate our will to 'the good will'.

(E) SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION OF TENDENCY IN PSYCHOLOGY

Our whole discussion of tendency may be summarized as follows. All that can be meant by saying that an inorganic object has a tendency to behave in a certain manner

is that it does in fact so behave if nothing extraneous interferes with it, or that it would so behave if it were not prevented. But, in the case of organisms, we rightly say that they have intrinsic tendencies to behave in teleological manners which entail the co-operation of a certain kind of environment ; and that, if they are prevented from this natural behaviour, they will if possible behave in some manner which approximates thereto. Further, at any rate in the case of organisms, we are justified in saying that resistance of tendency involves a condition of tension or strain.

Conation presupposes awareness of a tendency objective to the conative act. Thus organic tendencies enter the mental content as impulses, or are known as enduring tendencies, and thus afford motives for conation. Beyond the strictly organic tendencies there emerges from the psychical activities of the organism a more complex class of needs which may be called needs of the person, or the psychical needs of the organism itself. From the cognition of society yet another class of tendencies enters the individual's mental content and may determine his will. And cosmic tendencies may in principle do so also. It is mistaken to derive the more complex conations wholly from an innate set of primitive tendencies. Any objective tendency may enter the mental content and influence the will in its own right.

Such in brief is the theory of the objectivity of need which I have sought to work out in the three preceding chapters. This theory is strongly suggested by the experience of the objectivity of moral obligation. But, apart from that, it seems to be involved in combining the assumption of epistemological realism with a critical acceptance of the hormic principle in psychology, according to which all conscious striving presupposes some teleological activity prior to the consciousness of it. My aim has been to criticize and elucidate the hormic theory. It is a disputable theory ; so is epistemological realism. But my claim is that when hormic psychology is purged of an animism which is wholly unnecessary to it, what is left

is the theory of objective teleological tendencies. Thus though it would be rash to assert of plants that they are conscious, we cannot avoid regarding their behaviour as teleological. Whether they are conscious or not, there is an important sense in which they may be said to *need* light, air, and so on. Similarly in our own bodies teleological activity does seem to occur independently of our consciousness. Moreover, conscious desire in its simplest form is introspected as conscious 'espousal' of some organic process which, to be espoused, must first be cognized. And even in the case of more complex and mental activities careful observation seems to show that the same principle applies.

Having worked out in some detail the theory of the objectivity of need, I went on to consider, in terms of the theory, the problem of mental conflict and irrational choice. My conclusions on this subject may be summarized as follows. Within the mental content there is conflict of objective tendencies. In principle choice favours the greatest possible objective fulfilment. But behaviour is behaviour of the organism, and conation is conation by the organism. And the established behaviour-tendencies of the organism may resist control. Either they may function independently, as in an uncontrollable reflex, or they may cause irrational conation, as in imprudent or immoral conduct.

CHAPTER X

OBJECTIVE ACTIVITY AS THE GROUND OF ETHICS

(A) THE MEANING OF GOOD

HAVING argued that conation necessarily involves awareness of, or imagination of, some tendency objective to the conative act itself, I will now consider the bearing of this psychological conclusion on ethics. But first I must gather up the threads of our various ethical inquiries, even at the cost of some repetition, so as to weave them, if possible, into a coherent pattern. Thus I hope to formulate an ethical theory which, while strictly ethical, will also be adequately related to biology and physics. Having attempted this purely abstract discussion, I shall venture at a later stage on a more concrete description of the nature of the ideal.

We must recall the fundamental ambiguity of the word 'good'. It refers sometimes to acts of valuation, sometimes to objects valued. Only the latter sense concerns ethics. Everything that is called 'good' in this sense is either (*a*) itself a case of free teleological activity, of fulfilment of tendency, or else (*b*) it is instrumental to, or at least significant of, such activity or fulfilment. Conversely, everything bad is either itself a case of the hindrance of activity or tendency, or else is instrumental to, or is at least significant of, the hindrance of activity or tendency.

Here at the outset, however, we must remember our distinction between 'tendency' and 'capacity'. We shall find reason to say that by 'good' we mean (or ought to mean, in ethics) not merely the fulfilment of the intrinsic tendencies of things as they are, but also the fulfilment of their capacity of co-operating with other things to create new tendencies and fulfilments.

At the outset also we must refer to our earlier conclusion that what we mean by ' good ' is essentially the fulfilment of *teleological* activity. But since the distinction between teleological and non-teleological activity is perhaps not ultimate, we must not limit good offhand to those activities which are admittedly teleological. Even physical activity, it will be remembered, may perhaps be described as low-grade teleological activity on the part of ultimate physical units acting in relation to immediate ends. Consequently we are not entitled to deny that physical fulfilment is good merely because it is not apparently teleological. Our reluctance to admit that physical fulfilment is in any sense good may be mitigated by the thought that physical tendencies inhere in the very same stuff as that which, in higher organization, emerges into biological and even mental activity. In physical fulfilment its simplest capacity is expressed ; but *what* is fulfilled on the physical plane is that which can in more favourable postures conduct itself in the manners which we judge most excellent. A man falls from a cliff. This physical event is certainly bad in that it entails a cessation of all organic and psychical activity in the man. But if physical activity were to be proved essentially teleological, we should have to insist that in this catastrophe some good does occur, though only on a lowly plane. For the fall is the free activity of certain ultimate physical units. This primitive good, however, is more than counterbalanced by the evil of the destruction of the man as a highly organized living being.[1]

Now it is obvious that, for instance, good food is so called because it favours the general teleological tendency of organisms to maintain themselves. It nourishes, and is not indigestible. Good weather, no less clearly, is that kind of weather which in general favours human activities. A bad fall is a fall which does harm to the body, and so prevents its natural behaviour. A bad pain, though it is hated for its intrinsic character, owes its hatefulness

[1] I am not, of course, suggesting that the cliff has an objective need to kill the man. Obviously it is entirely indifferent to the cliff's nature whether he lives or dies. But the man's *fall* constitutes a physical fulfilment of the man's own matter (and. strictly speaking, of the whole planet to which he falls).

apparently to its being a symptom of the destruction of living tissue, of tissue which tends to maintain itself in a state of organization. Moreover, as we have seen, there is reason to say that the painfulness of 'pain' sensa is constituted by our tendency to shun them.

Often, no doubt, when we say that a thing is good we seem to mean merely that it is a perfect instance of its kind. Thus a good circle is a fairly accurate approximation to the form of perfect circularity. We may be tempted to think of it as 'trying' to be a perfect circle; and we speak of it as good in so far as it succeeds in attaining this 'form' to which we suppose it to approximate. Similarly, we may speak of a good knife, meaning an instrument that approximates to the ideal form which a knife should have in order to be wholly a knife, lacking nothing, and having no irrelevant features. Thus in so far as the instrument really *is* a knife, and not something other than a knife, it is a good knife; in so far as it fails to be a knife, it is an imperfect or bad knife. In the same sense we may speak even of a good knave, implying that this knave is a complete and typical specimen of knavery, that his nature is not alloyed with traits of any nature incompatible with knavery.

In the actual world there are no perfect knaves or knives or circles. But in each of these cases goodness consists in approximation to an ideal. In so far as the thing falls short of that which (we suppose) is its own ideal nature, it is not its own true self. It is internally discrepant, logically incomplete, not a self-contained individual, but a sort of mixture of various conflicting forms. In fact, if that which is logically discrepant with itself cannot be real, it seems to follow that in so far as a thing falls short of perfection it is not fully real. Thus the good and the real come to be identified. On this view, then, there is not one goodness, but as many kinds of goodness as there are forms to which things approximate. The goodness of circles is quite different from that of knives; and the goodness of knives has nothing in common with the goodness of knaves. And there is yet another goodness of

bucketfuls, and another of mountains, and still another of conduct.

But what reason have we to say that an actual knife or mountain strives toward, or approximates to, any form other than its actual form? And what right have we to say that a good knife is more real than a bad one? And if a bad knave is less real than a perfect knave, is a bad citizen also less real than a perfect citizen? Everything which exists does exist. Even a half-hearted villain is a perfect instance of half-hearted villainhood. Everything fulfils its *own* nature perfectly. Why 'ought' it to have some other nature?

Evidently behind this notion that goodness is conformity to type, there must be some *demand* for the type, some purpose which needs something for its fulfilment. When a man is illustrating geometry, and equally when he is making a wheel, a true circle fulfils his need better than an imperfect one. The form of a knife is determined by the need for a cutting instrument. And the form of a knave is determined by the purpose of some one who needs a knave, whether to commit a murder or adorn a novel. Moreover, for some murders and for some novels the half-hearted knave may be more satisfactory than the thorough kind.

The case of the knave in the novel is particularly significant. For just as in music we demand those intervals which are neither too trite nor too awkward for our grasp, so in other cases we often judge that to be good, the form of which is intelligible, but not too easily intelligible. Further, just as in music taste has developed so as to prize ever subtler harmonies and rhythms, so in other spheres we may learn to grasp, and to demand, ever more complex forms. Nor does this only hold good of art. At one mental level we may commend most highly the simple virtues, such as physical courage and generosity; but later we may appreciate more complex forms of conduct.

Even in the case of aesthetic value 'good' means fulfilling to some need; and, as always, the need is objective to the value-judgment. On one theory of art a good

picture successfully and harmoniously presents the symbolical fulfilment of various human tendencies, which are all of them tendencies discovered in organisms, societies, and the inorganic world. But on another theory of art, which, indeed, is not incompatible with the former, the artist discovers in the external certain suggestions of rhythm and form, which in nature are never perfectly fulfilled. These rhythms and forms he disentangles from irrelevant accompaniments, and presents them (in the medium of his art) as perfected fulfilments of tendencies. Now these tendencies are not strictly tendencies of nature, though they are, indeed, capacities of nature. They are tendencies which arise from the conjunction of nature and the artist's psychical capacity. Nevertheless, they are objective to the act which values their fulfilment. In the case of music, apart from any utilization of the fused associations of sounds and rhythms, the artist strives to present the fulfilment of certain formal potentialities of sound. In literature fused and unfused associations of words, phrases, and rhythms, play a great part, affording symbolical fulfilment of various human tendencies; but also there is again some fulfilment of the formal capacities of sound.

Similarly, the intellectual inquirer discovers in his field certain suggestions of explanatory principles none of which, on the face of it, is quite capable of ordering the facts. For him, then, that principle is good which 'fulfils the demands of' many facts harmoniously. He does not call the principle good merely because it satisfies his own demand for a solution; he calls it good because it is the fulfilment of suggestions given to him by the facts themselves, and thought of as tendencies, or at least capacities, of the facts. But, as in the case of art, the tendencies are not really tendencies of the facts alone; they arise through the conjunction of the facts and his psychical capacity. But though they are thus tendencies grounded in his psychical capacity, they are none the less objective to the act of valuing their fulfilment.

Even the good that is called 'moral' is essentially

relative to the fulfilment of some tendency logically prior to its own fulfilment. Some, no doubt, have argued that moral right and wrong are absolute, and not relative to any end, that they are characters inherent in certain forms of conduct themselves, just as flatness and sharpness are supposed to be inherent in a spade, and not relative to our needs. To lie, they tell us, is intrinsically evil, whether the consequences of any particular lie be good or bad. But this view is not borne out by the facts of our moral experience, nor by the progressive criticism of the moralities of different eras. In practice we give reasons for our moral condemnation of lying. Either we say that it is contrary to the will of God, which implies that it thwarts a tendency which, in God's mental content, gives rise to his conation; or we say that it conflicts with an impersonal and universal moral law, which means (if it means anything) that it conflicts with a need of the universe; or we point out that, if lying were sanctioned in human society, there would be an end to the mutual confidence upon which society is based. In fact, in this last case, we explain the rightness of truth-telling as instrumental to a good which we regard as intrinsic, namely, the fulfilment of the needs of society, or of individuals in social relation. Most persons are willing to lie to save a life, or for the sake of some cause which they regard as of supreme importance. But they do so with a feeling of guilt. And though this feeling is often merely habitual, or the outcome of a superstitious belief in absolute morality, it may be partly justified by the fact that any lie, in however good a cause, may do some hurt to social confidence. Finally it may be held that lying is bad because, apart from any other effects, it thwarts the cognitive tendency of the listener. A need for truth is implied in his nature as a being capable of knowing.

It is clear, then, that the good which is called moral is like all goods, essentially a fulfilment, and is inconceivable apart from some prior demand. And the demand itself is necessarily the outcome of some objective tendency.

In fact it is impossible to find anything whatever that

is good which is not either itself a case of fulfilment of some tendency or capacity objective to the act of valuing, or a means toward such fulfilment, or at least a symptom of such fulfilment. Of course there are many cases in which, although a thing affords fulfilment, we do not call it good. It is said to be not good to sleep when duty calls; yet sleep is a fulfilment of organic tendency. But sleep, regarded in abstraction from its extra-organic consequences, is considered good; and it is so considered simply in that it is the fulfilment of a tendency. Instrumentally it may be bad; intrinsically it is good. Of all such cases we may say that in so far as they are less than good they are also less than fulfilment; and that, on the other hand, in so far as they are fulfilments, though of a minor kind, they are also goods, though of a minor kind.

(B) THE MEANING OF BETTER AND BEST

If the essential meaning of 'good' is fulfilling, or favourable to free activity, what is the essential meaning of 'better'? What do we mean when we say that one thing is better than another? Clearly, when we are judging merely from the point of view of some single tendency, we call that 'better' which affords more fulfilment to the tendency in question. For instance, when we are aware of an impulse to eat, and are thoroughly hungry, a solid meal is judged better than a snack; and half a loaf is better than no bread. When a society is hampered by foreign domination, that policy is the better which will produce the more freedom.

On the other hand, when we are comparing the fulfilment of one tendency with the fulfilment of another, we have to pass value-judgments on the tendencies themselves. Sometimes we may be able to compare the extent of the reality which expresses itself in each tendency. Thus the tendency of a raindrop to trickle down a window-pane expresses less of the real than the tendency of a river in spate. The tendency of one man to seek nourishment expresses less of the real than the tendency of a famished

mob, or the will of their protagonist who voices their demands.

Of course such simple quantitative comparisons are not often possible. And if we were to leave the matter thus, we should be justly charged with the error of reducing the qualitative concept 'better' much too glibly to the crude quantitative concept 'fulfilling more tendencies'. And indeed the phrase 'more tendencies' would be very inadequate, as its significance is not merely quantitative but numerical. In respect, indeed, of tendencies of the same hierarchical level, that course is better which actually fulfils more tendencies; but the essential principle of comparisons is: that is better which consists of the fulfilling of 'more of the tendency or capacity or potentiality of teleologically active substance'. This, I submit, is the principle which in fact we do finally apply when we have to compare the goodness of things. For instance, if I say of two men that X is better than Y, I mean, apart from their social instrumentality, that X is living the fuller life. Each of them is a teleologically active substance capable of physical and psychical activity. Each of them, for instance, tends to preserve himself intact as an organism, and to control his environment in relation to whatever ends he has espoused; and X is better (in these respects), the more accurately he behaves in relation to these ends. Again, each tends to cognize his environment and to conform his will to his cognition of objective tendencies. And X is better the more he succeeds in these activities. He is better, in fact, the wider and deeper and more accurate his knowledge, and the more rational his will. And not only so, but also he is better the more *capacity* he has for such activities in his innate and acquired constitution. Thus in the last resort the difference between them is not like the difference between red and green, but like the difference between more red and less red. In fact it is, after all, at bottom a quantitative difference.

It may be objected that I do not show how this principle of comparison is to be applied. But I claim to have shown, at any rate, what the principle is that we do

attempt to apply when we call one thing better than another. The difficulty of applying it accurately is no argument against the contention that we do apply it, or intend to apply it. If it be objected that, for instance, in the case of the man who falls down a cliff and is killed, the principle cannot apply in comparing the living activity of the man with the physical activity of his atoms in his fall and destruction, the answer once more is that this is the principle which in fact we do apply. We know that the man's life consists in complex teleological activity, while physical activity appears not to do so. If we believed that physical activity were the more complete expression of the teleological nature of substance, we should judge it also the better. To make the one judgment is to make the other. But in preferring the living man we prefer what we rightly or wrongly believe to be the more complete expression of the nature of substance.

Here I would emphasize an important point, even at the risk of repetition. I have argued that by ' better ' we mean fulfilling more of the tendency or capacity of active substances. This theory purports to be a generalization from our actual preferences. Obviously the mere fact that preference occurs does not prove the truth of this theory of preference. But the theory is derived from a critical inspection of, and induction from, actual preferences, together with what I take to be the implications of the hormic principle in psychology. According to my interpretation of the hormic principle, conation is essentially the espousal of objective teleological tendencies. Preference then, *when it is not distorted by automatism,* should consist in espousal of the greater objective fulfilment. And in fact (so I submit) careful inspection of preference confirms this view.

In comparing the man and the atoms of his body, we have to take into account the principle of emergence. And it is in cases where emergent differences occur that ' better ' is regarded most emphatically as qualitative. For the emergent activity is in fact different qualitatively from the reducible. But in judging the one ' better ' than

the other, we are essentially judging it to be that in which the capacity of the active substance is more fully expressed. Thus in the last resort, though the activities which we compare differ qualitatively, we compare them in respect of a supposed underlying quantitative difference. Thus, although in these cases it is impossible to measure the degree of betterness, ' better ' is, even here, a quantitative concept. I have assumed that the fulfilment of the emergent activity of the whole would be generally judged better than the fulfilment of the reducible activity of the parts disorganized. Whether it really is better, is a question of fact which could only be answered by discovering whether or not it is actually a greater fulfilment. I have suggested that this may well be the case. I have conceived the emergent activity as constituting a greater fulfilment even for the part itself, as in human society the individual's social activity is experienced as a greater fulfilment for the individual than merely egoistic activity. This is open to dispute. But the point relevant to our present discussion is that, if and when we intuitively judge an emergent activity better than a reducible activity, what we are doing is judging, rightly or wrongly, that it constitutes a greater fulfilment. For instance we may intuitively judge it better, i.e. more fulfilling of active substance ; and then we may seek to prove that in fact it *is* more fulfilling, i.e. better. Of course both the intuitive judgment and the reasoning process may be erroneous.

Sometimes in comparing tendencies we may be able to discover some more fundamental end which is served by both tendencies. Then we can judge the two tendencies (or activities) in relation to that end. Thus within the individual we say that those activities are better which contribute more to the maintenance and harmonious development of the individual. Similarly in the case of societies, those activities are better which contribute more to the development of the society. But as between an individual's fulfilment and a society's, the latter is likely to be better in that it is probably the fulfilment of a greater whole with tendencies emergent in social organization.

But let us not forget that the will of an individual or a minority may more truly express the need of a society than the will of an unenlightened majority.

We may conclude then that the essential meaning of 'better' is simply 'more fulfilling' or 'more expressive of the nature of active substance'; and that there is both a better which is related to any single tendency, and a better which involves the comparative evaluation of tendencies, either in respect of the extent of reality expressed, in them, or in relation to some major tendency to which they should be subordinate. For instance, as we have seen, the tendencies which the parts of a whole would have in isolation from the whole, should be subordinated to the emergent tendencies of the whole. But in human society the tendencies of the whole and of the parts are inextricably interwoven. The needs of society are the needs of its individual members, but they are the needs of the-individuals-in-relation. And from this relation the distinctively social needs emerge. The ideally social individual needs harmonious fulfilment of all individuals even more than the fulfilment of himself as a private person. For his mental content is (in the ideal case) the society of which his person is but one member. We may say, then, that, from the social point of view, that is the better which affords the greater harmonious fulfilment of individuals; but further that those individual needs are the better needs which are the more social, since the more social needs are capable of the richer fulfilment. It should be remembered also that not only the needs of extant individuals are to be taken into account, but also the needs of future generations.

We thus discover an important corollary to this account of 'better'. If that is better which is, or is instrumental to, the greater fulfilment of tendencies, and especially of the tendencies of greater wholes, it follows that that is also better which brings into being more tendencies, and greater wholes with higher emergent tendencies. Thus in making our value-judgments we must take into account the possibility of modifying the nature of individuals and

of society so that new and richer fulfilments may occur. We must, that is, take into account not only extant tendencies but also capacities.

We may now consider the most abstract meaning of the phrases 'the best', 'the good', 'the ideal'; though we cannot at this stage inquire into the more concrete character of the ideal which is implied in the nature of the world as we know it. In general that is 'the best' in relation to a given tendency, or whole of tendencies, which would afford complete fulfilment to the tendencies concerned. Further, in relation to the whole universe there is a sense in which 'the best' is the complete fulfilment of all actual and possible tendencies of every rank, including the tendencies of the whole as a whole. But such an ideal is clearly unattainable, since tendencies conflict. We must, therefore, be content for practical purposes to mean by 'the ideal' the greatest *possible* fulfilment of tendencies in the universe. In general, we may say that the ideal is that the universe should achieve such a reorganization of its nature that obstruction may be so far as possible eliminated, and that the richest possible tendencies of the highest possible rank may be completely fulfilled, along with as much minor fulfilment as may be.

But we must further insist that, though conflict is itself evil, since it involves resistance of activity, yet if, as seems likely, it is sometimes the indispensable ground from which higher tendencies may emerge, then it is better that there should be conflict than a barren harmony. Indeed, there is some reason to suppose that conflict of subordinate units, though only conflict within special limits, is essential for the occurrence of organism.

Tendencies of lower ranks also, however, even to the lowest, must be fulfilled as far as this is possible without detriment to the higher. But *only* so far as this is possible. For we agreed long ago that the most complete fulfilment of anything is its fulfilment as a member of an emergent whole greater than itself.

There is an objection to this view that the ideal is the greatest possible fulfilment of tendency. Regarding the

total universe of existence, and not merely that part of it which is teleologically active, the greatest *possible* fulfilment, we may be told, is just that actual amount of fulfilment which does occur. For where there is conflict the stronger must win. In every case of conflict the greatest possible fulfilment, therefore, is always achieved.

We may meet this objection by pointing out the ambiguity of the word 'possible' in this connexion. What does necessarily occur is the greatest possible fulfilment of certain active substances in a certain extant *pattern* or *configuration*; what does not necessarily occur is the greatest possible fulfilment of those active substances themselves, of their individual tendencies and capacities. Owing to their relationship they may hinder one another. We may imagine a universe in which opposing forces were permanently balanced in a state of strain or tension. Here some slight rearrangement, even if for the moment it were to entail less fulfilment, might produce greater fulfilment for both sides in the long run, and might perhaps even favour the emergence of new activities. But, apart from the emergence of new activities, it is clear that each antagonist in every conflict might be diverted so as to avoid collision with the other. And so each might achieve free activity. In a purely physical universe such interference were obviously impossible. But of every kind of universe we may say that it should be so ordered that all its substances should achieve free activity to the fullest 'possible' extent, and that all latent capacities should be fully expressed.

(c) THE MEANING OF OUGHT

At an earlier stage of this inquiry I offered a psychological description of the fact that what is believed to be the greater objective fulfilment is not always chosen. On such occasions we judge that we 'ought' to have chosen otherwise. We may, that is, recognize that the end which we have rejected has in some sense a claim on us. It is now time to attempt a logical analysis of the nature of this claim.

Let us first consider the meanings of the word 'ought'. The word is not only used in a 'moral' sense. We may say, for instance, 'If he desired to reach Paris to-night, he ought to have travelled by air.' Here it is implied that the 'ought' is relative to a desire and a certain physical situation. Had he not desired to reach Paris to-night, it would be meaningless to say (in this 'non-moral' sense) that he ought to have travelled by air. All that is intended by the statement is that, in the given circumstances, the only means of fulfilling his desire was to travel by air. Given the desire and the circumstances, the 'ought' follows, whether or not he is in fact intelligent enough or energetic enough to carry it out.

The word 'ought' may be used in this 'non-moral' sense with reference also to one person's desire and another person's action. We may, for instance, say 'I desired him to reach Paris to-night; therefore *from my point of view* he ought to have travelled by air.' He, of course, will not admit this obligation unless he has entered into my point of view, unless, in fact, he and I have been determined by cognition of the same objective tendencies. Yet, whether he has entered into my point of view or not, and whether or not my desire is a just expression of all the objective tendencies in the situation, it is nevertheless true *universally* that from the point of view which *I* happen now to occupy *he* ought to have travelled by air. Within the universe of discourse of my desire and the physical circumstances, he ought to have travelled by air. On the other hand within the universe of discourse of *his* desire and the physical circumstances it is untrue that he ought to have travelled by air. In each case the 'ought' is universal. It is true universally that in such a situation, not complicated by other factors, so and so ought to be done.

But my desire and his desire, though they are centres of universes of discourse which are distinct, refer to one and the same world of fact. And in that world their fulfilments may be incompatible. Thus arises the distinctively moral meaning of 'ought'. One of the desires,

we may judge, morally ought to be fulfilled, and the other ought not. We evaluate the two desiderata with reference to some standard independent of each desire.

Within the merely prudential sphere it is easy to find a measure for this comparative evaluation. Desires, as we have already seen, are essentially desires for the fulfilment of cognized objective needs. We often say that, though a man desires so and so, he does not need it, and ought not to have it, and even ought not to desire it. When a man's desires conflict, we judge them with reference to his needs ; but of course we may judge mistakenly as to what his needs really are. Of an engineer we may say that he 'ought to have known' that a certain shaft would not stand so great a strain. In such a case we mean that one whose activity is that of engineering had a need which only the knowledge of certain facts could fulfil, whether he desired such knowledge or not. Indeed, he 'ought to have desired' such knowledge, since he did in fact need it. (And when we say that he 'had a need', we mean in this case that the need was involved, whether he knew it or not, in some active objects embraced within his mental content.)

Clearly, then, within the prudential sphere we judge desires in relation to a supposed need of the organism or of the person, and may say that in general a man's desires ought to correspond with his need. We judge, in fact, with reference to a universe of discourse in which the supposed need of the man is the determining factor. And if we are asked by what right we subordinate his felt desires to his perhaps unconscious need, we justify ourselves by insisting that every desire essentially derives from just the consciousness of a need, even when that consciousness consists of a grossly erroneous judgment. The desire has, so to speak, no rights against the need, because the objective determinant of the desire is the need itself. From this it follows that we may translate the sentence, 'Since he desired to reach Paris to-night, he ought to have travelled by air,' into the sentence, 'In consequence of the need of a certain object within his

mental content, namely, the need for him to reach Paris to-night, there occurred also the need for him to travel by air.' In fact 'ought', in this 'non-moral' sphere, depends wholly on need.

But beyond the merely prudential sphere the situation is apparently different. For the needs of different individuals may conflict; and then we may judge that the need of the one ought to be fulfilled and the need of the other ought to be sacrificed. What can we mean by this? In general what is it that we really mean when we say that a man 'morally' ought to love his neighbours, or ought to educate his children, or ought to obey the laws, or ought to serve God, or ought to behave so as to advance an ideal even at the cost of his own life?

Clearly we do not *mean*, as we do in the case of prudence, that the man himself really needs to do these things in order to fulfil his own nature. Even if it be true that he cannot, as a matter of fact, attain fulfilment without such conduct, without, for instance, sacrificing his life in the cause, we do not *mean* that he ought to behave in this way just because *his* fulfilment demands it.

On the contrary we *mean* (whether with reason or not) that the universe itself is such that, when we take into account all that we know of *its* nature, there is seen to be a dominant need whose fulfilment demands these activities on the part of a man. And when we say that this need has a 'claim' on each of us, we mean, reasonably or unreasonably, that goodness must be universally grounded; and that in the universal view the fulfilment of this supreme need appears as the intrinsically best end; and that any fulfilment which conflicts with this ideal is therefore necessarily not sanctioned in the universal view. If it is still asked, *why* the universal need should supplant our private needs, we might reply that it is the expression of an entity objectively far greater than any private person, and that because of its greatness we intuitively recognize its claim. Such in brief would seem to be the essence of what we *mean* by moral obligation.

(D) LOGICAL BASIS OF OBLIGATION

We must now try to state the logical basis or justification of this sense of obligation toward something regarded as other than the experient. And first it must be insisted that any account of obligation which slurs over the distinction between self and not-self is necessarily false. The essence of obligation is that it is felt toward something regarded as distinct from the subject. Morality does not arise if the major need, which is the source of the moral claim, is *felt* as a need of the greater self. The essential fact about the moral claim is that it is *not* logically grounded in the need for self-fulfilment, even though acceptance of it may incidentally lead to self-fulfilment. If the self is fulfilled in moral behaviour, this is because it has embraced something intrinsically good ; the ideal is not good because it is the fulfilment of self. The characteristic fact about obligation is that it is felt, not as an impulse toward self-fulfilment, but as an impulse of loyalty to something thought of as good intrinsically, as *being* good whether it is within the mental content or not. Perhaps this feeling is merely illusory ; perhaps it is not. But clearly it cannot be given an adequate logical justification by any theory which seeks to explain it in terms of its precise contrary.

The starting-point of an adequate theory of obligation is a clear understanding of the objective source of conation. We must hold firmly to the fact that conation is in essence neither the pursuit of feeling, nor the pursuit of exclusively organic fulfilment, nor yet the pursuit of exclusively personal fulfilment ; but is primarily the espousal of *whatever* tendencies are cognized within the objective mental content. Though conation is, of course, a unique mental act, and is not ' forced ' by anything external, it is also essentially *directed*, or suggested, by an objective tendency within the cognized field. And this epistemologically objective tendency, however erroneous, owes its dynamic nature in the last resort to the ontologically objective world. Conation is, so to speak, the ' living through ', or conscious championing of, the process, or

drive, or resisted thrust, of some reality other than the act of conation. The direction of every act of conation is thus entirely derived from cognition of the objective tendency that is being conated. Conation without such an objective tendency is simply inconceivable, meaningless.

The ground of obligation, then, is to be *seen* through an understanding of the nature of conation itself. Not that the logical ground of obligation *lies in* the nature of conation, or of conative beings ; we have insisted that it does not. But by studying the nature of conation we discover that at all levels it entails an intuitive and unanalysable apprehension of an objective claim. Not only in the recognized moral sphere, but in every conation, the motive source is this intuition of objective tendency as having a claim, or constituting a claim, on any conative being who cognizes it. Any such claim has, of course, only provisional authority. It may have to be denied because it conflicts with objectively more important claims. Its universality may have to be restricted ; but in itself it is presented as universal.

Conation itself, then, even when it is distorted by automatism, is in its very nature an intuitive loyalty to objective tendency. In every conative act, even the most automatic, we express, as it were, allegiance to some part or aspect of the world. And we do so, not because the object of our conation happens to satisfy some demand intrinsic to ourselves as conative beings, but because the object itself, through our cognition, rouses us to conativity. Our allegiance is doubtless of our own giving, but also it is of the object's awakening. Our conativity is suggested in us (though not created) by the object cognized as tending. If this is true, namely that every conative act is essentially a championing of *some* tendency of the real, the final goal of all conation is the greatest possible fulfilment of the whole real. This conclusion follows, not from any rational impulse in ourselves, nor from any real will for self-fulfilment, but from the nature of every object of conation. In awakening to allegiance to one object, we *incur* obligation to all ; since all alike are objects.

To say that conativity is awakened by the object is to say that the fulfilment of the objective tendency or capacity is intuited as intrinsically desirable, or as having, or rather being, an intrinsic good. The *only* kind of object which has this intrinsic goodness is, as we have seen, the fulfilment of objective tendency or capacity. Or, more precisely, by goodness we *mean* essentially fulfilment of objective tendency. For it is *meaningless* to assert that anything which has no tendency, or capacity, or need, can have a claim. The concept of 'claim' *involves* a something active and unfulfilled. Goodness, were it a static character of objects, and not the fruition of capacity, would simply occur or not occur as sensory characters do; and its absence could not demand our activity. Whatever degree of cognitive skill we employ for the true apprehension of the object, its fulfilment, when once it is cognized, is intuited as (apart from conflict with other active objects) intrinsically desirable. And, apart from the distortion of automatism, the greater fulfilment is intuited as more desirable than the less, as intrinsically better than the less. Thus in the object of every conative act it is implied that *the intrinsic best* is the greatest possible fulfilment of the objective world. And this ideal has a 'claim' over us in the sense that, in spite of our ignorance and our automatism, each of our conative acts accepts as its goal an objective fulfilment which is but an abstraction from the objective ideal. Since all conation is loyalty to objective tendency, we inevitably acknowledge, even in the meanest act of conation, the claim of the ideal. Or rather, whether we consciously acknowledge the claim or not, it holds *of* us. For every act of conation springs from an intuition of an intrinsic good; and from the many intrinsic goods arises the possibility of an intrinsic best which is most desirable or ought most to be desired, whether anyone desires it or not.

Here an objection will perhaps be made and must be squarely faced. After all, it may be said, obligation remains a mystery or an illusion. You may continue to insist that conation is evoked by awareness of objective

tendency, and that when it is unhampered by automatism or by ignorance it seeks the objectively greatest possible fulfilment; but this makes no difference to the fact that we do often knowingly seek the less fulfilment rather than the greater. You still fail to tell in what sense conation *ought* to seek its 'natural' goal rather than the unnatural and irrational goal which it does seek on these occasions. Within the prudential sphere desires are admittedly to be judged in relation to the individual's own need, since desire is derived from need. But you have rejected the view that the claim of the moral ideal rests on its being the real need of the individual. You insist that his need may conflict with the ideal; and that if he has come to need the ideal, this is *because* he has discovered the ideal to be good intrinsically, and has conformed his desire to the ideal. Surely in this insistence on the absolute objectivity of the ideal you destroy its moral claim over the individual. Unless in some sense *he* really wills it, it cannot be for him a ground of action.

In fact it may be objected that after all we have derived obligation from the nature of conation; and that thus we have fallen back on the orthodox view that obligation holds because the real will of the agent is the good will. For in effect we have said that the conative being is such that, unless he wills the ideal, he is false to *his own nature as a conative being*, and that this claim of his own conative nature constitutes the moral claim. Were our nature such that we inclined to conate not objective fulfilment but objective unfulfilment, the ideal of fulfilment would have no claim on us.

This objection must be answered as follows. We have not derived obligation from the nature of conation. We have only said that the logical ground of obligation is to be *seen through* an understanding of the nature of conation. The ground itself, we have said, lies in the nature of the dynamic objects which are cognized. We intuitively cognize the activity of objects as constituting a claim on all conative beings. Thus all conation is essentially moral, even when it is not as moral as it ought to be! It is

essentially moral in that it springs from an unanalysable intuition that a certain objective fulfilment is desirable in the strict ethical sense ; that in fact it *ought* to be desired simply because of the dynamic nature of the object, and not because of any psychical consequences.

Here, then, we come in line with the intuitionists, though we apply their principle in a wider field. They hold that moral obligation is based on a unique intuition that certain kinds of acts ought to be done, and others ought not to be done, and that this obligation applies universally. They deprecate any attempt to explain the moral sense in terms of pleasure, or self-fulfilment. This doctrine of intuitive moral apprehension we accept ; but we must apply it differently. For we recognize the same unique intuition as the source of every desire, and the same assertion of universality. As, in the sphere of cognition, credulity is primitive and doubt the outcome of conflict of beliefs, so, in the sphere of conation, the assertion of the universality of the claim of each conated tendency upon all beings capable of serving it, is primitive, and is only qualified in so far as tendencies are found to conflict.

The objection that I have attempted to meet really assumes what it seeks to prove. To the theory that motive is essentially objective it replies by assuming that motive must necessarily be subjective. In postulating that our nature *might* be such as to conate unfulfilment of objects rather than fulfilment it misses the point. Only through the suggestion of cognized tendencies does our dormant conative capacity awake and direct itself. Conation is *in essence* conation of objective activity.

(E) EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Another difficulty must be faced. Conation has been derived from the cognition of tendency ; and the moral claim has been grounded in the cognition of the greatest possible fulfilment of tendency within the objective mental content. The ground, then, (we may be told), is not the object itself, or the tendency itself in the object ; it is

simply the *cognition* of the tendency of the object. Thus the logical basis of obligation would seem to be, after all, not the need of objects themselves, but the individual's need to harmonize his conation with his cognition. And so the vaunted objectivity of the moral claim turns out to be only an epistemological, and not an ontological, objectivity. In what sense, then, can that immense part of the world which is beyond the individual's mental horizon be said to have a moral claim on him? For instance in what sense, if any, is it true that a man who is ignorant of his neighbour's need, or his society's need, *ought* to discover it and strive to fulfil it?

A full answer to this point would doubtless entail a long epistemological discussion. But here we need only note that there is reason to hold that the object of knowledge is in principle, and apart from error, identical with the existent object. When, and if, we know a thing, we know *it*, and not merely a 'thought' of it. Doubtless there is error in all our experience; but in principle what we know is the real itself. The content of our cognition is given us by, and is in part identical with, an independent real. And so our cognized tendencies are given us by, and are in part identical with, tendencies of the independent real. Thus if the conativity of all conative acts owes its being, in part, to cognition of tendencies, it ultimately owes its being, in part, to the tendencies of the real itself. It is, in principle, the real which gets itself known by us and gets its fulfilment willed. But owing to our private limitations and automatisms it gets itself known imperfectly and willed distortedly. To say that the fulfilment of the real 'ought' to be willed, is to say that the real has a capacity for being known, and for its fulfilment to be willed by us, but that owing to our limitations this capacity is very imperfectly fulfilled, and therefore constitutes a perpetual demand upon us. This demand thus arises from the fact that all conation is an espousal of objective tendency.

But even yet there is an obscurity. Obligation has, indeed, been successfully derived, not merely from cognition, but from the tendencies of the real objects of knowledge.

We have certainly passed beyond the psychological to the ontological ground. Nevertheless, there still seems to be a gulf, not indeed between mental states and the real, but between those reals which are known and those which are not known. What claim have the tendencies of unknown reality on us?

The answer is simple. We have already seen it clearly expressed in the ethics of Professor Hobhouse. The good is objective and universal. It does not depend on any particular individual's pleasure, nor on his conation. Nor does it depend on any particular individual's cognition or view of the world. I have suggested that this principle of rationality does not really hold in a system which makes pleasure constitutive of good; but the ethical theory which I have advocated, having derived obligation from beyond the sphere of private mental states, must clearly accept a universal point of view, and allow to all reals an equal status, whether known or unknown.

There is yet another possibility of misunderstanding. The moral claim, we say, is the claim which is intuited as made by all the unfulfilled needs of the universe. Of course we know very little about the universe, and almost nothing about the universe *as a whole*; but the moral claim is experienced as a claim made on the part of all unfulfilled needs within our mental content, i.e. all unfulfilled needs cognized in the universe. Our view of the needs of the universe may be very mistaken, owing to our ignorance; but this is irrelevant to the nature of moral experience, which is obligation toward *any* teleologically active substance, and therefore to all such in their degree. I do not, then, suggest that each case of obligation is grounded in the need of the universe as an organic whole. Each is grounded in some particular need, whether the universe is organic or not. But all must be taken into account. *If* the universe as a temporal organic whole has or could have needs, we are morally bound by it. If not, we are still bound by the sum of needs within it, simply for their own sake. If, on the other hand, the universe is a supra-temporal organic whole, and necessarily perfect,

then, indeed, moral obligation is not relevant to it. But in my last three chapters I shall try to show that we may and do have ethical experience in relation to it, namely, we may admire it for the perfection of its fulfilment.

(F) SUMMARY

I will now summarize the main argument of this chapter, and indeed the central theory of this book. We habitually use the word 'good' in two entirely different senses, namely, sometimes as a predicate of the act of valuation itself, and sometimes as a predicate of the object valued. Much ethical disagreement arises from the fact that the disputants are assuming different meanings of 'good', so that to each his own theory seems plausible and the other impossible. Sometimes, however, ethical theories merely confuse the two meanings, and by ambiguity seem to escape the difficulties of both. If moral obligation is to be taken seriously and not as a mere delusion, we must, in ethics, stick to the second sense rigorously, but with open eyes. We must seek to discover what general character objective to the act of valuation is consciously valued, and what condition of an object is intuited as exercising a moral claim. I have tried to answer these questions by saying that primarily what we mean by 'good' in an ethical sense is the fulfilment, or progressive fulfilling, of teleological tendencies objective to consciousness. This view, I submit, avoids the difficulties both of the self-fulfilment theory and of the theory according to which 'good' is a simple quality. The former is inadequate because at heart it is egoistic. The trouble of the latter lies in the meaninglessness of good when divorced from teleology. I, however, have derived 'good' from teleology, though not from the conscious act of striving. In Professor Moore's theory 'ought' remains entirely unintelligible (not merely inexplicable, but meaningless), just because in his view 'good' is independent of any demand, need, lack; in fact, independent of any teleological activity. He is right in insisting on the intuitive basis of

ethics ; he is right that we intuit an objective claim. But for a claim to be intuited, there must be something intuited as having a need ; there must be an object which is dynamic, not static.

Such being the ethical meaning of ' good ', it follows that by ' better ' we should mean ' fulfilling more of the tendency or capacity of teleologically active substance '. This principle holds even in respect of tendencies of different emergent rank. By ' the best ', or ' the ideal ', we should mean the complete fulfilling of the capacity of the world.

Having thus formulated the basis of an ethical theory, I went on to found thereon a theory of moral obligation, which I summarize as follows. Every conative act entails an intuition of a claim made by some cognized object which is cognized as a teleologically active substance. This claim is intuited as a universal claim on any conative being. The act of conating its fulfilment is an act, not of mental content, but of an organism ; and the organism has certain established behaviour-tendencies of its own. The rational ideal, the greatest possible progressive fulfilment of all active substances, entails the limitation and even the vetoing of many claims. Whether a conative being recognizes the ideal, and the claim of the ideal, or not, the claim holds of him ; for it inheres, not in the nature of subjectivity, but in the nature of active substances. The nature of the claim of the ideal derives from the nature of the particular claims which we intuit ; but the primary intuition of an objective claim cannot be explained. It is a brute fact of experience. When a conative being wills the fulfilment of objectively minor claims at the expense of objectively major claims, his will violates, not the nature of subjectivity, but the nature of the objective world. The moral situation arises from the fact that though conation is the act of an organism having subjective capacity, what needs to be conated through that subjectivity is distinct from that subjectivity. While subjects or organisms having subjective capacity can by their activity favour or thwart needs, those needs

themselves emerge not from subjectivity but from the intrinsic nature of certain objects.

The foundation of this theory is the contention that we intuit teleologically active substances as exercising a moral claim, and that, after due criticism, nothing else can be discovered which exercises such a claim. The reader must decide for himself whether this generalization is true. I can only ask him to survey his own ethical experience, and make an induction therefrom. I can only ask him whether he does not in the last resort *mean*, by calling a thing 'good', that it is a fulfilment, or a progressive fulfilling, of teleological activity. In my own case at any rate, it seems clear that when I attend carefully to my ethical experience, I do intuit all teleological activity as exercising a claim on my subjectivity; and that on the other hand if I have ever felt obligation toward anything that turned out subsequently not to fall in this class, I have ceased to feel obligation toward it as soon as I have seen it in the new light.

Finally, if it be suggested that what ought to be achieved is not the mere fulfilment of objective teleological tendencies, but consciousness thereof, I reply that in view of the hormic principle it seems to be of the very essence of consciousness that it awakens in the service of ends prior to it, and objective to it. In fact I am forced to regard consciousness as in its very nature instrumental, and obligation as grounded not in it but in the teleologically active substances in whose activity consciousness itself is instrumental. This view, indeed, is regarded by many as hopelessly paradoxical, but only because they cannot refrain from assuming that instrumentality, and teleology itself, involve consciousness.

CHAPTER XI

DETERMINISM AND FREE WILL

(A) THE RELATION OF FREEDOM TO ETHICS

IT is commonly said that moral conduct, though it must conform to an objective principle, must also be 'free obedience'. The agent must will the act for no other reason than that he believes it to be, in the circumstances, the right act. His will must have no determinant save the goodness of the moral principle on which he is acting. The act must be *his* act, and not the act of something else 'compelling' him. In some important sense it must be true that he *can* do either the right or the wrong act; and that, in choosing the right, he accepts a principle which he *could* have rejected.

This assertion, that the moral agent, is a free agent, does not deny that the behaviour of the good man is predictable theoretically in every detail, and to a large extent even in practice. For it is essential to morality that there should be an objective and universal principle or system of principles according to which all right acts, in whatever circumstances, must be regulated. The right act, therefore, in any situation, can theoretically be described beforehand; and this is the act that the good man will choose. But though the behaviour of the good man is thus theoretically predictable in every detail, it is not to be called moral conduct unless it is free behaviour, unless his acceptance of the moral principle springs from nothing but his own 'good will'. In fact, though his conduct is strictly determined in relation to the demands of the objective situation, it must be actually effected (if it is to be moral conduct) by nothing other than the free moral agent, who accepts the moral principle in general, and *therefore* freely chooses a determinate course through diverse circumstances.

That *all* the acts of the good man are theoretically predictable would, no doubt, be denied with horror by many whose opinion deserves very great respect. It would be admitted that many of his acts are predictable ; but also it would be insisted that only those are predictable which consist in the fulfilling of definite obligations, which are, in fact, acts of simple justice. Those acts of supererogation which go beyond mere justice, which do more than fulfil the rights of others, which express positively and subtly the personality of the agent, would be denied to be predictable. Great works of art, for instance, and the morally creative lives of spiritual persons, would be said to be the spontaneous expression of emergent characters in human personality. To claim that all this is predictable, it might be said, is to fail to take emergence seriously. For the essence of emergence is that the behaviour of the whole is the unique expression of the nature of the whole, and therefore is not predictable from any knowledge but knowledge of the behaviour of the whole itself. And even so, knowledge of the whole's past behaviour is no adequate guide to its future behaviour, since novel situations may arise which call forth novel emergent behaviour. Thus, though in theory at least it is possible to predict what the good man will *not* do, in that he will not be unjust, or mean, or cowardly, and so on, all those acts which more positively express his unique personality are unpredictable. Even he himself cannot predict them. They have to be done before they can be known.

This view certainly calls for very careful consideration. All hangs on the meaning of the phrase ' theoretically predictable '. We must, of course, admit that the acts of the good man are not all predictable in actual practice. What then do we mean by saying that they are theoretically predictable ? We mean that anyone with full knowledge of the man's circumstances, and of his nature as a highly developed organism, could predict all his acts, even those of creative imagination. We mean, in fact, that the man's acts are not arbitrary, that they follow from, or are

expressions of, the intercourse of the man and the environment. If this doctrine seems not to take emergence seriously, either the doctrine has been interpreted to mean more than it does mean, or emergence itself has been misunderstood. We must not forget that, although the emergent behaviour of a whole cannot be predicted merely from knowledge of the nature of the parts unorganized, yet admittedly the behaviour of the whole is *determined* by the nature of its parts. In organization they reveal (or if it be preferred, they assume) a ' new ' nature ; and anyone getting to know this new nature could predict the emergent behaviour.

But, it will be objected, the new nature is in principle unknowable, save from observation of the emergent behaviour itself. This contention I should reject. It is true that, for prediction of the emergent behaviour, something is needed beyond knowledge of the reducible nature of the parts ; but that something is *theoretically* obtainable. What is needed is knowledge of : (*a*) the reducible nature of the parts, (*b*) the environment, (*c*) certain principles which have been called the law or laws of hierarchical emergence. These last are theoretically discoverable by induction from experience of the whole range of emergent levels ; and, once discovered, they would enable us to predict the emergent nature of any given whole, provided that we had knowledge of its parts and its environment.[1] It may be objected that these laws of hierarchical emergence are figments merely of a pious hope. At present we know nothing of them ; and we may be told that we are not even entitled to assume that emergence is systematic at all. Yet, while in comparison with what remains to be discovered we do indeed know extremely little about the principles of emergence, on the other hand in certain limited fields we have fragmentary but important inductive knowledge of the kind of whole that does as a matter of fact emerge in certain conditions, and of the kind of behaviour that is to be expected of it. Thus we do as a

[1] The concept of a law of hierarchical emergence was formulated by Prof. Lloyd Morgan, in his paper, ' A Concept of the Organism, Emergent and Resultant, *Aristotelian Society's Proceedings*, 1926–7, p. 164.

matter of fact know something about the kinds of behaviour to be expected from men of specific stock and specific circumstances. And the more we study, the more we can predict. To set theoretical limits to this advance were wholly unjustified. No doubt many extravagances have recently been committed by psychologists; but we must not forget that their science is still in its infancy. Though in practice their analysis, and still more their prediction, are extremely uncertain, they seem at least to have established certain very general principles which cover schematically the whole field of mental activity. Whether, indeed, psychology will ever advance so far as to be able to predict, for instance, the character of the next work of a particular artist (of course only after incredibly minute study of the particular case), is irrelevant to this argument. The point is that, though such prediction would entail incomparably more knowledge and skill and patience than the predictions which we effect to-day, and though some of the subtler principles which it would involve may as a matter of fact lie wholly beyond the grasp of human intelligence, yet our psychological experience strongly suggests that prediction of behaviour is limited only by our ignorance and lack of insight, not by anything arbitrary or incoherent in behaviour itself.

To sum up this matter, then, when we say that the good man's behaviour is theoretically predictable, we mean only that even in its most splendid achievements it is a systematic expression of his nature, and that his nature itself is systematically connected with other things. We do not, for instance, deny that one factor in his nature is a certain determinate degree of the capacity of spontaneous loyalty to the great and remote things at the expense of the minor and intimate things. Nor do we deny that the more complex and creative kinds of behaviour demand for their interpretation knowledge which could never be derived from study merely of the less complicated kinds of beings. We claim only that the faith in systematic connexion is scarcely less justified in the mental than in the physical sphere. All prediction, indeed, rests upon the

conviction that laws will hold good in the future just because, so far as we know, they have always held good in the past; and this conviction is incapable of strict logical defence. But the problem of induction applies alike to psychological and physical prediction, and need not trouble us here.

The advocates of 'free will' against 'determinism' are apt to lose sight of the fact that in practical life the regularity of the good man's behaviour, and the predictability of his actions are far more important than the fact that he is a free agent, and that in a special sense he *could* be irregular and unpredictable.[1] It matters little to his neighbours whether he is free or not so long as, freely or not, he does what is right. And surely we would rather our governors were automata who inevitably *must* act so as to achieve the good, than that they were less mechanical but more erratic centres of indeterminate 'free will'. And for ourselves, would we not willingly sacrifice our freedom to choose right or wrong if we could thereby ensure that for the future we should invariably do right, though as automata? To wish otherwise would be to care more for our own righteousness than for the objective ideal.

Morality, indeed, at least in one sense of the word, depends on the freedom of moral agents. Were there no kind of freedom there could be no obligation in any ordinary sense. But morality depends not *only* on freedom but also on the distinction between good and evil; and this is quite independent of the question of freedom. It is easy to conceive a world in which, though there were no free agents, there were yet good things and bad things, and possibilities of goods and bads. In such a world acts might still be good and bad instrumentally; and in virtue even of their form alone they might still have intrinsic value. For instance, those acts might be intrinsically best which were fulfilments of the highest rank of emergent tendencies of agents. In such a world the good 'ought'

[1] Dr. J. E. Turner has strikingly insisted on this point, *The Philosophical Basis of Moral Obligation*.

to be achieved although it could not be achieved by *free* agents.

On one view, indeed, freedom is fundamental, namely on Kant's view that nothing can possibly be good without qualification save a good will.[1] Such a will, he held, is good not because of what it effects, but good in itself.[2] All other goods are but instrumental to the creation of the good will. And when we are told to treat human beings always as ends and never as means, it is implied that the end which is their fulfilment is that they should fulfil themselves by freely willing the good will.

On this essentially moralistic view, then, the supremely important end in the universe is that free agents should choose to act according to an objective, universal and rational principle. Kant's universal maxim is now generally admitted to be insufficient. 'I am never to act otherwise,' he says, 'than so that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law.'[3] It is not difficult to show that the only universality characteristic of the good will is that, in each particular situation, it is just the will to do that particular act which, in the circumstances, will achieve the greatest good. The mere universality of the good will does not constitute its goodness; though universal it certainly must be, since in *any* sphere (to adopt Professor Hobhouse's phrase) principles which are fundamental can admit of no exception. The goodness of the moral principle in fact must consist, not merely in that it can be universalized, but in that it is the universal application of the principle of the fulfilling of needs, in that it is universally the will for that which, in the universal view, is seen to be demanded.

Kant's aim was to divorce morality entirely from the mere fulfilment of desire, or the mere following of inclination. For in his view the essence of morality was that it was free choice according to a purely rational principle, while inclination and every kind of need was conceived as

[1] *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*, Abbott's translation, p. 9.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 10. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

external to the rational agent himself. To follow inclination, even the noblest inclination, was therefore to sell oneself into bondage, and to cease from being a free rational being. And, of course, it is true that the moral experience is often felt as a resistance of inclination for the sake of a rational principle. But clearly it is a mistake to suppose therefore that morality has nothing whatever to do with need, that it is, so to speak, a needless acceptance of abstract rationality. It is, indeed, as we have seen, a spontaneous espousal of an objective need, but in mere rational coherence there is not any need which can be espoused. Though, according to the theory adopted in this book, motive is objective, not subjective, voluntary action is none the less inconceivable *without* motive. Kant lost sight of the fact that moral conduct, in transcending one need, merely accepts another and greater. The rational principle in morals is but the principle of embracing the widest field of objective needs.

Kant's prepossession with freedom was perhaps in part inherited from the free will controversies of protestant Christianity. But it was also the outcome of his own 'Copernican revolution' in the theory of knowledge. When the experient was taken to be fundamental in epistemology, it was natural that the attitude of the experient should seem the all-important fact in ethics. But however Kant was led to his theory, he seems to fail through a too exclusive interest in morality itself at the expense of the goodness of ends. It is well, therefore, to remind ourselves that, while without goodness of ends there can be no morality, without any shadow of freedom there may still be goodness of ends. Even if every human act be predestined in the nature of things, and all our moral struggles simply hallucinatory, yet it may still be in strictness *better* that one act should be done rather than another.

But in a world in which men have a sense that they are free agents confronted by an objective distinction between good and evil, 'goodness of will' must seem of great importance. For only through 'goodness of will'

is the good likely to be achieved. But to suppose that 'goodness of will' is itself the ultimate ground of the distinction between good and evil is, if not precisely to set up a means as an end, at least to mistake a part for the whole. If we are to take human beings as ends in themselves, let us do so without evasion. Let us not take them as ends only in so far as they achieve an abstract form of will. Let us rather take *them* as ends, because they themselves, with their diverse needs, are capable of richer fulfilment than any other beings within our ken. Thus we shall at least avoid an abstract moralism. For the good will, after all, is only good in that it seeks ends that are good in themselves. A man of good will is just a man whose established habit it is to seek ends which seem best by acts which seem most effective.

Nevertheless, the question of freedom is important in ethics. For, though freedom is not the ground of good and evil, it is certainly in some sense relevant to moral obligation. If the experience of free choice is illusory, the experience of obligation must be illusory too. If, when a man chooses, he could not possibly have chosen otherwise, there seems no meaning in saying that *he* was morally bound to choose otherwise. We may still say that the good ought to be achieved, meaning thereby simply that it is good that the good be achieved; but we have no right to say of anyone that *he* ought to have done otherwise than he did, unless we believe that he *could* have done otherwise. Where there is no freedom of choice, right acts seem to merit no praise, and wrong acts no blame; save in the sense in which all good things are to be praised, or rather appreciated, and all bad things condemned. Obligation can only occur if the agent *can*, but also can *not*, act so as to achieve the best in the circumstances.

(B) INTROSPECTION OF VOLITION

In every kind of choice we certainly do feel that we 'can' take either course. At this moment I am confident that I can either raise my hand or not 'as I will'. I do

not experience my *choice* to move it as something foreign to me, compelling me ; my choice is simply I, as I am at the moment. If a fly settles on my hand and tickles me, I may still move or not move, as I will. But in this case I do experience an objective and rebellious ' tendency to move. And indeed the tickling may become so disturbing that at last my hand may twitch in spite of my will to keep it at rest. The more I am tickled, the more vigorously have I to ' will ' not to move, in order to restrain the automatic action of my hand. By an act of volition I may interfere with the natural rhythm of my breathing, now accelerating it, now stopping it altogether. And the greater the divergence from the normal rate, and again the more prolonged the interference, the more vigorously must I ' will.' But if anyone will try for himself the experiment of holding his breath for a long while, he will find that, save in the last extremity, there is no actual rebellion of the physiological mechanism, and flouting of his command that it should not act. Rather, at every stage but the last extremity, the mechanism is absolutely under his control ; but *he* becomes increasingly reluctant to control it, increasingly reluctant to issue the inhibitory command which, at every stage, he *can* issue, and at every stage but the last will be absolutely obeyed ; but the organic consequences of the command become increasingly undesirable.

Similarly with hunger. A man may choose to starve rather than steal food ; but, as the organic impulse to eat increases in urgency, his resolution may waver, and finally collapse. But at every stage, even (in this case) in the last extremity, his behaviour is absolutely under subjective control. When he finally succumbs to temptation, he *chooses* to give rein to a tendency which, had he but chosen otherwise, would have been curbed.

In a clear moral choice the good does not compel us in the manner of the last extremity of breathlessness. Nor does the evil ; though many persons seek to excuse themselves by believing that their choice of evil was the work of some force outside themselves. When we choose rightly we eagerly take credit for the choice, insisting that

by a spontaneous 'act of will' we chose for no other reason than that the choice seemed right. But when we choose wrongly we are apt to say that the effort to control ourselves, to master our instinctive or habitual mechanism, was beyond our power. And it is certainly true that in panic-flight, or rash pugnacity, and even in gradual surrender to a subtle temptation, we may feel ourselves unable to resist the drive of a mechanism. But though the irrational choice may be called 'compulsive', it is choice all the same. It is not physical compulsion, but a definite psychical surrender to mutinous demands 'within the citadel of the self'. In one sense, of course, both the reflex mechanism and the mechanism of instinct and habit are 'within the self', in that both fall within the mental content. In another sense they are both 'external to the self', in that they are both objective to the subjective act of choice or will, which accepts or rejects tendencies in something other than itself, namely in the psycho-physical organism. But whereas pure reflex activity may take place without any volition, strictly psychical activity, even when 'compulsive', does involve an act of choice or will. The sense of guilt is evidence that, however we excuse ourselves, we know (or at least believe) that we *could* have done otherwise.

It certainly does *seem*, then, that we direct our behaviour to some extent by spontaneous 'acts of will'. Perhaps it is all a delusion. Perhaps the experience of choosing is but another case of the conceit of the fly on the axle, an epiphenomenon which has no influence on the course of events. Perhaps in conscious choice we do but *cognize* the activity of something which is not *itself* a conscious activity. There is no need to venture into such problems here. We need only insist that, until epiphenomenalism is proved, the experience of choice as efficient must not be ignored. After all, our belief in its actual effectiveness is very strongly confirmed. By a very broadly based induction we are convinced that with certain types of acts, if we do not choose to do them, they do not get done, and if we do choose to do them, they

do get done. It is certainly theoretically possible that the true cause of the act is not the choice, but something hidden which the choice accompanies. This view is suggested by the doctrines of universal physical causation and conservation of energy. But science has by now outgrown the phase in which she asserted dogmatically that her fundamental concepts must be true universally. Even the 'uniformity of nature' is now but a postulate to be confirmed independently in each sphere. Moreover, without denying uniformity, many would say that it is possible, even probable, that strictly physical causation is itself definitely interfered with by activities of a higher plane of organization, and that choice is of this nature. Anyhow choice does *seem* to be efficient; and we must discover what precisely, supposing it is efficient, is its importance for ethics. Though we reject all forms of moralism, and insist that right is derived from good, we must yet admit the extreme importance of choice and of the good will, and the need for a theory of moral obligation which does justice to these. Moreover, though we must not suppose that the principles of natural science are enough to disprove the efficacy of choice, it is evident that choice is largely determined. Even if it is not simply determined by physical causation, it is determined psychologically. This is only to say that at least up to a point it is regular, not arbitrary. Is there any clear reason to suppose that this regularity has limits? And if it has not, what is the bearing of regularity of choice upon morality?

(c) THE DETERMINANTS OF FREE WILL

I will now try to state the psychological and ethical aspects of the problem of freedom in terms of the theory of conation described in earlier chapters.

According to that theory, conation entails cognition of objective tendencies, the fulfilment of which is thereupon conated. But, as we have seen, conation all too often 'lags behind' the advance of cognition. We 'will' more easily ends which we have willed before, ends toward

which the organism is already shaped or set, rather than ends which we newly discover to be objectively most desirable, most needed. Only by 'an act of will' (as we say) can we control the behaviour-set and choose to do that which we believe right though it is irksome. If we fail to exert ourselves in this mysterious manner, we behave mechanically and wrongly.

Now this capacity of mastering the established behaviour-set for the sake of our objective ideal depends partly on a *habit* of mastery formed in the past; but this habit itself has to be explained. A 'strong will' is doubtless often due partly to practice in making vigorous decisions. But how were these past decisions themselves achieved by one agent, while they would not have been achieved by another?

It seems that in part a man's 'strength of will' depends on obscure physiological conditions. In drunkenness, for instance, the will may be enfeebled, though also perhaps a tot of rum may strengthen the waverer. Just as the subject's power of taking everything into account in intellectual inquiry is, it would seem, limited by the integrative capacity of his central nervous system, so also his power of taking everything into account for conation is apparently limited physiologically. Of course, it is possible that, within limits set by his physiological state, a man's will is absolutely indeterminate, an arbitrary fiat not causally determined by anything else in the universe. On this theory, which Professor Laird would call a limited tychism,[1] we must surrender the belief that the universe is systematic through and through. But it is possible, I think, to do justice to our experience of free choice while maintaining a rigorous determinism, though a determinism which is not simply physical.

The conative act is one aspect abstracted from the unitary psychical act of cognition, affection and conation. This act may be thought of as the act either of a unique metaphysical substance distinct from the organism or of the organism itself mastering its own habitual behaviour-set

[1] J. Laird, *A Study in Moral Theory*, p. 173 ff.

so as to conform its conduct to the demands of its cognized objective field. In either case it is the act of a subject acting with reference to an objective mental content, past and present. It is *not* the act of the content itself, since in principle the content is the objective world (including the organism itself as one object). What acts is not content as such, but the organism in its subjective capacity. Only in one qualified sense is the psychical act the act of the content, namely that it is the tendencies of the content which, through cognition, *suggest* the direction of conation. The act of will, then, may be called the act of the content operating through the medium of the psychical subject which is distinct from the content. But this description is metaphorical. It is the psychical subject alone that *chooses*, not his objective field, not even the most intimate organic part of his objective field. Of course, it may be that the subject is after all just that which in its physical aspect we call the organism. Yet the organism as choosing to control its habit of behaviour must be distinguished from the organism as controllable mechanism. The objective field itself, as such, whether organic or extra-organic, does not choose.

Let us now suppose that different *degrees* of the capacity of psychical effort, or of integrative conation, are emergent in physiological systems of different degrees of organisation ; and that disintegration of the physiological system, for instance by alcohol, results in a lowering of this capacity for psychical effort. This means that, though every choice (rational and irrational) is strictly determined, it cannot be accounted for simply by physiological causal laws. For *what* is emergent in the physiological system is precisely an entirely unconstrained capacity for choosing either to facilitate or to resist the established mode of behaviour for the sake of some end suggested by the objective field. Such a capacity is, in the nature of the case, irreducible to physiological causal laws. We are supposing that different degrees of ' self-mastery ', or of the capacity of choosing to ' pull oneself together ', occur in different kinds of physiological patterns. Choice, then,

is determined by: (*a*) cognition of objective tendencies, past, present, future, and imaginary; (*b*) the automatic established behaviour-set of the organism; (*c*) the organism's contemporary capacity for psychical effort, which is limited in part physiologically, but is itself none the less emergent. To a greater or less extent, then, the behaviour-set sways the capacity for free choice; while also this capacity itself controls, to a greater or less extent, the behaviour-set.

I have frequently used the phrase 'psychical effort'. We all find that to do a greater muscular work, or to change a more deeply-rooted habit, a greater 'psychical effort' is needed. But it is very important to realize that this psychical effort is something radically different from physical force. Within the sphere in which volition is effective at all, the 'psychical effort' works either by directly overcoming an external physical resistance, as in the case of volitional muscular activity; or by directly overcoming a physiological automatism, as in the case of controlling the impulse to sneeze; or (a very different manner) by directly overcoming a resistance neither physical nor physiological but psychical. Even in volition of muscular work, but more obviously in volition of intellectual work, there comes a time at which we begin to be *unwilling* to continue. The 'act of will' consists then in overcoming a purely psychical *reluctance* to work. When we are constrained by the purely physical or purely physiological, choice itself is not constrained, though it is ineffective. Choice is only constrained by a psychical reluctance. When in temptation we fail to put forth the necessary psychical effort, we are not in these cases directly constrained by a physical force, nor even by a physiological disability external to the subject; we simply fail to overcome a reluctance. While recognizing that a certain end is objectively the best in the circumstances, we fail to resist the *appeal* of more familiar ends.

Every choice, then, is determined, and is in theory predictable; but also in an important sense *every* choice is a free psychical act. It is an expression of the individual's

own subjective capacity at the moment of choice. True he did not make himself; but such as he is, his choice is his own. Nothing contrains him now, though obviously something other than his present self made him to be what he now is. And one kind of influence that has gone to his making is, of course, his own past acts of will.

Every choice, then, is determinate; but it is a case of '*self*-determination'. The degree of conative integration of which the individual is capable is not itself indeterminate; it is an expression of factors prior to itself. But every choice is determined wholly by this capacity for conative integration, acting in relation to a certain objective field of tendencies. Every choice is an act on the part of the innermost self or subject, or of the organism in its subjective capacity. Choice is not something *done to* the innermost self, or the subjectivity of the organism. The subject is persuaded, not compelled by objects and their tendencies. Though indeed something external to his subjectivity suggests his conation, nothing external forces him. His acceptance of the suggestion, his active espousal of the tendency, is his own subjective deed, or the act of an organism having subjective capacity.

He may choose the rational goal of conation, the believed greatest objective fulfilment. Such choice is in the fullest sense self-determination, since, not only is it an act of the conative subject but also it is an act which takes into account the whole of his mental content. And we may safely admit that in one sense his mental content, though it is in origin external to him, does also fall within his objective 'self'. Thus we may say that his whole 'objective self' determines the choice through the medium of the highest degree of subjective conative capacity. But even irrational choice is essentially self-determination, though not the fullest self-determination. Even the most 'compulsive' choice is, as we have already noted, free choice in that it is choice, and not a non-psychological mechanism like reflex. In yielding to a psychological automatism the subject, as we have seen, chooses to refrain from controlling an impulse which, with a psychical effort

to overcome his reluctance, he might have controlled for the sake of the believed greatest objective fulfilment. He surrenders simply to his own reluctance to forego a minor but familiar objective good for the sake of the ideal. Thus he chooses to be determined by a part of his objective content rather than by the whole. This, then, is something less than the fullest self-determination. The free subject, falling short of the highest degree of subjective conative activity, determines his conduct in relation to only a part of his 'objective self'. On the other hand even this irrational choice is essentially *self*-determination, since, though it is not determination by the whole self, it is determination by nothing but the self, and is in fact the act of the subject, though not at the highest level of conative capacity.

But though every choice is essentially self-determined, it is in theory predictable. The control of automatism entails effort to overcome reluctance, and only a certain degree of effort will as a matter of fact be put forth (or only a certain degree of reluctance will be overcome), by the individual as he is at the moment constituted. In theory, then (but, alas, not in practice) the degree of self-determination which he will achieve in any given choice can be inferred inductively. From wide observation of the association of various factors (physiological and psychological), with diverse degrees of conative integration in many individuals, we should be able to arrive at general principles or descriptive laws of this association; and, observing the individual's own contemporary physiological and psychological condition, we should be able to apply our general principles to his particular case, and predict his choice. We should be able to infer whether he will *choose* to control, or acquiesce in, his innate and habitual behaviour. But whichever he chooses, the choice is determined wholly by subjective activity operating on an objective field, and capable of a certain degree of cognitional and conational integration.

(D) RESPONSIBILITY

Let us revert for a moment to Kant's ethical theory. The ' original capacity for good in human nature ' is simply the pure capacity for unconstrained conation. It is the ' good will ' only in the sense that it is a capacity for freely espousing the tendencies of active objects, and for taking into account without bias *all* objective tendencies within the cognized field. In so far as it fails to take all cognized objects into account it is not a good but a bad will ; but its complete expression is the good will, which wills without personal bias the greatest possible fulfilment of objective needs. As to Kant's ' natural propensity for evil ', there seems to be no positive factor worthy of the name, unless we may dignify by that title the propensity to espouse familiar tendencies at the expense of objectively more important but unfamiliar tendencies which are seen to claim a reorientation of our conduct. But this propensity itself presupposes the fundamental propensity to conate *some* objective tendency or other.

Anyhow in spite of Kant we must hold that the evil in man does spring from the mere limitations of his nature. Nowhere is there any positive evil will or propensity, but only a failure to improve upon old-established or inherited modes of behaviour. This is not to be taken to mean that the ' real will ' of each is necessarily ' the good will '. It would be more true to say that at heart we are neither good nor bad. We are *capable* of willing the good will, or rather of some approximation thereto ; and in so far as we fall short of the good will, our will is bad. We are capable alike of the good and the bad. But to will rightly in any situation a strength is needed which we may or may not have. Our evil, as Kant himself says, is due to our frailty. And our frailty is determinate. Surely, then, *we* cannot be held responsible for the limitations of our nature.

Yet the matter cannot be left thus ; for, unless our moral experience is entirely illusory, we *are* in some important sense responsible for every choice that we make. For we feel that in some important sense, we *could* have

chosen otherwise. Does this mean that after all we are left with an unsolved paradox on our hands? And must we, to escape it, simply deny either determinism or free will? No, for if the foregoing account of moral experience is correct, there is really no paradox, so long as we use the words 'determinism' and 'free will' strictly. 'Determinism' must mean not merely physical determinism, but self-determination by an emergent free agent spontaneously espousing the tendencies of objects. "Free will" on the other hand, must not be taken to mean that the moral agent's capacity for conative integration, and his degree of that capacity, is wholly unrelated to anything else in the universe. It is an emergent capacity; but it is determined by physiological and other factors. Yet *what* it is when it has emerged is a capacity for a certain degree of psychical effort toward integrative conation.

It should be noted that the experience of free will or free choice is simply the experience of activity as opposed to passivity. Everything that acts, and is not merely acted upon, acts freely; though necessarily its action is determined by its own nature and its relation with its environment. Everything that really does act, then, were it to experience at all might justly experience free choice; since in so far as *it* acts it acts spontaneously. In fact there is nothing at all strange in our experience of free choice, so long as we do not suppose it to mean that choice is simply arbitrary. Spontaneous activity obviously must occur. Even purely physical events cannot be reduced simply to passivity. The electron, or the atom, acts as it does of its own nature; though it acts in relation with the activity of other agents in its environment. Its action cannot be wholly determined from without; for if all things were purely passive there would be no activity. Of course no agent can violate its own nature. It can only act in those manners in which it 'has it in it' to act. Were it to act otherwise, it must after all have 'had it in it' to act otherwise. To suppose that it could change its nature spontaneously is simply to suppose that it had in it all along a capacity for new kinds of activity, that in

fact hitherto its nature was not fully expressed. To suppose that it may simply abandon its previous nature, and act in manners opposed to its previous activity in similar circumstances, is simply to suppose that *it* has ceased to exist and has been superseded by something new.

It is the same with the psychical agent. He cannot act otherwise than in accord with his nature. And indeed his nature is simply how he does act ; just as the electron's nature is how it does act. And in each case, so far as we can tell, the action is systematic.

But though in this important sense all activity that really is activity is necessarily spontaneous though determinate, psychical activity is spontaneous, or free, in a more radical manner. Whereas physical activity may be constrained by the physical environment, psychical conative activity cannot ever be simply and directly constrained by the physical. If our theory of conation is correct, *every* conative act is an unconstrained espousal of some objective tendency or other. The act, in every case, is primarily determined by the intrinsic *goodness* of some possible fulfilment or other. Even a choice of evil is primarily determined by cognition of some minor tendency, some minor possibility of good. It is evil in that it is *not* determined by an admittedly major good. And this failure is due to a frailty which is purely moral, in the sense that it is failure to overcome, not a physical force, nor an external psychical ' force ', but a mere reluctance, a failure to resist the suggestion or persuasion of a familiar minor good for the sake of a less familiar major. Thus while every choice is determinate, it is a *chosen* determination on the part of a spontaneously active substance, whether of a metaphysical ego or of an organism having subjective capacity. Nothing other than cognitions of objective tendencies immediately determines choice. And even these cognitions do not in any sense constrain choice.

There is, however, a sense in which rational, or moral, choice is more free than irrational, or immoral, choice. For the reluctance which has to be overcome if automatisms are to be transcended is in a sense a relic of the past self,

of the past exercise of subjective capacity, which has left its mark upon the organism, and now tends to interfere with the proper functioning of present subjectivity. In overcoming this reluctance, therefore, the present subject exercises his subjective capacity more fully or freely.

It is true, as we have seen, that whether a man will be persuaded by the whole field of his cognition, or 'over-persuaded' by certain intimate components of it, whether he will as a matter of fact freely choose the ideal or freely betray it for the sake of some minor good, depends partly on the state of his body. But even this does not mean that the physiological state constrains him. It means that the physiological state is one determinant of the degree of his freedom as against his own reluctance or inertia. It means that in certain states individuals exercise a greater and in other states a less degree of psychical effort toward integrative conation. However they choose, they *could* have chosen otherwise, in the sense that there was nothing whatever external to their own nature to prevent their choosing otherwise. But on the other hand choosing is not arbitrary but systematic, and therefore in theory predictable.

CHAPTER XII

ESSENTIALS OF THE CONCRETE IDEAL

(A) IDEALS AND THE IDEAL

HITHERTO I have been engaged in discussing the nature of 'good' and the logical ground of moral obligation. It is now time to attempt an inquiry into the concrete ideal which is implied in the nature of our world.

Human ideals are changeful as the clouds. To-day our enthusiasts, by constant preaching and example, kindle us at last with a spark of their own zeal for some goal or other; to-morrow, not merely is the goal still to be gained, but (far worse), while we are plodding toward it, some superior intelligence among us discovers its unsoundness and ridicules our labour. Then we are divided. Some, unable to grasp the criticism, continue their toil, content but futile. Some catch a gleam of the truth, but shun it, lest their satisfying activity should cease to satisfy. Some learn all too clearly their error, and fall into despair.

And how tawdry look the ideals of yesterday! Pietism, moralism, the cult of wealth and power, nationalism, the liberal and the communist utopias, and the cult of 'personality'—how they stir men, and how tedious they may become! Indeed there is nothing more insipid and nothing more pathetic than to-day's account of yesterday's aims, or indeed any man's view of his neighbour's ideal. The disillusionment lies not merely between one generation and another, nor between one and another contemporary culture or private taste, but even between diverse moods of one mind.

Must we conclude that the whole business of ideal mongering is a folly, and a disreputable folly, as tending

toward fantasy and toward emotionalism? Has it all been a waste of time, this effort to envisage the desirable? Do the fashions in ideals change with no more reason than the fashions in dress? Or is there perhaps some continuity and progress to be discerned in the history of the supreme ends that men have conceived? Certainly in these latter days anyone who ventures to preach an ideal must be either ridiculously lacking in humour or prepared to join in the inevitable laugh at his own gaucherie. For it is certain that he will produce only a caricature of that which is in fact desirable. And it is certain that, even if some few of his contemporaries should see as he has seen and be blind with his particular blindness, his successors will revile his idols and set up images of their own.

Indeed it must be admitted that the aims of men, their 'ideals', are crude and contradictory. But this is not seriously disheartening unless we suppose 'ideals' to be creatures purely of desire, rather than records of man's groping toward *the* Ideal which in fact is posited by the actual capacities of the world, and is to be discovered, not created, by minds. On this latter view, which is involved in any realistic ethics, the discrepancies and crudities of 'ideals' are attributable to no subjectivity of value but to the limitations of individual minds and particular cultures. At the heart of every ideal lie certain true value-judgments, apprehensions of certain goods that are indefeasibly members in the Ideal, or at least instruments for the Ideal. But, owing to the limitations of human experience, these goods have been imperfectly correlated with other goods. Thus minor goods appear as major, and many major goods may be entirely missed. Further, since every man's 'ideal' is to some extent systematic, each 'ideal' is controlled through and through by some basic value-judgment or other, or a group of value-judgments; and if these basic judgments happen to be imperfectly conceived or objectively without claim to their basic position, the whole 'ideal' is vitiated. And owing to the very diverse idiosyncrasies of our experience, our 'ideals' are not only crude but profoundly different from each

other. It is therefore very difficult in the midst of our conflicting loyalties to realize that 'ideals' are one and all judgments of *the* Ideal, be they never so erroneous.

It would be interesting to embark on a detailed study of all the types of 'ideals' that men have entertained, and to show how in each case a real and important objective need has come to be espoused and over-emphasized at the expense of other needs equally important. But here I can only mention a few of the main conclusions that such a discussion would reach, so that we may be forewarned against certain extravagances of ideal-mongering, and may at the same time note certain very diverse principles, all of which must be taken into account in attempting to envisage the outlines of the objective ideal. Thus, though we must not fall into the error of evolutionism, we may agree that the ideal must include whatever biological forces there be. The discovery of the biological evolution of ever more highly organized types of life suggested that the distinction between good and bad must be simply derived from the supposed fact that a 'life force' in the world was ever pressing toward greater complexity of living. Whereas in the older view good was thought to be derived from the will of God, the newer theory based it on the trend of Nature. In an age conscious of its 'progress' this doctrine was plausible; in a decaying civilization, however, no one would ever be persuaded that goodness is identical with survival-value. Only because men supposed that evolution was in some manner directed toward more complex vitality and mentality, were they tempted to derive good therefrom, forgetful that the fulfilment of 'evolution' is good only so long as it makes possible ever more complex activities upon ever higher planes of emergence. But though in this they erred, they were justified in identifying good with the fulfilment of the activities of active substances.

In other accounts of the ideal we find the same mixture of chaff and grain. Thus, while we must not be deceived by hedonism and utilitarianism, neither must we deny that pleasure itself is a good to be sought for its own sake.

The greatest happiness of the greatest number is not a sufficient account of the ideal, but the claim to happiness is valid, and not to be ignored even in the ideal.

Similarly with moralism, it is unjustifiable to think that the good consists merely in conduct of a certain form. But it is demanded in the ideal that certain very general principles of conduct should be accepted as obligatory upon all individuals, even to the detriment of their private needs, and sometimes even to the detriment of other individuals; but it is demanded that those principles themselves should be determined by the needs of all individuals in social relation.

Again, the Christian ideal of Love, or Brotherhood, though a far richer ideal than most, cannot be sufficient. When it began to be seen that mere moralism degenerated into self-centred legalism, a new insight was gained into the relationship between individuals. The ideal was seen to be that individuals should conatively espouse each other's needs in the same manner as they espouse their own, so that each mind should be invaded and possessed and enlarged by all others. The unity of men should be a unity of internal relations, not only a system of external legal relations. This discovery is, of course, of supreme importance. But it sometimes led to an apothesis of the mere abstraction, 'love', as in some extravagant interpretations of the great proposition, 'God is Love'. To set up abstract love as the end of human existence is almost as though we were to say that the end of the cells of a man's flesh were merely the abstract form of their organicity rather than the mind which their organicity calls into being. On the other hand, of course, the ideal must include the loving community, since it is by the mutual 'ingression'[1] of individuals in love that new capacities and activities emerge.

Another ideal associated with Christianity, and also with the East, is that in which the individual is urged to turn his attention from the things of this brief world and live

[1] I borrow the word from Prof. A. N. Whitehead, though he uses it in a different connexion.

for a world that is eternal and unseen. This 'other-worldliness' may result in a rejection of all the urgent claims of our daily life for the sake of a fantasy. But let us remember that *the* ideal entails not only that men should be sensitive to obvious mundane obligations, but also that they should strain to hear, and to respond to, the appeal of whatever higher spheres there be.

So with stoicism, divorce from all desire is no sufficient account of the desirable; but only through this resignation and detachment can the mind preserve its integrity and glimpse that excellence of reality which, it may be, transcends the sphere of human striving. Stoics have often been men of action, fulfilling the social claim tirelessly, even heroically. But though the stoical ideal includes action, it demands also complete detachment; and this is well, since detachment is the way to spiritual dignity and freedom. But the desire to be emancipated from desire is itself a desire. And the idealization of detachment is after all a disguised self-assertion; or at best a mistaking of the means for the end.

Again a thoughtless ritual of 'good works' is insufficient, both because in its uncritical haste it may do more harm than good in the world, and also because in disparaging the inner life of contemplation and admiration it disparages the highest known kind of individual fulfilment. But this ideal, no less than the others, has living roots. For, in the first place, mind's capacity is not only for contemplation but for conduct. Even from the point of view of the individual, therefore, fulfilment entails not only the truest and richest cognition, but also the most just conation. And in the second place it is urgent that individuals should subordinate even their own highest personal development to the development of the social whole. And in respect of the issue between personal and social types of ideal, it is easy to see that though each may run to extravagance, each is soundly based. The former rightly insists that the goal must be no abstract sociality but the increasing enrichment of actual individual minds, individual mental processes. But the latter with justice claims that the goal

for the individual mind should be to become a fully social mind, in fact that the extreme ideal for mind is that all minds should be emancipated from their private limitations, and be, each one of them, the mind of society, nay of the universe.

(B) THE ABSTRACT FORM OF THE IDEAL

The most abstract formula which expresses the concrete ideal is (as we have seen) that the ideal is the greatest possible fulfilment of the tendencies of the universe. But by 'tendencies' must be understood, not simply those tendencies which at present occur, but also those which might emerge from a rearrangement of the members of the universe. For the fulfilment of tendencies emergent in wholes is in principle greater than the fulfilment of tendencies of their parts in disunion; therefore it is desirable that ever more complex emergent tendencies be brought into being, even though this should entail the thwarting of existing tendencies. On this account it is well to exchange the word 'tendencies' for the word 'capacities', and describe the ideal as the greatest possible fulfilment of the capacities of the universe. From this it follows further that the ideal includes the greatest possible fulfilment of tendencies emergent in the universe as a whole.

Such is the most abstract formula which expresses the concrete, objective, and universal ideal. It is not inconceivable that the ideal for the cosmos as a whole might entail the thwarting of every present extant tendency of the cosmos, and the refashioning of the whole for the attainment of some higher degree of emergence which (we may suppose) is impossible in the present course of events. But such a fantastic possibility does not concern us. Our knowledge of the nature of the universe is as yet so slight that we cannot form any clear concept as to what, in the cosmical view, the ideal entails. We must perforce restrict our attention almost entirely to our own planet, and seek to discover what it is that, if our planet were all, *would* be the ideal. Perhaps in one respect we are entitled

to venture further than this. Until we have reason to suppose otherwise, we may guess that our planet, even though planets be rare among the stars, is in some sense typical of the whole; and therefore that the ideal suggested by it will not be utterly beside the mark in the cosmical view. But of this we must not be over-confident, so little is the grain that we inhabit, and so multitudinous are the stars. It is not impossible that, from other stellar systems, minds of a subtlety inconceivable to us are now condemning, and justly condemning, our best 'ideals' as products of a mentality scarcely worthy to be called mental. It is not impossible that, as a matter of fact, all that can ever come to be most valued within the widest possible limits of this planet's culture is utterly beside the mark, and man's championship of it a hindrance to the fulfilment of the objective and universal ideal. It is possible, moreover, that even in supposing ourselves to know the highest tendencies of our own planet we seriously mistake our planet's nature.

These, however, are but abstract possibilities; and they concern us only in that the thought of them should prevent us from claiming that we are moral legislators for the universe, or that 'God is on our side'. We can but note the gulfs around us, and then turn to envisage the ideal as best we may, in terms of our own pathetically anthropomorphic culture. But at least we need have no doubt that there *is* an objective and universal ideal, which, had we but sufficient data and sufficient insight, and were we emancipated from the compulsions peculiar to our human nature, we should joyfully salute as the perfection toward which the highest terrestrial aims were at least a crude approximation.

(c) COMPARATIVE EVALUATION

Within the limits of the known world, then, what capacities do we find, what claims that must be admitted in any judgment of the ideal?

There are, for instance, those multitudinous and obscure

tendencies that are ever being fulfilled and hindered on the physical plane within the system of each atom, and in the inter-relation of atoms in all ' dead matter ' and all living flesh from Polaris to the Cross. Must the ideal take into account even physical tendency ?

We have already been forced to admit that *if* there is no essential difference between teleological and mechanical activity, if the activities of the ultimate physical units are after all ' microscopically teleological ', or if all teleology is ultimately reducible to physics, then in the essential meaning of ' good ' it is implied that the fulfilment of physical tendency is a case of goodness. This view certainly violates common sense, but only because physical activity is so remote from the human fulfilments that we have at heart. But after all, *if* there is no ultimate difference between teleological and physical activity, we are indeed of the same stuff as ' dead matter ', and should regard the activities of the ultimate physical units with sympathy. And whatever the prejudices of common sense, it is clear that *if* there is no essential distinction between teleological and physical activity, physical activity is not, in theory, irrelevant to the ideal. Theoretically, then, when there is a conflict of physical ' forces ', so that each inhibits the other's expression, it is demanded in the ideal that the situation be so altered that each achieve free activity. If the physical were all, the ideal for the universe would be, not indeed merely the slow process of ' running down ' which is said by some to be the upshot of all the conflicting turmoil of energies, but rather that the ' balance wheel ' of the cosmic clock be disengaged, or all conflicts resolved, so that immediate and complete physical fulfilment should be attained.

But the physical is not all. There are higher levels of activity, and richer capacities which cannot be expressed save through interference with the physical. In physical activity the real expresses, so to speak, only its most superficial nature. Thus in so far as physical activity can be fulfilled without hindrance to higher emergent activities, its fulfilment is demanded in the ideal. But practically

it need only be considered as instrumental to the fulfilment of higher activities.

There is another aspect of this subject to be taken into account. Of any given physical unit we must say, not that the ideal is merely that its *physical* activity should proceed without hindrance, but rather that it should be caught up into some higher organic system and assume the emergent nature of that system. And of all the ultimate physical units (whatever they be), we must say that the ideal (utterly unrealizable, no doubt), is that they should all, through cosmical organization, assume the nature of a cosmical organism, and continuously fulfil themselves not as atoms but as members of that organism, active upon the highest of all planes of emergence. Such a state of affairs may seem to us quite impossible and fantastic; but such evidently is the ideal. And short of this it is best for any given unit that it take part in the activity of as complex a system as possible upon as high an emergent level as may be. For we have agreed that the ideal is that the real be so organized as to give birth to tendencies and activities expressive of its deeper nature.

These emergent tendencies are, in the first place, the biological tendencies of even the simplest organisms. With some confidence, perhaps, we may claim that the fulfilment of these is good intrinsically; and that, for the sake of these, whatever merely physico-chemical conflict and resistance be necessary *ought* to be incurred. But just as the physico-chemical must be subordinated to the biological, so also the simpler biological centres of activity must be subordinated to the more complex, and in particular to the richest kind of living known to us, namely to the human. Thus not only by prejudice do we approve the sheep that eats the grass, yet lament the sheep's destruction by the liver fluke. Not only by prejudice do we tolerate man's eating mutton (*if* flesh is really a suitable diet for him). And if the amoeba should still claim, through Mr. Bertrand Russell, to be man's equal, we may pertinently ask her, is she capable of as rich a fulfilment as man? And if she cannot establish this claim, we must

indeed admit her right to the full development of her capacities; but only in so far as she can thrive without hindering her betters.

Biological tendencies certainly differ in rank in respect of delicacy and complexity of their response to the environment, and the versatility of the organisms in which they inhere. Compare, for instance, the parental behaviour of birds and of fishes. But a more important difference, one which amounts to a difference of kind, is that between the more and the less mental among biological tendencies. For, as we have seen, there is reason to think that in the higher grades of organization ever subtler psychical capacity emerges. And in man fulfilment is distinctively mental. He is such that he can fulfil his own nature only by intelligent cognition of the universe (including himself) and unbiassed conation of its ends. And, as we have seen, this mental capacity of human organisms is by far the most important tendency of the real known to us. It is, so far as we can judge, the release or realization of the real's deepest nature, namely its capacity for mentality, or, if it be preferred, for spirituality.[1] And through this subjectivity, the capacity of the world (as object) may be increasingly fulfilled. In fact through it both subject and object express their nature.

In thus comparing biological tendencies in respect of their objective importance we come again upon a grave problem. Granting that a man is better than an amoeba, how many amoeba's fulfilments equal one man's fulfilment? Or are we to suppose that the fulfilment of one honest man is immeasurably more important than the fulfilment of all the amoebae that ever were and will be? We incline to think so; but when this principle is applied within the limits of mankind, we hesitate. Few would hold that any man, be he never so richly endowed, is so precious that the rights of any, even the crudest, of his fellow men are to be utterly disregarded when they are opposed to him. Somehow we look with disfavour on the utopia in which a multitude of serfs exists only to maintain

[1] But of spirituality I shall speak in the last two chapters.

a cultured aristocracy. Yet we see nothing wrong in the servitude of our horses and cattle. We may recognize, indeed, that these have rights; but most of us would not hesitate to sacrifice them for any considerable human advancement.

Is there any rational principle behind these common moral judgments, or are they but habitual prejudices?[1] Clearly they result from an apprehension, however vague, that, while the living of each living thing is an intrinsic good, and constitutes in the universal view a claim to a certain minimum of free activity even against certain needs of its superiors, that claim, even that minimum claim, is not to be sanctioned if it conflicts with the superiors' most essential needs. The nearer the superiors and inferiors in intrinsic excellence, the greater the rights of the latter against the former. On this principle we should readily destroy a plague of locusts, and with scarcely more compunction we poison our rats. But our human enemies receive, or expect to receive, more consideration. Indeed as between man and man, though men surely differ greatly in their capacities, and, quite apart from their social instrumentality, some are intrinsically more excellent than others, yet so fallible are our judgments in this region that it is often in practice safer to insist on the minimum rights of the typical human individual than to seek out and favour those capable of higher development.

But clearly even on the human plane we do attempt to single out at least the more intelligent for more careful upbringing; and within limits we expect that dullards should toil so that these naturally favoured ones may seek higher self-expression. In this policy we commonly have in mind, not to favour one individual against another, but to achieve the best for all, or for 'society', or for 'the race'. And in the last resort we must seek what is best for the cosmos. Intelligence is rare and precious, since

[1] It will be remembered that at an earlier stage I attempted to generalize the results of an induction from such preferences by saying that in judging one thing better than another we judge it to constitute a greater fulfilment of the capacity of active substance. In the above examples the preference would surely be reversed were we to discover that after all the greater fulfilment were attained by that which at first was condemned.

without it we fall into chaos. But if the intelligent have a right to better conditions than the obtuse, this is certainly not because they have made a corner in a precious commodity ; it is because their capacity is greater, and because without leisure and richness of experience they cannot serve the universal end to the full extent of their capacity.

But the superior rights of the intelligent, or (if it be preferred) of those of richer spiritual capacity, do not rest only in their superior instrumentality. The fulfilment of every human being is an intrinsic good ; and the fulfilment of those capable of higher development is intrinsically better than the fulfilment of the obtuse and the insensitive. For each contributes to the ideal not only through his instrumentality but also by his intrinsic virtue. The ideal is just the fulfilment of the reals' capacity ; and every individual, stupid and intelligent alike, is a member of the real.

Every human being, then, has an intrinsic right to free development in so far as his development does no harm to others. But when a choice must be made between one individual and another, we have to compare them not only as to instrumentality, but also as to intrinsic excellence, and again not only as to intelligence and richness of content, but also as to the capacity to will and serve the best that they know, rather than be the slaves of their own automatism.

Such comparison is indeed difficult, and within the present limits of our knowledge often impossible. But in daily life we have often to attempt it ; and in principle it is valid, even though the method of our valuation may be false. And though comparative evaluations may err, compare we must ; and must act upon our decisions. Occasions may even arise, for instance in a shipwreck, in which it were objectively desirable to save one unique intrinsically and instrumentally valuable individual even at the cost of very many less precious lives. And further, though this conflicts with our traditional idealization of self-sacrifice, that individual himself *ought*, if necessary, to sacrifice his fellow passengers in order to ensure his own

survival. It may, however, be doubted whether any human being is ever justified in acting thus, simply upon his own estimate of his own importance; for there is no field in which a man's judgment is more fallible than in self-valuation.

In all comparative evaluation we are prone to take into account one true principle only, ignoring others equally important. Thus we may sometimes judge one individual intrinsically better than another simply because his mental capacity is more subtle and his mental content more complex. But subtlety and complexity are not themselves intrinsically good. Subtle mentality is good in so far as it cognizes and conates the subtle tendency of the real as it really is; and a complex mental content is good in so far as its complexity is the true expression of the intricacy of the real, and no mere complex of error. For example, the social mind is more complex than the unsocial. But sociality is not a means to mere complexity. The complex organization of society, and its ingression in the individual mind, is good just because the real is highly complex and demands a complex mentality for its apprehension.

(D) THE SOCIAL ASPECT OF THE IDEAL

Even when we are thinking of the intrinsic worth of individuals, and not of their usefulness to society, we take into account their social aspect. For, all else being equal, we judge that man the more excellent whose mind embraces within itself more of society, whose mental content is such that, (in idealist phrase) it approximates more to the best will or 'real will' of society. And this we do in the conviction that, apart from his instrumental value as a means to social fulfilment, the individual's intrinsic worth is greater the more subtly his content corresponds with the actual intricacy of the real. And many would say that there is no richer content than the social content, since human society, in spite of its disorder, is after all the highest system of emergent tendencies known to us. Thus in the fulfilment of the social individual mind there is a

greater fulfilment than in the fulfilment of one who lacks social content.

But it is permissible to regard every individual, even the very flower of his age, as instrumental to the fulfilment of something greater than any or all human individuals. What is this something? Many would reply that it is society. Nor do they thus pledge themselves to the view that society is itself an experient mind. They hold rather that society is that vast system of activities and values in which any individual mental process is a partial participent, but which is not united in any one experience. This it is, this objective social content, that is said to be the end for which every experient is an instrument. The ideal, therefore, is the progressive co-ordination and enrichment of this social whole, which, they insist, is itself mental though it is objective. For it consists of the psychical activities and felt needs of men and women. Or rather, we are told, it consists not of particular psychical processes at all, but of the universal content of those processes. In the ideal there must be so many individuals, neither more nor less, as are needed for the perfection of the form of society. Each will have his function, his particular contribution to the all-embracing 'concrete universal' which is society. Thus some will contribute art, some science, some government, and some beauty of character in simple duties. Each in degree will fulfil 'his station and his duties'. And the whole will be the music of a very diverse orchestra, whose end is neither the players nor merely the present sound, but the eternal form which this sound embodies.

What must we say of this account of the ideal? Clearly we must insist that the ideal is not primarily a universal but a particular, characterized by a universal. It is a universal realized in a particular case. But, further, that universal is good just because it is demanded as the fulfilment of a particular active substance, even though, in the case of the ideal, that substance be the organized universe. To the contention that the ideal is a 'concrete universal' we need but reply that whatever this may be, the ideal is

simply that the capacities of the cosmos should be fulfilled, that the cosmical substance should assume a certain character. If this is what is meant, we can readily agree. But we must insist that the ideal is that the world's capacity should be fulfilled, not that a certain abstract form should be attained.

Within the practical sphere it is society, the present system of human individuals in a certain environment, that prescribes the nature of the ideal. For the ideal fulfilment of any society, doubtless, a certain form is demanded, a certain number of individuals fulfilling certain definite functions. And so it may seem that the particular individuals exist for the sake of the universal form which they collectively embody. But to say this is to ignore that the goodness of the form of the ideal society is derived from the needs and capacities of its individuals, and primarily of extant individuals.

A certain important class of facts does suggest that the good is primarily a universal. We refuse to admit that mere duplication of mental achievements doubles their value. If *per impossibile* Brown and Jones were to produce two identical works of art or scientific discoveries or mechanical inventions, we might say that no more value had been produced than if only one of them had done so. This suggests that goodness is in the universal itself rather than the instance. But in such cases we are apt to value the result only from the point of view of society. It makes no difference to society that these achievements should be duplicated. Nevertheless it is the capacity of the particular society that creates the goodness of these achievements. The unimportance of the duplication arises only from the fact that society cannot be twice fulfilled in an identical respect. But we must remember also the individual artists or discoverers. In each of them the achievement is good, though socially its duplication is negligible; for in each of them it is a fulfilment of capacity. Even from the universal point of view it is good that the capacity of Brown and the capacity of Jones should be fulfilled. But in so far as the fulfilments are identical, the capacities were

identical. Brown and Jones each embraced within his mental content an identical excerpt from the one real. The objective fulfilment is therefore not duplicated. But, on the other hand, two psychical capacities are fulfilled, in Brown and Jones ; and in this respect at least there is double value in the double achievement.

Every individual, once he is in existence, is a ground of intrinsic ends. The needs of his private nature constitute a demand for fulfilment which must not be simply ignored even in the cosmic ideal ; though of course it may well be that his needs must be partially or even wholly rejected for the sake of higher needs. Every individual, then, once he exists, is a ground of ends ; but *what* individuals there ought to be, how many and of what characters, is prescribed by the needs of society in its particular environment, and ultimately by the needs of the universe.

The immediate practical ideal is clearly the greatest possible fulfilment of the needs (or capacities) of extant human beings. But since new human beings keep flooding the earth, we cannot take into account only the present generation. The immediate practical ideal must include the production of individuals capable of the richest fulfilment rather than of individuals crippled before birth. But again, since the richest fulfilment of individuals entails social organization, the number and character of the individuals to come must depend on the demands of the ideal form of the future society in its particular environment. And this in turn depends on the capacity of the future individuals that it may be possible to produce.

The ideal, then, is that this real world, or, as some would say, a future real world continuous with this, should be characterized by a certain universal. But this universal itself is prescribed by the nature of the world as it is in fact. It is demanded, namely, that the richest possible capacities should ' awake ' in this world, and that the greatest possible fulfilment of those capacities should be attained. In fact, the ideal is that the real should be so organized that the highest possible tendencies should emerge and be fulfilled. The ideal is prescribed fully by the character and

potentiality of the real as it now is, by the character and potentiality of a certain particular, though that particular be the universe. The ideal is that *this* particular universe, that happens to exist, should be fulfilled as richly as possible, not (*per impossibile*) that this universe should be wiped out and another of a more elegant kind substituted for it.

The practical ideal, the only ideal which we can envisage, is human ; and being human it is social. But its sociality is derivative, not essential. Essentially the practical ideal is the fulfilment of human mental capacity, and its exercise upon the richest possible objective content ; but this fulfilment quite certainly entails sociality. The practical ideal, in fact, is that the human race should achieve the highest possible mentality and the richest possible culture. And this mentality and culture must be particularized in just so many individuals, neither more nor less, as are necessary for its perfection. But so long as there is an excess of individuals (if there be), they also have their rights. The immediate ideal must not simply neglect them, even for the sake of the ultimate mental perfection of the race.

But the more remote ideal is that there should be just so many individuals as are needed to perfect human capacity and culture. Further, lest some individuals should lack fulfilment, it is demanded in the ideal that every one should be, not merely fulfilled up to the limit of his capacity, but of the very highest capacity. For a man who achieves less than full humanity is so far a cripple, an unfortunate, and a scourge to society. Thus it is demanded that each individual should know all that is known and will the good. If this encyclopaedic knowledge seems preposterous, let us say that each should know *at least schematically* all that is known, so that he may will the good. For if any were to know less than the schema of all knowledge, or will less than the ideal, the harmony of all would be destroyed, and the activity of the whole would be discrepant with itself, and the progressive discovery and achievement of yet higher ideals would be hindered. But if each is to know all and will

the ideal, why, it may be asked, should there be more individuals than one all-knowing individual? The answer is twofold. In the first place, though each must share in the achievement of all, each must contribute to the whole his unique original quota. For the work to be done in the world demands many hands and many exploring brains. But though each cannot do all the work, it is demanded by the ideal that each should know and value all that is done, lest he should hinder the great common enterprise. It is important to note, however, that this psychical 'pooling' of the proceeds of industry is to be achieved not for the sake of repeating many times over psychic acts with identical content, but simply for the better advancement of the ideal of objective fulfilment. For the duplication of psychic acts (of cognition and conation and affection) in no way increases the fulfilment of the identical object of all.

There is another and more important reason for the sociality of the ideal. In groups of individuals certain high tendencies emerge which are not possible in the isolated individual. The man in the moon must lack the fulfilment of companionship, loyalty, and love. Society, in fact, is not only a means to fuller knowledge of the real, and more just conation of its ends; it is also itself an emergence of the real into richer being.

Our practical ideal, then, must be the achievement of the highest mentality with the widest and richest content. Each individual is good intrinsically in so far as he approaches this ideal, and instrumentally in so far as he is a means to its realization. This practical ideal should be the main guiding principle of all our politics. The extant needs of human individuals and societies must, of course, be considered, even though they are opposed to the remote ideal; for the ideal is the fulfilment of the real. And the extant human beings are no less members of the real than whatever beings are to come. It may often be very difficult to know how far the remote ideal should be postponed for the sake of immediate fulfilment, and vice versa. But however difficult it may be to solve such

problems, they are not in principle insoluble. For what ought to be sought is not merely the greatest subjective delight but the greatest objective fulfilment of the one world. But, of course, the fulfilment that is to be sought is not simply the greatest fulfilment at some remote millennium, but the greatest fulfilment throughout all time.

This abstract form of the ideal may seem to have but the remotest bearing on our practical politics. For we may agree as to the abstract ideal, yet violently differ as to how it is to be realized in Europe to-day. Yet there is some reason to say that our general, though perhaps remote, aim must be a ' personalistic socialism ', a socialism whose aim is the levelling up (but not down) of the capacities and activities of persons, rather than the establishment of a certain form of social organization. Of course it is possible that in transitional stages such as ours this ideal may be altogether impracticable and therefore a snare. It may be that, so long as there is low-grade work to be done, society must include low-grade minds to do it, since finer minds cannot devote themselves to such work without lack of fulfilment. It may be, therefore, that society should be hierarchical. But such an ideal can only be transitional. The low-grade human mind is yet human, having in its nature rudiments of the highest. Our beasts perhaps may achieve fulfilment in servitude, but the normal human mind is capable, in favourable circumstances, of something more than a life of drudgery. Therefore, by hook or by crook, we must contrive that lives of drudgery be no longer necessary to society. And since even the mentally deficient are not simply animal, but ' spoiled ' bits of humanity, incapable of a *merely* animal harmony, we cannot be content simply to allocate them to low-grade work. There must be an end to the production of individuals who are defective physically or mentally, and an exploration of the means of producing higher individuals, that is to say, individuals capable of a wider span and deeper penetration of cognition, and of more generous conation. Further, since the aim is that every mind should be ingredient in every other, we must seek to break

down the barriers between societies and between individuals, that all culture, all aspirations, all values, may justly determine the behaviour of all. Lastly, the practical ideal clearly implies that there should be a ceaseless exploration of the universe, not only for the discovery of means for the fulfilment of known needs, but for the discovery of new needs, and even perhaps for the creation of needs upon new and higher planes of emergence. For the ideal is the fulfilment, not merely of human mentality, but of the capacities of the universe.

(E) THE COSMICAL IDEAL

Such a description of the ideal must indeed seem far removed from practical politics ; yet even this is obviously not a description of *the* objective ideal, but only of the aim which is implied in our own limited experience. Let us not forget our littleness. Of the true ideal which is implied in the nature of the universe itself, and not merely in our fragmentary view of it, we can scarcely form the vaguest conception. But this we know. We experience the distinction between good and evil ; and this distinction is given not merely in the nature of our subjectivity but in the nature of the whole objective real which we experience, though so erroneously. Further, we seem able by our activity to increase the good and decrease the evil ; and we find ourselves under obligation to do so. We are bound, then, to go on, as best we may, exploring the universe to learn what it is that is most desirable, and to find means for its realization. And at every stage of our inquiry we must live up to our lights, such as they are ; although it may be that they are but Jack-o'-lanterns leading us utterly astray. And the best light that we have is the ideal of the fulfilment of mind's capacities. For not only is this objectively the best that we know ; it is also quite certainly the necessary means for the discovery and fulfilment of anything better that may at present be inconceivable to us.

On the other hand, if there be no organicity of the

universe, nor any possibility of achieving this cosmic ideal, then it is from the needs of humanity alone that the ideal arises. For goodness is essentially the fulfilment of tendency and capacity, and so long as there is any tendency, of whatever rank, there is a possibility of good. As to *the* good, the ideal, it is the greatest possible harmonious fulfilment of whatever capacities are inherent in the substance of the universe. If the highest possible activities are human social activities, or if the highest that can be brought about is some development of these, then these must be the chief ground of the ideal. But to assert that human capacities are in fact the highest, would be very rash.

The human ideal is clear at least in its barest outlines. Though in practice it gives rise to a thousand conflicting policies and bitter hatreds, the aim of all who adopt the standpoint of humanity is to fulfil and progressively enrich human capacity. This, as we have seen, means in the last resort to increase and refine the content of man's mind and to conform his will to the need cognized in that content.

But this is not the last word to be said. If we may take man as a true sample of the nature of the real, we may find in the human ideal hints of the cosmical. Man's subjectivity, we say, fulfils itself in cognizing as widely and deeply as possible the nature of the objective real, and in willing as justly as possible its fulfilment. But man's subjectivity itself, we have supposed, is emergent in the same kind of real (suitably organized) as that which it embraces as its object. In man, then, the real fulfils itself by knowing and being known, by exfoliating into ever subtler kinds of activity, and by willing the ends of that activity. That, which in mere physical and chemical action expresses its nature superficially, achieves in the human organism a new sphere of activity. It becomes a centre from which the universe begins to know itself and to will universal fulfilment.

The cosmical ideal, then, would seem to be as follows. In the first place the Whole, as a whole, shall know all. There shall be no fragment that does not partake (through

organization and emergence) in the subjectivity of the Whole. And there shall be no fragment excluded from the universal objectivity. But in the second place, within time, the Whole shall be not static but dynamic. It shall achieve ever new forms and new capacities. And these in turn must be cognized within the mental content of the growing Whole, and their fulfilment justly willed. Thus within time the ideal would seem to be that the world should for ever exfoliate in richness of being, and that mind should keep pace with this endless development by knowing all, and by willing and serving its progressive fulfilment.

But if the temporal view be not the finally true view, the ideal is other than this endless exfoliation of being, and of cognition and conation. There is some reason to believe that, though indeed our temporal experience is not positively false, it fails to reveal some essential character without which time must inevitably appear in a discrepant and illusory form. This is not the occasion to discuss the implications of temporal experience ; but we cannot close our inquiry into the ideal without noting how the problem of time bears upon the status of the ideal. If reality is in some sense supra-temporal, then a certain degree of excellence is eternally actual in the universe. Thus if it is a fact that the ideal will be achieved in the process of time, then the ideal *is* an actual feature of supra-temporal reality ; if, however, it will never be more than only partially achieved (for instance, in that very low degree in which it is achieved to-day), then the supra-temporal reality eternally excludes anything better. In either case our striving seems vain.

Metaphysical bogs surround all who speculate about time. But without going more than ankle deep, we may surmise that, after all, the temporal and the supra-temporal mutually support one another as aspect and whole. If so, then whatever degree of excellence the supra-temporal reality may eternally have, that excellence may well be the achievement of that factor in reality which we know as temporal striving. But again, just as time itself may

be both real and yet illusorily presented, so the ethical distinction itself may be both a true aspect of reality and yet an aspect which must deceive, so long as some other and essential character remains unrevealed. This possibility will be considered in the course of the very speculative inquiry upon which I shall now venture.

CHAPTER XIII

REALITY AND ADMIRATION

(A) ACTIVITY AND REALITY

I HAVE argued that by calling a thing good we mean that it either is, or is instrumental to, the fulfilment of tendency, and that the ideal is the greatest possible fulfilment of the tendency, or capacity, of the world. I will now speculate upon certain more remote implications of this view. It may well be that the most urgent and most fertile task of philosophy to-day is not speculation but criticism. Certainly speculation on the deeper, or metaphysical, problems is apt to lead the inquirer into treacherous ground. But speculate we must, to the best of our ability. The intellect is untrue to itself if it is afraid to venture into the metaphysical bogs. It must dare, even at the risk of succumbing to the fever and delirium of verbalism. The danger, however, is minimized if we realize it and prepare for it, and remember that in philosophical even more than in scientific speculation all conclusions are to be held tentatively.

The tendency of anything is, in a sense, its drive or thrust to become something more than it is. It is its effort, as it were, to give birth to something new over and above its present existence. It is its potentiality striving to be actual. How scandalously vague an assertion! Yet in some sense it is certainly true. Fulfilment of tendency is a creative act on the part of the extant real, in which it brings new real into being. It is an exfoliation of the real into further richness of actuality. Activity (of every kind) is the all-pervading miracle of the universe, an all-pervading creativeness. Everything in the last resort turns out to be some mode of activity, everything from a piece of lead to a symphony. There is in a sense nothing

whatever but activity, and the universal characters which it assumes, and certain principles or laws, some few of which it logically *must* illustrate, while others it merely *does* express. The former we may indeed deduce; the latter we can but discover. But the fact that there *is* activity, in diverse modes, is entirely beyond the reach of reason. It just is—the all-pervading creativeness of the real.

We have supposed that more complex kinds of activity emerge into being in the organization of units of simpler kinds of activity. On the physical plane there is only physical tendency, and the only fulfilment is physical. On higher planes of organization the real assumes new tendencies. It does not, we have supposed, fulfil tendencies that were active all the while, but repressed; for the new tendencies presuppose the higher organization. We may say, if we like, that the real had all the while the 'capacity' of expressing itself in the higher tendencies when organized; but, until the proper organization was achieved, there was no 'straining', so to speak, to behave in the new way. The tendency is not in the isolated parts, but only in the complex. By 'capacity' we must mean, here as always, no more than that the simple parts are such that, if they *were* organized, they *would* form a whole with certain tendencies.

Let us consider the ethical bearing of this creativeness of the real. The good, we said, is the greatest possible fulfilment of tendency, and of the capacity of substances to co-operate for the creation of higher emergent activities or tendencies. We now see a further implication of this view. The good is in general the greatest possible actualization of the potentiality of the real, the fullest expression of the nature of the real. And the real expresses itself most fully in the fulfilment of tendencies emergent in organism. In the activity which constitutes an organism new reality is brought into being. And the ideal, as we have seen, involves that the world should be organized so as to express itself in the highest possible emergent tendencies, and their fulfilment. This constitutes the fullest

actualization of the potentiality of the real, the bringing into being of the richest possible reality of which the present actual is capable.

(B) IMPLICATIONS OF BEING ADMIRED

One of the tendencies of organized reality is the psychical tendency to know, will and feel. Perhaps it might better be called ' capacity ' rather than ' tendency ', since, without any object to experience, experience is impossible. But the physical organism itself constitutes an ever present object to its own subjectivity, and in the organism itself lie the objective tendencies that are first conated. Moreover just as, in our earlier discussion of tendency, we were led to say that organisms have in themselves tendencies which demand a certain environment for their fulfilment, so now once more we must hold that this psychical capacity of organisms constitutes in them strictly a *tendency* demanding an environment for its fulfilment.

Now the psychical capacity may be called a capacity for cognizing the real and its tendency, and for willing and enjoying its fulfilment. In fact it is essentially a capacity for *knowing* and *admiring* and *serving* the real's exfoliation into new reality.

We have agreed that, in any given situation, it is good that actual psychical tendency be fulfilled ; for fulfilment, or progressive fulfilling, is what we essentially mean by ' good ', and psychical fulfilment is no less fulfilment than any other kind. The act of knowing, willing and enjoying is itself an emergence of new reality ; though, as we have seen, *false* cognition and *irrational* conation and affection are but *imperfect* fulfilments of psychical capacity.

A very important problem must now be faced. Is true cognition and rational conation and affection good solely in that it constitutes the fulfilment of the experient's capacity and may be instrumental to objective fulfilment in the environment ? Or does being known, willed and admired constitute in itself an intrinsic fulfilment of the object ? Does the objective world, in some obscure sense,

need to be the object of psychical activity, need to be known and willed and admired? Surely, it may be said, this cannot be the case, unless we are mistaken in holding (as we have held throughout this inquiry) that mere knowing makes no difference to its object, save indirectly. It is true, of course, that, in a certain sense and in certain cases, volition makes a difference to its object. I will to move my hand, and my hand moves. But in the great majority of cases volition takes effect indirectly upon its object, though always the medium must be *some* case of direct influence of volition upon the body.[1] Anyhow it would seem that objects are not themselves benefited in any way simply by being objects of psychical activity. To suppose otherwise must seem an indulgence in unwarranted fantasy.

But (since we are frankly speculating) let us pursue the matter somewhat further. In the first place we may note that, when the object is one that is capable of *knowing* that it is the object of psychical activity, it may very well be benefited by being known and admired and by having its fulfilment willed. Human beings commonly find that to be valued is an end in itself. To be an object of love, no less than to be a loving subject, is judged to be in itself a fulfilment demanded by our nature. This fact is often attributed to our social or our sexual dispositions; and certainly it would be illegitimate to infer from it alone that all objects are intrinsically benefited by being objects of psychical activity.

Nevertheless, it is worth while to inquire what it is that we do experience when we rejoice in being valued. Roughly, what we feel when we are valued is that 'we have not lived in vain'. Apart from a merely selfish pursuit of pleasure, there seem to be two kinds of fulfilments worthy to be sought. A man may hope that his behaviour may be instrumental (in however microscopic a measure) to the fulfilment of that which is objective to him as an experient. But also in so far as he is himself intrinsically excellent,

[1] Volition itself, of course, may be regarded as the activity of the psychophysical organism as a whole, controlling the activities of its parts.

in so far as his cognition is true and rich, and his conation just, this excellence of his may, so to speak, be saluted, confirmed, crowned, by the admiration of his fellows or the affection of some few intimates, or the love of a life-long companion. Without such admiration he may feel that, though he may have done good work in the world, he, as a source of intrinsic value, has missed complete fulfilment, in that he has not brought into being all the excellence of which he was capable, namely the psychical reals which we call admiration and love. He may feel, in fact, that in failing to be known and valued he fails (thus far) to be woven into the tissue of psychic reality. He is a loose thread. And so, not only does he fall short of self-fulfilment, but also the whole of reality falls short of fulfilment in respect of his absence from the psychic tissue. The sense of not being valued, then, is a sense of not being adequately gathered up into the unity of things.

Now it matters little for our present purpose whether this experience is due to a specific disposition, social or sexual; for whatever its psychological source, it is logically justified. The admiration of intrinsic values does, as a matter of fact, constitute an emergence of new reality. In failing to be admired, an intrinsically good object does not fulfil all its capacity. Further, since value does not depend on the act of valuation, the fact that an intrinsically good object has fulfilled its capacity of being admired constitutes an additional good, whether the object is aware of being admired or not.

This does not mean that the admirer's cognition creates the value of the object itself. The object's value is intrinsic. The admirer cognizes it and espouses it. This espousal, or admiration, itself constitutes a new value, which is a fulfilment of the psychical subjective capacity of the admirer, and also a fulfilment of the 'psychical objective capacity' of the object. It is in fact an emergent fulfilment.

After all, then, it is not mere fantasy to say that the objective world *needs* to be known and admired and to have its fulfilment willed; for everything that is intrinsically valuable is capable of producing further value in

being admired. Even objects which are *not* intrinsically good, and are admired erroneously, obtain in a sense fulfilment in being admired. For the cause of an erroneous value-judgment is always the apprehension of *some* true value. (The erroneous admiration of a villain must be attributed to the true apprehension of the excellence of *some* of his attributes). In respect, then, of its good attributes the bad object is fulfilled in being admired. But the object as a whole, which by hypothesis is not good but bad, does not in strictness obtain fulfilment in being admired. For the admiration which it arouses is unjustified. It is admiration for something which is not admirable, which does not in its own nature demand admiration. The admiration which it gets is not strictly *its* fulfilment at all. Further, the experient who thus erroneously admires, incurs an evil discord within himself. The objective world as a whole, moreover, is not benefited by admiration of things within it that are not good, for things within it that are not good are antagonistic to its rudimentary unity.

This speculation may, indeed, seem to ignore the principle that knowing, as such, makes no internal difference to its object, save (indirectly) when the object is aware of being known. But if the ideal is the greatest possible fulfilment of the capacities of the universe, it is demanded in the ideal that all intrinsic goods should be contemplated and admired; and this is demanded, not simply because the act of contemplation and admiration constitutes a fulfilment of the subjective psychical capacity of the observer, but also because to be admired fulfils the 'objective psychical capacity' of the thing that is admired. In fact it fulfils the thing's capacity for being an object to some mind, and an admired object, knit within the system of that 'objective self'. To be admired, then, 'makes the best of' good things. For in the cognitive relation of subject and object there emerges this new reality (knowledge and admiration), in which subject and object together find their completion. In this view it remains true in one sense that being known and admired

makes no internal difference to an object (just as being photographed makes no internal difference to an object); but on the other hand it is also true in another sense that being known and admired does constitute a fulfilment of the object's capacity for entering into an emergent subject-object-relationship. Being known and admired makes no difference to that in the object which is known and admired. But it does make a difference to the (ontological) object as an entity capable of playing the part of epistemological object in a subject-object relation, and of co-operating in the creation of the emergent activity of admiration.

I am well aware, however, that this contention would be wholly unjustified save in a frankly speculative discussion.

(c) ORGANISMS, NATURE, AND AESTHETIC OBJECTS

Very tentatively, then, I conclude that there is meaning, a very special meaning, in saying that intrinsically good objects do 'need' to be admired. In particular every organism needs admiration. It is not wholly meaningless to say, for instance, that the rose-tree flowering in my garden needs to be admired for its organic achievement in order that its objective psychical capacity may be fulfilled. Each of the atoms, also, that constitute its leaves and petals would obtain fuller being by being known as an individual and admired for its primitive excellence as an expression of the 'underlying substantial activity'[1] upon a lowly plane of organism. And for her richer and more organic nature, my wife, known by me somewhat intimately, demands a deeper admiration. And when I see her with her child and observe how intimately she has embraced within herself the needs of her child, thereby assuming a still more complex nature and capacity, this higher intrinsic good also demands of me admiration. And further, though we must never ignore the difference between the subjective unity of experience and the objective systematic relationships of distinct experients, admiration is demanded by the vast and diverse, but only slightly

[1] Professor Whitehead's phrase.

organized, company of the forty million minds of England. And the rudimentary trace of objective organism which hopeful observers can detect in the human race, also demands admiration so far as it exists, and service in so far as it is yet only potential.

But what of the mountains, lakes, and clouds, and the whole company of nature's beauties? These are not themselves single organisms, though they may conceivably be *compounded* of primitive physical organisms. So far are they from being single organisms that they are not even single organizations, as a nation is, and the human race might become. Are we to suppose, then, that natural beauties, which are not unities of being but only of appearance, *claim* our admiration as an organism claims it? Or is the Wordsworthian view mere sentimentalism? Professor Whitehead holds that the Romantic Movement was justified in feeling that in admiring nature we apprehend an intrinsic value. 'Nature,' he says, 'cannot be divorced from its aesthetic values';[1] and 'these values arise from the cumulation, in some sense, of the brooding presence of the whole on to its various parts.' What precisely can be meant by such a statement?

An adequate discussion of our admiration of nature is not possible here. But I would hazard the guess that it involves two very different activities. We are apt to regard a landscape both as a pattern of sensory qualities, of colour, volume, texture, and so on, and also as in some sense the face of nature herself, as features expressive of an underlying spirit. The former is strictly aesthetic admiration, the latter might be called religious. The former is typified by the artist's manipulation of abstracted natural features for the construction of a true aesthetic unity, and is carried to its logical conclusion perhaps in the most 'abstract' art. The latter is experienced most purely perhaps in our admiration of the star-strewn sky. Here the strictly aesthetic experience is slight, but we may have an overwhelming sense that we are confronted by the very face of nature. In the former experience, I should

[1] *Science and the Modern World*, p. 122.

say, we are interested in perfection of form, unity in diversity, even if that perfection gathers up into itself much that in isolation would be imperfect, ugly, or evil. In the latter experience we are interested chiefly in actuality. Here, we feel, we are confronted with the very features of the cosmos; and, just because they really are the features of the cosmos unobscured, we admire them. It was a variety of this experience, perhaps, that led us at times to admire even the horrors of war. Here at least, we said, is the real unadorned, and no mere censored aspect selected from the real. But in this mood, indeed, we forgot that if prettiness is not the whole truth of the real, neither is horror. This ecstasy of horror and defeat, however, must be more closely considered in the next chapter. Here I would distinguish between purely aesthetic appreciation and the ecstasy to which both aesthetic appreciation and also other experiences may sometimes give rise. In aesthetic appreciation, I should say, we admire a certain limited object; in the ecstasy which may result from this admiration, we admire the universe through the symbolism of, or at the suggestion of, the particular aesthetic object. But of this later.

Now in aesthetic appreciation, whether of natural beauty or of the works of pure art, one source of our delight may possibly be that certain specific kinds of sensory patterns are the appropriate stimuli to certain inherited emotional tendencies. Sounds and colours and forms may well have for us an inherited value—sexual, social, parental, and so on. Or, on the other hand, certain sensory patterns may touch off certain simple glandular reflexes. Another source of aesthetic delight lies doubtless in the acquired human associations of the object. These may be explicitly conscious in our minds, or fused and subconscious. Thus we may frankly admire the sunset for its emotional significance. In calling the hills bold or serene we unwittingly confess that we admire them for their fused human symbolism. In such cases what we admire is not strictly the sky and the mountains for their own sake, but only their likeness to things human. We rejoice, as it were, in human features

seen reflected in nature. True, nature herself really *has* the features that we are admiring; but our judgment of their beauty depends on their fused human associations.

Further, it may be that aesthetic appreciation is largely derived from the free exercise of our neural capacities. The rhythm of the dance and the curves of the hills and the proportions of the 'abstract' picture may doubtless please us just because they accord with our own powers of apprehension. In music those combinations of sound are best appreciated which are apprehensible under some pattern, which in fact are neither so simple as to be trite nor so complex as to be 'unintelligible'. Here again it may seem that we admire just because *our* capacities are fulfilled. But in truth *what* we admire is not our own agility in apprehending the form, but the form itself. We admire most the most complex and unified unity-in-diversity which we, with our degree of skill, are able to grasp.

This apprehension of unity in diversity, and of the most rigorous unity in the richest diversity, is clearly essential in the aesthetic experience. And it is in virtue of this that mathematicians rightly claim that there is beauty in mathematics. In the work of art, fused associates and even conscious associates must combine, in most closely knit yet diversified unity of matter and mood, with the unified sense pattern of the aesthetic medium itself. It is too easy to explain this whole affair in terms of the observer's need for diversified yet harmonious exercise of his powers. The artist himself, and the unsophisticated observer, are justified when they revolt against this subjectivism, and insist that in some sense or other what is produced is *itself* a thing of value, and no mere means to harmonious satisfaction.

An organism, we have agreed, is a value in itself; and it attains a higher degree of intrinsic value the more organic it is. It attains the most complete fulfilment of its capacity in a life of most diverse activities all of which are harmoniously controlled for one end. Now in a work of art we are presented with a concrete instance of that

unity in difference which is an essential character of organism. In admiring the harmonious fulfilment of the capacities of the diverse matter of any work of art, what we admire is a concrete presentation of this essential character of organism. True the experience is in a sense illusory. The presented unity, including all its fused and unfused symbolism, is the unity of no actual organism, such as a person. It is only a phantom of organism projected upon unorganized material, or on material organized merely from outside. The 'underlying substantial activity' which expresses itself in this intrinsic value is not in the medium alone, but in the co-operation of the artist and his medium. (In fact it is an emergent activity.) But the phantom is a phantom of a concrete unity. It is presented to our senses and our imagination. It is a visible, audible, or even (in sculpture) a tangible ghost, into which we 'project' an illusory life. Unlike the value of a true organism, the aesthetic value of a work of art is not 'in and for itself', since it, the concrete object, has not 'realized' itself. It entails for its existence the artist's creative mind.

Of the appearance of nature I said that we admire it partly for its felt actuality and immensity, partly for its symbolical fulfilment of our human needs, partly for the fragmentary and fortuitous traces of that unity in diversity which is the special character of organism. Now while in the appearance of nature this sensory unity in diversity plays a minor part, in the work of art it is supremely important. Without it there is no aesthetic value whatever. But, on the other hand, whereas in the appearance of nature we are confronted by the very face of nature herself, or at least certain of her features apprehended in isolation from the rest, in the work of art we are confronted, certainly by something actual, but by something which is significant to us less by virtue of its actuality than by virtue of the symbolism which is focused into it by the human mind, and by virtue of the abstract form of rich 'unity in diversity' which it embodies.

(D) SUMMARY

I would summarize this whole very speculative discussion as follows. There is a sense in which the ideal, the good, is the greatest possible actualization of the potentiality of all that exists, the fullest expression of the nature of the world. This, owing to emergence, is more nearly achieved the more there is organization. The ideal, therefore, is the realization of potentiality upon the highest possible plane of organism. No organism, however, fulfils its whole capacity unless it is contemplated and justly admired; since in being contemplated and admired it co-operates in the emergent activity of the subject-object whole. The abstract form of the ideal is, therefore, that continuously victorious activity, on the part of all organisms on all planes, be continuously and justly admired in all their aspects by all psychic subjects of sufficient capacity for this task.

In admiring the features of nature, we appreciate them partly for their accidental human associations, but also for the fragmentary 'abstract' beauty, or unity in diversity, which we discover in them. Possibly one cause of our love of nature is that we inherit sensory and perceptual capacities which are themselves the product of nature's age-long operation upon our ancestors. What more natural than that we should delight in the perceptual environment to which we are best adapted? What more natural than that the modern urban and industrial environment should not be perceptually appropriate, and therefore not immediately pleasing? What more natural than that, as we become better adapted to urban life, we should begin to discover new and unexpected beauties in the gloom and glare and angular precision of city percepts? But there is another element in our attitude to nature's features. We salute them for being, whatever their form, veritable features of the face of reality. And this is sometimes true also of our reaction to the civic environment; for even city life, after all, is a feature of reality. Finally, in so far as we find in nature hints of formal unity-in-diversity,

or again symbols of human nature, we are tempted to take them as features of a veritable cosmic organism.

In the creation and appreciation of works of art, our delight has doubtless many sources. But when all irrelevant matter is set aside, what we admire in art is a strict formal unity which is imposed upon, or is seen to emerge out of, richly complex matter, sensory, affective, and ideational. What we admire is the harmonious fulfilment of rich potentialities. What we admire is an appearance of organism. This admiration of a unitary object (though in a sense an illusory object) is the main factor in aesthetic experience. But it is not always distinguished from the enjoyment of our own agile and victorious activity in apprehending the object. Nor is it true that we admire the object *because* it affords us harmonious activity. It is unnecessary to suppose that our own harmonious activity is itself the only object which can rouse our admiration.

CHAPTER XIV

MORAL ZEAL, DISILLUSION, AND ECSTASY

(A) MORAL ZEAL AND DISILLUSION

THE whole of the preceding inquiry has been concerned with a particular kind of experience, namely, the experience of things or events as good and bad. We have tried to discover what it is that is implied in our diverse uses of these words, what is their common essential meaning; and further, we have tried to elaborate this meaning into a logically coherent concept. Having reached some conclusion on this subject, we considered the meaning and implications of moral obligation. And finally, we came to some very tentative conclusions as to certain characteristics that seemed to be required in the objective ideal. This discussion entailed a very speculative exploration of the relations between subject and object in the act of admiration.

There remains to be considered another type of experience, in which ethical experience seems to be in a manner transcended. I will first try to describe the kind of experience that I mean, and will then close this whole survey with a very tentative speculation as to its significance.

There seem to be at least three moods which the mind may experience with regard to good and evil. I will call them the mood of moral zeal, the mood of disillusion, and the mood of ecstasy. It is ecstasy that I will venture to discuss; but, first, it will be well to distinguish the three moods from one another. They do not necessarily exclude one another. It is possible to have various blends of them in which now one and now another is more prominent. Or perhaps I should rather say that we may attend at once to those diverse aspects of experience which conduce to each of these three moods, and that we may be

concerned now chiefly with one, now with another aspect. The mood of ecstasy, indeed, seems in some sense to involve and to transform both the others.

In our customary daily life we seldom experience any of these moods, for we are too closely engaged by the successive strokes of the game of living, to contemplate it as a whole. With little thought as to what it really is that we are doing, we fulfil our private needs and the habitually recognized claims of our neighbours; or we brood upon our defeats, or build castles in the air. Now and again, however, the mind is shocked into a poignant realization of the stark difference between good and bad, and perhaps into some gesture of allegiance to the good.

This mood of moral zeal may sometimes spring from an unusually intense and indignant experience of private need, or from a self-forgetful espousal of the needs of another, or others, or from the spectacle of animal suffering. Or, again, it may arise from the discovery of some inconsistency or insincerity in oneself or another. But whatever the origin of the moral mood, it consists in a white-hot indignation against all that is conceived as bad, and in particular against all that is conceived as conflicting with the free activities of human beings and perhaps of animals, or (as some would put it) against all that is thought of as 'contrary to the will of God'. The universe is regarded single-mindedly in relation to the ethical distinction, the great struggle between the powers of light and the powers of darkness, or between life and death, or spirit's activity and the inertia of matter. We are so impressed by the urgent needs of living things, and perhaps by the needs of a world regarded as itself alive, that the ethical distinction seems to be an absolute distinction between characters of the real itself, and no mere accidental result of our sensitivity. If the stars are indifferent to this vast crusade for the good, so much the worse for them. If they be not themselves alive or seats of life, we may ignore them; unless indeed they can be made somehow instrumental to the achievement of the ideal. If, as some believe, the great enterprise of life on this planet must sooner or later

end in defeat, then the universe is contemptible, a brute-mother devouring her divine foster-child. For nothing, in this mood, matters but the abolition of evils and the achievement of goods.

From this zealous mood we may fall into disillusion.[1] This is experienced as a definite contraction of the spirit, or a collapse from a more alive to a less alive mode of being. Our headlong ethical enthusiasm is perhaps suddenly and mysteriously checked, as though by a change of weather. As though by spongy ground, we are reduced suddenly from a gallop to a hang-dog walk. Perhaps we have been exhausted by some hidden physiological change, and have projected our jaundiced mood upon the environment. Perhaps, on the other hand, it is mere thought that has fatigued us and projected its pale cast upon the world.

Anyhow, from whatever cause, we find ourselves disillusioned about all values, save probably the fierce negative value of sensory pain. The normal mind seldom sinks so far as to be *disillusioned* about the badness of pain stimuli. It may indeed transcend their badness, rise to some degree of emancipation from their tyranny, through the experience of higher values; but this transcendence is no mere disillusionment. In disillusion all values above the sensory level simply escape our apprehension. No longer is the world a theatre of intense personal dramas, or of the cosmical epic of good and evil; it is just a tedious and chaotic accident, a foul tangle of thorns and marshes wherein one has somehow to find a tolerable resting place. Of course there are sweets, a few rare berries to be captured now and then. But mostly they turn sour in the mouth, and always after them comes colic. The prudent man takes as little as possible of the hostile world into his system. He loves as mildly and as rarely as possible. He eschews all loyalties. He exerts his will only to keep

[1] The word 'disillusion' may either mean literally the process of admitting cherished illusions to be in fact only illusions, together with the emotional attitude of bored disappointment, which such a discovery usually evokes; or it may mean the disappointed emotional attitude alone, whether it happens to be justified by the situation or not. Here I use it in the latter sense, namely, to mean the emotional attitude. It is possible to have an illusory disillusion.

reality at arm's length. For life, in this mood, seems a long and sleepless night in an uncomfortable bed. We toss and yawn, and stop our ears against the clamour of the world, and construct a defence of pleasant fantasies, or hypnotize ourselves with mildly laborious and aimless antics, to entice sleep.

When we succeed to some extent in this attempt to keep ourselves from being implicated in the world that is over against us, our disillusion may achieve a certain cynical complacency of triumph. And this may sometimes be so intense that, buttressed by a little confused thinking, it may persuade us that we have attained a sublime detachment from ephemeral values and have found the goal that transcends good and evil. When, on the other hand, the demands of the body, or of other persons to whose needs we happen to be sensitive, are so insistent that we cannot disengage ourselves from them, or again when we contemplate the insecurity of all our defences, we may taste abject terror on account of our vulnerability. And this terror, so long as it is experienced only in imagination, may sometimes exalt itself into a kind of pseudo-tragic ecstasy. For we are all capable of masochism—at a safe distance from the actual.

But these moods of triumph and terror are in truth mere phases of the disillusioned flight from the enticing and wounding object of experience. And in defence of this withdrawal we may construct or accept all sorts of theories, the gist of which is always that the difference between good and bad is illusory, and that obligation is a meaningless concept; and indeed that the preference for pleasure rather than pain is itself a fortuitous and crazy bias, which the prudent man will seek to escape as far as possible.

(B) THE RISE TO ECSTASY

The third mood, which I venture to call 'ecstasy', is less easy to describe. Some would perhaps identify it with the more triumphant kind of disillusion; for in some sense it certainly involves both triumph and detachment

from all desire. Others may refuse to distinguish it from disillusion of the more tortured type ; for it is not wholly unlike masochism. Some may claim that it is essentially moral, though it is emancipated from every particular moral bias and every moral code ; for certainly it is an experience in which a supreme duty seems to be fulfilled by the stripped and cleansed spirit. Others may think of it as the highest reach of that kind of experience which we call aesthetic ; for they perhaps know it best in contemplation of works of art. Some, however, would insist that what is under discussion is simply the religious experience, since it is essentially the contemplation of supreme excellence, and the spiritual gesture which we call worship.

Many, of course, would simply deny that there is any such experience as that which I wish to describe. They suspect that anyone who thinks he has, or did have, such experiences is merely mistaken. Some precious dogma or other (they suggest) demands that there should be the possibility of intuitive apprehension of occult reality, or of value other than teleological values ; and so in certain moods of zest a believer may persuade himself that he is face to face with the supreme excellence, when, as a matter of fact, he is merely rather excited. It is so easy to believe that an experience has the character that we want it to have, and even easier is it to assume that a past experience did have the desired character.

In all these spheres there is indeed grave danger of self-deception and faulty introspection. But in the last resort it is only by more rigorous introspection that our error is to be discovered. We cannot afford to discard introspection altogether merely because it sometimes fails us. No doubt many have deceived themselves into believing that they have had definitely super-normal experience. Possibly others, however, really have had such experience, and have been unable to describe it intelligibly to the mystically blind. Indeed, the literature of mysticism is so vast and detailed, and so much in agreement, that the existence, as opposed to the interpretation, of unique mystical experiences may be considered

publicly established by the testimony of many persons who, claiming to have had it, have established also their own honesty and their accuracy of introspection. But, alas, it is almost impossible to disentangle their data from their interpretations. The professed mystics may have seen the truth, but they fail to describe it intelligibly, and their interpretations are often naïve.

Here, however, I am concerned with something less remote than the experience of the great mystics, namely, a mood which may happen to very many of us if not to all. Perhaps I am not entitled to use the term ' ecstasy ' to signify experiences which, it may be, are wholly unlike the alleged mystical ecstasy. Yet I adopt this magniloquent word to mark the fact that the experience under discussion is strikingly different from all our ordinary value-experiences, and that it involves a sense of exaltation ; and further, that the excellence which it claims to apprehend is conceived as the attribute not of a part but of the whole universe, or of the whole universe as it is presented to the individual. It is an experience which, though it may occur but rarely in the life of any particular person, is not properly called super-normal. I would hazard the guess that, though many might disown the experience entirely, they have as a matter of fact had it, but have failed to distinguish it from other experiences somewhat like it, or have perhaps simply failed to notice it when it has occurred. For it is an experience which must be very carefully introspected if we would neither overlook it entirely nor mistake it for something else. To careful introspection it appears to be neither an enjoyment of teleological fulfilment nor a mystical apprehension of the reality behind familiar appearances. It is essentially, I should say, the appreciation of an unfamiliar and surpassing excellence in the total object of familiar experience. It is not insight into the ' reality ' behind ' appearances ', but discovery of a hitherto unappreciated excellence of the familiar world itself.

As with disillusion, so also the mood which I have called ecstasy is very possibly conditioned by the state of the body. As in the one case certain physiological changes

seem to diminish our capacity for intuiting value, so in the other case it may well be that other physiological changes induce in us a more delicate sensitivity, or a shrewder percipience. However this be, the mood comes to us with an enjoyment of intensified psychical activity, a kind of unusual wide-awakeness. This, perhaps, means simply that we find ourselves at grips with a more stimulating, more vivid, or more complex objective field than usual; or, since this much is also characteristic of the intense ethical zeal, it were better to say that in the mood that I am describing we seem to discover in the urgent struggle between goods and bads a more serene and hitherto neglected aspect. We glimpse the same reality from a fresh angle. Or, to use an imperfect but perhaps helpful image, from seeing things single-mindedly, with monocular ethical vision we pass to a stereoscopic, binocular, or argus-eyed vision, in which the ethical is but one factor. What we see is what we saw before, but we see it solid. Whereas before we could appreciate only the good of victory, now we salute a higher kind of excellence which embraces impartially both victory and defeat.

Very diverse situations may afford occasion for this enlightenment, situations so diverse that it seems at first impossible to find any feature common to them all. Fleeting sense-objects are sometimes potent symbols that evoke the experience. A breath of fresh air may be enough, or an odour, or a clash of colours or of sounds, or such more complex objects as a gesture or the curve of a limb. On the other hand, objects of a very different kind may effect the change in us, for instance, a supreme work of art, especially if it be tragic, or a subtle matter of intellectual study which taxes our powers of comprehension and affords the illusion of emancipating us from our human limitations.

In fact, almost any kind of object may afford the stimulus for this mood of ecstasy, or on the other hand may never do so. One kind of situation, however, is perhaps peculiarly significant for an understanding of the experience. Grave personal danger, or conviction of final defeat in some most cherished enterprise, or the danger or final downfall of

some dearest object of loyalty—it is perhaps in these situations that the precise content of the mood is best seen.

It is possible, for instance, to be on the verge of panic, to be reduced to quivering incapacity and terror, and yet all the while to be an exultant onlooker, rapt in observation of the spectacle, yet in a queer way aloof. It is possible even in the compulsive reaction to pain in one's own flesh, and even while helplessly watching a beloved's pain, to be, precisely, in the very act of frantic revulsion, coldly, brilliantly, enlightened, not as to the excellence of pain, but as to the excellence of the universe.

There seem to be two factors common to these experiences. They all involve the vigorous espousal of some need or other, great or small; and they are all experiences of the defeat of the espoused need. They are all occasions of intense psychical activity, and all occasions of defeat. From unusually intense and thwarted desire we seem to wake, without any disillusionment from the ends at stake, into apprehension of value or excellence of an entirely different order. Not that we pierce beyond illusory appearances to reality itself, or contemptuously turn from the shadow to the substance, but rather, as I have said, we appreciate something that was presented before but was hitherto beyond our appreciation. Not even that we 're-value'; for re-valuation implies some denial of the urgency of former values. Rather we prize these even more than formerly; and, just because of this new apprehension, just because experience of this other order of excellence irradiates even the familiar valuations that it transcends, we may be even more active in their defence than we were before our enlightenment. For, paradoxically, the familiar values, even with their new poignancy, are perceived as members in that higher excellence which does indeed both eclipse them and enhance them.

(c) EMANCIPATION FROM TELEOLOGY

Well may we call this mood ecstasy, even though perhaps it is profoundly different from the ecstasy of the mystics.

For it is essentially a standing outside oneself, and an aloofness from all the familiar objects of the will, a detachment not merely from the private person but equally from the world and its claims, not indeed to deny them, but to appreciate them with a new serenity. To speak almost in the same breath of detachment and of enhanced appreciativeness may seem inconsistent. But anyone who has ever attempted any work of art must understand this description. For it is only when we stand aloof from our work, that we most justly and most keenly appreciate whatever is good in it. Immersed no longer in the technical labour, with all its incidental but engrossing defeats and victories, we can value without distraction (and therefore with closer attention, and therefore more sharply), the aesthetic whole that we have devised.

I do not mean merely that in ecstasy our private desires may come to be regarded as unimportant and contemptible compared with the needs (say) of mankind as a community of interdependent minds; somewhat as, within the individual's private economy, momentary impulses may be regarded as less worthy of consideration than permanent and deep-seated dispositions. It is not this comparative evaluation of needs and their fulfilments that is in question. In this mood of ecstasy we *seem* in some manner to pass beyond the whole cramping, limiting distinction between good and bad; we may even contemplate with a kind of cold fervour of acquiescence the possibility even that the whole enterprise of mind in the cosmos should fail, that the richest capacity of the universal active substance should never achieve expression in the supreme level of organism, and that all that has hitherto been achieved should be lost. For in this mood not only victory but also defeat, even final catastrophe, is experienced as good. We seem to stand above the battle in which we ourselves are eager and hard-pressed fighters, and to admire it as a work of divine art, in which tragic aesthetic excellence overwhelmingly vindicates all the defeat and pain even of those who may never have access to this vision.

Evidently if this account of ecstasy be true, we have

come upon a very serious difficulty for an ethical theory according to which we *mean* by 'good' simply fulfilment of activity or tendency. For if by 'good' we *mean* fulfilment, it is meaningless even to ask of a certain instance of 'good' whether it is an instance of fulfilment or not. Let us, however, put aside this difficulty for the present, and pursue our empirical investigation of ecstasy. It is this radical difference between the familiar values and the value glimpsed in ecstasy that leads some to suppose that in ecstasy the distinction between good and bad is seen to be abolished. This I believe to be an error. Detachment from lower values for the sake of higher is mistaken for emancipation from value itself. There is, no doubt, a sense in which the spiritual life involves a 'disintoxication' from the influence of all values,[1] an aloofness even in the most exalted delights. But these negative phrases describe only the process of emancipation, not the end for the sake of which emancipation is attempted. And even so they misdescribe; for there is nothing in them to distinguish ecstasy from disillusion, the somnolent failure to value at all from the awakening into a new mode of valuation and a new sphere of values, unnoticed in familiar moods. It is true that in ecstasy we have peace, and that we are indeed emancipated from all desire, and can accept whatever befalls. This, however, does not imply that we have transcended value, but rather that we have discovered, or seem to have discovered, that whatever befalls is good. We *admire* the issue of fate; we are not indifferent to it. Those who claim that the 'spiritual life' consists in an emancipation from value, admit that to the imperfectly spiritual the goal of spirituality constitutes a value, and the supreme value; but, they argue, the goal itself is a state in which value is seen to be illusory. In the spiritual view it matters not whether anyone attains to spirituality, still less whether the world's enterprises succeed or fail. Therefore, we are told, in the spiritual view value is altogether escaped. But this is to overlook the fact, insisted upon often by the mystics themselves, and even

[1] G. Santayana, *Platonism and the Spiritual Life*, p. 30.

by those who claim that value is transcended, that the spiritual life has its joys. It may be in a sense emancipated from desire, but only in the sense that it possesses what is most desirable, and has no occasion to desire more.

This dispute evidently does not turn on the propriety of the use of the words ' good ' and ' value ' with reference beyond the familiar plane of teleology. Rather the question is as to whether the experience is or is not affectively toned, and conatively active. Is it *mere* detachment, *mere* disintoxication, or is it definitely ' ecstatic ' in the familiar sense ? Surely it comes to us as essentially the contemplation of an object *as good*, though as good in a manner very different from the familiar manner. It is not mere contemplation, but admiring contemplation. There is a judgment, implicit or explicit, that the object of contemplation *ought to be*, that it is an end in itself and for itself, and further that when it is delivered to our contemplation we ought to salute it with that gesture of the spirit which we call admiration or worship. If anyone should ask what meaning there is in saying that an object is an end in and for itself, we must answer that in the final ethical analysis it turns out that in *all* value-judgments, an objective situation, such as organic fulfilment or personal fulfilment, is simply judged good in and for itself. We cannot analyse the experience further.

It is in defeat or tragedy that ecstasy, when it occurs, is most distinguishable ; for in defeat it is most opposed to the teleological. In triumph also it is possible ; but since it is itself a triumphant mood, we do not easily introspect it as other than the feel of victory. Nevertheless in our triumphs we may sometimes enter upon it, watching ourselves with almost derisive zest. But at such times ecstasy is apt to be mistaken for mere satiety and disillusion. For it is most obviously distinguished from triumph in its detachment and disintoxication from the fruits of victory even in a great cause.

It is perhaps in contemplation of aesthetic objects that ecstasy is most often achieved. But normal aesthetic

appreciation, even when it is intense, is distinct from the ecstasy to which it sometimes gives rise. For while aesthetic appreciation itself is essentially appreciation of a particular object, however complex that object be, ecstasy is appreciation of the whole experienced world, though it may be induced by the aesthetic object. In fact, while in pure aesthetic appreciation we admire the aesthetic object itself, in aesthetic ecstasy we admire the universe through the symbolism of the object.

Moreover, since in aesthetic experience ecstasy is so closely associated with the experience of the harmonious activity of our own powers of apprehension, it is not always distinguished therefrom. Again, since the aesthetic object itself is apt to be regarded as in a manner illusory, the aesthetic ecstasy is often confused and clouded by a certain scepticism. And so, though having it, we may have it without conviction, or cynically 'explain it away'. The supreme aesthetic objects, however, and especially those which are tragic, can reveal most clearly the peculiar value which is the object of ecstasy. Not that the human significance of such works of art is essential. The most abstract art, it is said, even as the most abstract intellectual study, may enlighten us into ecstasy, may reveal that excellence which is different in kind from all familiar values. But it is in contemplation of those works of art in which human strivings are woven into a tragic aesthetic whole, that we achieve most richly the mood which paradoxically unites the single-minded espousal of needs with the spiritual aloofness consequent on apprehension of value of another order. And the aesthetic ecstasy is the more compelling in proportion as the aesthetic object is on the one hand poignant, through its inclusion of the triumphs and defeats of teleological beings, and on the other hand austere in its subjugation of this material under an abstract form. It is in this subjugation that dramatic art is creative. It evokes in a complex of teleological values and disvalues an excellence which, including them, is other than they.

(D) SUMMARY

I would summarize this account of the ecstatic experience as follows. (*a*) The experient does not seem to himself to apprehend some hitherto hidden reality or occult substance. He seems to appreciate something presented in ordinary experience but not hitherto appreciated. (*b*) The object which he appreciates is not simply the particular object with which his attention has been engaged, whether an aesthetic object, an object of intellectual contemplation, a tragic or triumphant event, or what not. He appreciates rather the whole of existence as it is revealed to him in ordinary experience. But he appreciates it with the help of, or through the symbolism of, the particular object with which his attention has been engaged. (*c*) The excellence which he seems to discover in the familiar universe seems to be no ordinary value, no mere fulfilment of the activity of a teleologically active substance. In some sense it is indifferent to, because it is superior to, the ordinary distinction between good and evil. In ecstasy we seem to appreciate the universe for being—just whatever we believe it in fact to be, whether for mind a place of triumph or of defeat. And, if my account is correct, the difference between this excellence of fact, or of fate, and the familiar teleological goods is most obvious in those moments of ecstasy which occur when we are being forced to surrender our most cherished ends. (*d*) Although there is this striking difference between the excellence cognized in ecstasy and all familiar goods, it is not true that in ecstasy we transcend the sphere of value altogether. In all the ecstatic experiences we do definitely *value* the universe, which is the total object of contemplation. We admire it, worship it ; and we do so because we judge it to be a value, not simply for us, but in and for itself. We are not disintoxicated from *all* values, but only from all values other than the intrinsic excellence of the universe. Nor, strictly, are we *disintoxicated* from any values ; for, though from our high look-out we can now regard all familiar values with complete detachment, we at the same time see them to be irradiated by the supreme excellence.

CHAPTER XV

ECSTASY AND ETHICAL THEORY

(A) DESTRUCTIVE ARGUMENTS

SO far I have only described, and now I must attempt a critical estimate of, the ecstatic experiences and their significance. It may be that all are in a sense illusory. Of course, in one sense they *are* what they are rigorously introspected to be. But in so far as they consist in value-judgments, these judgments may be erroneous ; and I have described them all as apprehensions or judgments of the intrinsic value of a certain object, namely the universe. They are intuitions of value, together with judgments that the value intuited is characteristic of a certain object. Now we do often pass from intuitions of value to erroneous value-judgments, just as we often pass from intuitions of sense-qualities to erroneous percepts. It is possible that in all these cases of ecstasy we do but 'project' upon the external situation a complacency whose source is in truth merely 'organic'. Thus, perhaps, the aesthetic ecstasy does but project upon the aesthetic object, or rather upon the universe seen through that object, a 'feeling of harmonious activity' which in fact comes to us from the harmonious activity of our own powers of apprehension. Similarly with the ecstasy of intellectual contemplation. And in the strange ecstasy of defeat or of pain perhaps the organism, stimulated into intense activity (overt or internal) by the urgent situation, experiences an irrepressible 'physiological cheerfulness', which, since there is no familiar object to justify its existence, persuades the subject that he is apprehending some occult external value or excellence hitherto unnoticed.

A somewhat similar explanation may be derived from psycho-analysis. This ecstatic emotion, it may be said,

is a typical case of 'irrational affect'. Could we but analyse the patient's mind, we should discover that some perhaps obscure and insignificant feature of the present environment happened to be for his 'unconscious' a symbol affording gratification to repressed cravings rooted perhaps in his infancy. And indeed the intensity and mystery of the mood of ecstasy do suggest that it is the values of remote childhood that are being enjoyed again.

Let us consider the physiological argument first. No doubt in aesthetic and in intellectual experience the sense of the harmonious activity of our powers of apprehension may play an important part in delighting us. Indeed, careful introspection confirms this much of the theory. And this 'activity of our powers of apprehension' is doubtless activity of the organism, and has a physiological aspect. But it does not follow that the ecstatic experiences are *essentially* experiences of our own harmonious activity. For instance, both in the aesthetic ecstasy, and in ordinary aesthetic appreciation, we are concerned with objects other than our own organic activities. In our admiration of, let us say, a tragic drama we experience something which *seems* quite different from any delight that we may also have in the exercise of our capacities. Introspection here reveals two distinct factors in the experience, delight in the aesthetic object and delight in our own activity of apprehension and appreciation. It is difficult to believe that the one is merely an 'illusory' projection of the other. Of course, if we suppose that *all* value experiences are projections of organic well-being, we must admit that ecstasy is so also. But if teleological activities other than those of the experient's own organism are sometimes the immediate ground of value-judgments, then the value experienced in ecstasy may turn out to be of this kind. And, in fact, many values do seem to be thus experienced as good quite apart from their relation to the experient himself and his organic needs. Thus of the values of other individuals and of society it seems true that, so far from being reducible to organic needs of the experient himself, they may be intuited as values though

opposed to private needs, and may subsequently mould the organism. Thus finally they do afford the individual organic fulfilment ; but they do so because the organism has gradually become attuned to these extra-organic values. A man's love of another and his loyalty to society, though they are not reducible to any instinct or complex of instincts, do induce in him private needs for the activities of love and loyalty.

But though this general theory of conation be admitted, there still remains a difficulty in respect of ecstasy. I have argued that the extra-organic values, though not grounded in the tendency of the individual organism, are none the less grounded in the tendencies of *some* active substances, other than the tendencies of the individual organism.

But both in the ecstatic experiences and in ordinary aesthetic experience this seems not to be the case. The value of the immediate aesthetic object, and of the more remote object of aesthetic ecstasy, the value also of the object of intellectual ecstasy, and the value cognized in the ecstasy of defeat—these, it may be said, constitute no fulfilments, unless they be after all fulfilments of the experient himself or his own organism. Apart then from the fallacy of reducing *all* conation to organic fulfilment, there is some reason for holding that, after all, ecstasy at least must be so explained.

Let us state the issue starkly. Our ethical theory demands that the good apprehended in ecstasy should be judged good just *because*, or in that, it is cognized as a case of fulfilment ; since we have claimed that goodness and fulfilment, when clearly envisaged, are simply identical. Thus either our theory is false, or in ecstasy we experience no goodness, or the goodness experienced in ecstasy is, after all, a case of fulfilment ; and if so, what is it a fulfilment of, unless of organic tendencies, ' projected ' upon the external world ?

Introspection, as we have observed, emphatically denies this last explanation. In all these experiences two factors are discoverable, namely complacency in the free exercise

of our powers of apprehension *and* that unique act of admiration for something distinct from our own activity, namely the external universe. The two may be confused, but they are distinguishable.

It is easy to mistake the delight in exercise for the pure aesthetic experience, and conversely it is easy to ' explain ' the aesthetic appreciation and the aesthetic ecstasy itself as mere delight in exercise. But this is plausible only through a failure of introspection. Similarly with the object of intellectual contemplation. To reduce the ' beauty ' of mathematics to a projection of the mathematician's delight in his own agility is to deny, for the sake of a theory, the clear deliverance of introspection, which reveals *both* delight in our own activity *and* delight in the object. And even more obtuse is it to confuse the intellectual *ecstasy* (induced, may be, by the contemplation of the ' beauty ' of mathematics) with a sense of being in intellectual training. Of course, it may still be that the theory which identifies them is right and introspection wrong. But the deliverance of introspection in all these cases is precise and intense, and not lightly to be denied. In the case of the strange ecstasy of defeat the theory of organic fulfilment is peculiarly unplausible. How unlikely is it that, just when we are so crushed and abject that we can scarcely perform the simplest action, we should at the same time be experiencing an unusual and irrepressible animal cheerfulness which forces us to find some objective excuse for our emotion !

This leads us to the psycho-analytical account of ecstasy. This theory, like the other, seeks to reduce all conation to certain capacities innate in the organism. I will not here repeat the argument which asserts that, however true this theory may be of particular cases of morbid, and even of many normal, desires, it is unjustified as a general theory of conation. I will only point out that to say (for instance) that the supreme emotional experiences of the adult are *mere* derivatives of childhood experiences is no more significant than to say that the intense emotional experiences of childhood are shown by their relation with the

supreme emotions of the adult to have been nobly pregnant, or to have been early approximations to, or attempts at, the mature emotions of the adult. To reduce ecstasy, for instance, to a sexual 'Oedipus' complex, is but to find in early sexual experiences the first gropings toward ecstasy and the spiritual life. Sometimes, owing to an unpropitious environment, the individual remains throughout his life in this backwater of the stream of conative development; sometimes by good fortune he passes on to more thorough fulfilments of his capacity. And in maturity, were his ecstasy to be 'psycho-analysed', he might gladly admit to himself, 'Yes, this supreme excellence that I have known is after all the very thing that I was seeking long ago in those recently-unearthed but long-repressed disreputable childhood cravings.' But if he were to suppose therefore that he had 'explained away' his ecstasy, he would be as simple as the psycho-analyst himself. Rather he should hold that, though those repressed childhood cravings had largely controlled the direction of his development, *what* he finally developed into (through the help of a propitious environment) was a being with capacities of appreciation far richer than a child's, and further that in his ecstatic experience he apprehended and appreciated more clearly the value toward which he was very blindly groping in his 'disreputable' childhood.

Thus, supposing the Freudian 'aetiology' to be in a sense true, we might yet reinterpret its account of the ecstatic experiences so as to dignify the 'disreputable' rather than vilify the sublime.

The tragic ecstasy, for instance, might of course be traced to masochistic or sadistic impulses. Its vaunted aesthetic value might be explained as a symbolical wish-fulfilment, either of a lust to sacrifice what is precious, for fear of vindictive powers, or of an itch to inflict defeat on others as a symbol of one's own might. But, preserving in either case the aetiology, we might just as well claim that masochism and sadism were early experiments in ecstasy as that ecstasy is just masochism or sadism.

But the real trouble with Freudianism is not its

iconoclasm, which indeed has been both salutary and entertaining. Its real weakness is a purely intellectual blunder. For Freudianism, like all kinds of pure instinct psychology, fails to recognize that the extra-organic environment may instil in the individual new behaviour-tendencies not simply reducible to the outfit inherited by the organism. It clings to the concept of an individual whose fundamental nature is fixed at birth and incapable of any real enlargement; whereas the truth is that the environment itself, working of course on the ground plan of the individual's innate disposition, may build thereon a nature whose capacities are no more discoverable in the primitive nature than a symphony is discoverable in the mere instruments of the orchestra that plays it.

The physiological and psycho-analytical arguments, then, fail to prove that ecstasy is a mere illusory projection of emotion whose real source is not conscious. But though the arguments are not convincing, ecstasy might still *be* illusory, in either of the suggested manners, or in some other. And certainly its illusoriness is suggested by the apparent absence of any active substance whose fulfilment it is that is cognized.

Is the only common element in all these ecstatic experiences simply the exhilaration of transcending, or seeming to transcend, the tyranny of one's own desires or the limitations of one's own illusions? In all these experiences we certainly do seem to have this transcendence. In intellectual ecstasy we seem to have put away error and to be at last in the presence of reality. In the aesthetic ecstasy also we have some such sense of being face to face with the real, and of being purged of mundane desires. The appeal of 'abstract' art, for instance, seems to lie partly in the sense that we have shed all cravings for the romantic and sentimental. In the ecstasy of defeat perhaps our admiration of the objective situation is but a projection of our delight in our own unexpected emancipation from desire. For in the extremity of exhaustion we may become apathetic; and this apathy may be mistaken for transcendence of desire. And well may we value

transcendence of the limitations of private cravings, for this has ever been the way to richer experience. Obscure but greater values keep ever beckoning us out beyond our familiar cravings, so that resignation and transcendence, from being mere means to mental enlargement, may come to be regarded as intrinsically good. Plausibly, then, it might be argued that in ecstasy we do but find fulfilment for an habitual lust for resignation in situations in which, as a matter of fact, there is no higher value to justify the resignation.

It may be so. But the possibility that it may be so constitutes in itself no proof that it is so. And let us not lose sight of the extreme experienced difference between the tragic ecstasy and mere resignation. The one is a state of triumph, though of triumph in defeat; the other is a state of surrender, though often it may open the door to fuller life. The one is a self-oblivious absorption in an object, even though the object includes one's own person as a member; the other is essentially a consciousness of the private self, since it is resignation of the self's desires in the hope of a fuller life on a higher plane. These experiences seem utterly different. And unless we find very cogent reason for identifying them, we must continue to distinguish them.

(B) HYPOTHESIS OF HYPER-BIOLOGICAL PERFECTION

The only positive reason for supposing that the experiences which I have called ecstatic are not simply illusory, but appreciations of a unique kind of objective excellence, is the content of the experiences themselves. They are all so profoundly different from, and richer than, the various experiences of which they are said to be illusory 'projections'. This difference I have tried to make clear. It consists partly in the fact that, whereas all ordinary values are direct or indirect fulfilments of teleologically active substances, the value cognized in ecstasy seems not to be so. The *appreciation* of the values cognized in ecstasy certainly constitutes a teleological fulfilment,

namely a fulfilment of our psychical capacity; but the objective excellence cognized is apparently no fulfilment. This uniqueness of the object of ecstasy has, as we have seen, given rise to the theory that in ecstasy we are 'disintoxicated' from the influence of all values. But this theory we have judged false. Ecstasy is essentially an experience of the goodness of an object, namely of the universe, and comes therefore within the purview of ethics. If, however, we accept an ethical theory which describes 'good' as the fulfilment of the activity of active substances, and if we cannot explain ecstasy away as illusory, how can we reconcile our ethical theory with this unique kind of value-experience? Some, as we have seen, would say that the very fact that this question can be asked at all shows the falsity of our theory.

We are now trying to grapple with phenomena very far removed from our everyday experience; and a theory which is valid within familiar fields may well need to be reinterpreted to accommodate itself to these obscure facts. Just as our familiar concepts of space and time, though valid for all ordinary purposes, need to be restated as a concept of space-time so as to accommodate certain obscure physical facts, so the concepts of good and evil, valid within the sphere of common sense, may need to be reinterpreted in the light of ecstasy.

Bearing this in mind, let us close this whole highly speculative discussion by attempting on the one hand to see more deeply into the facts of ecstasy, and on the other to discover further implications of our ethical theory, in the hope that on this deeper level fact and theory may turn out to be in harmony.

There is reason to believe that in certain cases the emergence of organism involves not only harmony but also conflict of units within the organic system. Four instances are enough to illustrate this principle. First, between the members of any healthy living body, there are many strains and antagonisms of an ordered kind, and within the microscopic structure of the tissues the same is true, while the central nervous system is itself a system of minor

systems which both co-operate and conflict. But so long as the organism is healthy, the conflict is ordered in relation to the needs of the whole. Second, psychical activity, which seems to be an activity emergent from the merely physical and the merely physiological, seems to occur only where the fulfilment of lower-order activity is delayed by resistance. It is in hindrance to our bodily functions and psychical enterprises that we advance in thought. Third, it is from the conflicts, no less than from the co-operation, of individual minds that the social mentality is born. We could never pass from the private to the public view if there were never conflict between private interests, or if we never had to choose between loyalty to ourselves and loyalty to the community. Fourth, in the region of art the most excellent aesthetic object is that in which the most recalcitrant material is successfully organized under the most exacting form.

> Oui, l'oeuvre sort plus belle
> D'une forme au travail
> Rebelle,
> Vers, marbre, onyx, émail.

Further, it is in tragic art, rather than in comedy, that the distinctive aesthetic excellence is most compelling; and this would seem to be because in tragic art it is most clearly seen as a superior excellence emerging from conflict on subordinate planes.

Now in all the ecstatic experiences conflict plays a part. In some of them it is focal, in others marginal. But I should say that even in those cases in which we rise to ecstasy through the apprehension, for instance, of a simple sense quality, or a gesture or facial expression, or the poignancy of watching any careless gaiety, we contemplate this datum as it were against a vast and vague background of conflict, victory, and defeat. We see and admire the datum, whatever it be, as the expression of one side of a conflict; and at the same time we rise imaginatively above the conflict, and appreciate, or seem to appreciate, a superior excellence which seems to characterize the universe as a whole. This superior excellence we experience as

something definitely other than biological fulfilment. As the excellence of dramatic tragedy entails biological (and psychological) defeat, so the cosmical excellence which we seem to apprehend in all ecstasy entails the subordination of biological organisms for the sake of something which might be called 'hyper-biological perfection'. There is ambiguity in the prefix 'hyper'. Is this perfection really biological, but upon a far higher plane; or is it opposed to the essential nature of biological fulfilment? Since, however, we are not yet in a position to answer this question, the ambiguity of 'hyper' is very convenient. We need only to say that this 'hyper-biological' perfection is experienced by man as something very different from every kind of biological fulfilment known to him.

Many would say, and I agree with them, that there is no evidence that any such unique quasi-aesthetic excellence does characterize the universe—no evidence, that is, save the deliverance of ecstasy itself. Is ecstasy, therefore, an irrational value-judgment based upon a typical 'irrational affect' which is not justified by any character of the object valued? We have seen that it may be so explained, but that these explanations sound curiously superficial, though subtle. And during the ecstatic experience itself such explanations are not at all desolating, but merely ludicrous.

During the ecstatic experience the only explanation that is believable is one which accords with the actual content of the experience, namely that a hitherto unappreciated excellence of the universe is revealed to us. We can easily believe, for instance, that for the moment we have risen to a higher emergent plane of psychical activity, that we have learnt a truer kind of valuing, that we regard the universe not as a striving member usually regards it, but as it would regard itself, or as its creator might regard it.

If this were true we might say of ecstasy that it was the experience of the highest emergent value. And we should have to suppose that while the value-judgment which we make in ecstasy is wholly irrational and unjustified within the universe of discourse of ordinary affairs, it *is* justified upon a higher plane of experience.

But we could not simply suppose that in ecstasy we appreciate a higher order of *teleological* value, since the deliverance of the mood is definitely of a non-teleological excellence. Yet, in general, as we have seen, the higher values are no less teleological than the lower. For instance, the rise from private desire to the appreciation of society is a rise from minor to major teleological ends. Only in aesthetic appreciation do we seem to rise above the whole sphere of striving, and then we appreciate the non-teleological excellence of only a certain limited object. In ecstasy, however it is induced, we appreciate, or seem to appreciate, a non-teleological excellence of the universe.

If, then, we take the experience at its face value, we shall have to believe that it consists of a true, though rationally ungrounded, judgment of the intrinsic excellence of the universe, not indeed as the supreme fulfilment of cosmical biological tendencies, but rather as an aesthetic whole *within* which the principle of biological, or teleological, organism plays its part upon many planes, and is not necessarily victorious.

There is an unfortunate ambiguity in the words 'organism' and 'organic', an ambiguity which confuses this whole discussion and is clearly revealed in the preceding paragraph. The cosmos might be a perfect organism in one sense while in another sense it was not. It might be perfectly organic in the sense in which a work of art is said to be organic, but not organic at all in the sense in which an animal or plant is said to be organic. It might, that is, be such that all its parts were perfectly subordinated to *some* central unifying principle, though that principle were not a system of teleological behaviour-tendencies, nor yet conscious activity. In ecstasy, then, we seem to apprehend the cosmos as perfectly organic in the aesthetic sense; yet what the unifying principle is, we cannot say. We find it excellent in the sense in which a picture or a symphony is excellent, not in the sense in which a dinner is excellent, nor even in the sense in which a bird's flight and a human person are excellent.

(c) THEORETICAL DIFFICULTIES

But such an account of the matter seems to constitute a flat denial of the view that by ' good ' we *mean* essentially fulfilment of teleological activity.

I believe that this difficulty can be overcome in a manner which both clarifies our theory and helps us to be more precise about the deliverance of ecstasy.

In an earlier chapter we identified fulfilment of tendency with realization of capacity, actualization of potentiality, the bringing into being of new actuality. What we admire most readily is concrete and perfectly fulfilled organism of the biological or psychological kind, emergent in its own members and controlling them for the expression of its own nature. And organism (upon all levels) we saw to be good just in that it is the fullest expression of the capacity of members, the fullest actualization of potentiality of active substance. And the ideal, we have held all along, is, in *some* sense, the perfected cosmical organism in which all substance fully expresses its capacity. In pure aesthetic appreciation we admire a concrete organic phantom, imposed upon members which both co-operate and conflict. And in those aesthetic objects in which human striving is utilized, we admire the appearance of a higher organicity achieved by the human material itself, but upon a plane above the plane of ordinary human fulfilment.

Now in ecstasy we seem to admire the appearance of organism on a plane above the whole sphere of teleological activity. This appearance may be illusory ; but it is after all essentially an appearance of organism, or of that concrete and complex unity in diversity which is the essential character of organism. All that is thwarted in the world obtains, we feel, complete fulfilment through its membership in the perfect organic unity of the cosmos. If this description be true, the object of ecstasy not only is after all a case of fulfilment, but also is actually valued *because* it is cognized as such. But it is not that kind of fulfilment which is achieved by the teleological tendencies of men and

animals; it is fulfilment, analogous rather to the fulfilment of the aesthetic material in the aesthetic unity. It is a hyper-biological fulfilment emergent in a whole composed of biological striving and its environment. But what kind of fulfilment this might be is altogether obscure. Just as we may make judgments of the excellence of aesthetic objects without necessarily being able to analyse that excellence, so in ecstasy we make judgments of the excellence of the universe without being able to analyse that excellence. All we can say is that, if the deliverance of ecstasy is true, *some* unifying principle there must be, under which the cosmos is perfectly unified, and in the achievement of which all substance perfectly fulfils its capacity. In ecstasy we seem to apprehend in some manner the perfection of the cosmos as a quasi-aesthetic object; but we are not good enough 'art critics' to analyse that perfection. And it were better to say 'hyper-aesthetic' rather than 'quasi-aesthetic'; for the work of art itself offers only a phantom, and a meagre phantom, of that which in ecstasy is burnt into us. Further we can say of this obscure unifying principle that it is not in any ordinary sense the fulfilment of mere teleological processes, even of a cosmical individual, since it is experienced as essentially an *eternal* perfection in which the success and failure of teleological processes are both members. More than this we cannot say.

Some hint of the solution of our problem may perhaps be found in the word 'eternal'.[1] In arguing that good is essentially the fulfilment of teleological activity we regard the universe solely as a temporal process; for teleology involves a movement towards the realization of an end that is not yet. But *if* our temporal experience is in some way incomplete, if the ultimate reality is in some sense supratemporal, embracing the temporal process as one of its attributes, teleology is only a partial aspect of something eternal. For supratemporally, though the end is made

[1] The following argument, of course, owes very much to the absolutism of the great Idealists. While such matter is wholly unreliable (so it seems to me), as the foundation of a philosophical system, it is not out of place in this frankly extravagant speculation.

actual by successful striving, yet the achieved end and the striving co-exist eternally. Not that they are contemporaneous and everlasting, for temporally the one follows the other; but that in the supratemporal view events of different date are equally actual. That which temporally appears as victory after striving, is supratemporally an eternal factor; and it is supported by another eternal factor, which temporally appears as the process of effort. In unsuccessful striving, on the other hand, there is eternally the process of effort, but eternally no achieved end. If, then, in moments of unique insight we were to apprehend the familiar world from the point of view of eternity, we should see it as a factor in the eternal perfection of the organized supratemporal substance; and we should inevitably contrast that eternal perfection with the familiar perfecting of temporal teleological process. Yet in truth the two would not be different in essence. The eternal perfection would be in fact the very same fulfilment of potency as that which we see temporally as teleological fulfilment. The universe would be glimpsed as organic; yet not as biological process, but rather as hyperbiological, and having a quasi-aesthetic perfection of form, in which the whole potency of substance would be fully expressed. Ecstasy, then, would be an apprehension of the familiar temporal good and evil as factors in an eternal excellence.

Now not only is the whole course of this argument very dubious, but also we must question whether the deliverance of ecstasy itself really warrants the statement that we apprehend the familiar world from the point of view of eternity and as a factor in eternal perfection of organized substance. We said originally merely that it revealed an unexpected value *of the familiar world itself*. Possibly these two propositions could be reconciled, but I shall not attempt to face this problem here. I will only point out that, *if* this argument is true, our ethical theory is not incompatible with the deliverance of ecstasy. In the temporal view the essence of good is found to be the fulfilling of teleological process; but supratemporally regarded, this fulfilling is an eternal perfection of being; and it is this perfection which,

in ecstasy, we glimpse as an attribute of the familiar temporal world. Thus in the last analysis there is no difference between the good experienced in ordinary life and the good experienced in ecstasy. Both alike are the fullness of the expression of the nature of substance.

One possible and serious objection to this reconciliation must be faced. The introduction of the supratemporal, it may be said, merely obscures and does not solve the problem, the essence of which is, not that the value given in ecstasy is an eternal value, but that it is a value which incorporates within itself both victory and defeat, even upon the highest possible emergent level. If by 'good' we mean fulfilment, what sense is there in saying that in ecstasy we apprehend a value which is not incompatible with the defeat of all vital activity, even the defeat of an emergent cosmical individual? (For nothing less than this can be meant by saying that the value given in ecstasy is not biological.)

The solution of this difficulty would seem to be as follows. We have already distinguished between two senses of the word 'organism', namely the aesthetic (or that which for convenience may be called the aesthetic), and the biological. This distinction must be further developed in the distinction between organism as the seat of emergent activity, and organism as the seat of one kind of emergent activity, namely consciousness. In ecstasy it seems that even though consciousness were never to be achieved upon the largest scale, even were it to be defeated and annihilated on every level, yet cosmical emergent activity, or rather emergent perfection of being, is eternally achieved. Now this must seem to many a meaningless statement; but only to those for whom consciousness itself is necessarily the highest possible kind of emergent activity. If on the other hand consciousness is regarded as essentially instrumental, there is nothing unreasonable in supposing that cosmical fulfilment might entail the final annihilation of consciousness, in fact that, in spite of complete biological tragedy, the cosmos might be perfect.

If this argument is correct (which, of course, is immensely

improbable), the bearing of the distinction between the temporal and the supratemporal is as follows. Consciousness is essentially an activity, and therefore temporal. It is also supratemporal, in so far as it holds together the past and the present; but only partially so, in that it is manacled to a passing present. The highest kind of good, then, which must be a predicate of the supratemporal whole, cannot be a character merely of the highest kind of consciousness. For consciousness is temporal; and the highest good is eternal. The hyper-biological perfection of being is no far off divine event. It occurs at no one point or points in the time process; it is not even repeated at all points. It is an attribute strictly of the supratemporal whole. It is to be apprehended by us only in those bewildering incursions of the eternal, which I have called ecstasy. But though our temporal consciousness may thus *experience* something of the eternal, and may perhaps in the distant future come to experience it far more fully, it cannot ever itself *be* eternal. The greatest of all goods cannot be a character of passing subjectivity; it must be a character of the greatest of all possible objects of subjectivity, namely, the supratemporal whole.

In some such manner then, *if* our temporal experience gives less than the full truth about time, we might solve this difficult problem. But a more immediate and less difficult problem is still upon our hands. We have indeed found that the object of ecstatic valuation is after all an appearance of fulfilment; but clearly the very fact that we previously denied this, while yet claiming that the object was intrinsically good, suggests that we have been wrong in *identifying* good and fulfilment. Even if all goods are as a matter of fact fulfilment, good and fulfilment, it may be said, are now shown to be distinct ideas.

The answer to this objection is that we failed to analyse the deliverance of ecstasy completely. The excellence which we discover is indeed something wholly aloof, not only from our private fulfilments but even from the highest conceivable rank of such *biological* fulfilment, in which individuals, over against an environment, achieve free

activity and development. Yet this excellence which we cognize in ecstasy *is* cognized as an emergent expression of an organic whole consisting of biological individuals *and* their environment. And even if the universe, temporally regarded, were to become completely organized as one biological individual, that *individual* would have an environment, namely its own members. Now if that internal environment of the cosmical individual were to have in it the seeds of decay for the cosmical individual, there would still be the possibility that, from this inevitable defeat of the cosmical individual by its members, a supreme non-biological *aesthetic* unity might emerge. And this unity would constitude a *fulfilment* of the parts of the universe, though not a *biological* fulfilment.

The truth is, then, that in ecstasy we experience a supreme fulfilment, and experience it (truly or falsely) as the fulfilment of the capacity of the objective universe. But because this fulfilment is not a biological fulfilment, and because in ecstasy biological fulfilments are often experienced as defeated, we too hastily deny that what we experience is fulfilment of any kind. But what we experience in ecstasy is in fact *experienced as fulfilment.* For whatever our rational judgment about it, we *feel* toward the cosmos as toward something perfect, in which, though there is conflict within it, the conflict itself is a harmonious member within the whole. Without discovering any ' hidden reality ', we discover in the familiar real a unity, a perfection, hitherto unnoticed. Or better, we feel toward the familiar real as toward such a unity; yet rationally we find no clear justification for our feeling. Such an experience admittedly might be mere ' irrational affect '; but equally it might be an emergence into a higher kind of experience which cannot as yet be rendered intelligible.

I said too hastily that in ecstasy we ' feel ' toward the cosmos as toward something perfect. The word ' feel ' is ambiguous. It might imply that upon the evidence of our own feeling or ' affect ' we impute a character to a cognized object. Careful introspection suggests that what happens

in ecstasy is something more subtle. We seem to *cognize* a perfection of fulfilment, and therefore we feel ecstatically toward it; yet we cannot analyse our cognition. We have a cognitive intuition of cosmical excellence, of the perfection of the familiar total object of experience. But we cannot correlate that intuition with the general body of knowledge. There is nothing unique or extraordinary in such an unanalysable intuition. We often, for instance, have percepts which defy analysis. What *is* unique in the ecstatic intuition is that which is intuited, namely the perfection of the familiar universe.

(D) CONCLUSIONS AS TO ECSTASY AND THE IDEAL

We have been indulging in very vague and doubtful speculation. the sole empirical foundation of which is the ecstatic experience itself in its diverse forms. Apart from this there is no justification whatever for any such addition to our ethical theory as has been attempted in this chapter. And indeed many very intelligent persons would consider that the ecstasies are sufficiently explained as mere 'projections' of emotion upon an object to which no such emotion is appropriate. On the other hand many perhaps no less rigorous thinkers would hold that the ecstatic experience is itself so overwhelmingly cogent that, though indeed it must certainly be severely criticized in the light of the rest of our knowledge, the essence of it which survives such criticism compels our acceptance, even though, to accommodate it, we may have to reorganize our whole philosophy.

I have suggested one way in which a biologically-founded theory of ethics can be reconciled with the deliverance of ecstasy; but it has been a very speculative way, which many would reject as entirely illegitimate. We are faced with three possible courses. Either we reject the deliverance of ecstasy as illusory and preserve our ethical theory intact; or we decisively accept it and readjust our theory in some such manner as that of the preceding pages; or we simply suspend judgment. Surely the third

is the sane course. For the upshot of our discussion is just that, though we have come to some conclusion as to what the deliverance of ecstasy is, and have found a means of reconciling our theory with this unique experience, we have no reason for believing its unique deliverance save its own cogency. Therefore, while we accept it thankfully as in fact the supremely satisfying experience of life, and seek to relate it within the general system of our knowledge in some manner which neither denies the truth of its deliverance nor wrecks the system, we must ever remember that minds believe too easily what they earnestly desire to believe; and therefore we must discount much of the cogency of ecstasy, and suspect our attempts to show its validity. We must, in fact, maintain a strict agnosticism with regard to it.

But something positive does transpire from this discussion. We have indeed no clear evidence that the deliverance of ecstasy is true, that ecstasy is not merely a ridiculous trick played on us by our own little-understood constitution; but whether there is a valid object for it or not, this emotion is the emotion that *would* be appropriate to a universe which did in fact possess such an excellence as we seem to discover in it. If ecstasy is not evidence of an actual attribute of the universe, it at least suggests an attribute that a universe must have, if it is to be ideal. It must have this hyper-teleological, quasi-aesthetic excellence, which when we experience it, commands our worship. For this supratemporal perfection of form, and no mere success of temporal striving, is seen to be the extreme of that which in more familiar spheres we call ' fulfilment of teleological activity ', and ' good '.

At an earlier stage we said that the ideal was that the whole universe should achieve organism, and progressively fulfil its capacity upon the highest of all emergent levels. All our human endeavour, we said, however microscopic its scope, must be controlled in relation to that end. And clearly the only way for us as a race to serve in this cosmical task is to strive to organize our tiny planet and facilitate, if may be, the development of ever richer, subtler and

more unified mind. In a still more microscopic sphere, the sphere of our own individual endeavour, this must be ever the supreme practical aim to which all other and more easily espoused aims must be in the last resort subordinate ; although these also are intrinsic goods which depend for their value upon no ulterior end. (For we have ever insisted that each biological individual is a ground of intrinsic good, whether it co-operates upon a higher plane or not.)

Such, we said, must be the ideal, and such its relation to our daily lives. But now we must admit that over-reaching this whole realm of value, aloof even from the fulfilment of the cosmos itself as a biological individual with an 'internal' environment, is excellence or fulfilment of another kind, which we appreciate most easily in our own poor works of art, but which we sometimes *seem* to apprehend as an attribute of the universe itself as a whole.

The general system of our knowledge does not by any means confirm the deliverance of ecstasy. It were therefore dishonest and mere 'wish-fulfilment' to claim that the ecstatic judgment were true. But if our knowledge does not confirm it, neither does it positively deny it. We are therefore entitled to the hope that it is true. And since this supreme excellence presents itself as claiming our worship, we are under obligation to worship it ; even while we are also under obligation not to lose sight of the fact that we cannot be sure of the validity of the ecstatic judgment. But however this be, we may assert confidently that, whether the whole of things has this supreme character or not, it ought to have. And such an assertion is, to say the least, not unimportant.

Finally, remembering the argument which suggests that the act of admiration itself constitutes a fulfilment of the object admired, we must surmise that, if the universe has in fact such hyper-biological unity as ecstasy seems to discover, then worship, even on the part of such microscopic beings as ourselves, is not utterly futile.

But if the wild speculations of these last three chapters are wholly mistaken, as is all too likely, yet we are on

solid ground in holding that the essence that is meant by 'good' is fulfilment, and in deriving the remote and the practical ideals from the needs of organisms of all ranks. Every actual organism which comes into existence claims fulfilment; and its claim must be taken into account in the ideal. But also every organism which *might* come into existence must be taken into account. And those must be brought to pass which, directly or indirectly, will afford the most complete fulfilment to the latent capacities of the active substance which is the cosmos.

Imported into the sphere of human affairs this abstract ideal takes a more precise form, which should be the guiding principle of all our conduct and all social policies. We must seek to make it possible for all actual men and women to fulfil themselves in the highest activities of which they are capable, and we must endeavour so to order our societies that yet richer capacities may occur and be fulfilled.

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