

MORAL EDUCATION WITHOUT INDOCTRINATION

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ABSTRACT

MORAL EDUCATION WITHOUT INDOCTRINATION

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This research report attempts to provide a plausible answer to the question of how it is possible to morally educate without indoctrination. This question is centrally concerned with the problem of finding a rational justification for morality. Intuitionism and emotivism can offer no answers. Universal prescriptivism, in its latest formulation, can take one a great distance towards this goal. In its emphasis on the element of constraint and the importance of criticism, it can provide moral education with a rational base. For this reason it has profound implications for moral education especially as regards the avoidance of indoctrination.

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted in part-fulfilment for the degree of Master of Education in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE	i
 Chapter	
1. INDOCTRINATION	1
Introduction	1
The impossibility of a definitive analysis	1
Indoctrination is a pejorative term	2
Criteria for indoctrination	3
Consequence	4
Method	5
Content	7
Intention	9
Indoctrination by osmosis	13
Moral indoctrination and moral education	15
2. A.S. NEILL: A LIBERTARIAN VIEW	17
The child is born good	17
Moral education - is it necessary?	21
3. ETHICAL CULTURAL RELATIVISM	32
4. A RATIONAL BASE FOR MORAL EDUCATION	44
Intuitionism	45
Emotivism	47
Prescriptivism	49
The element of constraint	51
The constraint of 'logic and the facts'	51
The logical properties of moral concepts ...	52
The facts	53

	Page
The element of criticism	54
The two-level theory	54
Archangels and proles	55
The relationship between the two levels	56
Criticisms of Hare's ethical theory	58
5. THE IMPLICATIONS OF HARE'S ETHICAL THEORY FOR MORAL EDUCATION	63
CONCLUSION	75
LIST OF REFERENCES	80

PREFACE

The aim of this research report is to provide a plausible answer to the problem of how it is possible to morally educate without indoctrination. Indoctrination, I shall argue, indicates a diminishing of rationality thus any attempt to overcome indoctrination in moral education implies a central concern with finding a rational base for moral thinking.

This project of finding a rational base for morality is, of course, a notoriously difficult enterprise which has taxed moral philosophers up to the present time. MacIntyre's controversial book, After virtue (31) represents yet another more recent attempt to tackle this problem but from a radically different perspective.

It is not without trepidation, therefore, that I turn my mind to this problem and venture to suggest that Professor R.M. Hare's latest ethical theory can take one a great distance towards this goal. This has, of course, been denied by many philosophers who are quite prepared to equate prescriptivism with emotivism on the grounds that prescriptivism, like emotivism, 'cannot find much place for argument.' (51:42) More recently, the criticism levelled at prescriptivism is that it implies an unjustified choice, 'a choice unguided by criteria.' (31:20)

Once prescriptivism has been equated with emotivism which denies morality a rational status, finding a rational base for morality becomes impossible. From this standpoint a strong

version of relativism is indefensible. Similarly, libertarian theories of education which often presuppose an anarchistic epistemology cannot be refuted. It is with this in mind that I have chosen to argue against these two viewpoints and to show how Hare's universal prescriptivism is incompatible with these views.

Chapter one will be concerned with unravelling the meaning of the concept of indoctrination and moral indoctrination. In chapter two, I will argue against a libertarian view which holds that moral education is unnecessary and in this way deprives it of its importance and any impetus on the part of educators to involve themselves in this task. A refutation of ethical cultural relativism which denies that moral education is possible will follow in chapter three. Chapter four will examine intuitionism and emotivism and their adequacy as ethical theories for moral education. It is my argument that Professor Hare's theory is able to take one further than either of these two theories and because of this can provide a rational base for moral education. The rest of the chapter will be concerned with an outline of his theory.

In the concluding chapter I will advance arguments in support of my viewpoint showing how universal prescriptivism entails a type of moral thinking which is of profound importance for moral education because it is essentially anti-indoctrinatory in character.

CHAPTER ONE
INDOCTRINATION

1. INTRODUCTION

At the heart of moral education is the vital question: given the uncertain nature of morality and the fact of interminable moral disagreement, how does one overcome the problem of bias? This raises the further question, 'Are educators entitled to contribute directly to the formation of specific moral values in children?'

These are difficult questions. Libertarians deny that educators have this right. They believe that each individual ought to be free to make up his own mind on moral matters and that this should be left to nature rather than schooling.

These views raise questions as to whether we should regard moral education as necessary. We cannot, however, consider life without morality and therefore it is not unreasonable to suppose that we should take seriously the suggestion that children should be initiated into the demands of a moral order.

Acquainting the child with these demands is not an easy task. Firstly, there is a lack of agreement on moral matters and secondly, there is the difficulty clearly elucidated by Pring (38:64) regarding the necessity of reconciling the tension between a respect for the child's individual way of thinking, feeling and questioning while at the same time retaining a belief in the superiority of the public traditions of thought that, as a teacher one represents and can introduce to pupils.

2. THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF A DEFINITIVE ANALYSIS

Indoctrination is a confusing concept. It has a great

variety of meanings for different persons and at many points ambiguities and contradictions arise to confound any attempt at a precise definition. Wittgenstein's notion of language as having an indefinite set of meanings mirrored in various language games seems pertinent and it is not surprising that writings on the subject reveal conflicting views as regards which criterion constitutes the essence of indoctrination. Traditionally, conflict centres on four criteria: method, content, intention and consequence. The only area of agreement appears to exist in the belief that indoctrination is concerned with imparting beliefs.

Searching for one absolutely correct analysis is futile since the meaning of indoctrination depends very much on how it is used in a particular context. I will explore various opinions according to the four criteria mentioned and another, accepting those views which appear plausible. In this way, I hope to formulate a general idea of what indoctrination implies which will form a framework against which the adequacy of various ethical theories can be judged.

3. INDOCTRINATION IS A PEJORATIVE TERM.

Indoctrination is almost universally rejected and this rejection is a recent phenomenon. Prior to this century the term indoctrination was used interchangeably with the word education. (44:9) According to the Concise Oxford dictionary of current English it means, 'to teach, instruct, imbue with a doctrine, idea or opinion.' (13:620) There is no reference to its use as a derogatory term. Nevertheless, the sense in which it predominates in general use today is overwhelmingly

negative. The term picks out something objectionable: elements of coercion. If we accept that indoctrination is pejorative, we must also accept that its conceptual utility is limited. It cannot also mean merely to teach, nor can we speak of the outcome of indoctrination as positive. Indoctrination is opprobrious and therefore it cannot be regarded as necessary to education. Education is a concept with normative implications. It would be a logical contradiction to say that someone had been educated but had not changed for the better. Indoctrination represents as Wilson (56:23) points out, a boring failure to tackle the problem of the child's development. We are thus compelled to reject accounts which attempt to blur this distinction by making it appear acceptable.

These accounts are given by Green (18:44-45), Moore (33:97-98) and Wilson (56:20-21). These writers refer to the necessity of using non-rational methods with young children. While one cannot deny this necessity, one can question whether the derogatory connotations of indoctrination are applicable in these situations. I suggest that these writers have confused the early socialisation of the child with the concept of indoctrination. This is because they have failed to consider another important criterion, the intention of the agent.

4. CRITERIA FOR INDOCTRINATION

The four criteria, consequence, method, content and intention are inextricably interwoven. To examine each one in isolation from the other is an artificial way to proceed but it is necessary in order to reveal the implications of each

criterion.

4.1 Consequence

The consequence criterion has generally been overlooked but it is an important criterion for it is through the end product that we can say that the child is indoctrinated. It is because we observe this consequence that we are anxious to avoid it. We speak of someone being indoctrinated when we detect that he has a closed mind. A closed mind is undesirable because it implies that a person has an unyielding and inflexible commitment to ideas which have been acquired for no good reason which makes him impervious to rational discussion. (3:54) It alerts us to the fact, not merely that the child has certain beliefs, but that he holds them in a certain way, in an unquestioning way.

The criterion is a necessary condition for indoctrination because unless we can detect this end result we could not be sure that the child had been indoctrinated. We cannot, however, conclude that every time we come across a child with a closed mind that he must be indoctrinated. This criterion may be one possibility amongst others such as a low intelligence or a poor home background. It cannot, therefore, function as a sufficient condition for indoctrination. (43:4) Nevertheless, it should not be overlooked for paying close attention to the consequence or what happens to the learner can be, I suggest, the key to discovering whether the child is indoctrinated and this may lie beyond the intention, content and method of the teacher.

4.2 Method

Indoctrination is held to be a particular method of bringing about belief. The methods which the indoctrinator uses are regarded as undesirable. Some of them include the use of approval, rebuke, example, charisma, threats, drilling and authoritarian approaches which allow little or no discussion or questioning. They are usually classed together under the umbrella term 'non-rational.'

Defining indoctrination solely in terms of the method criterion is inadequate. The use of non-rational methods in themselves is not necessarily undesirable, for example, as in the training of young children. The context must be examined such as the teacher's intention and the child's maturity in relation to the content taught before any judgement is made. Atkinson (in White, 54:118) suggests that indoctrination occurs when we use non-rational methods which are unjustified. Hare concurs, (19:54) his view is that they are not bad in themselves but only if they are used to produce the closed mind: attitudes not open to argument. Cooper (5:54) suggests that the method criterion can be a sufficient criterion for indoctrination if it is revised to read as follows: 'For instead of saying that teaching is indoctrination if certain methods are employed, we can say that such teaching is indoctrination only if these methods are employed despite the availability of other rational methods.' This appears to me to be a very plausible argument.

Snook, however, (43:26) believes that the method criterion is neither a necessary nor a sufficient criterion for indoctri-

nation. That it is not a sufficient criterion may be true, if it is not revised as was suggested above but is it true that it is not a necessary criterion? According to Snook, a completely non-rational technique could scarcely succeed in getting beliefs across. For the indoctrinated person holds beliefs and this requires a degree of understanding. Furthermore, he is able to give reasons for his belief and can defend it against criticisms.

Snook overlooks the fact that the use of the term non-rational must be qualified. It is true that the indoctrinated person's beliefs cannot be totally non-reasoned, otherwise it would not be a belief but it is non-rational in part, to the extent that it is indoctrinated. This means that someone else has implanted the belief and the person has arrived at the belief in a causally motivated way from, say, a desire to obey rather than in a rationally motivated way. (56:19)

Green (18:32) and Flew (12:11) illustrate how it is possible for someone to hold beliefs which can be logically incompatible or held without reasons so that we can speak of these beliefs as non-rational.

I suggest that indoctrinated beliefs are necessarily non-rational in the qualified sense, that they do not provide for adequate reasoning and that to this extent they are often irrational:unreasoned and illogical. A fully rational method could never be equated with indoctrination. No one, for example, could come to regard, say, a moral belief as absolutely true if he had been taught to examine rationally the status of moral propositions. Indoctrination is

incompatible with a fully rational method and therefore to that extent it must be non-rational.

Various writers suggest ways in which methods can be non-rational. Critenden (6:146) talks about 'violence being done to the criteria in a particular subject.' This violence includes making unwarranted claims, suppressing the critical evaluation of reasons and evidence. He includes any unsound pedagogical method which is inconsistent with the general nature of requirements of inquiry, of moral principles and the intellectual and social development of the child. Moore (33:98) says that the authoritarian teacher's method of structuring the teaching situation is conducive to indoctrination because the teacher does not mention other alternatives to his view or if he does, he puts them in an unfavourable light. The teacher stresses facts at the expense of evidence or the justification of these. They are non-rational in that they are not fully logical or based on proper reasoning.

Non-rational methods in the qualified sense outlined above are important because once we identify them in a teaching situation we are alerted to the possibility of indoctrination. We can question their justification by examining the content taught, the intention of the teacher and the affect on the pupil.

4.3 Content

The content criterion is contingently related to the concept of indoctrination in that certain content is more susceptible to indoctrination than others. These areas often embody doctrines and are commonly viewed as paradigm cases of

indoctrination. They occur in the fields of politics, religion, aesthetics and morality. According to Thiessen (48:15) doctrines can also be found in the realm of science and for this reason may be just as common in science as in the paradigm cases.

Peters (37:41) says that 'whatever else indoctrination may mean, it obviously has something to do with doctrines ...' Flew (12:70) states that indoctrination refers to the implanting of doctrines and that the reiteration of the root word doctrines may suggest the limitation on the possible content. Thus, according to these views, indoctrination concerns the implanting of doctrines which form part of a religious, scientific or political system of beliefs or ideology.

The problem here is that the term doctrine is too vague. According to its dictionary definition, a doctrine means something that is taught. (13:360) This leaves the field wide open for a variety of interpretations. Some have said that doctrines are beliefs not known to be true or which cannot, in principle, be known to be true. Others, that it means anything taught or that it refers to statements not scientifically verifiable. As Snook (43:29) points out, however the word doctrine is defined, one cannot distinguish via the criteria given, the difference between ordinary statements which are not true and doctrinal beliefs. If, however, one wants to make doctrine mean simply anything taught, then the concept becomes empty and there is no point in talking about the evil of indoctrination.

The view that doctrines are closely linked to indoctrination is *prima facie* plausible. It is true that we do tend to regard

the beliefs promoted in religion and politics, for example, as doctrines. Deeper reflection reveals that the presence of doctrines does not necessarily imply indoctrination. It serves rather to indicate that in these areas the danger of indoctrination is greater because we are in the realm of uncertainty where our facts are not empirically verifiable and therefore more difficult to validate. (cf 17:30)

The concept of indoctrination cannot be limited to apply only to doctrines for another reason. It will become impossible to conceive of the idea of religious or moral education and the development of justifiable courses of study in these areas will become impossible. We would only be able to talk about religious training not education and every religious person will be regarded as indoctrinated. We must reject this view because there do exist non-indoctrinary ways of dealing with doctrinal belief. If we link indoctrination so inseparably with doctrines we rule out the possibility of indoctrination occurring in other areas of belief such as the idea that simple truths can be indoctrinated or the deliberate teaching of what is false. (cf 17:31)

Doctrines explain many cases of indoctrination by furnishing the motive. (43:37) By themselves, however, they neither constitute a necessary nor sufficient condition for indoctrination. The only restriction in content which is valid is that indoctrination is concerned with handing on beliefs as distinct from skills, attitudes or ways of behaving.

4.4 Intention

The intention criterion is supported by Hare, Snook,

White and Kilpatrick. Gosher (17:35) identifies a factor which most supporters of the intention criterion appear to overlook, namely, its extreme complexity. There is often no straight forward criterion for identifying what a person's intention is and nor can many people say precisely what their intention is. Intention is significant, nevertheless, because it emphasises that children are generally indoctrinated if those in authority are intent on doing so. It is a criterion which merges with other criteria so that we detect intention in the chosen content, the methods used or the consequences which result. Intention is useful on another account, it suggests that motives are involved. There are many plausible supporters of the intention criterion and it is widely accepted.

According to Hare (19:65) what distinguishes the educator from the indoctrinator is his motive: the educator is trying to turn children into adults by getting them to think for themselves, while the indoctrinator aims at keeping them perpetual children or suppressing this process. Hare states (19:52) that ...'indoctrination only begins when we are trying to stop the growth in our children of the capacity to think for themselves about moral questions.'

Kilpatrick (26:51) says that if the adult wishes to avoid indoctrination his intention must be to acquaint the child with reasons for thinking and behaving in a certain way - 'to let him in on the reasoning process at work.' The intention should be directed from the earliest possible opportunity at bringing the child to see the importance of reasoning to control thinking.

White (54:119) holds that the distinguishing features of indoctrination occur when the child is brought to believe 'p'

is true in such a way that nothing will shake this belief. White's definition is inadequate because it fails to distinguish between desirable and undesirable types of beliefs that must be unshakably adhered to.

Snook (43:47) offers a refinement. He states ... 'a person indoctrinates p (a proposition or set of propositions) if he teaches with the intention that the pupils believe p regardless of the evidence.' The notion of evidence is problematic. While it is appropriate to speak of evidence in empirical contexts, it is inappropriate in the realm of religion and morals since there is no obvious objective evidence to speak of. Snook attempts to meet this difficulty by referring to Scheffler's view. (43:58-59) He says that we can construe evidence in a loose sense by taking it to mean 'good reasons' and further that what these good reasons consist of will vary with the subject conceived. The difficulty with the term good reasons is that it is an evaluative term and is itself open to dispute. I suggest that it is too vague a term to serve as a criterion for identifying indoctrination.

There is another problem with the notion of holding beliefs without evidence which is very similar to the objection raised against White's definition. Green (18:117) agrees that indoctrination is marked by a person coming to hold beliefs unintelligently, that is, without evidence. Although this view is not false, it must be qualified because on this view everybody could be said to be indoctrinated. In a great many cases, it would be impossible to be otherwise. In the teaching situation much is imparted without referring to the relevant

evidence. Pupils accept on trust what the teacher imparts and often it is this abuse of trust by the teacher which indicates indoctrination. As Moore (33:97) points out, learning will always even for the rationally mature individual include an ingredient of the unreasoned, the merely accepted.

Cooper (5:43) in an illuminating article rejects the whole approach to indoctrination via intention as radically misconceived. He criticizes the definitions of both White and Snook and their failure to distinguish clearly between the 'sincere' and 'insincere' indoctrinator. The sincere indoctrinator believes that the propositions he is teaching are true but the insincere indoctrinator does not, or he thinks that what he is teaching is important for his pupils to believe for reasons other than the truth. The point Cooper is making is that it is only the insincere indoctrinator who could fit the definitions given by White and Snook. The sincere indoctrinator, who is most common, does not have the intention to indoctrinate 'regardless of the evidence' or in such a way that 'nothing will shake that belief' because for him there is no evidence to believe in the face of. (5:45) Cooper states that the sincere indoctrinator, far from intending that his students believe regardless of the evidence or unshakably, may insist that if there was genuine evidence against his viewpoint then he would want his pupils, and himself, to give up their original views. The sincere indoctrinator can feel secure in this assertion because he is convinced that there is no evidence available. The sincere religious teacher, for example, may take just this standpoint

because he cannot conceive that any evidence could ever be forthcoming against his beliefs.

Perhaps the most telling objection is that Snook makes the intention criterion a necessary and sufficient condition for indoctrination. He thereby rules out the possibility, supported by recent literature¹, that children can be indoctrinated without any intention on the part of the teacher.

Barrow (3:209) also rejects Snook's argument. He believes that it is possible to indoctrinate by omission and that intention does not provide a sufficient condition for indoctrination. The example he gives is of an educational system as a whole indoctrinating by what they do not do rather than by what they do. They achieve this by avoiding altogether the question of moral beliefs and their logical status as an area of inquiry. The result is that children grow up regarding moral beliefs as unquestionable certainties.

4.5 Indoctrination by osmosis

Sociologists of knowledge have helped to enlighten minds about a new and more pervasive form of indoctrination, that is, indoctrination by osmosis. They have shown that our most basic concepts are acquired in a manner which is very difficult to distinguish from the non-rational methods of indoctrination. (40:145) This has helped to create a greater awareness of subtle influences at work to which we are subject from birth and from which we derive our understanding and meaning of the

¹ Casement, W. Another look at indoctrination. The Journal of Educational Thought, December 1983, vol. 17, no.3 p. 230-240.

world. It has led to the gradual realization that the avoidance of indoctrination in teaching is extremely difficult and that the complete avoidance of it may be well nigh impossible. Stanley (45) argues that there are four factors which make social education appear indoctrinatory, namely, that much of what is taught is not grounded in data; in the fact that value preferences are unavoidable in selecting content; in the contrived and filtered environment of the classroom and in the fact that social education is unavoidably partisan. This form of indoctrination makes the 'intention only' criterion of indoctrination appear extremely naive. It raises questions as to whether the sharp dividing line between socialisation, education and indoctrination, which can be so easily distinguished in theory, is all that distinct in practice and whether, in fact, there is not an area, however small, where they may be completely indistinguishable from each other.

This conception of indoctrination draws attention to the necessity to raise the level of consciousness in teachers, particularly moral educators so that they become more critically aware of what they so often take for granted. It seems that this is of paramount importance if intellectual freedom is our goal.

This discussion has revealed to me that indoctrination has not been well understood by philosophers and it seems that more discussion is needed so that educators can come to understand its meaning more clearly and know how to avoid it.

Indoctrination is undesirable because it is inimical to education. It sets barriers to intellectual freedom and

offends against Kant's second formulation of the categorical imperative: respect for persons, because it reduces the child to a means. In whatever way indoctrination is caused the final test is what happens to the learner, whether he has or has not a closed mind. The child with a closed mind will be unable to think critically about the beliefs he holds. He will be impervious to rational argument, his beliefs unshakably fixed. In this way his freedom and dignity is diminished and for this reason indoctrination is to be morally condemned.

It appears that forms of indoctrination are many and various and this leaves the matter open-ended rather than settled. Conceptions of indoctrination embracing intention, content, method and consequence as well as the osmotic conception are all helpful sources to guiding us in identifying the many guises of indoctrination. All component parts reveal different facets of the concept and neither one can stand alone as the sole criterion.

5. MORAL INDOCTRINATION AND MORAL EDUCATION

Moral indoctrination can be grasped more clearly by understanding the nature of morality. Morality is concerned with values and values, in contrast to facts, cannot be said to be either true or false nor is there consensus as to what constitutes moral reasons or evidence for a moral claim.

Since no moral beliefs are unquestionably true, indoctrination occurs when unquestioned allegiance is implanted to a set of fixed and specific rules. (3:170) The child is brought to believe that moral beliefs are unquestionable and he holds his beliefs in such a way that he cannot recognise their true

and logical status. He sees them only as unassailable truths. The indoctrinator has succeeded in making the child an instrument of his will with complete disregard for the child's rationality. In the light of this Hare's ethical theory can be viewed as the complete antithesis to indoctrination founded as it is on the logic of moral concepts, certain constraints and criticisms which guide rational moral thinking.

Moral education following Hare's system with its theoretical and substantial elements counteracts moral indoctrination because it is aimed at examining the status of moral beliefs rather than merely inculcating beliefs. It seeks to develop the open mind, one which is prepared to engage in philosophic dialogue. It aims to develop a true understanding of what kind of evidence is relevant to a particular belief and knowledge as to the degree of certainty which is appropriate to them. (3:211)

Above all, it is predominantly a rational activity enabling the person to subject his beliefs continually to critical scrutiny which will enable him to give reasons for his commitment to a particular moral position.

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CHAPTER TWOA.S. NEILL: A LIBERTARIAN VIEW

The Libertarian view regards moral education as unnecessary. I intend to show, through an examination of the views of A.S. Neill that this philosophy is mistaken and to reveal the paradox that leaving the child to chance is more conducive to indoctrination than a sound attempt to morally educate. I will examine two views of Neill, that the child is 'born good' and that moral education is unnecessary. In the light of Hare's ethical theory, I will argue that these two assumptions cannot be sustained.

1. The child is born good

Central to Neill's philosophy is the belief that children are by nature virtuous. Neill fiercely rejected the Calvinist doctrine of original sin and could never accept its premise, that man is a sinner in need of redemption. Nor could he accept Freud's ideas that aggression is inborn. That the child is 'born good not bad' was a conviction that never wavered and became for Neill a 'final truth.' (34:2)

Neill never produces any argument in support of this belief and by itself it is extremely vague. What does being born good imply and what kind of evidence would be appropriate in determining evidence for this claim? Does it mean that the child's natural growth is good or is it referring to his desires or perhaps his character? To regard an infant's character as innately good suggests a strain of nativism which is quite gratuitous. On the other hand, what does

good mean by our criteria of value, by Neill's or anyone's? Perhaps Neill did not really mean 'born good' but rather 'not born bad,' he could be using the words loosely as an appeal against the doctrine of original sin. It could then be inferred that he meant the child was born in a neutral state. This position however, destroys his own argument because if it depends on environmental influences how the child grows up, it cannot also be true that the child will inevitably turn out good if he is left to himself. So many questions are raised that the statement becomes almost meaningless, expressing at most faith in the goodness of humanity rather than a coherent rational position.

It does seem to indicate faith in some kind of internal principle at work, perhaps a good psychological force in the child which will ensure that if he is left to grow in his own way, without interference, he will be incapable of evil. But there is a contradiction here for if the child is born good why does Neill say that given the right conditions, the child will inevitably learn what is right - the right conditions should be unnecessary if children are born good.

In opposition to the determinism of being born good, one cannot help contrasting Sartre's opposed idea that 'existence precedes essence' by which he means to say that human beings are not determined to be what they are through a fixed human nature in which they participate. His view is that it is in their nature not to have a nature in this sense but rather that their lives are spent in a self-definition which is not a matter of discovery but of decision since the option is always open to decide otherwise. Even if the existential

viewpoint seems an exaggeration in its insistence that man is nothing else but what he makes himself, it expresses an unquestionable truth to which Neill seems blind: that man's course in life is not determined by a fixed nature but rather is an open-ended possibility. (9:36)

On what grounds can Neill's optimistic and somewhat romantic view of human nature be sustained? Neill never explains.

Neill's beliefs reflect an abhorrence of traditional religion, one of the sources of his childhood terrors but it is also indicative of a failure to come to grips with the notion of evil. If people are born good then it is logically impossible that evil should ever have arisen in the world. Neill's view is that evil arises out of the corruption of others but if this is correct, his theory allows for no explanation of how corruption arises. Neill readily embraces ideas of the child's innate goodness but is unable to entertain the possibility of the opposite position, his innate badness. This idea that man is capable of evil is not exclusive to religious doctrine. William Golding in Lord of the flies shows how a capacity for evil cannot be eradicated by a veneer of socialisation or schooling. In his satirical attack on society he reveals that the tendency to evil is not only nakedly evident but the overriding factor. Neill and Golding operate on hunches both expressing opposite sides of the same coin. By absolving the child of evil it is almost as though Neill also absolves him of any kind of moral responsibility for his actions

The assertions that man is born wholly evil or good is a

rash presumption which mirrors only the glimmerings of truth. They are dogmatic because they appear to arbitrarily single out one characteristic as the sole defining trait of human beings, whilst excluding others. The belief in the child's intrinsic goodness allows no adequate explanation for those promptings in the child which we might deem bad by our criteria of value such as lying, spitefulness and cruelty. Neill explains them purely in psychological terms. The child with criminal tendencies, for example, is expressing a perverted form of love, not badness. (34:235) In fact, Neill's almost pathological avoidance of all notions of morality with regard to the child, except where it suits his own philosophy is evidence of his selective use of morality.

The difficulty with psychological explanations is that they are limited because they cannot account for all instances of deviance. To use it, as Neill does, to provide a covering explanation for all cases of deviance is an oversimplification indicative of a tendency to generalise. It is evident that not all problem children have problem parents, as Neill (74:101) so confidently asserts and neither are all children's behaviour problems directly traceable to unsatisfactory home environments. Neill and his supporters would, nevertheless, assert that these negative influences are there, they do exist because they must exist. The issue is then removed from a rational context and becomes one of dogma and faith. In other words, it is not merely a causal relationship between the child's environment on the one hand and his delinquent behaviour on the other that is necessarily at stake in trying to unravel the causes for his delinquency but as criminologists suggest a

highly complex matter involving a multiplicity of causative factors but also chromosome deviations, hormonal dysfunction and various dysfunctions of the nervous system.

Neill's premise in the final analysis is a distortion of the truth because it states in absolute terms something which is at best uncertain. It expresses faith rather than truth, sentiment as opposed to rationality.

Hare's ethical theory illustrates why we could never be born good in any absolute sense. This would imply that we had perfect moral intuitions or moral knowledge but according to Hare, it is only an 'archangel' who has this. We fallible human beings are more like 'proles', extremely vulnerable to error. If we were really like archangels, when our moral thinking was complete we would find that we all arrived at the same conclusion. We know only too clearly that this is not the case and that moral disagreement abounds. Possessing neither perfect command of the logic of moral concepts, nor the facts, and varying in our ability to think critically we all come to different conclusions some more rational than others but none which we could call perfect.

2. Moral education - is it necessary?

According to Neill, adults have no right to impose their notions of good and evil on children. Moral instruction is psychologically wrong because it represents a constant stream of prohibitions, exhortations and preachments. (27:219) The child must be free to find his own morality. That the child is capable of doing this is based on Neill's faith in his ultimate capacity for 'self-regulation.' Neill's view is

that there are two selves in conflict, 'the self that Nature made and the self that moral education fashioned.' (27:222) seen in this light, moral instruction and moral education are yet another form of indoctrination which contributes to the repression of children and the sickness of humanity.

There are a number of objections to this view. Firstly, it is based on the premise that the child has a right to non-interference; that he has a right to guide his own development; and further, that only he has a right to determine whether adult influence is interference or opportunity. This language of rights logically presupposes some kinds of rule structure because there can only be rights when rules exist. To imply that the child has a right to freedom is to claim a moral right. (3:144) Neill is appealing to the very presupposed system of moral rules which on other occasions he is at pains to deny. He is assuming that we share his beliefs that there is a system of moral rules binding on all men, for example, that the child ought to be free and ought to be left to determine his own life. This appeal to rights has an air of finality about it which effectively conceals the fact that the moral framework being appealed to is itself questionable. To substantiate this view that the child has these rights would involve substantiating a complete ethical position which Neill does not do. That the child has a right to self-regulation is not therefore the end of the argument, it is the argument itself. The authority with which Neill makes these claims is therefore spurious.

The idea that 'Nature' creates a 'real self' and that

therefore all moral guidance must be left to chance is without justification. Children cannot find their own morality, they cannot create values and make moral choices in a moral vacuum. They must first acquire some rudimentary notions of right and wrong in their early years. We cannot, in fact, avoid influencing the young child and the notion of self-regulation in this context is inappropriate.

Hare's ethical theory helps us to see why. Hare recognizes that children acquire their moral intuitions in their early years from their parents. He sees this as inescapable and not without its dangers because moral intuitions are often destructive reflecting attitudes of bias. Contrary to Neill, Hare regards it as necessary to bring children up to acquire moral intuitions of the 'right' kind. This is because these sentiments form in the child simple reaction patterns which help him to cope with the world. Faced with new situations he can draw on these learned sentiments; without them he is faced with insuperable difficulties because he is totally unprepared. Each new contingency must be negotiated afresh. We see this view and its consequences reflected in extreme forms of existentialism and crude forms of act-utilitarianism. Hare likens it to driving a car without having learned the basics. (22:36)

Neill is adamant, however, that the adult must refrain from attempting to promote adherence to certain values because there is no need to make this effort. He says: (34:224)

'There is no need whatsoever to teach children how to behave. A child will learn what is right and wrong in good time - provided he is not pressured.

Learning is a process of acquiring values from the environment. If parents are themselves honest and moral, then children will, in good time, follow the same course.'

It is significant that Dewey recognised what Neill did not, that a blind creative force is equally likely to turn out to be destructive as it is to be creative. Dewey remarked: (27:403)

'The idea that goodness of character will come without attention to the means of creating it is a relic of the belief in magic, for the principle of magic is found whenever it is hoped to get results without intelligent control of means.'

Neill's rejection of 'intelligent control of means' completely overlooks the importance of positive influence necessary for the child's growth and fails to consider the fact that adults are able to intervene usefully. Croall (8:307) explains how Neill's inability to live up to his own precepts in the upbringing of his daughter resulted in many problems for her and the Summerhill community. Neill was forced through practical expediency to realise that some adult intervention was necessary, nevertheless, he could not bring himself to exert that authority. Neill would leave the unpleasant task of interference to someone else and would blame his wife if anything went wrong. (8:366) Neill failed to recognize the paradox that through direction or some restraining influence the child may find freedom. His assertion that the child should be left alone to discover what is right and wrong 'in good time' raises the moral question of why it is illegitimate

to suggest to the child that some things have been found worthwhile and whether this sort of freedom might mitigate against the child's eventual happiness. (47:153) It is not clear that deliberate initiation into moral resources would not promote understanding and prevent some unnecessary suffering and unhappiness. Nor is it unreasonable to suggest as Dearden (10:78) does that 'some grappling with external demands are necessary' to enable the child to find himself. To leave the child to discover fundamental truths in 'good time', whatever that may mean calls into question the very necessity for education itself.

Neill's naive belief that a 'free' child would remain uncontaminated by the 'neurotic world' outside and would not pick up ideas and values of 'moulded' children was refuted by his daughter who quickly adopted their language and values in spite of being self-regulated, a fact which caused Neill considerable apprehension. (8:304)

Neill confuses moral training with moral education. He uses these terms interchangeably and it is clear that he can see no distinction between them. Hare's system of moral thinking allows one to understand why this is so. Neill cannot see further than one level of moral thinking, what Hare calls the intuitive level. Hare (22:39) makes it clear that although the relatively simple principles at the intuitive level are necessary for moral thinking, they are not sufficient. Neill believed that the children were, in fact, involved in critical thinking at their weekly meetings where they decided on the rules for the Summerhill community. It is my contention that

it is doubtful whether this thinking could be termed truly critical, unsupported as it was by guidance or any directing principles. Hare believes that critical thinking at the second level is thinking which is subject to certain constraints. He states that unless moral thinking takes these constraints into consideration it is likely to remain on one level: the intuitive.

Neill's rejection of any kind of moral guidance which would have enabled the child to do his moral thinking on a critical level in the disciplined sense, reveals his inability to conceive of any viable alternative to the prescriptive morality he abhorred. One can appreciate why Neill was quite unable to view moral training in any other light than one of objectionable moralizing. He did not understand how these two levels of moral thinking could interact to support and complement each other. We can also understand why Neill believed that the environment was the best teacher. Bereft of any theory of how moral thinking could best proceed on a critical level and blinded by his own misconceptions, he could only believe that the environment itself, 'Nature' was the cure that would lead the child along a path of natural growth to moral autonomy. Moral autonomy, as Hare's theory reveals, cannot be attained without the complementary and supportive role of both the intuitive and the critical levels of thinking. Thus, Neill failed to provide the child with essential conceptual tools for critical thinking to supplement the intuitive level of thinking and, in addition, his extremely laissez-faire attitude to the child's moral education allow for the possibility of indoctrina-

nation. It is precisely these conceptual tools of critical thinking which Hare stresses as essential for rational moral thinking which makes his theory anti-indoctrinatory in character.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Neill assumes that any kind of moral training is wrong and fails to recognize that socialisation demands a degree of moral training. Nor is it surprising that he failed to see how moral education at the second level of thinking could prevent moral training from degenerating into moral indoctrination. The cumulative result was a complete blindness to the importance of moral training by which the child could acquire the correct dispositions and moral education by which the child could acquire the critical skills which would enable him to subject these dispositions to scrutiny.

We cannot, therefore, support the view that the child needs no moral direction of any kind. Moreover, it is false to assume, as Neill does, that children from good parents will automatically follow in their parents' moral footsteps. There seems to be good reasons to take positive steps to direct the child's moral growth, not only for his own sake but for others.

The limitations of Neill's vision is revealed in the dichotomy of his thought: either the individual or society; either authority or love; either the child's interests or the imposed curriculum; either freedom or repression. These false dichotomies are anti-educational because they rule out the possibility of compromise, of reconciling these conflicting

tensions so that they exist in creative tension with each other. This is a prerequisite if we are to think of educating the child rather than schooling him. It makes no allowance for the need to initiate the child into what is regarded as worthwhile and fails to consider that the child is in no position to judge the values of these social resources because he lacks the capacity to discriminate. It dismisses the possibility of the adult's role of educative intervention.

Neill has an ambivalent attitude to morality. On the one hand he calls for a suspension of moral guidance and moral judgements and on the other he is committed to a moral absolutism that is expressed in an almost religious vein as he castigates 'our sick society.' (34:10) It is ironic that Neill who constantly inveighs against making moral judgements with regard to children is unable to refrain entirely from this practise himself.

Neill's attitude to punishment is destructive because it threatens to eliminate moral relationships altogether. That some punishment can be educative in initiating the child into the moral dimension of life is beyond Neill's imagination as is the view that punishment presupposes that persons have acquired a moral disposition because only moral agents are capable of punishing and being punished. He fails to see that the purpose of punishment can be a moral one or to view it in any way other than as a manipulative instrument for social control. Neill never entertains the idea that moral education can help the child understand that punishment does not mean getting hurt but rather, may be an external reminder to the

offender that he is a morally responsible person who has acted in an irresponsible manner. Nor can he recognise that it can function as an instrument to lesson hate and open lines of communication. Wilson (58:115) points out that if the child expects punishment and is not punished when he feels that he desires to be, it is likely to lead to negative feelings about one's worth as a person. He says further, (58:116)

... 'to the extent that a child, at whatever age and stage is beginning to see the moral point, rather than to interpret it merely as an attempt at psychological coercion, then being punished for wrong doing will seem like having the existence of a moral order of things, and of one's place in it confirmed.'

Neill fails to see 'the moral point' because he conflates punishment with hate and he forgets to consider that not being punished in such circumstances could lead to bewilderment, despair and indifference. This gap in Neill's thinking can be understood in the light of his harsh Scottish upbringing. At school he lived in constant dread of the 'tawse', a leather strap used for beatings. At home, his father frequently and severely meted out punishment in this way, partly to assure himself that he was not showing any signs of favouritism to his children. These extremely negative experiences of punishment were intensified by constant feelings of anxiety and unhappiness coupled with the knowledge that he was a bitter failure to his father who continually told him that he would 'come to nothing.' (8:7-21)

The claim that the free school does not indoctrinate values is difficult to sustain. According to Croall, (8:211)

'What the children learned at Summerhill was determined by Neill's own likes and dislikes to a much greater extent than he cared to admit. No child could really escape his influence however free of adult 'moulding' he claimed they were.'

Neill's opposition to new ideas, ('we don't go in for suggestions here'), his beleaguered stance against traditional schooling in the face of change, his inability to cope with situations at the school where other adults played a prominent role and his autocratic attitude to his staff, allow once more for the real possibility of indoctrination.

As one staff member comments: (8:329)

...'one felt hampered and restricted. We were often told that we didn't understand the "Summerhillian way of doing things" - but there was no machinery to make you more Summerhillian. It was impossible to change any practice or even discuss changes however minor: Neill had set replies and anecdotes to support his viewpoint - it was like a religious sect.'

Neill did not provide opportunity for children to think critically about the values presupposed in his ideas of freedom nor did he accept that these ideas could differ from his own, particularly in their wanting to make use of their freedom in a different way to what he thought appropriate. (8:279) He failed to see that moral education can be a liberating agent because he shunned educational and ethical theory and therefore could see no alternative view. He was

a prisoner or orthodoxy in his pedagogy and his barren and impoverished conception of the place of knowledge and particularly moral knowledge in education raises the question whether he was not also guilty of imposing restrictions on children not altogether dissimilar from those which he deplored in traditional schooling.

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CHAPTER THREEETHICAL CULTURAL RELATIVISM

Relativism wears many faces. Generally speaking it points to a form of scepticism. Within philosophical writings various definitions are given but this by no means implies that consensus exists as to one universal meaning of the term. My task of refuting ethical cultural relativism is thus made more difficult.

I am not rejecting partial relativism, the modest claim that moral beliefs can be explained by reference to a particular cultural context. Partial relativism does not play its hand too far. From the fact that moral beliefs arise out of and are shaped by the social context it is all too easy to conclude that moral beliefs are nothing but cultural norms.

I will attempt to refute this extreme viewpoint by arguing that it contains several contradictions and unacceptable consequences which render its position untenable. My counter-argument will be based on the assertion that, in spite of the vast diversity of man's moral beliefs, there exists a moral unity of man which can be interpreted in various ways.

Moral relativism is a doctrine which threatens to undermine confidence in the belief that moral education is possible. It implies, in principle, that morality can have no rational status and thus deprives moral education of its urgency and importance. The ethical relativist believes that all moral beliefs are relative and to engage in moral education which involves teaching moral beliefs as non-relative can only be seen as a form of indoctrination. There must, therefore, be something radically wrong about attempting to morally educate.

This doctrine implies two ideas, namely, a 'diversity thesis', that moral beliefs vary from culture to culture and a 'dependency thesis', that moral beliefs depend for their validity on a cultural pattern. (29:3) The dependency thesis in its extreme form results in a kind of determinism which says that moral beliefs are causally determined by a particular culture.

The impetus for this doctrine begins with the recognition that a great variety of moral beliefs exist in human societies. It is not mere diversity which is the telling point, it is that moral beliefs are incommensurable. They are irreducibly diverse and therefore in conflict with each other. The same action may be considered moral in one society and immoral in another and the question whether certain actions are moral or immoral cannot be asked.

Anthropologists have documented this endless diversity of beliefs and behaviour to support this fact. They raise uncomfortable questions about the normalcy of our own moral practices. Ruth Benedict, for example (4:4) describes how the society of Dobu are built on traits we would regard as beyond the borders of paranoia. In this society no-one may work or share with another, marriage must be with a deadly foe and a good garden crop is viewed as a confession of theft.

Consider too our own society where controversies surrounding abortion, nuclear warfare and social equality abound. The difficulty is that moral disagreements do not only arise out of different accounts of the evidence for a moral claim but out of different views as to what constitutes the evidence.

Thus, given the difficulty of talking about knowledge in the moral sphere, the relativist concludes that it makes no sense to talk of others having moral beliefs which are uniquely correct because moral knowledge is unattainable. A moral act can only be classified with reference to a particular culture. All moralities are equal and if cultures differ both are right.

Relativism raises crucial questions which I hope to throw some light on in the course of this chapter. Does the diversity of man conceal an underlying unity or is it illusionary? Must we tolerate other moralities even if tolerance requires us to condone certain practices we would regard as immoral such as sacrifice or racism? If not, then are we morally justified in trying to impose our own moral principles on peoples of other cultures?

Intuitively ethical relativism is extremely plausible and fear of relativism is not groundless. Relativism challenges customary opinions based on absolute principles. It rouses pessimism because it throws old formulas into confusion. It raises doubts in our mind: when we look at the seemingly irrational moral beliefs that some communities embrace with confidence, how can we trust our own? How can we know with certainty that our way is not as dreadful as we often regard others? How can we know that there is an ideal which arises outside the confines of a particular culture?

The question we must now ask is what consequences these differences are supposed to carry. The mere fact of differences does not, in itself, support a relativist thesis. Disagreement can result from causes other than relativism: they can be based

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on beliefs that are false, biased, the result of ignorance, superstition, fear or self-interest. The fact of disagreement does not mean that there are no facts of the matter or that it is impossible to discover the truth. (49:128) Conversely, agreement can be reached without arriving at the truth. According to Trigg (49:123) this concentration on the psychology of individual men, on what they accept or reject results in an obsession which obscures the fact that there can be objective standards beyond mere opinions.

Another objection is that the relativist's argument lands him in a hidden contradiction. If his own doctrine was valid not only would it be impossible to resolve disagreement but it would be impossible even to formulate them. Agreement becomes impossible with those who do not share a framework of similar ideas. If moral beliefs were rivals, disagreement could never get off the ground because, sharing no criteria of intelligibility, comparison would be impossible and there would be no point of contact, only mutual incomprehension. Thus, the possibility of independently appraising cultures is ruled out and translation becomes impossible.

Anthropologists such as Ruth Benedict (4:2) reject the notion of the moral unity of man. (cf 25:67) From her viewpoint cultural relativism seems to provide compelling reasons for adopting the theory of ethical cultural relativism. Her message is that morality, as part of a culture, cannot be understood or evaluated apart from the distinct world of the society to which it belongs. This viewpoint reveals perspective-neutrality to be a myth and truth itself relative to cultures.

The question arises, how can enculturated human beings see beyond their enculturated screens? The relativist rejects realism because it is mired in difficulties. Positivist accounts of the world of brute fact waiting to be discovered are pipe dreams. He knows that he cannot arrive at a view of reality which is not a view from anywhere within it. Hence his conclusion: there cannot be a rational basis for claiming that a moral belief is more correct, true or justified than another. Neither can there be objective standards by which the moralities of other cultures can be judged, indeed, it makes no sense to do so. Each culture must be understood in terms of the values shared by members of that society.

The problem is that in correctly rejecting a strong form of absolutism the relativist also rejects a plausible weaker universalism which suggests that even though we are enculturated we are not imprisoned behind our screens so that all we ever do is work out the implications of ourselves. His position forces him to some bewildering contradictions and nihilistic consequences.

On this view truth and logic are at risk. Truth is made to depend on what cultures happen to believe. It arises from the collective agreement of a culture and the idea that things can be that way whether cultures think they are or not, cannot be sustained. Confronted with differing moral beliefs which appear irresolvable it appears that truth and logic cannot decide the issue because they themselves are tied to particular cultures. They can only be evoked after sides have been taken. The difficulty is that the distinction between

rationally and irrationally held beliefs becomes blurred and we are led to the absurd conclusion that there is no distinction between education and indoctrination and that attempts at moral education are futile.

Another objection is that the relativist's doctrine is literally incredible and no human being could possibly believe it. We are required to believe that in every situation of moral choice contrary judgements of right and wrong are equally legitimate. This means that cannibalism, infanticide, incest, ritual murder and acts of self-sacrifice are equally legitimate because no one judgement is more true or rationally justified than another. We are required to suspend doubt and discussion about moral matters because moral conflict is pointless. These consequences are unacceptable. If moral beliefs are to be causally explained then there are no reasons unless there are causes and we have to lose ourselves as agents because the link between rationality and morality is severed. Reason itself is dethroned and this move makes irrationality impossible, thus rationality must be an illusion. As Hollis says (23:82), ... 'the difficulty is that there are too many ways of making the actors world rational from within.' The question of rational reasons for moral choices does not arise and since all we are engaged in is navel gazing, the notion of impartiality becomes meaningless.

This view invites anarchy because it is contrary to what we regard as moral. On the relativist's view, morality must be viewed as having no propositional content and we must believe that the emotive moral issues over which endless debates rage,

is carried out in a vacuum. Our most important moral decisions must be regarded as the result of arbitrary choice and that all moral arguments in which we urgently appeal to the relevant facts to provide grounds for our viewpoint are based on illusion. This implies that there is no such thing as a justified moral conclusion.

We must believe that what we call 'morally good' is to be identified solely with the mores of our society. This flies in the face of common sense and of crucial aspects of what we understand by moral goodness. When we say that something is morally good we mean that something is good about it independent of subjective and cultural conditions. The point is that if we are engaged in moral discourse there are limits as to what can count as morally good. There are inherent features of morality itself that make it difficult to regard morality as relative. The element of universality, for example, which is present in any morality makes it applicable to other persons and other cultures, not just to ourselves. Moral judgements, if regarded as relative lose their status as moral statements and become mere descriptive statements with their normative component neutralized. The difficulty is that if we cannot admit that moral judgements imply obligations, not just for me, but for others in like circumstances, then we cannot distinguish moral utterances from other utterances. Thus, moral relativism is impossible. It does not make sense to assume that I care nothing whether others share my views or whether I see myself as laying no obligations on anyone. Moral discourse seeks to persuade and prescribe. There are qualities of moral

statements that set limits to the game; what can be said and done in its name. The moral relativist cannot ignore those limits and still claim to be playing the same game.

The prescriptive quality of moral judgements has been emphasised by R.M. Hare. He views ethical judgements as more closely related to commands than statements of fact. Although his theory is a non-cognitive one, he is not taking a crude subjective view nor is he, in denying a strong form of absolutism: a realm of ethical facts which is part of the real world existing quite independently of ourselves, embracing ethical relativism. According to Hare, ethical judgements are not immune from criticism and reason has a role to play so that we can never conclude that any ethical judgement is just as good as

The tolerant relativist appears to extent to other moral beliefs is an admirable motive but it is not admirable in practice. The problem is that he reduces the notion of respect for others to agrees with. Why should we respect other moral beliefs if this implies exploitation, lies or superstition? Respect has little to do with agreement and the idea that because moral beliefs differ they must be given blanket endorsement is invalid. While we are not justified in imposing our views on others neither is it valid to adopt a relativist indifference to divergent moral beliefs. This attitude cannot be squared with our moral responsibility as human beings which involves making moral judgements. (cf 25:91) This attitude invites moral chaos because it allows each person and each culture to become their own legitimating authority.

Thus, while the relativist appears to be championing the right of everyone to hold to their own moral views, it does not mean that we ought to agree with him. This indiscriminate form of tolerance legitimises equally what is desirable and undesirable and because it fails to uphold the principle of non-contradiction ends up in nihilism. Posing as a neutral arbiter between views, it clashes with those views which do not allow a neutral arbiter such as the universalist and transcendental claims of a Christian or Islamic. The result is that it impales itself in yet another contradiction.

The right which the relativist champions for everyone to uphold their own moral beliefs is not, paradoxically, a view which he can uphold as a right because to do this is to put himself into a self-refuting position: by absolutising itself it becomes incoherent.

Self-refutation, according to Passmore (35:80) is evident when we have to regard a statement as 'at once being possibly true and as not being possibly true.' He states that in discourse we cannot renounce the claim to be making true statements. Similarly, the relativist, when he states his claim for relativity cannot deny that he is asserting it to be true. Therefore, in order to level the accusation of self-refutation we must note whether his claim violates the principles of discourse.

The relativist says that 'right' means no more than right for a given society and therefore that it is wrong for anyone to interfere or condemn the values of other societies. (55:34) His premise, however, is contradicted by his conclusion. For,

if what is right is only relative to a culture then it is clear that his conclusion is not presented as something that can be seen as relative to a culture, rather, it is presented as something which has a higher epistemic status. In other words, figuratively speaking, he steps out of his relativist framework into an absolute position, which his theory disallows. Put in another way, his position is indefensible because in order to make a coherent statement, the relativist must take the non-relative option. In order to say that ethical cultural relativism is true, the relativist must presuppose a non-relative framework. But this, in turn, presupposes relativism is false and what results is an oscillation of truth and falsity within the same context of meaning which results in incoherence. Not only is the message confused because of these conflicting elements but what it is trying to say cannot be expressed. He does violate the principles of discourse because the conflation of truth and falsity is incompatible with the invariant conditions of discourse. It is absolutely self-refuting because he is asserting and denying the same fact at the same time.

My argument rests on the assertion that there exists a concept of the moral unity of man. This unity may be understood from a number of perspectives. Jarvie (25:103), Atkinson (1:14) and MacIntyre (41:169) offer various interpretations. Warnock (50:71-95) provides, to my mind, a most plausible interpretation. His penetrating insight into the complexities involved enable one to understand the problem of relativism, yet not be compelled to accept it.

He argues (50:87) that there are four fundamental moral principles: non-maleficence, fairness, beneficence and non-deception which counteract the deleterious liabilities inherent in the limitedness of human sympathies. These basic principles, he says, have to be accepted as independent principles which are not reducible to one another or to anything else. This implies two important points. Firstly, that there cannot be a single rationale behind morality or one single fundamental moral principle, as Kant or the Utilitarians would have it. There may, however, be one general end in view but there is not just one means to that end. It is important to remember that this end cannot be equated to specific goals, a certain lifestyle or tell us how we ought to live. We should understand it rather as something which sets limits to our conduct, as prescribing certain conditions within which our lives are to be lived. (50:92) It is obvious that within the broad specifications of 'the moral point of view' a wide diversity of different ends and means are possible. Morality cannot offer a complete answer to the question of how we ought to live because, says Warnock, it constitutes only a part of the 'Good Life' and there are many different non-moral principles which also come into play.

Secondly, the independence of these moral principles means that they can conflict. It may be impossible to find grounds in support of one view rather than another. Recognizing the independence of these moral principles means recognizing the possibility of 'irresolvable perplexity.' It is this irresolvable perplexity which the relativist so readily recognizes and plays upon. Warnock's interpretation of this phenomenon is illuminating.

He says (50:89) that we should not be particularly appalled by this conclusion for he knows of no reason for supposing that this irresolvable perplexity is typical of moral decisions or that the typical terminal process in morals is that of arbitrary choice. This means that we can, at least, most of the time resolve our moral conflicts and that our moral decisions can be the result of a reasoned thinking process. This important truth has significance for my argument for it means that we can and ought to recognize not only the diversity in moral beliefs but also the possibility of irresolvable perplexity. Nevertheless, this concession can be viewed as compatible with the idea of the moral unity of man.

Thus, even if we grant the validity and importance of certain aspects of the relativist's arguments and even if we acknowledge the possibility of irresolvable perplexity in moral matters, it still does not follow that there is a simple inference from the fact of moral diversity and moral dilemmas to a moral relativism in which anything goes and by which we must concede that because the Australian tribesmen do it, it must be right for them. (cf 14:93) What is right cannot merely mean ordained by any given society although what a society's conventions ordains will be regarded as right in that society. It is the blurring of this crucial distinction which makes ethical cultural relativism unacceptable as a doctrine for moral education.

A RATIONAL BASE FOR MORAL EDUCATION

Finding a rational base for moral education is absolutely essential because unless moral thinking is based on a rational method which gives a purchase on the notion of truth, we are defenseless against the charge of indoctrination.

I will consider three ethical theories. My aim is to show that intuitionism and emotivism are unsatisfactory theories for moral education because they deny morality a rational status. Hare's ethical theory will be suggested and briefly outlined as a plausible answer to the problem.

If the relativist's subjective position is invalid, as I have argued, the question arises as to how far we can go in the opposite direction in claiming objective grounds for our moral convictions. This is not an easy question to answer and necessitates an examination of the nature of morality.

The Logical Positivists revealed a crucial distinction between empirical judgements and judgements of value. Empirical judgements, they said, are meaningful and can be verified by empirical observation, by sense experience. Value judgements are 'meaningless' since they cannot be tested for their correctness in the same way. To think that we can is to fail to recognise a fundamental logical difference which non-cognitive moral views insist on, namely, the gap between (moral) values and fact. It is to confuse the status of values with the status of facts. (cf 1:115) The interminable argument in moral philosophy is evidence to the fact that moral philosophers can go on arguing forever precisely because moral values cannot be objectively justified in the same way as empirical facts can.

The status of morality reveals that moral knowledge is not attainable in any empirical sense. Perhaps, however, it is possible to maintain a weaker claim to moral knowledge in terms of A.J. Ayer's third criterion for knowledge, namely, 'Being able to give an appropriate answer to the question: how do you know that x?' (24:101) An appropriate answer could be one which could be rationally justified: backed with relevant reasons, which are not inconsistent, the consequences of which we would be prepared to accept ourselves. (3:63)

In moral education the question we are confronted with is: 'How, if at all, is it possible to know what is right?' How can we legitimately prescribe what ought to be regarded as morally good if value judgements are neither true nor false and at best contentious? This is an extremely difficult question which has taxed moral philosophers and moral educators. In the search for moral knowledge various ethical views have arisen. I will examine three positions in order to discover whether they throw any light on the abovementioned question.

1. INTUITIONISM

This view is put forward by G.E. Moore. The real question of ethics he said is, 'What is the property for which good stands?' (51:5) His answer was that good is indefinable, like yellow, and by means of the 'open-question argument' he sought to show that good is simple and analysable. Goodness, he said, was a non-natural property and anyone who attempted to define good in terms of natural properties committed what he called 'the naturalistic fallacy.' On this view, all moral questions

are ultimately concerned with the possession or non-possession of one quality: goodness, which could only be recognised by moral intuition. It is an attempt to show that moral judgements are different from assertions of fact, expressions of taste or aesthetic judgements but as a claim to objective knowledge it fails.

Firstly, even if one acknowledges some truth in this view, there is no check beyond intuition about what is or is not the case. Further, when moral disagreements arise and both persons claim to have intuited the correctness of their view there is no way in which the question could be settled. Each person could claim that the other person's intuition was defective and the intuitions themselves could never settle the matter. In fact, the intuitionist begins to look very much like the relativist. It seems that in the final analysis he must also concede that moral judgements are matters of taste relative to individuals or to cultures.

To claim that intuition is an accredited route to knowledge is obviously fantastic and it is evident that what this claim amounts to is perhaps little more than an accurate guess. If we remember A.J. Ayer's third criterion of knowledge, what answer could I give to the question: 'How do you know that x?', except to reply: 'by intuition.' It is clear that this answer is inappropriate for it tells me nothing more than that I believe something to be the case.

Moral education viewed from an intuitionist squint is almost indistinguishable from indoctrination. It seems to imply the absurd view that facts are irrelevant for a moral

judgement. Moral education becomes devoid of content and the teacher becomes powerless to answer his pupils' searching questions. The teacher is committed to inculcating beliefs based on his own idiosyncratic opinion reflecting the limitations of his own vision. There could be no question of 'intelligent believing' since the teacher would be unable to offer the child any rationale which would enable him to understand why a moral belief should be accepted or rejected. (cf 18:25) It would require the persuasiveness of the teacher's personality or the fear of his authority to convince the child of the veracity of certain beliefs.

Intuitionism would rule out all discussion and argument. Pupils would undoubtedly feel that morality referred to mysterious supersensible properties of action or affairs, inexplicable, divorced from their own conduct, requiring an act of faith: the belief that if one concentrated clearly for a moment the truth would suddenly dawn.

The problem is that the child's mind would be firmly closed as critical thinking would be impossible. Every moral educator would also be an indoctrinator since he could give no rational account to his pupils why certain moral beliefs should be accepted or rejected or why they ought to act in one way rather than another. He would be engaged in creating what Green (18:37) aptly calls 'a non-evidential' style of believing which he equates with indoctrination.

2. EMOTIVISM

According to A.J. Ayer who launched this theory, a value

judgement does not qualify as a meaningful statement at all. It is neither analytic nor empirical and cannot therefore be verified. It is therefore not possible to argue about questions of value. (53:48) It follows that when two persons offer differing moral views it is impossible for them to disagree with each other. All these persons are doing is expressing ethical feelings. Expressions of feelings are not assertions, they do not have cognitive content therefore they cannot contradict each other. Emotivism amounts to what Raphael (39:26) calls the 'hurray-boo theory', because moral judgements are reduced to either expressions of approval or disapproval.

C.L. Stevenson's form of emotive theory is less extreme than Ayer's. He recognised that genuine agreement and disagreement was possible within moral discourse. He drew the distinction between beliefs and attitudes and put forward the idea that moral judgements 'evince' attitudes not belief. He saw moral discourse as characterised chiefly by its purpose: 'to create an influence.' (24:121) Moral judgements, he said, do not add to or change the belief of the person addressed, rather they influence his attitude and conduct. Moral discourse is not informative but influential, modifying attitudes primarily and beliefs only incidentally. (51:23) (cf 52:60)

Emotivism explains emotive involvement in moral judgements but in its failure to recognise the cognitive element it denies that morality may involve truths which can be known. (53:294)

Moral education according to this model would become just as unacceptable as the intuitionist model. The teacher would be concerned with influencing the child's attitude, not his

belief. One could almost regard him in the role of a propaganda expert as he persuades and cajoles his pupils without any recourse to rational argument. This would rule out the possibility of any degree of neutrality on the teacher's part or autonomy on the pupils.

To close one's mind to the importance of the evidence and the facts necessary for making and evaluating moral beliefs and to locate all its importance solely in its effects is to mislead the child once more into thinking that morality has nothing whatever to do with reason.

Since the teacher would judge his success by how effectively he had been able to win the child's allegiance rather than by how he had enabled him to think rationally or for himself, his role would be similar to the one described by Kilpatrick (26:48) as 'gaining converts to his partisan cause' - a form of tyranny over the mind indicative of indoctrination. It calls to mind Kant's principle of respect for persons. In omitting to give reasons for the child's impersonal consideration he is treated as a means: an instrument of someone else's will without regard for his rationality.

3. PRESCRIPTIVISM

This theory developed by R.M. Hare emphasizes that the meaning of moral language is revealed in the use to which it is put. It has some affinities with emotivism but differs from it in important respects. Hare, like the emotivists, rejects all forms of descriptivism, the view that moral judgements can be logically equivalent to factual statements. The model for

moral judgements in this theory is the imperative in all its ramifications: commands, resolves, general commands and rules.

The prescriptivist view is often misunderstood. It is not saying that moral judgements are imperatives but rather that they are like them and that there is an irreducible evaluative or prescriptive element in moral thinking. (22:6) The study of imperatives is therefore a useful point of departure for understanding moral philosophy. It should also be understood that prescriptivism does not, as many critics claim, say that all moral judgements perform the same speech act, that they prescribe in the sense opposed to advise or counsel. The term 'prescribe' is used as a general term to cover a variety of speech acts which have many differences among them but one common element, that of guiding action.

It is my contention that Hare's recent universal prescriptive theory of ethics makes ample provision for the rational character of moral discourse and because of this can provide a rational base for moral education. It can provide an acceptable answer to the problem of how it is possible to educate morally without indoctrination.

I will briefly outline Professor Hare's recent ethical theory which is presented in Moral Thinking, published in 1981 and also consider very briefly some criticisms against this view.

In this book Hare introduces two new developments in his moral theory. He has introduced these two developments to tighten up the thought processes involved in rational moral thinking. Hare develops more strongly two elements: the element of constraint and the element of criticism. The element

of constraint refers to those thought processes one has to go through in rational moral thinking. The element of criticism refers to the sorts of criticism to which these thought processes are open.

3.1 The element of constraint

3.1.1 The constraint of 'logic and the facts'.

According to Hare, rational moral thinking requires a command of two considerations: logic and the facts. By logic, Hare means the logical properties of the distinctive concepts of which moral judgements are framed, in particular those connected with the word 'ought.' By 'the facts', Hare means those facts which are available in any situation in which moral judgement is being passed, especially about how what is done will affect those others concerned.

Hare did not deny the emotivist view that in morality we are free to decide what principles we shall adopt and this view has been severely criticised by many philosophers who hold that morality should not be a matter of choice but somehow founded on the nature of things. I will briefly touch on this aspect in the last chapter. Hare said only that once we have adopted certain principles, morality requires us to be rational in our adherence to them. This means firstly, that we must try to discern what the logical rules are in accordance with which our principles must be adopted if they are to qualify as moral ones. Secondly, that we should try to discover the relevant facts of a situation when deciding whether or not it comes under any of our principles. (24:401-405)

3.1.2 The logical properties of moral concepts

Hare singles out two properties of moral concepts, namely, prescriptivity and universality. What Hare means by prescriptivity is for example, that 'ought' guides choices. If I say to someone, 'You ought not to steal but do so anyhow', it would be very odd. Normally when I use the word ought I am implying an imperative and in this sense my statement is prescriptive. (21:172) As regards universality, Hare states that it is a characteristic of moral judgements that we must be prepared to give reasons for them. Again, it would be very odd if I said, 'You ought not to steal but I have no reason for saying that.' According to Hare, mere consistency in regarding something as a reason is not enough. The reasons given for moral judgements must have a higher degree of universality. They must be what he calls 'U-type' ones, that is, ones which do not contain any reference to a particular individual.

In making moral judgements I would combine the two aspects as follows. Firstly, I would imaginatively put myself in each person's place, asking in turn, 'How much do I want to have this or avoid that?' Thus, I identify with his prescriptions. This is the application of the principle of prescriptivity. (22:97)

Secondly, I ask myself, would I be prepared to consider each person's interest, giving them all equal weight? Hare calls this 'going the round of all affected parties.' (20:123) This is the application of the principle of universality together with an appeal to interest or inclination. In this way, according to Hare, I can imaginatively weigh up cumulative satisfactions and come to some decision. Hare recognizes that it is not only

moral judgements that are universalizable but also other kinds such as aesthetic ones. Nevertheless, Hare affirms that in the majority of cases prescriptivity and universality are sufficient to guide us in adopting certain moral principles as long as our moral judgements are confined to those situations where the interests of other people are affected.

3.1.3 The facts

The reasons which are given for a moral judgement must be assessed for their truthfulness. We would also be required by the universality principle to go the round of the affected parties to determine who exactly will be affected by the act under consideration. Prescriptivity would require us to identify with the preferences of the affected parties raising the question of what, in fact, these preferences are. Hare recognizes that we cannot possibly know all the facts but emphasises that rational moral thinking requires us to consider those which we can discover. (22:159)

In a nutshell, what Hare means by our freedom to reason is the freedom to think in conformity to the correct logical canons which are determined by the meanings of moral words coupled with as full awareness as possible of the facts of a given situation. Hare is not saying that a moral judgement is any kind of descriptive judgement in the sense that we need only get at objective facts in order to know whether our moral judgements are true or false.

3.2 The element of criticism

3.2.1 The two-level theory

Hare draws a distinction between intuitive and critical thinking. Both these levels are concerned with moral questions of substance but differ in the way they handle them. (22:25-26) Hare explains these two levels through the notion of moral conflict. If moral thinking is confined to the intuitive level, then moral conflicts cannot be resolved. This is because this level may have no determined procedure for settling these conflicts or if it has, the principles involved will be of ever increasing complexity. (22:35) Hare does not dismiss the importance of the intuitive level of moral thinking. He recognizes that some simple non-contentious guidelines are necessary in the form of 'prima facie principles' or universal prescriptions and that much moral thinking is intuitive and descriptive. However, he regards it as only one level of moral thinking: the level of received opinion and unquestioned principle. He states (22:39) that although the prima facie principles used at the intuitive level are necessary for human thinking, they are not sufficient. Intuitionism cannot resolve moral conflicts, as we have already seen. (cf 22:40)

Critical thinking at a second level enables one to resolve these conflicts at the intuitive level and indeed, if we do not our thinking will be incomplete. (22:26) Critical thinking involves making a choice (a 'decision of principle') under certain constraints: those imposed by the logical properties of moral concepts and by the non-moral facts, and says Hare, 'by nothing else.' (22:40)

3.2.2 Archangels and proles

Hare outlines the characteristics of archangels and proles. In this allegorical way he clarifies the essential difference between these two levels of thinking. He emphasizes that these two kinds of moral thinking are not rival procedures, they are both elements in a common structure each having its own part to play. (22:44)

The archangel is an extreme kind of person. He has super-human powers of thought and knowledge and absolutely no trace of human weaknesses. Being free from both intellectual and character defects his critical thinking would enable him to reason effectively in any situation. After scanning the relevant properties and the consequences of certain actions he would be able to frame a universal principle, perhaps even a highly specific one, suitable for action in that situation. Nor would he be detracted from acting on that principle by any human weaknesses or other partialities. (22:44-45)

The very opposite of the archangel is the prole who has human weaknesses to an extreme degree. He has to rely solely on intuition, sound prima facie principles and good dispositions to guide him since he is completely unable to think critically. The only way he can gain knowledge of the facts is from others, either by education or imitation.

In each of us, says Hare (22:45) there is part archangel and part prole. Our moral thinking is a mixture of both in varying degrees therefore it is not surprising that we all come to different conclusions. Hare maintains that if we could all think like archangels we would all arrive at a perfect command of

logic and the facts and that this would constrain our moral evaluations so severely that in practice we would all come to the same conclusions. (22:46)

3.2.3 The relationship between the two levels

In order to explain the relationship of the two levels Hare recalls Aristotle's famous metaphor which reveals the relationship of the intellect to the character to be paternalistic. This applies to the relationship between critical and intuitive thinking and it means that in so far as a man's dispositions are rational, it is because 'they listen to reason as to a father.' (22:46) Thus, intuitive thinking cannot be self-supporting, whereas critical thinking can be and is therefore epistemologically prior. (22:46)

Hare believes that moral evaluative principles have to be differentiated from other kinds by the fact that they are prescriptive, universalizable and overriding. (22:53) To treat a principle as overriding is to always let it override other principles when they conflict with it. (22:56)

Hare admits that his account of moral principles as overriding other principles would make it impossible for a moral principle to be overridden by another moral principle or by a non-moral principle. Yet, he notes (22:57) that, in fact, both cases occur. In the first instance there are moral conflicts resolved by allowing one moral principle to override another and other instances where we 'take a moral holiday', where through weakness of will or just plain desire, I deliberately opt to do what I desire without considering others. In other words, I

allow a non-moral prescription to override a moral one.

It appears, *prima facie*, that there is an element of contradiction in Hare's account of the overridingness of moral principles. The question arises: how is it possible for moral principles to be overridable and yet not overridable?

Hare's answer is that the whole structure of moral thinking consists of two levels, namely

- . universal prescriptive principles which a person does not allow to be overridden. Hare calls them 'critical moral principles' and they are underived, functioning at the critical level. They are also capable of being made so specific that they do not need to be overridden; and
- . *prima facie* principles which are overridable and which are selected by critical thinking during which use is made of principles of the first subclass. In other words, *prima facie* principles are derived at the intuitive level and are selected as a means to the ends of underived ones. (22:60)

The interaction of the two levels is as follows. The moral thinker at the second level of critical thought selects from the first level those intuitive principles which are useful to his critical thinking. These *prima facie* principles are selected by critical thinking according to their 'acceptance utility.' By this term Hare means that they are selected on the grounds that 'general acceptance of them will lead to actions which do as much good, and as little harm, as possible.' (22:62) According to Hare, acceptance utility is the only

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feasible justification for their use. What this means is that it is the overridingness of the deliverances of critical thinking which makes derived principles and underived principles moral ones. (24:427)

The important point which emerges from this theory is that everything in moral thinking is subordinate to critical thinking because it is only the principles derived through critical thinking that have overriding status. We can understand now how the critical level lends it support to the intuitive and how it holds the two levels together.

4. CRITICISMS OF HARE'S ETHICAL THEORY

Hare's ethical theory is a sophisticated form of utilitarianism and many of the objections against utilitarianism can once more be raised against his theory. In Moral Thinking Hare devotes several chapters to a defence of these criticisms. Against Hare's prescriptive theory many voices are raised. Space does not permit me to consider Hare's defence of his position. I would like, however, to briefly consider two common criticisms.

Critics in general dispute Hare's belief that the central and most important use of moral language is prescriptive. They wrongly attribute to him the view that the close connection between moral judgements and actions can be explained solely by this mere fact. Hare, however, does not imply that the prescriptivity of moral judgements is the only conceivable account of the connection between moral judgements and action. Hare means to say that if moral judgements are prescriptive, this will explain the intimate connection they seem to have with

actions. (cf 24:206) (22:208) Hare agrees that not all moral judgements need to be prescriptive and that some of them are simply descriptive. (22:21)

As regards the principle of universality there are many criticisms. (cf 51:34) A common one is that it overlooks the extremely complicated character of most of the situations in which moral issues arise. (cf 24:210) This criticism ignores the fact that Hare has stated that a moral judgement may be universalisable, yet, at the same time very specific. (cf 20:40-41)

There are three major criticisms directed against Hare's notion of 'logic and the facts.'

The first argument is against Hare's assumption that it is logically possible to put oneself in the place of another to the extent required by the logical properties of moral concepts. This requires a complete identification with others and as Hare himself phrases it: 'Would it any longer be me?' The problem is that it is self-contradictory to suppose that I could become someone else. (22:119)

Hare's reply (22:96-97) is that although it is impossible for Smith to become Jones, it is not impossible for Smith to imagine being Jones. This implies imagining himself with Jones' preferences.

According to Hare, when I identify with someone by calling them 'I', I am already prescribing their satisfactions. Thus Hare contends that 'I' has a prescriptive element in its meaning and therefore that this identification is a prescriptive one. (22:221) Hare says further, (22:223) that since 'morality

admits no relevant difference between 'I' and 'he', I am bound unless I become an amoralist, to prescribe that his preferences be satisfied. Whilst Hare agrees that this may be psychologically difficult, he rejects the suggestion that it is logically impossible.

The second criticism against Hare's ethical theory is that it presupposes that all satisfactions or dissatisfactions are homogeneous as regards their moral significance. This is false, say his critics, because it assumes that all we are required to do is to calculate the cumulative satisfactions or dissatisfactions after going the round of the affected parties, and base our decisions on this. Moral judgements, they argue, cannot be quantified in this way.

Hare never denies that satisfactions are of different kinds but he contends that it is possible to know what cumulative satisfactions would be preferred in this or that concrete situation regardless of the differences there might be in the kinds of satisfactions. (24:414)

The third criticism levelled against Hare is that he has landed himself in descriptivism or naturalism because of his account of the constraints of logic and the facts.

Hare (22:218) defines a descriptivist as someone who thinks that moral judgements are descriptive and that for a statement to be descriptive is for its meaning to determine its truth conditions. Naturalism, according to Hare (22:186) is the theory that solely from certain factual statements, certain moral judgements can be made.

The objection is that Hare, by appealing to the meaning of moral words and thus to the logic of moral concepts has set

up a system of moral reasoning which compels certain moral principles to be adopted and others to be rejected. (22:218) It seems as though the truth of a moral judgement follows from the meaning of words and that he is offering an account of moral thinking which is indistinguishable from the descriptivists.

Hare meets this criticism in two ways. First, through the logical possibility of amorality which, says Hare, establishes his 'bona fides' as a non-descriptivist. This is because the logical possibility of amorality leaves open the further possibility of being able to either accept or reject any universal prescription or prohibition. (22:219) What this means, in fact, is that we can think in accordance with the logic and the facts but we are not compelled to adopt any universal prescription or prohibition which may arise. On the descriptivist or naturalist account that possibility would be non-existent. Hare is thus allowing for what he calls an 'escape route' from his prescriptivism. (22:183)

Secondly, Hare counteracts the suggestion that he is inferring value judgements from matters of empirical fact: that he takes what would maximize preference satisfactions of the affected parties to determine what ought to be done, by explaining that in going the round of the affected parties, we are identifying with the other person's preferences as moral thinking requires us to do. This does not mean that we are describing facts but rather that we are assenting to certain prescriptions. To weigh in the balance what would maximize the satisfactions of these preferences is not to describe any

factual state of affairs, a misconception which his critics are under, but to assent to certain prescriptions. Thus, to come to the conclusion that a certain act ought to be done is not to infer a moral judgement from a fact but from a prescription and this means that Hare cannot be guilty of the descriptivism or naturalism of which his critics accuse him.

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CHAPTER FIVETHE IMPLICATIONS OF HARE'S ETHICAL THEORY
FOR MORAL EDUCATION

Hare's aim was to find a system of moral reasoning which could be used to answer moral questions. His belief was that if such a system could be found which is rational then the question of the objectivity of its results can be left to look after itself. (22:213-214) It is my belief that universal prescriptivism provides a disciplined method of moral reasoning which refutes ethical scepticism because it makes moral knowledge possible. Through applying the proper method of critical thinking which Hare outlines, we can decide what is the 'right' answer.

Hare recognized the importance of the intuitive level of moral thinking but he notes that the appeal to moral intuition will never be adequate for a moral system. (22:11-12)

If we apply this idea to moral education it allows one to regard the intuitive level of thinking as an important stepping stone to moral education and not as a necessary evil. In chapter one, I suggested that various writers had confused the early training of the child with indoctrination. I questioned whether it was legitimate to construe the unavoidable use of non-rational methods as necessarily constituting an indoctrinatory process.

If we apply the two-level theory to this context we can see how moral training using non-rational methods need not necessarily constitute indoctrination.

Moral training is concerned with inculcating certain moral attitudes. It is a necessary part of moral education because as Hare says, (22:30) we want our children, 'to like and dislike the things they ought to like and dislike.' These attitudes enable the child to face the stresses of life because it gives guidance as to how he ought to live in terms which he can understand. (22:172-173)

On this theory, as I have explained, the intuitive level is not isolated from the critical because it is not self-supporting. The two levels must be seen as complementing each other. As the child matures, the capacity to reason should be increasingly invoked. Indoctrination begins when this is neglected and the intuitive level is regarded as sufficient on its own. Critical thinking at the second level is crucial if the child is to be able to question these assumed attitudes which are not always wise and too often reflect racial, religious and political intolerance. (22:172)

The important point to recognize is that at this early stage of the child's moral education, value-neutrality is undesirable. To demand value-neutrality is, as Gardner (15:78) argues, to demand no influence, no contact and no teaching. I have argued that there is no reason to support this view which is reflected in the ideas of A.S. Neill. It makes sense then to provide for the moral training of children and as Hare's theory shows, this need not be viewed as a form of indoctrination.

James Leming has described a similar approach which he calls 'moral advocacy.' Moral advocacy involves inculcating allegiance to certain norms such as honesty and respect for persons. (30:201)

Leming's plea is that the teacher ought to advocate, in a well-reasoned manner, specific norms. He states (30:201) that failure to inculcate moral norms means that individuals are incompletely socialised with the result that the stability of society is jeopardised. Leming suggests that moral instruction can be organised on the principle of a 'gradecut of rationality.' As the child advances in maturity he is trained to expect the application of reason to understanding moral questions. In this way the critical level of moral thinking becomes operative. (30:206)

Hare's ethical theory helps the educator avoid the pitfalls of indoctrination because it is founded on a rational system. In order to understand why this is important it may be useful to recall to mind what the concept of indoctrination implies. It implies what I have called the closed mind. (cf 56:20) (18:25), (26:18)

At its core it means that indoctrination is opposed to rationality because it diminishes rationality. Beliefs which are based on a fully rational method of thinking create the rational mind and become the point of departure which differentiates indoctrinated thinking from thinking which is capable of critical inquiry.

A crucial criterion in moral thinking, if it is to avoid indoctrination, is the possibility of an impersonal point of view. Rationality in moral thinking allows for this possibility because it enables one to assume an attitude of objectivity in the sense of being unbiased.

Hare emphasized that rational thinking is subject to certain constraints and in this way shows that standards are

implied. It seems to me that the element of constraint appears to be an essential aspect of the concept of rationality. This is because the very notion of rationality requires adherence to rules and correct procedures.

How effective are the constraints which Hare proposes, especially as regards avoiding indoctrination in moral education?

Hare argues (20:31) that the 'logical thesis' involving the two principles of prescriptivity and universalizability have 'great potency in moral arguments.' This has been denied by G.J. Warnock. He argues (51:42) that Hare is misguided in attaching so much importance to this principle because it can be reduced to mere consistency. By appealing to this principle, he says, I cannot reveal to anyone that their judgements are morally quite wrong, all I can do is to show them that they are inconsistent.

Kupperman (28:36) agrees that this principle does not take one very far into interpersonal neutrality because it leaves open the logical possibility that relevant differences could exist so that the moral requirements for one person could differ significantly from those of others.

He argues that although there is a burden of proof as to what counts as relevant differences, the true bigot or fanatic can disregard them. His point is that there is no logical flaw in this as long as one is prepared to apply the same judgement to oneself in a similar situation. Kupperman says (28:35) that a proper consideration of morality is necessary to carry us beyond the mere logical requirements of universalizability.

Hare does not disagree with this. He insists that the principle of universalizability is 'no more than a logical thesis' and not a moral principle and therefore that it must not be taken to prove directly and by itself conclusions about how in particular we ought to treat people. (22:154) He denies, however, that this principle, as Warnock says (51:46) 'does not carry much fire power in moral argument.' Hare's reply (20:35) is that it is a mistake to regard this principle as 'useless' for purposes of moral reasoning and that his argument does not merely rest on logic by itself.

To understand what Hare means by this it is important to recall what these two logical principles require of someone making a moral judgement. Prescriptivity involves an imagined situation in which I have someone else's preferences. This implies that I have an equal aversion to my suffering hat that person is suffering or going to suffer. Unless I have these preferences I cannot really be knowing what his situation is really like. (22:94) It is not therefore merely a cognitive awareness but also an affective and cognitive.

Hare (22:91) makes a distinction between knowing that something is the case and knowing what it is like. Knowing what it is like goes beyond the mere logical requirements of knowing 'that.' It involves, as I have explained, a full identification with the other person's preferences. Hare says (22:92) that it is this kind of knowledge which we should treat as relevant and as required for the full information which rationality in making moral judgements demands.

The principle of prescriptivity requires that if I make

moral judgements such as: 'Because you are a Jew you ought to be exterminated' or 'Because you have not paid me you ought to be put into jail,' then, I must be prepared to apply these judgements to myself by assenting to the imperatives, 'If I be a Jew let me be exterminated' or 'If I cannot pay then let me be put into jail.'

Hare's point is not in the final analysis concerned with what is or is not logically possible. It is simply whether I can or cannot stomach what my moral judgements, when universalised require me to stomach. He puts the matter like this: (20:193)

'What prevents us from accepting certain moral judgements which are perfectly formulable in the language is not logic, but the fact that they have certain logical consequences, which we cannot accept ... namely certain singular prescriptions to other people in hypothetical situations. And the 'cannot' here is not a logical cannot. It would not be self-contradictory to accept these prescriptions, but all the same we cannot accept them except on one condition which is most unlikely to be fulfilled - namely that we should become what I have called 'fanatics.'

It is unlikely, says Hare, because it is not empirically possible, only a fanatic would take a course of action which would jeopardise his own survival. Fanatics are persons who whole-heartedly espouse an ideal and do not mind if people's interests, including their own, are harmed in the pursuit of it. (20:105) The fanatic holds unshakable beliefs, he is not open to reason and this, to my mind, is symptomatic of the indoctrinated

person. The fanatic is the very opposite of the rational man, oblivious to the fact that he may be mistaken.

Surely an argument which enables you to bring home to your opponent that he is on a course of action which leads to fanaticism is not to be despised as 'useless.' It could, I suggest, provide a sufficient reason for a change of direction. In certain cases it may be a powerful argument if someone is contemplating some act or making a moral judgement to ask them the following questions. What makes the act right for you and wrong for someone else? Or, if it is wrong for someone else to steal from you then what makes it right for you to steal from someone else? One could also point out that it is not moral to make exceptions for yourself. It could, perhaps, reveal to someone that his viewpoint is prejudiced because it is indoctrinated.

The principle of universalizability, together with an appeal to inclination, the facts and the constraints of criticism can help to promote sensitivity to others especially as regards the consequences of action. Immoral actions are usually undertaken by persons who are insensitive to the feelings and experiences of their victims. Moral education, if it emphasizes this principle together with other considerations mentioned can develop a sense of understanding what it may be like to be cheated, stolen from or mistreated and in this way promote the inclination to behave morally.

John Wilson (57) like Hare, stresses the importance of the universality principle in moral education and the need to teach children to take into consideration the interests of others.

We have seen how Hare thought that the appeal to imagination is a necessary ingredient in moral argument. He likens it to scientific thinking in the sense that just as in science we are concerned with the search for an hypothesis and the testing of it by an attempt to falsify the consequences, so in morals the search is for principles and the testing of them against particular cases. According to Hare (20:92) the discipline of moral thought is to test the moral principles that suggest themselves to us by following out their consequences and seeing whether we can accept them. This sphere of exploration goes on in the imagination where reasons for moral judgements are universalized.

G. Reddiford (41:78-85) supports the view that 'moral imagining' is a necessary condition of acting from a moral point of view. He says: 'Failure to universalize one's moral judgement is a failure to acknowledge and act upon a fundamental moral principle, that of respect for persons, since failure to recognize that another person sees a situation in a different light is fundamental to the failure to accord respect to that person.' Reddiford shows that an imaginative understanding of the predicament of others is a necessary condition for developing feelings of sympathy and compassion.

Hare states (22:108) that an appeal to facts is necessary in moral reasoning and that unless moral thinking takes into account all the non-moral facts of the case then thinking is irrational. It is because the indoctrinated person will not be constrained by the facts that he is able to hold the beliefs which he does. This reveals that a concern for truth is absent

and that the person is basing his beliefs on other claims which have nothing to do with truth and objectivity, perhaps on some doctrine, authority or ideology. (cf 56:19)

The implications for moral education are that we should, as far as we are able, inform children of the facts, especially with regard to controversial issues. In this way we will be conveying the idea that rationality requires recognition of the relevant facts and that rational moral judgements cannot be made without reference to these facts.

As we have seen, everything in morality, according to Hare, finally depends on and is subordinated to critical thinking. It is the overridingness of critical thinking which holds the two levels of moral thinking together and makes them both part of moral thinking.

This emphasis on critical thinking preserves a place for freedom in moral thinking. Hare defines the word rational in accordance with Brand's definition as referring to 'actions, desires or moral systems which survive maximal exposure to logic and the facts.' (22:244) The emphasis falls on the word maximal meaning that if moral thinking is to be rational there is no limit to the scope for reappraisal of our moral judgements and beliefs. However assured we may be of the correctness of our standpoint, the requirement of rationality opens up the possibility of being able to question and questions yet again our beliefs.

John McPeck (32:6) emphasises that the most notable characteristic of critical thought is that it involves the appropriate use of reflective scepticism. This scepticism may

give way to acceptance but it never takes truth for granted and it is this element which Hare is stressing.

Hare (22:225) outlines three ways in which freedom in moral thinking is possible in his ethical theory.

Firstly, although we are required by the principles of prescriptivity and universality to identify with the preferences of others, this preference is only one amongst others that we may have. It will obviously influence our final choice but not determine it. Our final moral judgement will be determined by our total sum of preferences so that we remain 'free to prefer what we prefer.'

Secondly, the escape route of amoralism referred to earlier also preserves our freedom to prefer what we prefer. Since logic cannot compel us to reject amoralism when any universal prescription is proposed, we are free either to accept or to reject it. This means that we need only accept the conclusion to which 'logic and the facts' lead us only if it fits in with our preferences.

Thirdly, Hare suggests that we are free to propose our own evaluative or prescriptive principles provided that we are prepared to examine them in the light of logic and the facts. If any such principles do not fit in with our preferences in general, we are free to reject them. This means that our thinking is safeguarded at its very source and it makes possible the notion of moral autonomy in moral education.

This last point has been challenged by Warnock, (51:47) who does not see it as indicative of freedom at all but rather of anarchy because it negates reason. The crucial objection is

that not only does it allow us to decide on the evidence but it allows us to decide what the evidence is. It seems to Warnock that if you allow people to choose their own criteria of goodness, then moral discourse becomes irrationalist.

Hudson (24:208) supporting Hare, argues that moral discourse is not essentially irrationalist if it allows persons the freedom to choose why things are good, it is only irrationalist if once the choice has been made they refuse to be tested for consistency in holding their beliefs.

It is important to understand exactly what Hare is saying. He is not claiming that we merely decide at whim what criteria shall apply but rather that the standards we choose should be considered along with all the other standards that are subordinate to them, in fact, the context of the whole way of life in which they form a part must be carefully considered. The choice made will be in the light of this full knowledge. (cf 1:88) It appears to me to be a gross misconception to label this process as arbitrary or non-rational. There will always be those who will not be satisfied by this argument but it seems completely mistaken to say that prescriptivism is advocating that one chooses for no reason at all and that it can, in MacIntyre's view, be equated with the modern emotivist self which lacks any rational criteria for evaluation. (31:30)

Warnock is, however, bringing to light an important truth about prescriptivism, namely, that although prescriptivism gives sense to the idea of giving reasons for moral judgements, it cannot fully satisfy the demand for objectivity because the prescriptivist holds that ultimate standards are not so much discovered as chosen. This criticism does not, nevertheless,

destroy Hare's ethical theory, for it can be brought against any ethical theory. The question is whether any ethical theory can fully satisfy the demand for objectivity. As I have indicated earlier, the nature of morality is such that it cannot be objectively justified. This is because the ultimate justification of why one should be moral is circular, that is, any reasons one tries to give must, of necessity, also be moral reasons. (1:94) It seems to me that Warnock may well be crying for the moon. Nor can I entirely agree with MacIntyre's suggestion (31:25) that this choice of Hare's is simply a choice of values to which reason is silent. Hare stresses that morality is not easy and that it must be argued for. (22:223)

Hare's insistence on the importance of the constraint of criticism appears to strike the final blow against indoctrination. This is because it requires that moral judgments or beliefs be viewed as essentially open-ended: forever open to critical scrutiny and therefore completely opposed to the closed mind.

With regard to moral education, critical thought would counteract the feeding in of moral conclusions so indicative of the process of indoctrination. The constraint of criticism indicates that a philosophical approach is possible, one which involves rational reflection and allows questioning of basic assumptions. It would mean removing the attitude of dogmatism with the emphasis falling on teaching children to think for themselves and also to think well. Sharp (42) outlines such an approach and stresses the need to teach children certain tools of inquiry such as impartiality, consistency, comprehen-

siveness, an understanding of the relationship of parts to the whole and means to ends. It also implies understanding the role of ideals and the importance of taking into consideration the context in moral discussions.

At the heart of this philosophical approach is dialogue, open discussion about moral beliefs which is essential to cultivating an open mind on moral matters. It is the very opposite of indoctrination which can be seen as a way of closing off debatable issues. It makes possible the discussion of controversial issues and on occasion, where necessary, the adoption of a stance of 'procedural-neutrality' on the part of the teacher. (cf 46)

Baier (2:89) suggests two criteria that moral education should accord with if it is not to be called indoctrination. Firstly, it must show that some moral doctrines are derivable by some mode of reasoning and secondly, that the conclusions which result are such that everyone ought to follow. It has been the argument of this research report that Hare's ethical theory meets these two criteria.

CONCLUSION

Hare's ambition was to show the possibility of rational argument in morals. He has, to my mind, succeeded admirably in this task. He has provided a system of moral thinking which is rational because it is founded on a logical and consistent framework.

The property of prescriptivity reveals the intimate connection moral judgements have with action. Or to say, 'I

ought to do x' and then not to assent to the command, 'let me do x' is to reveal that one is not so much immoral as either insincere or illogical. This is because there is at least the appearance of a contradiction in a remark such as, 'I ought to do x but intend not to.' To abandon prescriptivity is to unscrew an essential part of the logical mechanism, it is to say, 'let us seriously consider this moral problem and when we reach our conclusion, let us not think that it requires anybody to do anything whatever.'

The property of universalizability reveals that unless we can universalize our moral judgements they cannot become an 'ought.' In this way we can see that rational action requires action that is generalisable to all agents. It brings in the moral dimension by showing that I cannot make exceptions for myself and others regarding moral judgements and still claim to be thinking morally or logically. The constraint of criticism reveals that our thinking must accord with certain rules. It shows that if moral judgements are to accord with the normal use of the word 'moral' there must be some recognition of the principle of impartiality.

Hare insists that before one makes a moral judgement one must be consciously aware of its implications. This is achieved by an appeal to inclination and imagination and by a consideration of the facts. Without the consideration of relevant and sufficient evidence, moral thinking is irrational.

The second level of critical thought makes Hare's system an open one. We are free to criticize our own convictions and this provides a base for freedom within reason itself.

It means that moral beliefs must be held open to refutation and that we must be prepared to change our convictions in the light of contrary evidence, something which would be unthinkable for an indoctrinated person.

Within this logical framework, rational argument can take place. The constraints of logic and the facts, together with the freedom of critical thinking provide moral education with a rational base.

The importance of universal prescriptivism for moral education lies in the fact that it allows individuals to become moral agents. This is crucial for education since a moral agent is the very antithesis of an indoctrinated person. He is able to hold opinions in the light of his own reasoning and in this way to be master of his own fate in the sense that it is reasoning that directs his life and controls his emotions and desires and not the reverse.

Dearden (11), Barrow (3), Gewirth (16), Critenden (7) and Peters (36), are at pains to point out that it is not clear that autonomy has anything to do with education unless criteria become relevant. They all reiterate in different ways the necessity to teach children to think well: consistently, logically and with due regard for the facts. Dearden (11:9) and Critenden (39:121) especially, echo Hare's insistence on the importance of critical thinking.

Gewirth (16:41) argues that autonomy and moral autonomy are at loggerheads. Autonomy, he says, means deciding for oneself according to one's own criteria while moral autonomy means being able to conform to certain standards which are

independent of one's own choice. He suggests that autonomy can only be viewed as an essential part of education when limits are set. His point is that only if the self is regarded as having to meet certain rational requirements can autonomy be positively and necessarily related to moral goodness because these requirements are also the criteria of morality. He sums this up by saying: 'Only if the self of autonomy is the rational self and its laws the rational laws can the problem be overcome.'

Hare's system of moral thinking constrains the self to be the rational self and the laws (principles) he stipulates are the rational laws. The moral autonomy which results from his system of moral thinking can therefore be regarded as a desirable aim for education.

That moral reasoning should be guided by rational criteria if it is to preserve a place for ethics within human life appears to me essential. It is precisely because existentialism regards the reliance upon principles as a denial of freedom and hence a form of Bad Faith that it eliminates morality altogether. It has been called a 'mood' rather than an ethical theory which has a direct contribution to make to philosophy because of its rejection of exactness and objectivity.¹

I have tried to show that other thinkers express similar ideas to Hare. His notion of two levels of moral thinking is

¹ Warnock, M. Existential ethics. Great Britain: Macmillan Press, 1974.

reflected in Aristotle's distinction between intellectual virtues acquired by learning and virtues of character acquired by habit. (31:144) Modern thinkers such as Sidgwick, Ross, Rawls and others have also made this distinction in different ways. (24:427) It thus lends credibility to Hare's theory to find other philosophers with similar conclusions.

Thus, Hare's ethical theory has profound implications for moral education. It can, if not completely, for this would be utopian, then at least to a considerable extent liberate the child's thinking from the tyranny of indoctrination.

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