AN ARGUMENT FOR THE TEACHING OF MORAL HABITS

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Abstract

   In this thesis an argument is presented that defends
the inclusion of the teaching of moral habits in a program
of moral education. The assertion is made that certain
moral habits can be taught, as opposed to inculcated,
because they are within the range of rationality. The
argument is developed first by a defense of the
possibility of knowledge and by extension moral knowledge.
Differing views of moral education are then presented and
the conclusion reached that rational deliberation is
defensible, involving rational engagement with students
concerning concepts relevant to ethics. The argument is
made that if certain habits, including moral habits, fall
within the range of the concept "rationality", and if the
appropriate method of teaching moral education involves
rationality, then the teaching of moral habits is possible
and defensible.

   In order to support the notion that certain habits are
within the range of the rational, the alleged "paradox" of
moral education is analyzed, rejected and the assertion
made that certain habits seems to be "infused" with
reason. An analysis of "habit" follows and the assertion
made that certain habits seem to fall within the range of
rationality. The concept, "rationality", is then analyzed
with the intention of showing that certain habits do fall
within its range. The relationship of rationality to
objectivity and truth are discussed to provided substance

to the assertion that a body of moral knowledge does exist and can be taught.

The last chapter concludes that certain moral habits fall within the range of the rational and can be included in a program of moral education. The thesis is conceptual in nature, with the purpose of defending the notion of the inclusion of moral habits in a program of moral education. Little discussion, therefore, is put forward concerning specific habits to be taught.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Over the past twenty years, moral education theory, apart from Kohlberg's developmental conception, has focussed mainly on three differing approaches: values clarification, inculcation and rational deliberation (Coombs, 1980). The first method does not seem to address the question of how a person becomes able to consistently practice morally defensible action; the second method is itself open to attack as being unethical; the third method does not clearly answer the question of how a person attains the abilities, sensitivities and capacity for receptions needed to be considered morally educated. Habituation of some sort seems to be a necessary component of this endeavour, but is it morally defensible to include the teaching of moral habits in a program of moral education?

This is the question that I will attempt to answer: are certain habits, and specifically certain moral habits, properly to be included in the range of subjects for moral education? Can and should they be included in a program of moral education? The argument that will be presented is summarized below:

The general goal of education is the creation of the educated person. One aspect of education is moral education. Central to all education is rationality: appeal to reasons, and reasoning of various forms. The means of education is teaching, as differentiated from

propagandizing and indoctrinating. Teaching implies the rational interaction of teacher and learner and the use of reasoning. If the range of the concepts habit and rationality are not mutually exclusive, then certain habits may be amenable to being taught, since some may be within the range of "rationality". These types of habits may form part of education and may be an important component of an "educated" person. This summary does not specify what sort of habits would qualify nor does it explain how habits may be taught. I am trying to establish a conceptual point concerning certain kinds of habits and their relationship to rationality. This is discussed in depth in the body of the thesis, particularly in chapter three.

Moral habits are included in the range of the concept "habit". Practical reasoning is included in the range of the concept "rational". On the above argument, therefore, certain moral habits may not be mutually exclusive to the concept "practical rationality". Certain moral habits may be amenable to being taught and may form a necessary attribute of the morally educated person. This argument will be developed by investigating what we mean by knowledge, specifically, moral knowledge. Is it possible and is it teachable? The next chapter deals with the alleged "paradox of moral education", which states that it is paradoxical to use immoral means (indoctrination, training) to develop in young people certain sets of habits and dispositions that are necessary so that they

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can move farther along the path toward moral responsibility and maturity. This chapter raises the question of the range of the concepts habit and reason. Chapters four, five and six provide analyses of the concepts, habit and reason. Chapter seven provides a summary and states the conclusions which may be drawn from the preceding discussion.

Chapter Two

Is Moral Knowledge Possible?

Introduction

I will first map out the concept of knowledge and later turn to the question of whether there can be moral knowledge. The following questions can be asked of both knowledge and moral knowledge. What constitutes knowledge? Is knowledge "objective" or "absolute", to use terms commonly applied? Is it relative to culture, or nationality? Any inquiry into the nature of moral knowledge must begin with a study of the nature of knowledge in general, and especially of the terms "relative" and "objective". What is it to say that one has knowledge?

What is Knowledge?

The Absolutist Misconception

Some of the ancient Greeks believed that knowledge consists in discovery of the secrets of the world, facts and propositions that exist, unchanging and absolute, independently of human beings. Plato's notion of the knowledge of forms is an example. He thought that real knowledge must be fixed, immutable, nameable and autonomous. As Hirst (1974) states, "From the knowledge of mere particulars to that of pure being, all knowledge has its place in a comprehensive and harmonious scheme, the pattern of which is formed as knowledge is developed in apprehending reality in its many different manifestations" (p.31). These views are mistaken because they hold that

knowledge must be absolute and unchanging. Hirst (1974) states, "Nothing can be supposed to be fixed eternally ... Yet none of this means that we cannot discern certain necessary features of reason and intelligibility as we have them" (p. 93). Knowledge, then, is not absolute, it is based upon beliefs about the world around us. Knowledge differs from belief in that it is beliefs backed up by reasons; it is defensible by argument. Not any old reasons, however. Knowledge claims must be backed up by specific sorts of reasons, depending on the sort of claim that is being made. What sort and what strength is open to argument. Empiricists and coherence theorists may disagree on what would be acceptable, however, the point is that knowledge must be defended by reference to reasons of some sort, and is thereby differentiated from belief. There are, of course, varying degrees of knowledge, based on the strength of the reasons that support the knowledge claims.

The Relativist Critique

Differing radically from Plato's transcendent view of knowledge is the view that all knowledge is relative to the knower. This subjectivism is persuasive, but mistaken, as the next section demonstrates. Humans do have a great deal in common: language, rationality, conceptual frameworks, for example. The argument that knowledge is trapped by each individual's perceptions chafes at common sense.

Consider some examples. We live in complex cities; millions of individuals perform many millions of tasks

each day. Yet, on the whole, things proceed smoothly. Surely this implies a common knowledge base which provides the logic for the successful functioning of so many people accomplishing so many activities? There are as well obvious examples of knowledge which it seems absurd to question - well established facts, such as: a large body of water exists between Asia and the Americas; children love to play; money is a means of transfer of goods and services. Consider the example of a tourist who goes to another country where all customs are strange and the language unintelligible; she will still be able to survive, due to the fact that public concepts exist that transcend the bounds of local culture and are common to all languages. Language is not private and unsharable; it is public and thus so can knowledge be.

One view that has contributed to the popularity of the relativist conception is the notion that since all knowledge comes from the senses and each person has a unique set of sense organs, we all "know" a different world, totally relative to each "knower". This view requires the equation of ideas and sense perceptions. Berkeley (1713) argued that our ideas are reduced to "phantasms" unconnected to any material existence. Reality exists because individuals perceive it. Of course, in Berkeley's argument, God is the "infinite mind" that eternally 'perceives' the world, thereby ensuring the continuation of the world independent of each individual life. If one rejects Berkeley's argument for God, one may

be led to the existentialist dilemma, a world of individuals trapped within their own sense perceptions, their own unique ideas of reality, unable to validate any other individual's existence or the existence of other "realities". On this view it would be impossible to argue that "real-life" and "dream-life" differed. One has no way to differentiate the two. Given the above argument against subjectivism, this argument does not seem defensible.

<u>Popper's views.</u>

Popper (1972) offers a critique of the relativist argument, allowing that there are states of mind that are subjective, but arguing for a "third world" of "objective" knowledge, that exists externally to any knower.

For Popper, there are two senses of knowledge. The first, subjective sense, involves states of mind; the second, objective sense, is really a 'third world' which is composed of objectively knowable things, including: theoretical systems, problems and problem situations, critical arguments and the state of discussion of critical arguments. This "third world" is "... totally independent of anybody's claim to know; it is also independent of anybody's belief, or disposition to assent; or to assert, or to act. Knowledge in the objective sense is knowledge without a knower; it is knowledge without a knowing subject" (p.109).

Popper (1972) suggests a thought experiment to support this conception of knowledge. He imagines that "all our machines and tools are destroyed, and all our subjective

learning, including our subjective knowledge of machines and tools, and how to use them. But libraries and our capacity to learn from them survive. Clearly, after much suffering, our world may get going again" (pp. 107-108). By "subjective learning" and "subjective knowledge", I take it that Popper means the individual person's learning and subsequent knowledge of machines and tools. This Popper would differentiate from the subject matter of libraries, which forms part of the "third world" of objective knowledge. The world could again "get going" by way of individuals going to the existing libraries and learning what is contained in them - the "third world" materials. Popper seems to be arguing that the possibility of the existence of this "third world" of knowledge that is not dependent on individuals makes it possible for the world to "go on". This does not imply that library learning would be non-subjective in the sense of not done by subjects or individuals. The individuals would be learning the material that, over the course of human history, has been accepted as part of the "third world". He goes on to add a second situation where everything, including the libraries is destroyed, and he argues that in this case there will be "no re-emergence of our civilization for many millenia" (p. 108). This would happen because the "third world" material would be destroyed and it would take much time before the "subjective learning and knowledge" of individuals could

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become part of the "third world" of objective knowledge (as defined by Popper).

To add a thought experiment of my own. Imagine that a neutron bomb exploded and eliminated all human beings, leaving intact machines and tools and libraries. In a sense one could no longer speak of knowledge being known; no humans would exist to "know"! But this does not mean necessarily that all knowledge has been eliminated. The concepts and theories residing in the libraries possess a kind of potential for being known that exists outside of any knower, even though the knowledge was created by human minds. If creatures with rational minds similar to ours visit the earth after the bomb has exploded, discover the machines and tools and libraries and study them, they could possibly learn from these examples and come to possess the knowledge that was created by the now vaporized human race (In chapter six, I will return to Popper's library metaphor relating to the concept of rationality).

A relativist might take exception to Popper on the grounds that this humanly constructed knowledge that would be recorded in the libraries of the thought experiment is not objective, since it consists in the cumulative beliefs of people from different cultures. These beliefs may be contradictory. Therefore, there is no body of objective knowledge; there are many differing bodies of culturally relative belief, corresponding to the number of different libraries in the world (or books in the library, for that

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matter). The fact that we can learn from such libraries means only that we can learn what various cultures or institutions believe to be true.

Popper's (1972) sense of a third world that is independent of a knower does not imply that the knowledge associated with this world is purely objective in the sense of absolute and unchanging. It is not the same as the Platonic notion. Some of the Greeks posited an eternally existing world of knowledge that humans discover. Popper (1972) suggests that the third world is " ... a natural product of the human animal, comparable to a spider's web ... it is largely autonomous, even though we constantly act upon it and are acted upon by it: it is autonomous despite the fact that it is our product and that it has a strong feed-back effect on us ... objective knowledge grows ... there is a close analogy between growth of knowledge and biological growth ..." (p. 112). Thus the relativist attack does not work.

Popper's third world argument seems a plausible defense of the objectivity of knowledge. It allows for a relatively autonomous body of objective knowledge, made possible by the descriptive and argumentative capacity of our language. Epistemology for Popper (1972) becomes "... the theory of the growth of knowledge. It becomes the theory of problem solving, or, in other words, of the construction, critical discussion, evaluation, and critical testing of competing conjectural theories" (p.142).

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Popper (1972) argues for the objectification potential of "theoretical problems and problem situations, critical arguments and the state of discussion of critical arguments" (p.107). Knowledge is subjective in that it comes from a human subject, but Popper wishes to free it from subjectivity, from having relevance only to each human subject.

Brown (1988) offers arguments against Popper's views; these will be taken up in detail in the chapter on the concept of rationality. The point to be made is that all knowledge is not totally relative to each individual knower. Even if the claim of objectivity cannot be sustained, if it can be argued that knowledge is not unique to each knower but has certain predictive features; the same argument can be made concerning moral knowledge. This would be sufficient for the purposes of this thesis.

White's views.

White (1983) puts forward some examples of statements made by relativists that illustrate their point of view. "Knowledge at all levels, common sense, theoretical and scientific, thereby becomes thoroughly relativised and the possibility of absolute knowledge is denied ... truth and objectivity are human products" (p. 2). In analyzing claims of relativism, White (1983) lists three criteria which must be true for relativism to be true. They are: 1) That there exists or may exist at least two sets of beliefs which differ from and are not compatible with each other.

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2) That we have no means of deciding rationally which set is correct, or whether neither is correct.

3) That it does not even make sense to say that this or that set is correct to the exclusion of the other.

He details three main arguments for relativism, two empirical and one a priori. The first argument claims that cultures are different; differing beliefs within these cultures are determined by the culture itself, therefore beliefs are relative to each culture and have no inter-cultural validity.

The second argument claims that cultures experience change; part of this is change in beliefs. There is no way to determine which set of changing beliefs is true, since they are determined by the culture of the time when and where they are held.

The a priori argument makes the claim that there can be no demonstration of the uniqueness of a set of fundamental principles, for the possibility exists that they could be replaced by rival sets; these could also be replaced, and so on. Therefore knowledge is relative. More will be said about this problem of "infinite regress" in the chapter on the nature of rationality.

These arguments are met by White (1983) in the following way. It cannot be shown that all beliefs differ radically from culture to culture. He uses the example of the concept of contradiction. White claims that it is also not true that there are no means for deciding which

of a set of beliefs is correct, as he explains in the following arguments.

White argues that to accept the position that there are no universal, exceptionless principles does not lead to acceptance of relativity. Principles can apply "for the most part". Also, change can come only by the application of principles to belief. This is the only rational manner for change to happen. White uses the example of causality here; it applies for the most part in human affairs, notwithstanding whether it applies in quantum mechanics.

White dispenses with the a priori argument by stating that if principles are to be replaced, they ought to be replaced rationally. If they are replaced rationally, we could not reject the concept of contradiction, the ideas of argument, drawing conclusions or the principle of causality 'for the most part'. To replace a principle would require justification, rationality and the principles which were to be rejected.

Pring's views.

Pring (1976) adds support to White's arguments against relativism. He sums up the relativists' argument, "Thus from the philosophical truth that all knowledge is 'socially situated' and from the observation that growth or stagnation of knowledge at particular periods (and its availability to particular people) can be contingently related to particular forms of social control, it is argued that all knowledge is socially determined, all

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truth is relative to particular 'legitimating' agencies"
(p. 70).

In rebuttal Pring argues that there are limits to how
far we can say that we inhabit different realities. We
have far too much in common. "There are limits to how far
one can talk about our concepts, our construction of
reality, as conventional ... and such a real world that
makes distinctions possible (whether or not we choose to
make those distinctions) includes the social world of
people intending, striving, agreeing and valuing" (p.
75). Pring asserts that we share contexts of meanings,
"... otherwise, where do the terms of one's redefinition
come from, or to whom could one communicate one's new
definitions? ... there is little point in fundamental
speculation about morals and religion, about politics and
arts, unless one has already entered sympathetically and
imaginatively into the attempts by others to identify and
tackle problems with these areas" (p. 75). Relativists may
not argue that there are no shared concepts or contexts
across cultures. In chapter six, the discussion of Brown's
views on rationality and truth addresses this important
point.

Conclusions

The conclusion that may be drawn from the above
arguments is that knowledge is potentially and often non-
relative, other than in the sense that it comes from human
minds. We share similar logical structures; concepts are
public creations which can be put into arguments bound by

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this logic; these can be debated and by the means of appropriate truth tests defensible conclusions may be reached.

Knowledge is not objective in the sense of externally existing, absolute, transcendent. It is a human product. Popper, White and Pring argue that knowledge, however, has a certain objective autonomy, deriving from its potential to be understood by other beings with similar minds and logical structures. The fact that knowledge is a necessarily human creation does not imply that humans cannot agree on objective standards for that knowledge. And it is not the case that because at a given historical moment, beliefs may have differed or changed, there are no better or worse ways of viewing those beliefs and no manner of rejecting or accepting new ones.

<u>Moral Knowledge</u>

Let us now turn to morality and the sort of knowledge that we attribute to it. What is moral knowledge? Is it proper to use the term "knowledge"? Or should we speak of values, emotions, societal beliefs? Does moral knowledge differ from knowledge in general? Do the same rules apply to it, or is it the case, as the relativist would argue, that values are necessarily and completely relative to the valuer?

First, moral agency concerns human beings. We hesitate to apply the term "moral" to squirrels or whales, Paul Watson notwithstanding. What is it that defines personhood? Essentially two qualities, as explicated by

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Singer (1987): rationality and self consciousness. Moral agency, then, concerns people and their actions. It is not concerned with every action, attitude or disposition of persons. Many things are valued, yet they do not fall into the range of the term "moral". For example, I value my old tennis racket, or a certain out-of-date suit, or hair style. These valuations do not seem to be moral in scope. I may value a particular type of food, or biology over physics. These valuations do not necessarily come under the range of the term "moral". Morality, then, is concerned with, "fundamental values" (Duncan, 1979). Some writers term these values moral principles: respect for persons, injunctions against killing or lying, for example. Moral values, then are distinct from values in general. Hamm and Daniels (1979) distinguish different classes of values, some of which are moral, some not.

Much of the confusion encountered concerning claims about the nature of morality stems from muddled thinking about just what subjects, issues, ideas, and actions come under the range of moral and which come under the range of non-moral value.

Wilson (1979) defines morality as being "... about the state of the soul; or if soul is too unfashionable a word, about our basic emotional dispositions and mental health" (p.22). He argues that too much emphasis is put on tying morality to action. Its range also applies to attitudes and dispositions. Duncan (1979) takes a different tack. "I take it that moral thinking is essentially about the

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fundamental values by which we profess to live. By the
much abused work 'values' I mean those things which we
seriously believe to be worth pursuing, the ends which we
think worth realizing and the actions which we think worth
doing or which we think important to refrain from doing"
(p. 21). Hamm and Daniels (1979) state "...it seems to us
that the basis of the moral comprises certain facts about
people and their situation"(p.21). Morality, they argue,
has to do with the resolution of conflicts between people,
through the use of reason. Hamm and Daniels delineate
three classes of value. Class A includes forms of
knowledge (including morality). These are characterized
by: logical structure, objectivity, and universality.
Examples would be knowledge of moral principles and rules.
Class B values are: cleanliness, sexual expression,
health, loyalty, thrift, and such like. Class C values
comprise preferences and tastes (p. 28).

White (1983) conceives of morality as actions in
accordance with rational moral principles. "Men [sic] are
essentially rational and some human aims are common to all
men [sic]. Because men [sic] are beings with rationality
and a set of goals and aversions which are common to them
all, they possess a common set of principles governing how
they must behave if they are to minimize their aversions
and reach the optimum number of their goals" (pp. 82-83).
Of course, moral principles require defending, but this
does not mean that they are incapable of
universalizability or open to questions concerning

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ultimate justification. Put another way by White (1983)
"... the basic principles of morality are not culturally
relative, since they result from the application of common
human rationality to the set of aversions which are common
to men [sic] ... and to the fact that men [sic] are prone
to those sorts of overriding desires which demand co-
operation for their fulfillment" (p.90). He lists the
following principles. We ought not to: kill, harm, or
torture others, deprive others of liberties, pleasures,
interests and forms of happiness or seriously increase
frustrations, practice deception, cheat, lie, break
promises, act unjustly; men [sic] ought to cooperate for
the attainment of their overriding goals.

Conclusions

Synthesizing the arguments presented above, it seems
reasonable to assert that morality is concerned with
persons, with their "overriding needs and goals" (examples
of which may include the need for physical and emotional
safety, affection, communication; the goals of happiness,
avoidance of pain) and with fundamental principles formed
from public concepts that attempt to order and achieve the
"overriding desires and goals" that White (1983) refers
to. We possess the faculty of reason, so we are able to
conceive of concepts and theories that form a knowledge
base for understanding our world. Reason, meaning the
ability to think, construct arguments, provide reasons for
conclusions, is fundamental to understanding the world and
our place in it. When we attend to the concepts we hold

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as fundamental in life, order them, and apply them to the practical actions of living, we are practising morality. Moral reasoning is an important part of the process by which we derive the moral principles. The justification for these principles, that which gives them generalizability, is the ultimate reasonableness of the principles themselves; that is, their congruence with reason that is common to all persons.

Moral reasoning is what White (1983) terms a "subspecies" of rationality, and as such is distinguished by its object only. Moral reasoning deals with the practical matter of the interactions among people. Moral principles are derived from the common experience of persons and deal with common desires and aversions. They are justified because they are the necessary conclusions of reasoning applied to the human condition and can apply universally to all humans. These principles are also the touchstones that are referred to when one attempts to sort out defensible courses of action in practical situations. Confusion results from failure to distinguish between moral principles, which are completely generalizable, moral rules, which need to be defended and justified by appeal to principles, those cultural variations of moral rules which do not violate either the moral rules or principles, and non-moral values which admit of great variation of application according to culture, preference and taste.

Moral Education

Having outlined one view of the nature of morality (a highly contested subject!), the derivation and justification of moral principles and rejected the notion of relativity as applied to these principles, we can move on to the topic of moral education. According to Coombs (1980), moral education traditionally has taken three forms, "... clarification, inculcation, and rational deliberation views represent the three most prominent conceptions of the general nature and aims of moral education" (p. 14). I will analyze each form in turn.

Values Clarification View

Values clarification is what the words imply: the business of clarifying values held by students. It is relativistic in that proponents argue against teaching of particular moral beliefs; to do this would necessarily be inculcating, perhaps even propagandizing, since moral principles are merely expressions of preference. Teachers should only help students to clarify their thoughts on particular issues. Regarding the educational worth of values clarification, Coombs (1980) states "Clarifying the moral values one holds is no doubt a good thing, but it does not have sufficient educational significance to count as moral education ... In education ... we must increase the student's knowledge and understanding of moral matters if what we do is to count as moral education" (p.15).Moral education implies more than the clarification of whatever beliefs or values a student may have.

At best, values clarification should serve as a component in a system of moral education aimed at improving the moral reasoning of students and increasing sophistication in understanding moral principles and their application. An important point to notice concerning values clarification is that no effort can be made to distinguish between moral and non-moral values. The process involves expressing preferred values, whatever they may be. The exercise of clarifying values, then, can be irrelevant to morality.

Inculcation View

The second school, that of inculcation, also comes under attack by Coombs (1980).

> to initiate children into certain moral beliefs and their associated modes of conduct merely because they are dominant beliefs in one's society is clearly to court moral indoctrination ... Indoctrination is morally indefensible because it involves treating persons as things to be manipulated by others and not as rational beings having the right to construct their beliefs on the basis of their own experience.(p. 16)

If we reject a system of inculcation, the question could be posed as to how moral education can be accomplished, since it can be argued that morality is in sum a matter of habits, which can best be learned by inculcation. This argument has been met by Duncan (1979) in the following way. "Part at least, but only part, of what we mean by having a moral principle, or making it a rule to do such and such, is that we have formed the habit of acting in that way, and therefore do not have to think

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about it" (p. 9). This seems to present a paradox: that morality rests on habit, which must be learned by inculcation or socialization. This is the subject of chapter three.

Rational Deliberation View

The third school, which promotes a rational deliberation view, argues that "the primary goal of moral education is to teach students to make and to act on rational, well grounded decisions about moral issues" (Coombs, 1980, p. 16). This view is consistent with the view of moral reasoning and knowledge presented. The program of moral education based on this view would involve in part educating students in the techniques of rational moral argument. There are several versions of this approach.

Coombs's views.

Coombs (1980) says, education about rational moral argument involves two kinds of reasons: motivational reasons (wants, purposes, rules of conduct) and beliefs about what actions will fulfill the same. The conclusion of moral reasoning is action. Motivational reasons in moral reasoning are moral principles. Good moral reasoning depends on a sound grasp of moral principles and true empirical beliefs.

Use of moral principles must meet the following standards, according to Coombs (1980): all judgements following from a principle must be accepted; acceptance must not lead to unacceptable consequences and the

principle must be able to be publicly advocated without
defeating the point of adopting the principle.

The ability to practice moral reasoning is not the
only hallmark of the morally educated person, according to
Coombs (1980). There are a number of "attainments" that
characterize a morally educated person, including various
sensitivities, abilities, and dispositions. Moral
education must concern itself as well with the these. One
particular sort of dispositions, of course, is habit.

Cochrane's views.

Cochrane (1979) holds there are several important
aspects of moral education. First is "the capacity to know
what one ought to do" (p. 82). This complex "attainment",
to use Coombs's (1979) term, is developed through liberal
education, development of competence in moral reasoning
and "associated capacities" (empathy, sympathy, etc.);
commitment to the moral life and emphasis on learning to
perceive the world through moral principles.

Training in skill development is important as well.
Its goal is to develop "the abilities to act toward the
ends determined by education (moral reasoning)" (p 82).
Cochrane lists attainments here as coming from two areas:
personal and political. Examples of the first are:
"learning to listen between the lines"; learning to
console. Of the second, "learning to speak effectively in
public; chair a meeting; lobby or picket.

Important as well are "resources to initiate and
sustain moral action"(p. 82). Examples include good self

concept, capacity to withstand peer and authority pressure, courage, perseverance, and capacity to delay gratification.

Wilson's views.

Wilson (1981) argues that the morally educated person must be adept in moral reasoning, and possess the following: ability to conceptualize personhood and use it in a universal principle; knowledge of concepts of various emotions and ability to identify moods and emotions in oneself and others; knowledge of facts and sources of facts relevant to moral decisions; knowing "how", as "evinced" in verbal and non-verbal communication; alertness to moral situations; ability to think through such situations and make "overriding prescriptive and universalized" decisions to act in peoples' interests; ability to carry out these decisions in practice.

White's views.

White (1983) argues that schools have three tasks to carry out in moral education, "... they must aim at instilling habits of moral behaviour in their pupils; even if for the time being the latter do not see the point and reasonableness of those habits. Second ... teachers should make every effort to get them (children) to see for themselves the reasonableness of moral behaviour. Third, like society as a whole, teachers must impose and enforce moral behaviour if and when the need arises and they feel competent to do that" (p. 104).

He also states that "a major part of moral education consists precisely in getting pupils both to see the difference between principles and their applications and to acquire some skill in weighing arguments for and against those of the latter which are seriously held to be in doubt" (p.105).

Duncan's views.

Duncan (1979) offers a summary of moral education as including "both the formation of sound habits and intellectual preparation for partaking in the ongoing moral dialectic, the continuing discussion of moral issues and critical scrutiny of moral principles ..." (p.16).

It is important to note that each of the above thinkers talked about, not only critical thinking, but habit formation as an important if not essential aspect to moral education. The question that now needs to be answered is whether habit formation can be accomplished by defensible means.

Conclusions

Much work remains to be done regarding the formulation of principles and rules and the derivation of relevant and required states of mind, attributes, attainments and dispositions of the morally educated person. This is the subject of a much more ambitious work. The simpler aim of this thesis is to argue for the logical possibility of moral education and to discuss two of the fundamental concepts involved - rationality and habit - and how they are related.

If the argument is accepted that moral principles and rules form a body of knowledge the inadequacy of any system but one grounded in reasons becomes evident. Inculcation and socialization views do not lie within the category of education, strictly speaking, although some education theorists would disagree with this. Although a person may acquire moral training or a set of moral prescriptions through either of these methods, one could not say that these were acquired by defensible teaching; the terms indoctrination or propaganda apply here. That there seem to be differences in language used and in derivation of relevant principles, rules, attributes, attainments and the like does not imply the impossibility of education in morals; rather it speaks to the need for further dialogue, study, and clarification of concepts.

The fact that there is an ongoing dialogue about the nature of the matter and much confusion and misunderstanding concerning relevant concepts does not deny the possibility of a person becoming educated in physics or chemistry. We do not say that education in health is impossible because there are differences of opinion and confusions concerning general definitions of health and the relevance and preeminence of concepts such as diet, cholesterol, exercise, stress and the like. By the same argument, we cannot justify denying the possibility of moral education because of differences of opinion and confusion about relevant concepts. In the next

chapter I will look at an apparent paradox concerning habit formation and morality.

Chapter Three

The Alleged Paradox of Moral Education

<u>Introduction</u>

In the last chapter I discussed the nature of morality and whether it is suitable as an educational endeavour. The concepts of rationality and habit are central to this topic and require further analysis. In this chapter I will present an analysis of what has been termed the "paradox of moral education". This paradox involves moral development and the seeming contradiction between reason and habit. Peters (1966) ascribes to Aristotle the stating of the paradox. I will analyze Peters' claim and what it rests on, Kazepides' responses in 1969 and later, in 1979, to Peters' claim about the paradox and, to a lesser extent, what Hamm (1975) adds to the debate. I will present the argument that there is no paradox between reason and habit in moral development. I will point out important concepts that are often mentioned only peripherally in debate on moral education and how these concepts, and the concepts of reason and habit, interrelate subtly in ways that cannot be understood by attempts to dichotomize them.

<u>What is The Paradox?</u>

<u>Arisotle's View</u>

What is the "paradox of moral education" according to Aristotle? He states that there are "... three things by which men become virtuous: and these three things are nature, habit and reason" (Politics 1332, p.39-40). He

points out that a person's nature alone does not imply moral excellence. This is acquired largely by the inculcation of habits. If young people develop good habits, they have a better chance of eventually becoming moral agents; if they do not develop good habits while young, it becomes difficult, if not impossible for them to achieve excellence in the moral sphere.

Habits alone, for Aristotle, are not a sufficient condition for moral agency, "... in addition, the agent must ... know what he is doing; secondly, he must choose to act the way he does, and he must choose it for its own sake; and in the third place, the act must spring from a firm and unchangeable character" (Nichomachean Ethics, 2, 4, p.30).

A seeming paradox arises. According to Aristotle, the young are not yet "reasoning" creatures, they are not yet capable of deliberately choosing proper actions based on rules and principles. Some "non-rational" means must be employed to inculcate desirable habits of action. If this is necessary to lay the foundation for moral agency, how does a young person who is trained to act in a certain way become autonomous: freely choosing morally correct actions based on an appeal to rules and principles? I will put forward several interpretations of the paradox, followed by my own analysis.

Peters' View

Peters (1966) formulates the paradox this way. "Given that it is desirable to develop people who conduct

themselves rationally, intelligently and with a fair
degree of spontaneity the brute facts of child development
reveal that at the most formative years of a child's
development he is incapable of this form of life and
impervious to the proper manner of passing it on" (pp.245-
266).

Hamm's View

Hamm (1975) says

> It is feared that if children become habituated in
> behaviour according to rules provided by adults, they
> may, because of the self perpetuating nature of
> habits, continue thoughtlessly to live according to
> those rules even when the rules become outmoded,
> and thus never achieve autonomous morality even when
> they reach the age of reason ... the question is, do
> habit and tradition, (the only possible modes of
> behaviour for a child) militate against reason and
> intelligent choice in the morally mature person
> (p. 424-425).

Hamm does not stipulate when the age of
reason occurs. As well, he seems to say that the only
modes of behaviour for children are habit and tradition. I
will deal with this assertion later in the chapter.

Kazepides' View

Kazepides (1969) formulates the paradox this way.

> Unless we are successfully conditioned or trained
> early in life to develop the right habits, beliefs,
> and attitudes *uncritically* [italics added], it is
> almost impossible for us to achieve virtue and find
> happiness in life. There is no question of examining,
> questioning, or accepting our moral beliefs and moral
> practices; we are simply taught them and rightly so,
> because there is no other way at that age. And yet, in
> spite of these facts, we are all expected to develop
> into autonomous moral agents whose actions will be

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guided by and judged according to the three criteria mentioned by Aristotle (p.178-179).

I put the word "uncritically" into italics, because an analysis of what this implies seems to me to be one of the ways to either prove the "paradox" false, or to get around what may still be a major problem, if not a contradiction. Aristotle might have taken issue with Kazepides' formulation of the problem, for Aristotle placed major emphasis on development of character through mentoring or initiating relationships with older people.

Kazepides changes his mind about this himself in a 1979 paper where he says "... he (Aristotle) does not suggest that young children could develop the desirable moral habits in an unthinking, mechanical way. Such habits, divorced from reason, are excluded by the nature of the apprenticeship model for moral education which emerges from Aristotle's discussion" (p.157). He goes on to say, "Aristotle would have been led into a paradox only if he had suggested that moral development is the result of inculcating animal-like habits divorced from thinking, through drill or through a laboratory-like conditioning" (p.157).

The claim that there is a paradox concerning the role of habit and reason in the development of moral education seems to be flawed from at least two points of view. The first has to do with the claim that children are completely incapable of reason. The second relates to the concepts involved, especially habit and reason. I turn now to these critiques.

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Critique of the Paradox

First Argument

The first claim, that children are not capable of reason at all, is empirical, put forward by thinkers as diverse as Piaget, Kohlberg, Hamm, and Kazepides (1969). Kohlberg's findings that support his conclusion are criticized by Peters as focussing only on certain kinds of moral principles (eg. justice), which are very abstract and take a long time for even adults to understand. Character traits, such as caring for others, argues Peters (1979) are "internalizations of considerations which would normally be appealed to as principles" (p. 270), and these can be grasped by the very young. It is not immediately clear that young children do not grasp the idea of fairness (one has only to watch the dividing-up of candy), but the point that Peters makes is well taken. Principles provide a basis for moral education that does not rely on inculcation and indoctrination.

If the claim is true that children are incapable of reason in any form, does this not render the enterprise of moral education useless? If children are absolutely incapable of reason, how can any moral education take place? There is therefore no such thing as moral education for the young and no paradox. As Kazepides (1979) says

> ... are we really dealing here with a paradox or with a questionable generalization about child development? If the claim about children being incapable of the moral life and impervious to the proper way of passing it on were true, it would simply make moral education an impossible task ... If during their 'most formative

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years' children were totally incapable of the moral life then there is nothing we could do. The truth is that children gradually become capable of the moral life (p. 160).

The first point to be made concerning the "paradox", then, concerns whether or not children are incapable of reason. Naturally, evidence of this varies from child to child, but is it true that, in general, children are incapable of reason? Part of the answer lies in empirical studies of children, part in an analysis of the concept of reason.

My son is seven years old. At this age, according to the argument above, he should be incapable of "reason". He often asks me if I would like to share a can of pop with him. He then proceeds to divide up the contents of the can into two glasses. When he first started to do it, he always gave himself more pop. Is this evidence that he was incapable of reasoning from the principle of justice to the rule that sharing means equal portions? When asked he agreed that it was unreasonable to give himself more. He realized that he had no good reason for doing it. He seemed to understand that he had violated a rule that had sound reasons behind it. Why, then did he pour himself more? He has not learned to control his emotions, at his age, and his selfish feelings may override his understanding of what he ought to do. This is not a problem of inability to reason; rather it is plausible to hold that reasoning and care for others is overridden by more powerful factors. Perhaps feelings of insecurity and lack of self-confidence had some influence as well. He

may, at his age, feel insecure about the power he holds against other and feel compelled to overprotect his interests, since he is afraid of losing them completely.

Second Argument

Part of the problem with the claim that children lack reason lies with the interpretation of the concept of reason when it is juxtaposed to habit, as if one precludes the other. Even if one uses a narrow interpretation of reason, as "ratiocination", the process of abstract thought, it is not clear that habits are not necessary to this function. To avoid the fallacies of irrelevance, such as hasty or slothful induction, or the fallacy of equivocation, the development of certain habits which guide thinking is essential. Some examples would be the habit of careful consideration of all relevant factors, or the habit of looking for alternative explanations.

Perhaps the concept of reason, especially in the moral sphere, implies the concept of habit as a necessary aspect to it. If I reason about moral principles, say the principle of truth-telling, I may conclude that it is a good idea to try always to tell the truth. This may result in the habit of truth-telling. Reason, then, is a necessary component of some habits. How do we reason about whether to develop truth-telling as a habit? Do we not employ habits of reflection as mentioned above? Does not reason, then, also depend on habit? Is it correct to say, as Hamm (1975) does, that " ... reason and habit are

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logically unrelated and operate on different planes" (p. 427)?

If reasoning requires habits that are necessary to the success of the act of reasoning, what remains that is strictly "reasoning", devoid of habit? The answer seems to be formal logic, but if this is true, formal logic becomes a necessary condition for reasoning about the world, but not a sufficient condition, and especially concerning the subject of morality. The necessary kind of reasoning used in moral matters is practical reason, as Aristotle describes it, reasoning focussed on empirical matters with actions as the ends of the reasoning process. Hamm (1975) asks a good question when he says

> What is of interest here is whether or not some basic
> moral notions are logically dependent on habit
> formation, whether habits in some instances are
> logically necessary for the acquisition of certain
> moral notions. Is it perhaps necessary to have a habit
> of truth telling before the concept of honesty is
> possible of being grasped? Is the notion of
> consistency, so basic to rational morality, a notion
> that logically depends on having a habit" (p.427).

The Range of "Habit"

Peter's Views

If we accept as dubious the claim that children are incapable of reason, is there still a paradox of moral education? Peters argues that an apparent contradiction still exists, if one ascribes to habit a narrow range, as Ryle (1949) does when he says that habits are essentially acts that are replicas of past acts. He distinguishes habits from intelligent capacities and thus would need to

agree that to use the concept of habituation as a prerequisite to moral agency would present a paradox.

Peters (1979) attempts to rescue the concept of habit from this fate by expanding its range. He argues that not all habits are learned by a mindless, repetitive drill. We can form habits intelligently, out of reflection and a desire to change, or for some end. "These ways of learning habits, in which reason and intelligence are involved, can be contrasted with other processes of habituation where a habit is "picked up" in ways which are explicable only in terms of laws of association such as contiguity, recency and frequency" (p 279).

Peters concludes that the paradox of moral education is escapable because intelligent habits are possible. As far as a child understands moral concepts, true education is possible, not mere inculcation of habits, for through discussion of moral principles and rules in context, children will come to see that certain habits make sense, and will be motivated to develop them. They will be able to argue for them as well, even though they may not be able to adequately understand extremely abstract concepts until they are older, mentally more mature and more experienced. The important task is to start educating in this sphere as soon as possible.

Hamm's critique of Peters.

Hamm (1975) criticizes Peter's (1979) discussion of habit by stating that Peters, in a sense, begs the question. Hamm says that Peters differentiates two kinds

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of habit. H1 habits are those for which there are in principle good reasons for developing that are related to actions proper, connoting flexible application of rules and conscious intent and choice and by which one acts on a rule with insight and intelligence. H2 habits are in accord with a rule, done automatically and without intelligence or awareness that the action falls under a rule. Hamm says that Peters then claims that H1 habits "embody a great deal, if not most, of what we mean by rational morality. If this is what is meant by habit, it is not surprising that habit does not militate against rational morality" (p. 425). The questions, says Hamm, are whether H2 habits militate against rational morality and whether the acquiring of moral habits is necessary to rational morality. It is true, as Hamm points out, that a person who has been indoctrinated into bad habits, can, with dawning insight, come to cast off the training and follow moral rules with awareness. It is also true that once a person is indoctrinated with "unthinking" habits it can be difficult to change. It is an empirical matter, for Hamm, whether or not H2 type habits militate against rational morality.

If H1 type habits are possible, it seems reasonable that children who develop these types of habits will not be harmed by them and may find the road to self legislation easier. Hamm is doubtful of the truth of the latter claim, but does concede that instilling moral habits is a good thing so that when children reach the

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autonomous stage they will be able to "cash in or capitalize" on their training. The chief benefit of Peters' article, says Hamm (1975), is "the implied injunction to inculcate habits as often as possible and as early as possible by way of appealing to the child's reasoning powers and engaging him in the rational aspects of moral argument" (p.426).

Kazepides' critique of Peters, 1969.

Kazepides, in his 1969 paper, criticizes Peters for shifting "back and forth between the empirical facts of child development on one hand and the conceptual contrast between 'habit' and 'reason' on the other" (p.180). He says that it is a "prohibited move" to reduce an empirical problem to a conceptual one. Hamm (1975) echoes this criticism when he says that "... the paradox as posed *ex hypothesi* rules out insight and intelligence as a solution for the difficulty in ... that the child is not yet capable of such rational processes" (p. 425).

Kazepides (1969) says that Peters "... takes great pains to show that the "brute facts of child development" reveal that children during their most formative years are incapable of being influenced by rational methods of teaching" (p. 180). Thus, argues Kazepides, "... since Peters is a 'staunch supporter of a rationally held and intelligently applied moral code' and since he also believes in young children's incapacity to hold or intelligently apply moral principles, the paradox stands" (p. 181).

Does Peters (1979) hold this view? He makes a distinction between character traits, such as honesty, which he says are examples of internalized rules or principles and motives. He says that the latter, concern for others, for example, "develops much earlier in a child's life and does not require the same level of conceptual development to be operative as does justice or even honesty" (p. 268). This seems to imply that children do exercise reason at an early age. This also seems to be an empirical claim, open to contest.

Kazepides, in the 1969 paper, asserts that Peter's attempt to claim that the paradox rests on a theoretical problem relating to the concept of habit is irrelevant to the real problem, which is one of pedagogy. He says at the end of the paper

> ... the paradox is based on the demands of the morally educated man [sic] and the facts of child development that require the use of some non-rational methods in early moral training. The study of the child's development and the critical examination of the requirements of moral life will certainly help us in developing better methods of early moral training: they will help to minimize the paradox but they will not help to resolve it. Only a miraculous change in the facts of child development or a drastic change in the requirements of morality will resolve the paradox (p.182).

Miracles must have happened in the intervening ten years, for in his 1979 paper, Kazepides asserts that "... to the extent ... that young children are capable of understanding moral reasons and arguments they are capable of moral education ... if, say at the age of five, a child

is still treated as if he did not understand any moral
arguments at all, then it is clear that the moral
development of that child has been neglected for too
long" (p.158).

Kazipedes (1979) justifies his change of mind by
distinguishing between "inculcating animal-like habits
divorced from thinking, through drill or through
laboratory-like conditioning" (p.157), and apprenticeship,
which Aristotle argued for and which is not based on
"blind imitation and repetition or on mechanical drill and
animal conditioning" (p.157). Kazepides (1979) argues that
the process is more like influencing: "by expressions of
agreement, rejection, expectation, encouragement. I let
him go his way, or hold him back" (p.158).

Kazepides (1979), states that Peter's formulation of
the paradox is based on "a background of assumed
dichotomies" (p.159), such as habit, tradition and reason.
Kazepides's assertion is that Peters sets up a theoretical
dichotomy between a certain kind of habit, characterized
by the phrase "out of habit" – things we do that we may
not be able to explain rationally. This is the H2 type of
habit, mentioned before. Peters, according to Kazepides,
differentiates between ways in which habits are brought
about. "It is only if habits are developed in a certain
way that the paradox of education can be avoided in
practice" (Kazepides, 1979, p. 161). Kazepides (1979)
asserts that this indicates that the problem is not a
logical one but one concerning pedagogy, and unlike what

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he said in the 1969 paper, he then goes on to say that this seeming paradox is really just a lack of understanding about how children learn in the moral sphere. He lists several versions of the paradox and argues against them.

Kazepides critique of Peters, 1979:

First version of the paradox.

The first version attacks the belief that conditioning the young is a necessary aspect of moral education. This, he says, is based on the assumption that children learn in much the same way as do animals- habits exercised merely "out of habit", in unthinking, automatic ways. Kazepides (1979) says that the

> ... fact that many parents fail to teach their young the appropriate rules and concepts and insist exclusively on what they consider socially desirable does not introduce a paradox in moral education; it simply raises the important questions about ... preparation for parenthood and the morality of the social order that permits or, worse, perpetuates such practices. The problem does arise when parents develop in their young appropriate moral habits but whenever these habits are divorced from intelligent understanding of the appropriate moral principles. The development of moral habit ... is not only possible and legitimate, it is an indispensable part of moral education (p. 162).

Kazepides (1979) here seems to assume that children are able to understand moral principles, whereas in 1969, he did not think so. He does not offer any argument for this change of belief.

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Second version of the paradox.

Another version of the paradox, according to Kazepides (1979), is the belief that children are like

> ... barbarians, outside the gates of civilized moral life. Just as barbarians are incapable of understanding and appreciating sophisticated high-level moral reasoning, so are young children too. They must therefore be offered low-level doctrinal beliefs and arguments or be constrained ... to comply with existing social standards"(p.162).

Kazepides (1979) rebuts this. In essence he says that indoctrination is only necessary if a society wishes to impose rationally indefensible beliefs. Otherwise "... it makes no extravagant demands on the imagination to propose a society in which indoctrination does not occur because those constraints do not operate" (p. 163). Kazepides says that the above example of indoctrination is not a paradox, although he does not say why it isn't. He assumes, I suppose, that children in such a society will become capable of using reason to understand rationally defensible principles and to make them habitual. This seems to beg the question posed in his 1969 paper: can the young get in the "game" at all?

Third version of the paradox.

Kazepides (1979) presents a third variation of the alleged paradox that has to do with changing cognitive perspectives. He ascribes to Peters the view that "in order to develop the dispositions of a just man [sic] the individual has to perform acts that are just, but the acts which contribute to the formation of the dispositions of a

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just man are not conceived of in the same way as the acts which finally flow from his character, once he has become just" (p. 163). Kazepides says that this problem is not peculiar to children and to their moral education; "... if it is a paradox at all it is the paradox of all learning" (p. 164).

Kazepides (1979) seems to have realized what Aristotle meant when he talked of initiation and mentoring. He seems to say that all children are capable of some form of moral reasoning, the activities described by Aristotle and Wittgenstein are defensible ways to develop moral reasoning and it is not a paradox at all that the process changes the participants; it deepens their understanding and necessarily changes their behaviour.

Complicating the Issue

At the end of the 1979 paper, Kazepides concludes that there is no paradox of education - merely complex problems that face the moral educator. He speculates about Peter's use of the term paradox.

> Perhaps the reason why Peters continues to talk about 'the paradox' is that he wants to dramatize a fact about the human predicament of great moment: that unlike other animals we are not born at our destination but at the doorstep of a civilized moral life, and that the road to our full humanity is littered with countless misleading signposts. Thus the educator who comes to recognize this distinct mark of man [sic] may become more sensitive in his treatment of the young, more aware of the many dangers that surround him, and less squeamish in establishing the appropriate habits in a morally appropriate manner" (p. 165).

Here we arrive at the heart of the problem of moral education. The analysis of the concepts relevant to moral issues is essential, and much more research is needed into how and when children start to understand moral concepts- in other words, become "rational", as these writers have put it. As Kazepides says above, the road to morality is difficult, great courage and sensitivity are required. One must have the ability to receive information appropriately, to differentiate, to judge and to make decisions. Steadfastness is needed to follow through on one's decisions and to change when it is appropriate to do so. Essential, too, are imagination, sensitivity, awareness, receptivity to emotions, ideas and changing situations. Many of these receptions, attainments and abilities have not been mentioned at all in the course of discussion of "the paradox".

<u>Coombs's View</u>

Coombs (1988) makes the point that critical thinking about moral concepts is essential to help children to become better at deciding moral issues.

> The task of developing traditionally defensible moral attitudes in students has two facets: we must assist students in acquiring the intellectual resources necessary for critical thinking about moral issues and we must assist them in conducting inquiries that bring particular moral attitudes under responsible critical scrutiny. Teaching persons to think critically is not simply a matter of teaching them a set of standards of good moral reasoning to apply. Rather it is a matter of initiating them into a complex set of practices in which the standards are embedded. To a large extent students arrive in school already having learned to

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participate in the practices of moral deliberation and criticism (p.18).

The assertion is doubtful that children are incapable of moral reasoning, as Hamm (1975) argues when he states "... habit and tradition, the only possible modes of behaviour for a child" ... (p.425). The issue is more complicated as Kazepides comes to realize in his 1979 paper. Coombs (1980) argues that we, as moral educators, initiate children into the moral sphere; we cultivate attitudes. Surely habit, in the sense of rationally developed, rationally defensible habit, is part of this initiation? Of course, "H2" type habits may or may not militate against the development of morality, as Hamm points out, but is this not irrelevant to the question? If H1 type habits are indeed possible, as even Hamm seems to acknowledge, the development of these habits seems to at least increase the chances of moral development as children gain insight into the reasons given for the development of these type of habits. Perhaps it is true that these types of habits are an unavoidable part of good moral development. Empirical research needs to be looked at to further this discussion.

Conclusion

To come back to Aristotle (1962) and his emphasis on initiation,

> ... in our transactions with other men, it is by action that some become just and others unjust, and it is by acting in the face of danger and by developing the feeling of fear or confidence that some become brave men and others cowards. ... In a

word, characteristics develop from corresponding activities. For that reason, we must see to it that our activities are of a certain kind, since any variations in them will be reflected in our characteristics. Hence, it is no small matter whether one habit or another is inculcated in us from early childhood; on the contrary, it makes a considerable difference, or rather, all the difference (2,1,p.15-25).

Coombs's purpose in talking of "attitude" is similar to Aristotle's, but he talks instead of the development of character through habits. Kazepides (1979), argued that Aristotle's use of habit implies reason, "... the apprenticeship that is, according to Aristotle, suitable to the development of moral virtue cannot be based either on blind imitation and repetition or on mechanical drill and animal conditioning. The nature of virtuous actions leaves very little room for such processes" (p.158).

It seems defensible, then, to assert that certain kinds of habits are necessary to becoming morally autonomous. In the next chapter I analyze the concept of habit, in detail.

Chapter Four:

Analysis of Habit

<u>Introduction</u>

As seen in chapter three, the concept habit is used with varying meanings. It seems to be a vague concept. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the concept with the aim of establishing the possibility of "intelligent" habits.

The term habit in ordinary language is used to indicate a form of disposition. A habit is a disposition to act in certain predictable ways, given sets of circumstances. It is contrasted to active thought or reasoning. When we use the term habit we have an idea of an action or movement that is somehow automatic, done without thought. Habits come about in many ways, although generally, repetition is involved. We come to have a habit by repeating certain actions over again until the action ceases to be consciously done; it is habitual. The concept of habit fits into several categories. Mental habits can include memory habits, verbal habits, reading habits and math habits. Physical habits can include motor skills and habits related to the senses. Psychological habits can include addiction, compulsion, and obsession. Social habits can include custom, practice, routine and wont. The range of the concept extends from acts of rote repetition to 'informed' habits, sensitive to reason.

This chapter is divided into two sections: a conceptual analysis, using Wilson's (1963) model for

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analysis, and a discussion of several views on the range
of the concept. A summary concludes the chapter.

<center>Conceptual Analysis</center>

Sentence Framing

Examples will be given followed by a brief analysis.

Model cases.

He habitually drove ten kilometers over the limit.

Tom has a habit of passing cynical comments at every opportunity.

I did it out of habit, without realizing how much you disliked it.

The above illustrate the repeated nature of habits.
The subjects may not have been aware of what they were
doing, which speaks to the automatic nature of habits.

I developed a nasty habit of sleeping in late.

I shave the same way every day, out of practice.

Your foul language could become a habit.

The above illustrate that the origin of habits can be
accidental or due to a preference that at the time may not
have been a conscious one. A habit could be developed or
"fallen into" unconsciously.

A good habit fits like an old shoe.

My habit of grinding morning coffee helps to start the day.

Habits are regular and predictable. They can serve to
lessen the stress of life by allowing us to function
without consciously thinking out every move.

I learned to break my habit of ignoring charities.

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Habits can be learned. They are amenable to change through teaching.

I am aware that I shower and shave before breakfast; it is one of my habits and I like it.

We can be aware of our habitual actions, even at the time of performance; not all habits are unconsciously performed.

I walked into the old house and reached for a lamp that was no longer there.

Habitual responses can be evoked by coincidence or by association.

My methods of meeting people changed after I lost my hair. Country life gave me a change of habits. I spent less time "going" and more time "mowing"!

I got out of the habit of reading when I worked double shifts.

Habits are shaped and changed by environmental factors.

<u>Related cases.</u>

The happy hour drink is a comfortable habit I fell into in Spain.

It is our habit to swim in the morning, then play tennis.

These are cases of 'routine', more than habit. It implies more planning, intention and motive than model cases of habit.

It is habitual in our society to overeat at Christmas.

This implies custom, or habits that have become generalized to a large group.

My habit is to play bridge every day at seven.

This implies intelligence; it is a routine.

My old habits were too strong; my marriage broke up.

Peters makes a distinction between habit and more deeply set dispositions or character traits, as this example shows.

I make it a habit to see the doctor every year.

This is better expressed as a "practice". It implies intention, intelligence, and monitoring of results.

It was her habit to wear diamonds and blue jeans.

This is a wont, or personal preference.

My informed habit of checking all the relevant facts helps keeps me out of trouble.

This implies the use of reason to monitor or guide habitual action. It is habit informed by reason and an important ability of a morally sophisticated person.

I am in the habit of washing my hands every five minutes.

This is compulsion, which is an extreme case of habitual action.

Contrary cases.

I solved that unique math problem by habit.

Habit told me that the solution was to do x.

Habit cannot perform this function; reason does. Habit may, however, aid in carrying out actions related to the solving of a problem.

I change my habits to suit what I want to do from day to day.

This use implies whim, desire, motive; habits are dispositions which are not that easily changed.

What a successful habit you have!

You are a person with sensitive habits.

My habit of smoking is sensitive to non- smokers rights

Habits are not successful, silly, sensitive or sound. The person who has the habit may be described as possessing these characteristics as a result of habitual actions.

I can improve my guitar playing through habit.

If we teach children effective moral habits, they may become morally autonomous agents.

Here, an appropriate habit serves as a precondition to successful completion of an activity.

Borderline cases.

I avoided the child on the bike out of habit.

This implies more a use of a reflex action, unless one regularly almost ran over children.

When I want to relax my habit is to drive through the park.

This implies an action driven by motive, rather than habit.

I am improving my guitar playing habits.

One can improve the playing but not the habit. One can become more aware of a habit.

Analyses of "Habit

Ryle's Views.

Ryle (1949) wanted to limit the concept of habit to actions that are completely devoid of thought. Habits are done automatically. "It is of the essence of merely habitual practices that one performance is a replica of its predecessors (p. 42). "Habitual actions are not done on purpose and the agent may not even be aware of his doing the action. Ryle's intention is to contrast habitual actions from actions done from motive, which, he states, involve care, attention and purpose, although he does assert that both belong to the category of action. Motive-driven acts differ from habit-driven acts in that a habitual act is one for which the disposition to act, not the motive, explains the action. For example, a person may drive through the park on the way home purely from habit; he has done it for years, and perhaps does not even realize he is in the park. He may be wrapped up in cogitations on, say, the nature of habit and not realize he had driven through the park until he left. A person who drives into the park might do it deliberately every day to unwind before going home. He is doing the action for a specific reason. For Ryle, this would be motive-driven, rather than habitual.

Peter's Views

Peters (1979) points to Ryle's contention that habits and intelligent behaviour are logically different, but he does not agree completely with it. Peters acknowledges

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Ryle's notion of "single track" dispositions but includes
more complex dispositions that he would still call habits.
One example he gives concerns bridge or chess. The
disposition to play bridge each evening at precisely seven
o'clock seems to be a habit but it is not in the same
category as the habit of starting to shave the right
sideburn.

Peters (1979) maps out three applications of the
concept habit:

1) a description, eg. S has habit T;

2) an explanation, eg. S does T from habit;

3) a procedure such as habituation, eg. I learned to
multiply by habituation.

He says that habits falling into categories 1 and 3
are not necessarily incompatible with reason. Habits from
category 2 are, however. Some examples: S has the habit of
playing bridge; this habit implies mind and mental
involvement. As well, habits of punctuality, and others
connected with specific acts do seem to involve reason to
some degree. Habituation can be rote, or accidental, or
come about through "intelligence applied to routine
practice" (p. 274).

Peters' analysis of habit widens the range of the
concept, for there seems to be at least three different
kinds of expressions in which we use the term habit, from
blind unthinking action to action that came about through
a habit, in a sense, "visited" by reason, although not
necessarily at the time of the action consciously guided

by reason. Peters does not, however, place all actions that might seem to be habits in this category. He eliminates sympathetic or angry actions from the category of habitual, as these are " too deeply connected with our nature"(p. 272). We cannot change these dispositions easily, if at all, nor can we say that one angry action will closely resemble another, in the sense of being automatic. Habitual behaviour, then, for Peters, has logically to do with automatic, repeated, and changeable behaviour.

Kazepides (1979) warns of problems arising from the divorce of habits from intelligent moral principles. His argument, presented in the previous chapter, asserts that not all habits are either irrational or non-rational.

Duncan (1979) adds another role to habit when he says "Moral principles are not some kind of intellectual entities on which the agent is precariously balanced as on a razor's edge. If it is indeed a matter of principle to which he genuinely subscribes, then it is also a matter of habit and the force of habit will push him in the right direction. Situations do frequently arise when habit is not enough and we must have recourse to thinking" (p. 10). When one is doing a task, for example, certain actions, at first thought out, become habitual. At certain times one may be shaken from these habitual actions and forced to focus consciously on a new situation. One cannot depend on habitual actions, one must think out new ways to solve a new problem. A crisis will arise if, faced with

the new problem, one fails to notice that the problem
exists, due to the mental sluggishness induced by habitual
actions. One must be sensitive to changes in conditions
which will require that one actively engages one's
conscious mind to solve a problem. In a sense then, habits
can be said to be sensitive to changing conditions. This
implies the existence of certain abilities and capacities
that belong to the category of reason or mind. When
applied to the moral sphere, this could be expressed as
sensitivity to changes in degree of moral risk or hazard.

<div align="center">Conclusions</div>

Habit is an important concept, for it allows us to talk
about an important range of dispositions to act. It is
important not to narrow the range of the concept to
totally automatic responses learned by rote and repeated
in exactly the same way with similar cues. Equally
important is the distinction to be made between deeply set
character traits, such as a disposition to anger, for
habits are amenable to change, although the varying
degrees of difficulty is vast. Habit is different from
dispositions stemming from motives, although they are
closely related.

At the other end of the spectrum, habit and reasoning
are very different. Where habit ends, reasoning begins.
Habits can help to prepare an individual for reasoning,
can help maintain an open mind, provide the discipline to
think through things carefully and fully. Wilson (1979)
states " ... I entirely agree with Dunlop in stressing the

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importance of getting people to be sufficiently committed (serious, psychologically secure, able to attend to the truth and to the facts) by whatever methods we can; for unless they are sufficiently committed, no amount of argument or deployment of reason will affect them ..."(p.185).

Chapter Five

Analysis of the Classical Conception of

Rationality

<u>Introduction</u>

The preceding chapter argues for the possibility of
habits that are in some way infused with reason. The
concept of rationality must now be considered to determine
if within the range of the concept there is room for
aspects of the concept of habit. The account of the
classical conception offered by Brown (1988) will be
explained in this chapter.

<u>The Classical Analysis</u>

Brown (1988) begins his discussion of what he terms
the 'classical' notion of rationality by citing a problem
concerning decision making. The problem involves a group
of twenty people who must decide to "cooperate" or
"defect", based on the goal of "maximizing financial gain"
(p.3). "Anyone, anywhere, who does the arithmetic problem
rationally must come up with the same answer, and ... this
is equally the case for his cooperation/defection problem"
(p.4). He cites the argument.

> Any number of rational thinkers faced with the same
> situation and suffering through similar throes of
> reasoning agony will necessarily come up with the same
> answer eventually, as long as reasoning alone is the
> ultimate justification for their conclusion. Otherwise
> reasoning would be subjective, not objective as
> arithmetic is. A conclusion reached by reasoning would
> be a matter of preference, not one of necessity. Now
> some people may believe this oreasoning, but rational
> thinkers understand that a valid argument must be
> universally compelling, otherwise it is simply not a

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valid argument (p.4).

Brown uses this game to introduce the classical concept of rationality. He states that this problem points out three attributes of a classical model of rationality: universality, necessity, and rules.

Features of the Classical Notion

As a prelude to the discussion, Brown sets aside the following senses of 'rationality', "... I will not be concerned here with collectives, or institutions, ... with the rationality of persons in the sense in which we might assess whether someone is, on balance, a rational individual. Nor ... with the rationality of specific behaviors" (p.5). Brown wishes to discuss "... what makes a specific belief, decision, act, etc., rational ...", and he will also talk of situations that call for"... rational behavior, a rational decision, and so forth ..." (p.5).

Universality.

Universality, argues Brown, means that "if two individuals arrive at different results in a particular situation it must be either because they do not both have the same information, or because at least one of them is not proceeding in a wholly rational manner" (p.6). Thus, argues Brown, mathematics and logic provide the "paradigm" of rationality. Problems in these fields seem to fit the requirement that there be only one universal answer. More will be said concerning the problems implied by this assertion. These subjects are limited in range, however.

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The majority of situations and problems in life are not as clear cut. Brown cites the example of "taste" to make this point. Should coffee be taken black or with cream? This question admits of more than one answer. Yet we do not consider an answer that differs from our own preference irrational, because we do not apply the term "rationality" to these kinds of situations. Brown points out this difference in order to show that, when one talks of rationality, what is implied is more than just subjective taste; one is required to agree that conclusions be universalizable.

Ethics, argues Brown, is a subject where conclusions can be problematic. Disagreement takes place concerning the correct principles for making ethical judgements and whether any such principles exist at all. Brown contrasts Platonic, Kantian and Utilitarian views of the source of universal moral principles to show disagreement over which are the correct moral principles. He notes that, although the views differ in fundamental ways, they all accept the notion that a rational basis for ethics requires principles that are universal in their scope.

Brown cites ethical emotivism and relativism based on cultural diversity as examples of disagreement over whether rationality is possible in ethics. Again, the main point is that to be rational, ethics must have, as its foundation, universal principles. Universality, argues Brown, seems to be implicit in all of these views of the nature of morality and of moral principles.

Brown proceeds to science to provide further argument
that universality is implicit in the general view of
rationality. He points to criticisms of claims to have
scientific knowledge. One is based on the existence of
"scientific revolutions in which the accepted body of
science in a field is radically transformed" (p.11).
Relativity theory and quantum mechanics are the two
examples used. The force of the argument lies in the
observation that, if these revolutions are possible, then
it calls into question the universality of the previously
held views, and by extension the rationality of scientific
inquiry in general.

Says Brown,"reflection on the above examples suggests
that there is an ambiguity in the notion of
'universality': some claims or principles are universal in
the sense of being applicable in every possible domain,
while some are only universal in respect to some limited
domain" (p.12). Logic is a good example of the former
type. He raises this to point out that "proponents of our
classical model of rationality have typically taken the
full universality that we find in logic as ideal, and only
reluctantly moved to principles that are domain-specific.
Moreover, there are good reasons for this" (p. 12). He
talks of the problem encountered when "alternative
criteria" are admitted and the difficulties in trying to
differentiate between them on a rational basis. For the
sake of his argument Brown takes "full blown universality
that is exemplified by formal logic" (p.13) as the ideal.

There is value in this position; "when we have such principles, we know what we are doing, and in their absence we might encounter situations in which we have no coherent basis for making an important decision" (p. 13). Is this not the dilemma of our day-to-day existence? Would Brown argue that when one is trying to decide on a course of action one is not acting in a rational manner, except if one recognizes and consciously applies formal rules of validity which do seem to allow for universality? Many millions of people go through their lives with no ability to express or explicate the formal rules of logic, yet it seems strange to say that if they do so they cannot be rational. Surely a concept of rationality that excludes all thought and action save in the fields where there are clear cut universal guiding principles is far too narrow to be useful at all. This, however, seems to be an implication of the classical model.

Brown makes an important point when he argues that the possibility of universally applicable criteria does solve problems posed by new theories and ideas that propose different sets of criteria for evaluation. Without a universal set of criteria already established to guide us, how could we choose between new theories and old ones?

The existence of a universal set of criteria need not stifle innovation, asserts Brown, for "... given the constraints of validity we can still construct valid arguments that move from new premises that no one has previously considered to new conclusions, but these

constraints do prevent us from attempting to evade a
charge of invalidity by introducing a new logic tailored
to the conclusions at which we wish to arrive" (p.14).
This could be applied as an argument against Keke's (1989)
conception of rationality and his statement that there may
be new forms of logic that will invalidate existing ones.
Brown's point is well taken regarding the possibility of
self-serving motives in arguing for the possibility of new
forms of logic. Yet, as Brown argued, in the field of
quantum mechanics new discoveries may well change our
understanding of the world that we may previously have
held to be immutable. That this may be so should not
encourage us to cast away the possibility of rational
thought.

Necessity.

Brown states that the classical model of rationality
includes the notion of necessity as well as universality.
By necessity he means that "a rationally acceptable
conclusion must follow with necessity from the information
given" (p.14). Brown turns again to math and logic for
examples. Two plus two must equal four in certain number
systems and the conclusion of a deductive argument must
follow from the premises. He says that the requirement of
necessity is more important than that of universality in
the sense that it explains why

> all rational individuals who start at the same point
> must arrive at the same conclusion. The requirement of
> necessity permits us to distinguish those cases in
> which everyone arrives at the same result because they
> have reasoned their way to that result in an

appropriate manner from those in which universality is achieved as a result of, say, ignorance or indoctrination (p.15).

Not only must there be a necessary tie between premises and conclusions, but, to be rational, we must realize that connection; just getting a rational result does not mean that the person who gets it is aware of the necessity of the answer. If this is not the case then that person cannot, unreservedly, be said to be thinking rationally.

Brown illustrates the importance of the notion of necessity by citing the distinction between "... accepting a result on a rational basis and accepting it on the basis of experience. The grounds for this distinction typically lie in the claim that conclusions accepted on the basis of experience do not have the necessity that characterizes reasoned results" (p.15).

Brown's point here is that the classical model of rationality <u>requires</u> the notion of necessity. The interesting question is whether necessity is part of rationality in all of its aspects or the result of a particular notion of rationality.

<u>Rules.</u>

The third feature of classical rationality is the importance of rules. Brown argues that the type of rule best suited is the algorithm, since it guarantees a conclusion in a finite number of steps. It is crucial to the classical model of rationality that reasoning be rule-governed because it is essential that all persons who

engage in a problem rationally must come to the same conclusion. There can be no arbitrariness. Following rules will guarantee this. "If we have a set of rules that will allow us to generate or verify answers then we know how to proceed, and it would be difficult to find a clearer model of irrational behaviour than that exhibited by a person who refuses to make use of such rules when they are available" (p.18).

Brown cites both deductive and empirical sciences as disciplines which illustrate the need for rule-following. No matter how hypotheses are derived, one evaluates them by certain tests, governed by the rules of scientific method. As Brown says, "... a rational decision is one that is guided by the appropriate rules, and when we come to a decision on the basis of such rules, we understand what we are about" (p.19).

The problem that arises here is how these rules are themselves justified? To what authority does one refer to establish the rules? If it is to a rational authority, from where did that authority derive its rationality? Kekes (1989) argues that there must be rational thought which happens, temporally, before the rules which govern rational thought are derived. If this is true, it is possible that future rational thought will change the rules which we regard as determining rational thought.

In the classical model of rationality a distinction is made between discovery and justification. Brown attributes this to Hans Reichenbach. Discovery is the process "by

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which individuals come up with new ideas" (p.30).
Rationality concerns "procedures by which such ideas are
tested and evaluated" (p. 30). Any acts which fall under
the category of discovery need not be rational; "the
processes and circumstances involved in conceiving a new
idea are irrelevant to the question of whether we have
good reasons for accepting or rejecting that idea" (p.32).

Brown gives as an example the career of the
mathematician Ramanujan. Apparently, he could conceive of
at least a half dozen new mathematical theorems every day,
but he had no idea how he did it! Brown's point is that
this activity is non-rational; the rational activity
starts when one of Ramanujan's theorems is criticized
using the rules of logic and mathematics. It seems obvious
that we should not accept the pronouncements of anyone
simply because they say it is true; yet, it seems equally
dubious that all cases of discovery are non-rational.
Again, it seems that a certain notion of rationality has
been chosen and put forward as the 'correct' definition.
It may be true as well that "non-rational" acts of thought
produced the rules by which propositions are judged to be
rational.

Rationality, nonetheless, is a valuable concept,
argues Brown. One value is reliability. A second is the
recognition that reasons must be given for accepting or
rejecting a proposition. Rationality is preferable to
authoritarianism, for obvious reasons. Finally,
rationality helps us to figure out what to do, by giving

us universal rules to follow to resolve complicated issues.

One would be loathe to argue for authoritarianism over rationality; however, it is not clear that the classical model of rationality provides satisfactory answers to substantial questions. The most pressing question is how do we discover the rules by which a belief or proposition is found to be rational? Does the classical model of rationality in fact beg the question? To these questions, I will now turn.

Chapter Six

Other Conceptions of Rationality

<u>Introduction</u>

In the following chapter, several alternative conceptions of rationality are put forward and analyzed. A discussion of the rationality and truth and objectivity is included. The conclusion is reached that certain kinds of habit can be included within the range of the concept of rationality.

<u>Kekes' Conception</u>

Kekes (1989) addresses the question posed at the end of chapter five. He asserts that "It is a basic assumption of the Western intellectual and moral tradition that rationality is a central value" (p.3). He says that, although he agrees with this assumption, many philosophers don't. Kekes argues that criticism of rationality is mistaken, at least when directed at the particular conception of rationality where, of necessity, it must conform to rules of logic.

<u>The Approach</u>

Rationality is a "controversial concept", according to Kekes. Therefore, he cannot begin with a definition of it. Instead, he offers what he calls an "intuitive conception" of rationality. He begins with the observation that "we all want to have as much truth and as little error as possible" (p. 3). Success means having correct understandings, but it comes in degrees, indicated by three concepts: knowledge, justification and rationality.

Kekes (1989) argues that knowledge is: "the possession of truth and the avoidance of error" (p.4), justification is "having sufficient grounds for believing that something is so" (p.4) and rationality is the broadest concept of the three, for it " ... indicates engagement in the enterprise of trying to find truth and avoid error" (p.4). The range of claims possible regarding the concept of justification is weaker than that of "knowledge" for the grounds for belief may or may not be true. Justification can include knowledge, but also error. For Kekes (1989), rationality "indicates the resolve to pursue (the goal of achieving truth) in a particular way" (p.4). Keke's view is interesting because he attempts to broaden the concept of the rational by arguing that rules of logic do not provide the ultimate basis for the authority of rational thought. Kekes states his thesis in this way.

> ... I shall be considering ... the relationship between this initial understanding of rationality and logic. ... One of the aims of logic is the codification of arguments into a formal system, a calculus. The calculus can then be applied to test the validity of arguments. Conformity to logic ... thus provides one necessary condition of the rationality of arguments. I shall ... question this view by asking about the source of the authority that logical rules have (p.4).

Six Refutations

Kekes refutes six possible justifications for the authority of logical rules.

1) "Logical rules are necessarily true" (p.4).

Kekes asks why this statement must be true, for otherwise it amounts to no more than a "pious injunction

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to abide by the rules of logic" (p.5). He asserts that
there are doubts about the necessity of logical rules as
well, due to the existence of "deviant and alternative
logics" and the "supposed incoherence of the notion of
analyticity" (p.5), and to the "extension of fallibilism
to logic" (p.5). Kekes does not enlarge on these subjects;
rather, he feels it sufficient to counter the claim that
logical rules are necessarily true by raising the
possibility of conflicting forms of logic and weaknesses
in analytic procedures.

2) "We should be logical, because if we aren't we fail to
make sense" (p.5).

This claim, asserts Kekes, tries to equate the
logical/illogical distinction with the meaningful/
meaningless distinction. Kekes argues that "many illogical
utterances are meaningful ... their identification as
illogical requires that they be understood and hence be
meaningful" (p.5). He argues against a technical sense of
the term 'meaningful' as well, for that must first be made
clear, (a difficult task, Kekes argues), before it can be
used successfully.

I am not sure that Kekes has here argued successfully
against the notion that logic is concerned with
significance. It does seem obvious that illogical
statements may still have meaning, but it is not obvious
that illogical statements have 'significance'. The meaning
of 'significant' is unclear as well. Perhaps this in
itself is sufficient to knock down the claim that the

authority of logic comes from the 'significance' of the logical utterance, versus the 'nonsensicality'of an illogical utterance. An illogical utterance could still have 'significance' of a certain kind. An example is the significance of the statement "shut your mouth when you are talking to me that way", shouted by an enraged person after an insult has been hurled at him.

3) "... the logical-illogical distinction corresponds to the distinction between what can and cannot be thought" (p.6). Kekes calls this the doctrine of psychologism, which argues that logic is concerned with the discovery of the laws of thought.

Kekes argues against this by pointing to the existence of fallacies as showing that "... the illogical not only can be, but frequently is thought" (p.6). He says that there are arguments for the doctrine as well. The assertion that fallacies exist can be countered by saying that fallacies come about when the proper functioning of our mental faculties is impaired. However, he argues that even if logic "describes how we think, logic cannot justify the claim that we ought to think that way" (p.6). This is an example of the 'is-ought' distinction, which is forceful. One cannot justify the authority of logic by arguing that it is the way we think; one must show why it is good to think that way, by appealing to something other than the brute fact that we happen to think according to logical rules.

4) "The logical-illogical distinction defines the limits of correct language usage"(p.6).

The argument here is that conformity to logic is a necessary condition of correct usage. Failure to conform to logic is a sufficient condition of incorrect usage. Therefore logical rules express the limits in which language operates.

Kekes asserts that this argument fails as well, for "it says nothing about why we are bound by particular logical rules "(p.7). He questions "... why is it that many of the rules that define what is correctly sayable in English are shared by many other languages ... logical rules seem to have a wider scope than the regimentation of correct usage in a particular language, although ... they do have that role ... but if they have only that role, different languages would have different logics ... "(p. 7).

Kekes suggests a way out of this problem by suggesting that logic is similar to the "depth grammar" of a language, and this is connected to "innate human mechanisms". "For the invariance of logical rules, conformity to depth grammar and, consequently, the rules of correct usage, would be seen as depending on universal human mechanisms" (p. 7). This is for Kekes another version of psychologism and falls prey to the same fundamental criticism: that a description of how we think does not amount to a justification of why it is good to think that way. As Kekes asserts, would it be considered

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valuable if we discovered that we as humans had "innate mechanisms, say for aggression, hostility or cruelty" (p.7)? A further argument is required to justify our placing value on these traits. So too in the case of logic. Even if we cannot think otherwise than through the use of logical rules, an argument must be made as to why this is to be accepted and valued.

5) "The logical-illogical distinction is supposed to be the distinction between valid and invalid arguments" (p.7).

"Validity is valuable because it is truth preserving. A valid argument transmits the truth from the premises to the conclusion and anybody concerned with rationality must recognize this as a good thing" (p.8).

Kekes argues that this fails as well, because it is not clear that arguments regarded as invalid may not turn out to be logical. Kekes asserts that invalidity means "lack of conformity to an established rule of inference. But, he asks, have all the rules of inference been established? There is no reason to suppose that the number of such rules is finite ... apparently invalid arguments may be in fact valid because they conform to not yet established rules of inference" (p.8).

This is an interesting point of view. As Kekes puts it " ... what happens if there is an argument that we find prelogically valid or vouchsafed by scientific investigation, and it turns out to be invalid because it conflicts with established rules of inference" (p.9)? Kekes puts forward two examples of this. The first deals

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with the ordinary use and the logical use, for the purposes of truth tables, of the term "and". An ordinary use of "and" includes a temporal sense, whereas "and" is used in a truth table in a nontemporal sense. Thus the valid inference that "I ate with abandon and had to diet" meaning that "I indulged and later I paid for it" would be invalid when put into a truth table. His second example asserts that in quantum mechanics it may not be true that a body cannot be in two places at one time. Kekes argues that this does not mean that inferences made in quantum mechanics are invalid; rather, that a new logic is needed to explain the findings of quantum mechanics.

These examples, argues Kekes, show that the fact that arguments are invalid according to established rules of inference does not mean that they may not be valid according to as yet undiscovered rules of inference. Therefore, invalidity need not imply illogicality and the logical-illogical distinction does not correspond with the valid-invalid distinction.

6) "Logical rules are the most general rules of nature" (p.10). The authority of logical rules is grounded on the world being the way it is. Kekes dismisses this suggestion by arguing that there is a disanalogy between logical rules and general rules of nature. Even if one argues that both sets are empirical, he says, they are so in different ways. For example, general rules of nature are discovered by us, but are true independently of our actions. Logical rules are developed by reflection on "successful practice"

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and are dependent on our actions and needs. Thus, although both sets of rules are empirical, they differ in the nature of how we discover or develop them. One cannot then argue that the authority of logical rules holds true because they are part of the general rules of nature.

Having refuted arguments which attempted to explain the authority of logical rules, Kekes asks " ... what gives them (logical rules) the authority they so obviously have" (p.11)? Keke's point here is that logical rules are important and are benchmarks for good thinking. However, the rules of logic are not a precondition of rational thought, they are a product of rational thought and provide a guide based on what has been successful from past thought. He begins his explanation by quoting Locke, "... He has given them a mind that can reason, without being instructed in the methods of syllogizing: the understanding is not taught to reason by those rules; it has a native faculty to perceive the coherence or incoherence of its ideas" (p.11). According to Kekes, logic is not a legislative enterprise, "... the authority of logical rules does not come from logicians ... although logicians do indeed formulate the rules they do not invent and impose them: logical rules are already there waiting to be discovered" (p.12). Could this be merely a different formulation of the rejected argument that logical rules establish what can be thought, even if we don't realize it until later, when we analyze our thinking? Kekes wants to go beyond this to assert that logical rules codify what

has already been successful reasoning, and this reasoning cannot be said to be led by logical rules because much of it took place before the codification of the rules. This codification process, in other words, depends upon prior rational thought.

The justification for this notion, asserts Kekes, is that "... the authority of logical rules rests upon the successful practice from which they have been extracted. A logical rule is implicit in practices we wish to perpetuate" (p.12). Kekes says that logical rules presuppose successful practice and " ... at least initially, the success of a practice cannot be determined by reference to them" (p.12). He qualifies this by saying that it is true that some logical rules are derived from others.

The relation between logic and rationality is that logic helps in the process of moving from premises to conclusions and this forms a large part of what we mean by rationality. If we wish to move defensibly from premises to conclusions, Kekes argues, we would be wise to "employ and abide by" logical rules. Kekes asserts, however, that this is not the whole story.

Practices

Kekes argues that logical rules are extracted from successful practices. He identifies two senses of success: a weak and a strong sense. The weak sense of success has to do with practices which "misidentify problems in accordance with irrational goals"; the strong sense of

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success implies genuine problems and rational goals. Kekes concerns himself only with the strong sense of success. He says that the

> correct identification of the problems and rationality of the goals are necessary conditions of a practice being successful. Since logical rules are extracted from successful practices, the authority of logical rules depends on correct identification of problems and on the rationality of the goals involved in the practice. And this means that we cannot always appeal to the authority of logic in identifying problems and establishing the rationality of goals. There is, therefore, a rational task that precedes the kind of reasoning that can be logically justified or criticized (p.14).

He qualifies this by adding that the "identification of problems and establishment of the rationality of goals (does not) proceed independently of logical rules" (p.14). He argues that these rules must be involved, if they can later be extracted from the successful practice. What is implied is that "logical rules cannot be appealed to in determining the rationality of the practice from which they are extracted. The precedence of rationality over logic is not in their temporal order, but in the order of justification" (p.14).

Practical Reason

Practical reason, meaning reasoning about actions, is for Kekes temporally prior to theoretical reason. He quotes Warnock, "... This seems to say that practical reason yields, so to speak, a bonus or dividend not procurable by any other means" (p.14). Kekes does emphasize that "what the primacy of practice implies is

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not that some postulates cannot be justified and must be
accepted on faith, but that their rationality cannot
involve appeal to logic" (p.14).

An immediate problem arises when one thinks about the
implications of this thesis. How can one argue that the
type of thinking that goes on prior to the formulation of
logic rules is indeed rational? Kekes seems to say that
the thinking must be rational, for at the end of it we
manage to extract and codify the rules of logic, which
were embedded, so to speak, in the original thinking. To
add a further dimension. How do we know whether the
thinking that goes on prior to justification by rules of
logic is morally acceptable? Perhaps the motivating
reasons are selfish and involve actions which will harm
others. It would seem that Kekes would argue that moral
rules and principles develop in ways similar to the way he
interprets the development of logical rules. If so, is it
not conceivable that the motivation behind the reasoning
that took place before the development of moral rules may
have been to support actions that would be morally
blameworthy? To state the problem using Kekes vocabulary:
what does "successful practice" mean? Is the justification
for a practice being called successful the realization of
just any goal, need, desire or want? If the success of a
particular endeavour depends on the realization of
particular goals desires, wants or needs, then to what
does one appeal to justify some over others?

Kekes attempts to answer some of these questions. He says that we all must cope with the problems we encounter. But we hope to achieve the goals we value. He admits that these goals may or may not be valuable. "We could value a goal and be wrong, because its achievement would not yield the benefit we anticipate, or because it would incapacitate us from pursuing more important goals, or because its pursuit would change us in ways we would find undesirable" (p.15). If the goals are worthy of pursuit, he says, then there is still the problem of how to get from "problems to goals". This is where rationality becomes valuable, for it is "the endeavour, indispensable to human welfare, to proceed from genuine problems to the achievement of valuable goals by the use of suitable methods. If we care about human welfare, we must, therefore, care about rationality" (p.15).

The problem still exists as to how Kekes would determine what problems are genuine, what goals valuable, what methods suitable? Is this purely a relativistic position? Are my thoughts on these matters equal to any one else's? Or are there better and worse, morally acceptable and unacceptable ways to approach these issues?

Kekes answers this criticism somewhat by saying that "commitment to rationality ... does not mean that we can find or that we should search for formulae that would provide a uniform decision-procedure for the identification of genuine problems, the formulation of suitable methods and the evaluation of goals" (p.15).

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Kekes thinks that to search for such a thing would be misguided. He argues that logic cannot be the object of the search, but so too does he reject "... the physical sciences ... biology ... history ... various texts ... economic forces or ... psychology to provide a framework both universal and necessary for connecting problems, methods and goals" (p.15).

Kekes does not agree, the above notwithstanding, with those who see rationality as "doomed" because there can be found no "canonical decision-procedure". Nor does he side with those who would denigrate rationality; it is and should be highly valued. Kekes sees a way out of this dilemma by looking for decision-procedures that are reliable but vary with different problems, methods and goals.

Decision procedures

By rejecting the notion of universal rules, we seem to fall into a relativistic position where there can be no objectively better or worse ways of proceeding from problems to solutions. The argument Kekes presents speaks of the possibility of rational, justifiable thinking that leads to successful practice, successful because genuine goals have been achieved leading to the betterment of the human condition. This original, creative (in the sense of its raw synthesizing power), rational thought not only enables us to recognize within it the ways and means of evaluation (ie. logical and moral rules), it also enables

us to refine and widen the scope of our understanding of the world and our place within it.

Brown's Conception

Nature of Concepts

Brown (1988) begins his analysis with some limitations on what is involved when a new model of a "familiar" concept is proposed. He says that he is not going to claim that the classical model of rationality is an incorrect account of the normal meaning of the term; nor will he offer an "essence or form of rationality that is not adequately captured by our ordinary talk of rationality" (p.178). He is not going to introduce a new concept and call it "rationality". What Brown wants to do is to "reflect a bit on concepts" and thereby come to a better understanding of the concept.

Intra and Extra - Linguistic

Brown introduces two terms: "intralinguistic", referring to how a term "functions within language", and "extralinguistic", which shows how a term "relates to items in the world" (p.179). His point in making this distinction is to argue that

> ... the extralinguistic aspect of a definition picks out typical items to which the term applies, and we should not place any *a priori* restrictions on what may be appropriate. These may be sensory qualia in the case of quality terms, but they can be material objects for terms such as 'table' or 'book'; complex systems of material objects and social structures for a term such as 'nation', and so forth (p.179).

He refers to paradigm cases as useful in criticizing analyses of concepts, although he notes that often these

are ignored in favour of sets of necessary and sufficient conditions.

Brown's purpose here is to set the stage for later argument about the function of rationality in his model. Rationality, for Brown, has less to do with propositions and more to do with the rational agent and the process of developing beliefs and knowledge; thus the importance of the notion that not just sensory information counts when relating a term and its uses in the world. Judgement by rational agents about this and other evidence is, for Brown, the essence of rationality. This is important for the argument that we should teach moral habits, for good judgement is the product of complicated sets of abilities, attainments, sensitivities and dispositions.

Concepts as Human Inventions

Brown's second point concerning concepts is that concepts are "human inventions, introduced to do specific cognitive jobs" (p. 180). They are not "built into reality" or "given to us", argues Brown; they are developed for particular purposes. Brown makes the point, however, that there are limitations to our development and use of concepts.

> Features of the world we live in exercise a
> considerable restraint concerning the range
> of concepts we can successfully employ, and
> individuals or social groups may fail to
> cope with the world they live in because the
> groupings and distinctions that are embodied
> in their concepts are, or become, inappropriate for
> guiding them among the situations they
> encounter(p.181).

The Classical Model Revisited

The purpose of Brown's discussion becomes clear when he states that

> ... the classical model of rationality selects certain features of our preanalytic concept of rationality and leaves out others, and that the motivation for these choices lies in foundationalism. The failure of foundationalism, and the problems that this failure generates for the classical model of rationality, suggest that we should turn to those aspects of our common concept of rationality that have been left in limbo in order to find the basis for an alternative model (p.183).

Brown sees much that is useful in the classical model, but maintains that certain conceptual decisions were made when the classical model was being developed that ignore aspects of the term "rationality" as it works in the world. This amounts to a justification of a conception of rationality, rather than an analysis of the concept.

Everday Notion of Rationality

Brown unpacks several aspects of our ordinary conception of "rationality". We have "rational beliefs", beliefs for which we have reasons. As well, we should believe on the basis of "relevant evidence" and reject beliefs if they have little or no evidence to support them. Thirdly, Brown asserts that we expect our rational beliefs to be more "reliable" than nonrational or irrational beliefs, because of this grounding of rational beliefs on evidence. Our everyday conception of rationality includes the notion of the "rational person, "... a person who can exercise good sense and good judgement in difficult cases, particularly cases in which

we lack clear guiding principles" (p. 183). Brown argues
that we expect a rational person to be: "amenable to new
ideas", "capable of making new proposals in a sticky
situation", and "prepared to compromise". Brown makes a
further point that a rational person should be "capable of
functioning well in the context of discovery". She should
be able to follow appropriate rules but also act sensibly
without rules and provide reasons for actions in these
situations.

Brown contrasts this view of rationality with the
classical model. He argues two points, one that the
classical model takes "... the notion of rational belief
as fundamental and the notion of the rational person as
derivative ... Philosophical attention then turns to the
question of what constitutes adequate reasons for
believing a claim and a rational person is one whose
beliefs meet these standards" (p.184). The classical model
explains the "notion of 'reasons for a belief' in
foundationalist terms" (p.184). "This leads to a focus on
the proposition believed and the relations between that
proposition and other propositions" (p. 187).

Elements of Brown's Specific Conception of Rationality

Brown argues that his alternative model of rationality
is based on a balanced analysis of the everyday term.
Brown claims that his conception incorporates the relevant
features of the everyday conception of rationality that,
he holds, were ignored in the classical model.

Rational agent.

Brown takes "... the notion of a rational agent as fundamental, and such notions as 'rational belief' as derivative, in the sense that a rational belief will be one that is arrived at by a rational agent" (p.185). He distinguishes between a rational agent and a rational person in that a rational person may not always be able to function as a rational agent. An example is a person who is asked to make a judgement concerning an arcane theory of quantum mechanics. On Brown's model, the otherwise rational person would be unable to act as a rational agent because she could not fulfill the requirements of "expertise" in the field. The actions of rational agents are fundamental in the new model of rationality. Brown makes the point that on his model the "way in which an agent deals with evidence in arriving at a belief is to be determinative of the rationality of that belief for her. ... this involves considerable relativization of rational belief to individuals, but this is is not the same as relativization of the notion of rationality" (p.185).

Judgement.

Brown makes judgement central to the new model. Important is "... the ability to make judgements in those situations in which we lack sufficient rules to determine our decision" (p.185). Our ability to act as rational agents, however, is limited by our expertise. " ... in cases in which I lack expertise there may be only one rational decision open to me: to seek expert advice"

(p.185). The results of judgement Brown terms "beliefs" or "decisions".

Brown does not believe that his model of rationality is open to the "infinite regresses" inherent in other models and mentioned earlier in the discussion of relativity. The problem of first principles, of what to take as axiomatic, is the essence of rationality on Brown's model. He asserts that "... when a regress threatens, rational decision-making is required, and those who have the necessary expertise must exercise judgement in order to terminate the regress - for the time being" (p.186). Brown does say that, notwithstanding the importance of judgement, the discovery of "algorithms for the solution of as many problems as possible", as emphasized in the classical model, is desirable in order to allow agents to focus on the exercise of judgement for rational decision-making in areas not amenable to the application of algorithms.

The classical model is not totally rejected by Brown; he laments the fact that there are so few "air-tight" algorithms to use to solve the complicated problems of life. The classical approach which advocates a view of rationality stressing rigorous rules and deductive reasoning to obtain necessary and objective solutions is an ideal; it simply is impossible in certain areas due to the complexity and vagueness of concepts and situations involved. A wider concept of rationality is needed to deal

with all of the situations we find ourselves facing in life. Aristotle is relevant here.

> Precision cannot be expected in the treatment of all subjects alike, any more than it can be expected in all manufactured articles. Problems of what is noble and just, which politics examines, present so much variety and irregularity that some people believe that they exist only by convention and not by nature ... Therefore ... we must be satisfied to indicate the truth with a rough and general sketch: When the subject and the basis of a discussion consist of matters that hold good only as a general rule, but not always, the conclusions reached must be of the same order (Book 1;3;p.12-20).

Judgement, in Brown's model, is not merely individual judgement. He seeks to avoid a relativist position and does so by stating that "for a belief based on judgement to be a rational one, it must be open to submission to the community of those who share the relevant expertise for evaluation against their own judgements ... On the model that I am proposing, rationality requires other people - and not just any people, but other people who have the skills needed to exercise judgement in the case at hand" (p.187). He does admit that this seems at odds with our everyday notion of rationality, but he argues that since he is trying to construct a conception of rationality and not merely analyze the everyday concept, this move away from ordinary language is defensible.

The social aspect.

Brown discusses why we should adopt a conception which recognizes the social aspect of rationality. He refers to Wittgenstein's assertion that "there is no sense to the

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claim that I am following a rule unless there is some public means of determining whether I have in fact obeyed that rule" (p.188). Science, says Brown, cannot therefore exist without a community of scientists.

He refers as well to Kuhn, " ... for Kuhn, normal science is also a social phenomenon, an achievement does not become a paradigm until it has been accepted as a basis for continued research by a community of researchers ..." (p.189). " ... Kuhn is maintaining that it is the process of community evaluation that distinguishes a rational choice from one which lacks rational warrant" (Brown, 1988, p.190). He contrasts Wittgenstein and Kuhn regarding the social element, "... for Wittgenstein rules are social and any rule-governed activity must therefore be a social activity; for Kuhn the social aspect of science replaces rules as the basis for scientific research and decision-making" (p. 191).

Brown argues that, unlike Kuhn's conception, his model does not require that each member of the community

> ... agree with the majority, and indeed, agreement with the majority view is neither necessary nor sufficient for rationality. That it is not necessary should be clear from the discussion thus far; I have taken scientific practice as the key test case ... and rational disagreement is a pervasive feature of science. At the same time, agreement with the majority does not automatically make a belief rational. Our model requires that rational beliefs be based on judgement, and judgement requires assessment of evidence and arguments. ... In other words ... the predicate 'rational' characterizes an individual's decisions and beliefs, it does not characterize propositions and it does not characterize communities. A community of individuals with the appropriate

expertise is ... necessary for an individual to arrive at a rational belief, but it is the individual's belief that is rational, not the community. (p.193)

Brown asserts that his model is consistent with the claims of critical rationalism, especially regarding the need for critical evaluation of claims. He says that the "reasons why this evaluation is required and the way it is carried out, are different on the two views" (p.193). Popper (1972), in his notion of a "third world" of knowledge, argues that the "subjective epistemology" put forward by thinkers with emphasis on the knower (second world) and the concepts said to be known is false. Popper (1972) is not consistent in his discussion, however. At one point he seems clearly to consider the notion of a rational agent who proposes concepts to be rationally debated as irrelevant.

> ... what should interest us are theories; truth; argument. If so many philosophers and scientists still think that concepts and conceptual systems (and problems of their meaning, or the meaning of words) are comparable in importance to theories and theoretical systems (and problems of their truth, or the truth of statements, then they are still suffering from Plato's main error. For concepts are partly means of formulating theories, partly means of summing up theories. In any case their significance is mainly instrumental; and they may always be replaced by other concepts (p.123-124).

Popper (1972) also asserts that "the individual creative element, the relation of give-and-take between a man and his work is of greatest importance" (p.125). He says as well "There is a give-and take between construction, criticism, 'intuition', and even tradition

..." (p.137). And "... we thus owe to the third world especially rationality - that is, our subjective mind, the practice of critical and self-critical ways of thinking, and the corresponding dispositions" (p.147).

Popper's (1972) and Brown's positions share a focus on critical evaluation, but, as has already been argued, they differ deeply in orientation. Popper wants to locate rationality in propositions; Brown wants to locate rationality in the agent.

Conclusions.

Brown admits that his model of rationality is weaker than the classical notion, for to claim that a belief is rational on his model does not imply truth; on the classical model it does. It is interesting to note that Popper's third world of knowledge can also contain "false knowledge". One could argue that Popper's (1972) claim that the third world knowledge has been arrived at in a negative way, because one arrives at this knowledge by critically examining and exhausting counter arguments and theories. The "knowledge" may amount to no more that what Brown puts forward as rational belief, the product of expert judgement, and this may still be subjective - relative to the agent. The interesting aspect of this view, however, is that we seem to have no other way to proceed.

Brown argues that his model is not relativistic, "we must not confuse the thesis that what is rational to believe or do is relative to a particular situation, with

the thesis that rationality is relative" (p.195). Brown warns against construing the social element of rationality as the only significant element.

> The social element is one element in rational decision-making and the demands of expertise must be met before the social element comes into play. Thus a consensus that is imposed on the members of a community by external political authority, or by force, or by manipulation of data ... will not generate rational beliefs on the model. Moreover, the point of requiring expertise is that individuals must actually make decisions on the basis of that expertise. (p.196)

Brown sums up his discussion of his conception by emphasizing that "rational outcomes" are generated by individuals who exercise judgement, but it must be judgement that is made as a result of critical debate, not just isolated individual judgement. Also one must "continually keep up with new information and techniques" so as to be qualified to make judgements; these must also be subject to re-evaluation in light of new evidence.

On Brown's model we can see that the end product of rational activity by a rational agent in critical debate with a relevant community of experts is rational belief or action. Popper (1972) argues that this process of critical rationality results in "knowledge" of a third order: objective and existing without need of a knower. Brown's model, which states that the rationality lies with the agent and not the proposition seems to me more convincing. To illustrate this, consider the earlier mentioned Popper's (1972) thought experiment concerning the neutron bomb which wiped out all persons but left all libraries

intact. He argues that what is left is knowledge in the form of theories, arguments, statements that have the potential to be known; they inhabit the objective third world. Brown would argue, I think correctly, that what would remain would be theories, arguments and statements that would require the attention of rational agents engaging in critical debate and exercising judgement before the term "knowledge" or even "rational belief" could properly be applied. Consider a group of earthlings who discover a planet on which no life exists but on which stand libraries. Assuming that they could understand the language, would the earthlings automatically assume that the documents contained knowledge, or true belief? At first inspection all they could say was that the documents contained beliefs. This is similar to anthropologists who discover a set of writings from a previously unknown tribe. The ideas contained in the documents would have to be analyzed by relevant experts in order to determine, by judgement, the rationality of the content. The rationality, as Brown asserts, lies with the agents; it cannot exist in their absence.

Truth Related to Rationality

The concept "truth", concerns sets of statements, propositions, theories, which form beliefs that accurately describe features of the world. In order to determine the truth of these beliefs, the manifestations of the beliefs, namely propositions, arguments and theories are subjected to analysis. On the classical model, this is a deductive

process involving axioms or principles that are assumed to be true and used as premises. The next sections look at alternative points of view.

Brown's View

Brown begins his discussion of rationality and truth by analyzing the "significance of the notion of truth". He acknowledges the attacks on the concept made in recent years, especially by relativists, and says that we must acknowledge that "there are cases in which it is extremely difficult to determine whether a claim is true or false, and cases in which long-held beliefs about the truth-value of some propositions have had to be revised. There are also numerous cases in which people function successfully in the world on the basis of beliefs that they later reject as false, and we have seen that there may be propositions which are neither true nor false" (p.197).

Notwithstanding this, Brown argues that it is hard to ignore the concept of truth completely. He gives the example that arguments against the concept of truth have force because of their truth. The irony of the relativist position is contained in the observation that the statement: "everything is relative" is a universal and therefore false! Brown asserts that the

> notion of truth is so deeply embedded in our thinking about cognitive matters that we cannot get along without it, and while there remains the radical alternative of constructing a new framework in which this notion does not occur, no such framework is available to us now. Thus we have little choice but to work in terms of the framework that is available to us now (p.198).

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Having asserted that the achievement of truth should
be a fundamental aim, Brown analyzes the concept. He says
that when we say that something is true we are asserting
that "there is a feature of that domain that holds
independently of this claim" (p.198). He gives an example
of the fact that there are three chairs in his study; if
this is true, it is true independently of anyone's belief.
How we ascertain that this is true is a different
question.

Brown asks the question why truth is important. His
answer points out the distinction between possessing truth
and knowing that we possess truth; that is, having grounds
to believe that what we assert is true, "... we have no
basis for accepting the conclusions as true unless we have
reasons for believing that the premises are true" (p.199).
This raises the problem of infinite regress discussed
earlier. How do we justify our belief in the truth of
premises; how do we know that what we assert is true?
Brown argues that we may possess truth via a dream (or
from a state of ecstasy, or from a revelation and so on),
but we cannot act rationally on the basis of this until we
have some grounds for believing that the dream or
revelation is actually true. "A voice in a dream may
announce that the stock of Juggernaut Industries is going
up, and this may be true, but this provides no basis for
deciding to buy stock unless I have reasons for believing
that the dictates of the dream are true. Without such
reasons I might buy and benefit because in fact the dream

told me the truth, but this would be a coincidence, no better than a random choice that I might abandon tomorrow" (p.201).

Brown argues that the concept of rationality is necessary at this point, for "rationality is concerned with assessing reasons for believing one claim or another" (p. 201). He points out that the classical conception of rationality is very attractive when thinking about this dilemma, for it argues that we can confidently arrive at the truth by applying principles via strict deductive logic. As Brown points out, the failure of foundationalism takes away the underpinning of the classical argument and leaves us with no sure way to evaluate the truth of claims.

> We are still in a position in which the only basis we
> have for accepting a claim is that we have reasons for
> it, but on our new model of rationality, having
> reasons does not assure us of achieving truth. Our
> reasons rest on the best available judgement, but
> those judgements are tied to the evidence available at
> a particular time. The significance of this evidence
> is never beyond question and further evidence may show
> any judgement to be wrong (p.201).

Brown concludes that rationality and truth are distinct; the possession and exercise of rationality does not always imply the discovery of truth. "We proceed rationally in attempting to discover the truth and we take those conclusions that are rationally acceptable as our best estimate of the truth" (p.202). The function of rationality becomes the the development of "organized,

coherent procedures for carrying out the search for truth,
a "long term process", as Brown puts it.

Simon's View

Simon (1990) gives a clear explanation of the flaws
contained in the classical notion of rationality and
truth.

> Reasoning processes take symbolic inputs and
> deliver symbolic outputs. The initial inputs are
> axioms, themselves not derived by logic, but simply
> induced from empirical observations, or even more
> simply, posited. Moreover, the processes that produce
> the transformations of inputs to outputs (rules of
> inference) are also introduced by fiat and are not the
> products of reason. Axioms and inference rules
> together constitute the fulcrum on which reasoning
> rests; but the particular structure of that fulcrum
> cannot be justified by the methods of reasoning. For
> an attempt at such a justification would involve us in
> an infinite regress of logics, each as arbitrary in
> its foundations as the preceding one (p.190).

Agassi's View

Agassi (1987), for similar reasons, characterizes the
classical model of rationality as a failure, based as it
is on propositions and their provability via truth-
testing.

> All that remains for us to do now, in order to
> complete the classical ideal of rationality, is to
> describe the method and examine its products for the
> characteristics which make us call them science. Here
> the system breaks down: it does not tell us how
> science can prove its axioms. It cannot even
> offer an illustration. And this is why Euclidean
> geometry was philosophically so important: finally in
> Euclid we found an example of a science proper. This,
> however, only masked the very breakdown of the classic
> programme ... Parmenides claimed to have produced
> science: he proved his own principles. This is not so
> in traditional epistemology from Plato onwards: not
> before Descartes did any philosopher attempt to

prove principles. Yet neither Parmenides nor Descartes could tell us what exactly they were doing (p.252-253).

Agassi (1987) gives an account of two alternatives to what he classifies as the failed attempt of the classical model: fideism, or the acceptance of certain axioms upon faith, and Popper's theory of rationality. "Popper leaves every opinion to arbitrary choice except for the exclusion of any opinion which one assumes has been effectively criticized: this rationality does not impose ideas but excludes error. This is a pluralist theory of rationality and a via negativa to the truth" (p. 258).

Popper's View

For Popper (1972), "truth" means "versimilitude" or nearness to truth (p. 143). Science, says Popper

> ... begins with problems, and proceeds from there to competing theories which it evaluates critically. Especially significant is the evaluation of their versimilitude. This demands severe critical tests, and therefore presupposes high degrees of testability, which are dependent upon the content of the theory, and therefore can be tested *a priori* ... The evaluation is always critical, and its aim is the discovery and elimination or error. The growth of knowledge - or the learning process - is not a repetitive or cumulative process but one of error-elimination. (p.144)

For Popper's argument (1972) to avoid Agassi's (1978) criticism, the meaning of "critical" must be fully explicated. In so doing, if it is to not fall into a persuasive or stipulative definition, which would be open to the regress argument levelled at the classical model, the argument must show which aspects of criticism are appropriate and which are not. This necessarily leads to

an assessment of critical judgement and the rational
agent, which Popper wants to ignore, in favour of elements
of his objective 'third' world: statements, arguments and
theories. It seems that Brown's model, with its emphasis
on the rational agent and critical judgement provides a
more fruitful way of approaching these issues.

Agassi (1987) claims that Popper's theory is false,
for two reasons. He argues that

> ... as long as there is no proof - no scientific
> proof - no exclusion of criticism is rational. But
> even if all rational thinking is critical, not all
> criticism is rational, as one can see from the
> criticism which the dogmatist carefully aims at the
> margin of his world-view, taking care to avoid the
> possibility that he is in fundamental error. Popper
> himself has warned us against this, yet he refuses to
> see that this brands some criticism as irrational, so
> that his definition of rationality as criticism is
> refuted (p. 259).

Popper relies on "conventions" that govern the process
of criticism of arguments, statements and theories. As
Aggasi (1987) points out, Popper's model is open to the
possibility of irrationality in criticism, and he does not
want to bring into his model talk of the subjective
knower, one who exercises judgement. This seems essential
if one is to properly adjudicate the appropriateness of
the conventions and the form of criticisms in Popper's
model. Brown provides us with a way to go past this by
emphasizing the rational agent and the judgement of
relevant communities of experts. The question can be
raised concerning these "communities of experts" that they
may not always act in a rational manner; Brown counters

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this by arguing that an expert ought to act on the
findings of her expertise in a sincere, ethical manner.

Rationality and Objectivity

Brown's View

Brown asserts that rationality and objectivity are
distinct. His first point is that we can be objective in
approaching a subject, even though we have preconceptions.
This is true because the "evidence supporting objective
belief must derive from a source that is independent of
that belief" (p. 203). Brown argues that this point is
most easily seen to be true in science and is less so in
other disciplines. Science provides a "paradigm" case for
rational decision making, for in science there are "bodies
of evidence" that are objective, in Brown's sense of
existing independently of the observer.

A lack of objectivity in a subject does not block the
exercise of rationality for Brown, but "objective
procedures provide us with an especially powerful source
of evidence" (p. 206). "Objectivity as well does not
'supplant' rationality, given the evidence provided by
objective procedures we must still decide what to make of
this evidence" (p.206). Brown asserts that this is the
activity of "rational decision-making". Other subjects
benefit from the gathering of "objective evidence", for
this "may well offer the best path to substantive truth".

Conclusions

Brown asks the question why be rational? On the
classical model, rationality consists in application of

universal principles through the use of deductive logic. The end result is thought to be the achievement of truth and knowledge. As Brown has shown, in many cases there are insufficient criteria simply to deduce from data whether propositions are true. Brown says that on his conception, such a case is

> ... the paradigm case in which rationality is called for. If the subject is one in which we have the necessary expertise, we gather information, apply whatever rules are available, weigh alternatives and arrive at a judgement; then we discuss our judgement and the reasons for it with our peers and re-evaluate that judgement on the basis of their recommendations and critiques. The outcome of this process is a rational decision or belief (p. 226).

Brown notes that this involves a much more modest claim than that of the classical model. "The relation between rationality and truth is considerably weaker on our new model of rationality. In many areas there seems to be no guarantee that we are more likely to achieve or approach truth by proceeding rationally than by, for example, simply picking views at random, although this result is mitigated in those fields where rational assessment is based on objective evidence" (p. 226).

This seems a melancholy achievement! Brown asserts that there is no such thing as "instant rationality",

> ... even when we have arrived at a conclusion rationally this does not yield instant truth. If we are to proceed in a coherent manner we need some way of distinguishing propositions that are worthy of belief, hypotheses that are worth pursuing, actions that are worth taking ... from those that are not, and it is rationality that provides us with a coherent basis for making these distinctions. In the course of

our search for truth we will rationally accept claims
that will later be rejected, and rationally reject
claims that will later be accepted, but a surer and
more efficient method does not seem available
(p. 227).

Brown notes that rationality is a "tool for attempting
to understand the world we live in" (p. 228). He argues
that deductive logic is a valuable tool in the quest for
truth, although, as we have seen, its uses may be limited,
given the uncertainty of data. Putnam (1978) talks of
imagination as another important tool of rationality,
which must not be ignored.

> ... the point is that this (use of imagination) may
> be a perfectly rational way to solve a practical
> problem, and yet this sort of reasoning need not at
> all be reducible to any kind of linear proposition-by-
> proposition reasoning ... What I like ... is that it
> suggests that moral reasoning may be reasoning in the
> full sense of the word, while at the same time
> suggesting that it is something which involves not
> just the logical faculties, in the narrow sense, but
> our full capacity to imagine and feel, in short, our
> full sensibility (p. 86).

The importance of these alternative analyses of
rationality for the argument presented in the thesis will
be clarified in chapter seven.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions Concerning the Concepts "Habit" and
"Rationality"

My intention in this thesis was to provide an argument
that made a connection between certain kinds of habits and
rationality and asserted that it is defensible to include
the teaching of certain habits in a program of moral
education.

In chapter one, differing views of the nature of
knowledge were examined. The absolutist conception of
knowledge, the idea that to be knowledge statements must
be absolutely true and immutable, was shown to be
untenable. The relativist conception of knowledge was also
rejected, on the grounds that we have many commonly held,
public, concepts and defensible methods for discerning
better and worse arguments constructed from these
concepts. The nature of moral knowledge was then
explained. Moral principles and general and local rules
provide the structure for rational decision-making about
the appropriateness of actions. The relativist position
was again rejected.

Having defended the possibility of knowledge and moral
knowledge, appropriate methods of moral education were
examined. The necessity of various attributes,
attainments, dispositions and abilities for the
development of moral autonomy was discussed. The
development of certain kinds of habits, those "infused

with reason" was defended as necessary to the creation of the morally educated person.

In chapter three, an "alleged" paradox between the goal of moral education and the means necessary to create a morally educated person was analyzed. The paradox arises because the creation of a morally educated and rational agent may imply the use of morally unacceptable methods, including the inculcation of unthinking habits. The paradox was rejected after analysis of various points of view on the topic. The possibility of habits "infused" with reason, intelligent habits, in other words, was defended.

Chapter four dealt in detail with the concept of habit. A conceptual analysis of the term was made, using Wilson's (1966) model for analysis. The analysis utilized sentence frames which support the argument made in chapter three that some cases of habit do involve reason. Analysis of several other points of view were shown to support this claim. I suggested at the chapter's end that the development of certain habits may even be essential to proper moral development.

In chapters five and six I examined several conceptions of rationality. The classical notion as interpreted by Brown (1988) was analyzed and alternative conceptions of rationality were examined. Brown (1988) proposed a conception that emphasized the rational agent and rational deliberation. The connection between success in the act of rational deliberation and the possession of

certain attainments, abilities and dispositions (i.e. habits) was made. If one accepts the importance of the rational agent, who uses judgement within a community of relevant peers, then one must accept that the education of these agents is very important. If their judgement is to be of the highest order they would need to acquire many different dispositions, abilities, attainments and sensitivities. As was shown, habits are dispositions. It follows, then, that the education of these potential moral agents would include habit formation.

The role of habit in practices was emphasized. As Aristotle argued, "... Hence, it is no small matter whether one habit or another is inculcated in us from early childhood; on the contrary, it makes a considerable difference, or rather, all the difference" (Nichomachean Ethics, 2, 1, pp's. 15-25). The argument was put forward that habits set the stage for the exercise of rational deliberation about moral matters for they enable the moral agent to act in a manner that will ensure that relevant considerations will be taken into account.

The assertion having been made that morality is a practice, involving practical knowledge, it follows that success in practical reasoning depends on the possession of certain attributes, abilities and dispositions as well as certain attainments. If morality is a practice and if the development of certain habits is necessary for success in the practice of morality, then the teaching of habits

is defensible and necessary to the creation of moral agents.

In light of the arguments presented in this thesis, it seems defensible to place young people in positions where they are taught and expected to practice certain habits. Some examples may include: the habit of suspending judgement until all of the "facts" have been put forward; the habit of listening carefully and with an open mind to other points of view; habits related to decisiveness and courage in the face of pressure to do morally blameworthy acts. Many more could be listed. The goal of this complicated process of moral education is the evolution of moral agents, those people who exercise defensible judgements in a community of their peers.

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