DOES ETHICAL VALUE TRANSCEND CULTURE?

by

ARTHUR THOMAS PEACEY

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ABSTRACT

Since we accept a democratic society as desirable, it is important to have a sound basis for ethical action. To substantiate such a basis it is necessary to controvert the ethical relativity which has become widespread as a result of the anthropological evidence of the diversity of customs and standards in different societies. This thesis maintains that it is possible to adopt a naturalistic position and at the same time hold that ethical value transcends culture. If it is assumed that within man is focussed the highest development of the universe, the ethic relevant to humanity acquires a universal character. An evolutionary approach provides the justification.

Ethical value concerns the "ought" and comes into being when one person considers the rights of others and modifies his conduct accordingly. Ethical action has two manifestations: (1) Intrinsic value conferred on others; and (2) Ethical value, the expression of an obligation, which incidentally leads to an accession of intrinsic value by the agent performing an ethical action.

Ethical value is viewed as a basic function of human nature regardless of any specific culture and the corresponding "ethical ought" is distinguished from the "social ought" which is a rule of conduct imposed implicitly
by society. It is maintained that there is a universalism implicit in the ethical ought -- man is an ethical creature; the ethical ought is an obligation to foster what is right and can not be reduced to custom or convention. After considering briefly the influence of psychology on ethics, the evolution of man's ethical nature is traced, and the endeavour made to show that ethical value is an evolving capacity of man. Anthropological data showing the influence of training and society on personality is reviewed, and criteria for comparing cultures advanced. It is suggested that our present culture with all its faults is superior to others and that the final influence of Western democracy, if its full implications are realized, may be beneficial.

Four criteria are presented as constituting the essential marks of ethical conduct; reverence for life, honesty, truth telling, and respect for personality. A rapid survey of a number of societies suggests that while no definitive pattern can be found, it is a reasonable hypothesis that men behave within certain limits of acceptable conduct, and that a social need lies behind departures from the criteria mentioned. The conclusion is drawn that ethical value, the moral imperative, is the expression of a capacity natural to man as a species
(although it can be manifested fully only under conditions of mature development of personality and environment) and that since humanity is greater than any specific culture, ethical value does transcend culture.
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# INTRODUCTION

Thesis stems from concern about cynicism deriving from ethical relativity -  
Loss of faith in cosmic sanction rarely accompanied by effort to find binding ethic -  
For democratic society (which is accepted as desirable) it is important to have a sound basis for ethical action -  
Thesis: possible adopt naturalistic position and at same time maintain that ethical value does transcend culture - evolutionary approach provides basis -

## CHAPTER I: SOME PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical views closely associated with metaphysics -  
Ethical imperative a unique aspect of personality functioning as a whole -  
Intuitionist theories rejected - if man and all his experiences included no need to rely on another realm -  
Ethics compatible with naturalistic position -  
Man evolved probably from cosmic dust finds himself possessed of ethical capacity -  
Does this vary from one culture to another, or is it a possession of man as a species? -  
Man has detestable propensities, but this is only part of the story -  
Philosophy seeks to evaluate relation of man to whole universe -  
We believe people should develop faculties fully - planetary "esprit de corps" -  
Relative Absolute Theory of Ethics adopted with qualification that if we assume that within man is focussed highest development of the process of universe, the ethic relevant to man acquires a universal character -  
A source of value outside human nature only creates further mystery - ethical conduct requires knowledge and command over material resources -  

## CHAPTER II: DEFINING THE SCOPE OF THE INQUIRY

The Validity of the Method of Introspection in Ethical Theory -  
A mature, scientifically trained introspection can be an efficient tool of ethical analysis -
Definition of Terms
"Culture" the sum-total of inherited factors not transmitted through the germ-plasm - "Transcend" See Chapter III.
"Ethical Value"

Field of Value:
I. Instrumental Values
II. Intrinsic Values.
III. Aesthetic Values.
IV. Ethical Value.

Ethical value is "sui generis" - it exists in connection with the concept of "ought", an outflowing to others -
It involves the relation between two or more persons - comes into being when one person considers the rights and needs of some one else and modifies his action accordingly -
Does man as a species respond to same ethical principle? -

Ethical action has two manifestations:
(1) Intrinsic value conferred on some one else,
(2) Ethical value, the expression of an obligation -

Etymological justification for using term ethical value for ethical obligation or ought -
In ethical act the performer also derives intrinsic value, which, however, is not the motive of action -

The Nature of the Good

Involves two problems:
(1) What is the nature of "ought"?
(2) What is the nature of intrinsic value?
The Good has meant both which are closely connected -

Goodness also two meanings corresponding to (1) and (2) above -
There can be goods ("bona") without goodness in ethical sense, but scarcely goodness without goods -

Obligation has two aspects:
Subjective, internal sense of subjection to mandate,
Objective, external reference to act required to be done -

Discussion of relation between the two aspects -

Why is an ethical act good? -
Would supersession of ethical obligation by spontaneous choosing of action leading to maximum intrinsic value mean a higher development? Are ethics good? -
Treating others well is ethical even when coercive sense of obligation is overcome; so, ethics presumably will never be superseded -

Treating others well is ethical even when coercive sense of obligation is overcome; so, ethics presumably will never be superseded -
Two elements in idea of good so far have been discriminated -

(1) The intrinsic good to others,
(2) The added intrinsic good to the performer of the act -

Is there a third element?
The ought contains an obstinate element -
No definitive disposal of feeling a value accrues by virtue of ethical action in itself, apart from intrinsic value realized by performer and recipient of deed -

The Nature of Intrinsic Value
An adequate theory of value must contain eudaemonism and self-realization - criterion of human welfare -
Value an expression of life which is ultimate -

CHAPTER III: THE RELATION BETWEEN ETHICAL VALUE AND CULTURE

The question of the thesis answered in the affirmative -
Ethical value a basic function of human nature regardless of specific culture -

Definition of Ethical Ought - of nature of law which men must follow if they are to be true to their nature as members of the human species -

Definition of Social Ought - a rule of conduct imposed implicitly by society -

Commentary on the Ethical Ought -
A universalism implicit in the ethical ought - man an ethical creature - ethical ought an obligation to foster what is right - it can not be reduced to custom or convention -

Ethical value an evolving capacity of man -
It has an aesthetic element and a sense of fitness - in addition it means a genuine giving elicited by pity, unselfish love, or desire to protect and serve -

Conscience is not a neurotic compulsion -

Commentary on the Social Ought -
Considered as sense of obligation wholly determined by society -

Could be called psychological ought -

Interaction of Ethical and Social Ought -

The experienced ought is complex, compounded of basic human nature and cultural influence -

Hereditary factor of primary importance because it is the indispensable foundation for all moral conduct, while influence of
training and society merely mould it to a pattern - the term "ethical" for the ought may be retained -

An ethical ought can be valid in a naturalistic setting -

Parallel with problem of heredity and environment -

Meaning of "Transcend" -

Ethical value has locus of functioning on plane of humanity and not on level of a particular culture -

For man as a species there exists a loyalty which expands from the group to embrace all life -

The Republic of Humanity -

Society is possible because man is ethical, not man is ethical because society makes him so -

Ethical Relativity -

(a) Extreme Ethical Relativity - ought entirely social - ethos of a specific culture sets limits to ethical development -

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Criterion of ethical progress, realization of more of man's potentialities -

Culture borrowing indicates supra-cultural factors -

Problem of good if ethical relativity -

(b) Moderate Ethical Relativity -

Close to position in this study except latter stresses hereditary factor -

What is the Criterion for Right Action?

No specific ethical values - what are different are intrinsic values; ethical value changes only in ends towards which directed -

Central fact is ethical nature of man -

In all situations there is potentially a right course of action -- right because of objective facts. Reason objective facts related to rightness is that life, intrinsic value, and ethical value are intimately and indissolubly connected -- they are ultimate criteria for any finite judgement - therefore, my duty bound up with my life-experience and my duty is to promote human welfare -

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CONCLUSION
This thesis stems from a concern about the apparently widespread ethical cynicism which is encountered today. Amongst contemporaries the opinion that ethical standards are simply relative to the particular society in which they occur is exceedingly widespread and tends to induce moral cynicism. The impact of modern science, especially the principles of biological evolution, led to a destruction of old absolutes and the great differences in cultures, set forth by Westermarck in his monumental study, Ethical Relativity, projected into popular thinking the idea of the relativity of all values. This concept weakens the ethical sense because the natural reaction to the discovery of extreme cultural diversity is that it is a matter of historical chance what particular code one is subject to and the primary binding character of the obligation is dulled. When the absolute element is taken away from ethical action the meaning tends to die; the belief that standards of conduct are purely relative to time and place, introduces an adventitious character which destroys the central character of ethical conduct, namely, the compelling power and sense of inescapably binding nature. If moral standards are relative, it is a short step to deny any validity to them at all beyond
that of ease and convenience. They become artificial conventions and a neo-Sophistic position results. When moral codes are considered to be compromises to make social life possible, it is not far to moral scepticism. The loss of faith in the absolute character of ethical value is rarely accompanied by the patience, desire, or ability to find an ethic binding on man which is based on other than cosmic sanction. No statistics exist to show how prevalent this attitude is but there can be no doubt that very many people feel that it does not matter very much what ethical standards are observed. If a democratic and humanitarian society is desirable -- and this we accept -- then the loss of ethical sensitivity is to be deplored.

Since it is essential for a democratically ordered society that citizens believe in the rights of others, as well as in their own, it is of great importance that ethical theory should be able to substantiate the position that action which considers the rights of others is not based on illusion. Therefore, an inquiry as to the nature of ethical value in relation to culture has more than theoretical interest, and the possibility of substantiating and providing a sound basis for ethical action has great importance. The exploration of such an abstract problem in a time of crisis is accordingly justified when
it has practical implications in actual human living.

It is the contention of this thesis that it is possible to adopt a naturalistic position and at the same time maintain that ethical value does transcend culture. The evolutionary approach to man's adventure in the cosmos provides the basis for a dynamic, progressive ethical value and the endeavour will be made to set this forth.
CHAPTER 1

SOME PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

It has been frequently pointed out that ethical views are closely associated with one's metaphysics. Man has to have some personal theory of life, or else just blindly follow custom and tradition. One's ethics depend on the position one takes as to whether the universe is hostile, friendly, or indifferent to man. On one hand are those who say that there can be no ethical value unless there is a cosmic guarantor and sustainer of values. On the other, are those who deny any specifically ethical value and describe the "ought" as socially determined, a function of societal life. A function, because the very business of maintaining the myriad relations necessarily constituting social life calls for reciprocal consideration of one another and this gives rise to what is described as ethical action.

The fact of an ethical imperative is an amazing phenomenon, especially if we accept it as part of man's natural endowment. The ethical experience has emotional components, but it is something more than a complex of emotions. It requires the exercise of reason and judgement for its operation, but it is more than reason. It is a unique aspect of the personality functioning as a whole.
Since different temperaments characterize different persons, the ethical temperament -- the temperament which finds ethical promptings congenial and not irksome -- will predominate in some people more than in others. It might be asked which type of person is best fitted to study the problems of ethics. The man who experiences ethical pleasure may be biased in thinking he is serving an absolute law; the man who has little experience of ethical commitment may lack a necessary element in coming to grips with the problem. Those who deal with evolutionary phenomena incline to a naturalistic theory. Those, particularly in the past, concerned primarily with abstract ideas, tended to absolute theories. But at the present conjunction of human thinking, we can not find adequate evidence for accepting a metaphysical order from which ethical value descends to man through intuition or revelation. We must reject intuitionist theories which imply or posit a realm of a different order from the natural universe, including within the last term all those phenomena which are manifested through human beings. If we include man and all his experiences there is no need to rely on another realm.

Some temperaments, however, can not accept a naturalistic explanation; they must go beyond material categories and postulate some divine source of the ethical impulse. Those who undergo mystical experiences may have
their varying interpretations of the ultimate reality which gives rise, as they believe, to their experiences. The ethical experience, indeed, may sometimes have affinities with the type of experiences which are called mystical -- it is transporting in character and it is ineffable. However, those who perceive the dangers and inconsistencies of a mystical interpretation, whether they reject this method outright or not, are not prevented thereby from incorporating the ethical experience, with all its vivid promptings of the spirit, within their philosophy. For them, it is sufficient to accept the fact of the ethical imperative with all its difficulty of comprehension. Its existence in such a universe as man's matured and total experience presents to him, makes him wonder, but it is no solution to push the mystery back on to some even more mysterious, remote power or principle which exercises its creative energy in some other area of the cosmos. A naturalistic position may be accepted without derogating from the supreme importance of ethics. Even though we may believe that there will never be any complete unfolding of all the unknown factors in the universe, it is a sound and vital methodological principle that the universe should be regarded not as an ineffable mystery defying understanding, but as a problem to be solved. Man should confront the natural universe and operate on the assumption that
by patient research and discipline he will be able to maintain a worthwhile existence. This inquiry recognizes then, that man finds himself in a universe which has evolved in some manner out of cosmic dust, in other words, out of primitive physical particles, which by collocation and development through a fascinating and not yet definitively determined cosmological evolution have produced a race of living organisms, at the apex of which is man. This creature, man, is in a sorry and awful dilemma, and yet one which constitutes an exquisite and tremendously moving drama. The great Greek dramatists with their concept of Fate had a vision of this stupendous cosmic act. Man finds himself possessed of animal impulses which have their own accompanying values as well as being the basis for cruelty and vicious actions. He has also emotional powers and feelings which carry potentialities for enhanced living or for degrading beastliness. He finds himself capable of spiritual experiences which are so transporting in their incidence and effect that he perforce refers them to a transcendent being of a higher and perfect order. Then his powers of analysis show him the unlikelihood of this and he banishes the gods from the skies and can only accept the spiritual experiences as actualities within his experience. A scrutiny of all the facts necessitates the recognition that the human animal has as one of its capacities the potentiality of ordering its activity along what we call ethical lines. From this
starting point, then, we seek to determine whether this ethical capacity varies from one cultural environment to another, or whether it is a possession of the species. It would seem to me that ethical value is an expression or manifestation of planetary man. All men, regardless of racial classification, or of any other economic, social, or cultural distinction, can potentially have equal commerce with and enjoyment of this ethical value.

A theory about ethics must not be solely an abstract speculation but must envisage the extreme modes of behaviour manifested by men. In seeking to discern a high ethic which is potentially within the moral compass of all men, our scansion must not dismiss the earthly scene of concrete human action for realms of pure imagining. Nor must the evil propensities of human beings — the moral blindness, the rapacity of wicked men and their chilling indifference to the rights and fate of their victims, the predatory destructiveness of modern war — be dismissed from thought. If we are realistic we see only too clearly how selfish, cruel, and detestable a creature the human species can be. No great stretch of evaluative perception is required to subscribe to the sentiments of Mark Twain in his pitiless denunciation of humanity in *What is Man?* And it would be easy to yield to the temptation to agree
with Swift's merciless judgement:

I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth.

If this evaluation constituted the whole truth, a final judgement would be easy, and we could resign ourselves to living in a society in which the most that could be hoped for would be a set of rules designed to facilitate the most harmonious inter-relationships possible between the members of the community -- a refined social contract to modify the "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" existence of Hobbes.

But the actual situation is more complex; the human experience can not be compressed within any single category. We do find instances of conduct which is ethical. This requires explanation. A theory which dismisses the human adventure as an exercise in selfishness is inadequate and indeed denotes an abdication from the task of framing a suitable hypothesis. It is quite possible that mankind may pursue an eventual path of extreme selfishness; it may even destroy itself, though complete annihilation is unlikely; life will probably go on again at some level. Man as a species will probably always have the chance of growing to high, ethical stature.

1 Swift, Jonathan, Gulliver's Travels, Toronto, MacMillan Co., 1946, p. 152, Chapter VI., Part II.
"High ethical stature" -- such phraseology almost requires a word of explanation. It smacks perhaps of pious aspiration. Well, pious aspiration has nothing wrong with it if it is not exercised in an unrealistic cloudland of sentimental vapouring; if it is accompanied by a frank avowal of the facts of human conduct. To discuss the possibilities of one line of human development should not be forbidden because a rational calculation of the probabilities suggests that that line of development may never be followed. Philosophy, as one of its interests and in spite of the positivists who would rule out all speculation which bears no immediate return in the form of demonstrable propositions, seeks to evaluate the relation of man to the whole universe as it exists now and may exist hereafter. If such conjecture does not detract from the resolute coping with the pressing problems of the age, it is not illegitimate. Accepting then this probing into the significance of man's place in the universe, we face the most awful of frustrations. We are seeking to find solutions to questions for which we will never know the answers. Each inquirer reads only a few pages in the book of life and is forbidden, for ever we believe, to look up the answers in the back of the book, assuming even that these answers are written somewhere, or will ever be written. Cursed with this ultimate stultifying of his passion to know, the searcher has the right to put forth
his theories and air his speculations. To suggest a possible ethical future for mankind should not draw down strictures.

Somehow we feel that people ought to behave in that way which will enhance their own enjoyment of existence. We would prefer, other things being equal, that men live so as to develop more of their faculties. This applies not just to some persons we know in our own community at this present time. It could be made as a historical judgement of people living in a previous age. We feel that it would be more fitting that all people should utilize their powers in such a way that they and those associated with them should extract the maximum of advantage from existence. This reduces, in a sense, to a duty to the race. It would be desirable to develop a planetary "esprit de corps". Should we not have pride, after all, in man as a creature who, although subject to so many vicissitudes on a lonely planet, to chance and circumstance and a thousand hazards, yet manages to work toward a better future? Every evil act derogates from the fine possibilities of achievement of the human race. If we are, in truth, in the perilous predicament of dwelling in a lonely universe, with certain exquisite feelings and sensitivities which make us feel acutely the wonder and mystery and frightening immensities of the cosmos, and moreover, with no sure guide nor mentor to tell us what it is all about; then the very least we
should do is to be dignified and live our lives according to the best plan we can find. This mode of action is enjoined on us by the kind of nature we find ourselves possessed of.

If it be objected that only those persons trained in a certain way have this kind of ideal envisagement of the possibilities of human life, we can reply that somewhere in the human adventure this concept has come into existence and those who have the vision should seek to expand and make it available to more and more people. This is not just to indulge in wishful thinking but to be the vehicle of a tradition -- the human tradition. The criticism of high ethical thinking which dismisses it as merely wishful thinking would seem to overlook the fact that a creature has been able to wish along these certain lines.

The naturalistic position assumed in this thesis is close to the relative absolute position of Dr. Barnett Savery, with one qualification, which is this. If we assume that value exists only in conjunction with man and that there are no powers external to him supporting him, and if, further, we assume that man is the highest species developed, if, that is, within man is focussed the highest development of the process of the universe, then the ethic which is relevant to man acquires a universal, if not absolute
character. If a transmoral source is postulated for ethical value, that only creates a further mystery; we are still left with the initial problem of what we experience as ethical. If there is a general value as well as specific values, how can the general become specific? The final sanction for right conduct need not be cosmic; if it is binding on one in order to fulfil his nature as a member of his species, that is a valid sanction. This, of course constitutes a much more difficult ethic than one based on supernatural authority.

Whitehead said that neither matter nor life can be understood in isolation; likewise, ethics are not a mere conceptual system but have meaning only in conjunction with life. Ethical conduct to be fully manifested requires more than good motives. Also essential are the following:

Intelligence and knowledge; (Socrates was correct)
Primary emphasis on this life;
Reasonable freedom from unconscious complexes, repressions and motivations;
Abundance of material resources;
A high degree of command over natural forces.

These requirements constitute the indispensable matrix within which a mature human ethics could develop, as will be made more explicit in the later chapter on evolutionary ethics.
CHAPTER II

DEFINING THE SCOPE OF THE INQUIRY

The Validity of the Method of Introspection in Ethical Theory

Has the method of introspection any value and cogency in the resolution of ethical questions? If there is an ethical ought which operates in human beings, it is only in them that it could be detected and analysed and the method of introspection is essential to determine its nature and content. Possibly this is the only tool available to the inquirer to get at certain facts. Ethical theories cannot be based on one person's feelings, on the deliverance of one person's inward investigation. But if some agreement can be reached amongst different observers, then the method has validity.

If a person has paid complete attention to the influence of unconscious prejudices, needs, desires, and mental habits on the conscious judgement, and is acutely aware of the danger of forming prejudiced opinions which strike him as objective impressions, then his conclusions may after all be of value. The internal inspection must be far more than an emotional reaction to the inner working; it must be informed by scientific method, by an intimate knowledge of the various ethical theories, by the findings of modern psychological research into the nature of the
emotions, and it must above all be acutely aware of the gigantic capacity of the human mind to deceive itself and adduce estimable motives for the conduct followed. An informed and refined tool of introspective analysis should, therefore, be recognized as an efficient instrument of investigation and should be accepted for this purpose.

Such an instrument, if it brings in the verdict that the ought, the sense of obligation, is more than an impulsion induced by society, should not be dismissed as a suspect, subjective activity lacking in all scientific validity. There is all the difference in the world between an emotionless, ignorant introspection and a mature, informed, scientifically trained mode of introspective reporting.

DEFINITION OF TERMS:

By defining the terms of the title, "ethical value", "transcend", and "culture", as used herein, the scope of this inquiry will be indicated. The three present an increasing degree of difficulty and will be dealt with in reverse order.

What is meant by "Culture"?

Culture is a term denoting those activities of man which set him off from the rest of the animal kingdom -- the sum-total of inherited factors which are not transmitted through the germ-plasm. Lowie uses the term "the social
tradition”; Linton's term "social heredity" is amended by Kroeber to "social inheritance", which is as apt a characterization as any.

Two activities of man which make the transmission of the elements of culture possible are speech and the faculty of symbolizing.

Culture consists of all non-biological elements and denotes not merely the ways of winning a living from the physical environment and instruments and artifacts, but all the complex of habits, customs, and values generally. Through education new generations are inducted into the culture, learn its ways of doing things and become integrated within its system of institutions and psychologically attuned to its ethos, or total cultural pattern, its essential attitude to the external world and the universe generally.

What is meant by "Transcend"?

This term involves the relation between what can be called the ethical ought and the social ought and will be dealt with in the next chapter.

What is meant by "Ethical Value"?

It would be as well not to speak of the realm of values; this might imply a kingdom of ends; a supernatural or trans-natural realm subsisting apart from men. The term
field of value will perhaps be more appropriate, although not entirely suitable. The field of value may be described as follows:

I. Instrumental Values.
II. Intrinsic Values.
III. Aesthetic Values.
IV. Ethical Value.

I. Instrumental Values: A value is instrumental or extrinsic which subserves some end beyond itself. It is a means to intrinsic value.

II. Intrinsic Values: Intrinsic values are those which are valued for themselves alone. Economic value is a broad, general category largely instrumental in nature. There are, however, economic values, it would seem, which are practically, if not definitively, intrinsic; they subserve no further purpose but that of personal appropriation and enjoyment. They are instrumental only in the larger sense of ministering to human life.

Economics is concerned with the management of men's affairs and relates essentially to his welfare. Economic value may, therefore, be taken as the type of a broad set of values which are intrinsic, and yet are not aesthetic or ethical. They denote value, worth, good things which men value for themselves.
III. Aesthetic Values: Aesthetic values are those derived from the aesthetic experience. The term "aesthetic" is derived from a Greek word meaning "perception by the senses" and the aesthetic experience, therefore, signifies sensuous receptivity to impressions of all kinds, from works of art, the forms and colours of the natural world, and those arising from various modes of personal activity. The term is frequently and usefully restricted to denote sensitivity to beauty but it need not necessarily be so limited.

Aesthetic value might be shown as a subdivision of intrinsic value since it is appropriated and enjoyed by human beings just as any other value which carries its own meaning and validation with it. However, on account of the specialized interest possessed by aesthetics it is sound to classify it by itself.

IV. Ethical Value: We may note that ethical value is "sui generis"; it has a radical differentia from all other values. Ethical value exists in connection with the concept of "ought". Its distinguishing mark is moral duty, virtue, obligation, moral excellence. Ordinary values and those called aesthetic are received and enjoyed by the person concerned. Ethical value, in contrast, is an out-flowing to others, a giving.

Further, ethical value is to be distinguished
from the other values as follows. One person in isolation can enjoy aesthetic value -- beauty, for example, and the other intrinsic and instrumental values indicated. This is not to say, obviously, that other people are not vitally and necessarily involved. In relation to aesthetic value, for example, the artist must exist; and all the persons concerned in the practical and mechanical factors involved in providing other intrinsic values must exist apart from the appreciator. But the actual value transaction concerns only the latter as far as the appropriation of the value is concerned. One single human being may enjoy the aesthetic experience of viewing a sunset, or some art-object. Ethical value, in contrast, has an additional factor which gives it a radically different status. It involves the relation between two or more persons. Ethical value necessarily, and by definition, concerns a number of people, two at a minimum, in a certain form of interaction. Ethical value comes into being when one person considers the rights and needs of some one else and modifies his action accordingly. The sense of ought comes in -- though it may be that the ought is not a necessary part of the highest ethical action.

A fundamental difference is to be noted between aesthetic and ethical value. To illustrate, Robinson Crusoe on his island could experience the first, but never the
second, unless some other human being came into relation­ship with him. Or unless, further, the sphere of the ethical is held to include other than human beings -- animals or other parts of nature, on the one hand, and a divine or cosmic force on the other. This is beyond the scope of our study.

It can not be said that the four subdivisions are four species of one genus. This points out again that ethical value is different in kind from the other values noted.

Our study is now clarified to the extent that we may view it as the attempt to answer the question whether what we may find to be ethical value is different for different cultures, or whether man as a species responds to the same basic ethical principle. At this juncture more must be said as to the attributes of ethical value.

Is "ethical value" the most accurate description of what we are concerned with? Our study revolves about the fact of non-self-regarding action; the fact that people do act towards others in an unselfish way, with the good of the other person in mind, at least to some degree. Does this lead to difficulties? The person who is the recipient of the ethical action receives value which is not ethical for him. It is a form of value which for him is intrinsic.
Does an ethical act, then, involve two types of value radically different in nature? That is, the type of value enjoyed, which is non-ethical, and the value involved centrally in the act of unselfishness? What is the logical status of the latter? What justification is there for calling it ethical value at all? Can we say that the two values are the same entity viewed from two aspects -- the two sides of a coin of value, or the concave and convex sides of an arc of value? Rather, it might be more accurate to say that what is involved is one act which has two manifestations: first, the intrinsic value conferred on someone else; and second, what we have chosen to call ethical value which is the expression of an obligation.

There is an etymological justification for adhering to the terminology "ethical value". The meaning of "value" derives from the Old French "valoir" -- "to be worth", which comes from the Latin "valere" -- "to be strong". The ethical act is of supreme value in making an ordered existence possible. Since value is intimately associated with and arises out of the ethical act, the term "ethical value" for the ethical obligation is legitimate and appropriate. It seems fitting that ethical value should be equated with the "ought".
It may further be noted that in performing a genuine ethical act, the person who does so derives a mode of value himself. This is a species of intrinsic value which is not, however, ethical in itself.

In ethical activity, then, the central value -- the essence revealing the nature of the act -- is what we are principally interested in. Arising from this is (a) the value conferred, and (b) the possible value resulting to the person performing the action, as mentioned above. The conscious intention of the actor is to confer the value received by the other person concerned. The concomitant value which he may incidentally receive, is something added, a gift to him from fate. If, however, he pursues the ethical course for the sake of the emotional glow and the self-satisfaction derived in feeling virtuous, his act loses its ethical character. By ethical value, therefore, we mean the central nature of the mode of activity in which the doer intends benefit to accrue to another being; this central character includes within its connotation the concepts of virtue, duty, conscience, unselfishness, and moral excellence.

Intrinsic value includes the numerous degrees of value, potential and realized, expressed by the various terms designating value in enjoyment or potentiality, as well as the different aspects of value which are stressed in various theories. All the first three divisions noted
above are essentially one. Value is that which is of value or worth to human life. Only ethical value is radically different and that by reason of the entity with which it is concerned, namely, the sense of obligation.

THE NATURE OF THE GOOD:

It seems apparent that in studying the nature of the good, philosophers have been concerned with two problems which have not always been clearly discriminated, and possibly this partly accounts for the fact, which is really incredible, that the most penetrating intellects over some 2500 years have not been able to reach a greater measure of agreement. The two problems are the following;

A -- What is the nature of "ought", or, in other words, what is the nature of ethical value?

B -- What is the nature of intrinsic value?

The expression "The Good" has sometimes meant one; sometimes the other; sometimes, no doubt, the two together. For there is no doubt that the two are very closely connected and unless this were so the confusion would not have arisen.

The word "goodness" is also used; it can have two meanings; (a) the goodness in things, the goodness experienced by somebody; and (b) goodness as virtue, the carrying out of one's duty. There can be goods (the old Latin term "bona") without goodness in the ethical sense, but it is practically impossible to envisage goodness without goods, either realized, or envisaged, or intended. It would
clarify these two concepts if the above two categories, A and B, were designated as goodness and the Good respectively. The latter term would then be a collective one for various goods.

This study is concerned primarily with problem A, the nature of the ethical impulse. If we can determine this, much light will have been thrown on the central problem of the thesis, whether this value transcends culture.

The experiencing of obligation has two aspects: first, there is the internal sense of being subject to compulsion, to the dictate of a law or mandate of some kind, which may be overwhelming. This might be called the subjective component. Then there is the external reference to the act required to be done. This is the objective factor. What is the relation between these two factors? Is the interior sense of command always the predominant one? It would seem always to be so according to the class of ethical theories which conceive duty in terms of adherence to a law or prescription. Loyalty to the categorical imperative, for instance, would seem to lay the primary and overwhelming stress on the subjective factor. Those theories which take the furtherance of an ideal as central, such as happiness or self-fulfilment, revolve around the objective factor.
It is in the relationship with the objective element that the connection between the good considered intrinsically and without ethical connotations, and the ethical imperative lies. The moral imperative has as final goal or consummation some act which effectuates human good in the primary intrinsic sense. This accounts for the inclusion of both entities under the one concept of the good.

When we say, for example, "It is good that the State should protect all its citizens", or "It is good that human personality should be respected", our statements are closely connected with ethical goodness. We do not mean simply that intrinsic good is being enjoyed by someone in the way intended when we say, "This apple is good". In the latter statement we mean that the apple brings good to us and we refer the quality to the apple itself. If we say, "It is good to eat apples", the reference is to the act or to its effect on our own well-being; there is little, if any, objective reference. But, more important, there is no ethical reference. But when we make the first two statements the reference seems to be to the quality of ethical goodness. Take the first sentence; "It is good that the State should protect all its citizens." Is there an ethical reference? If so, on whom lies the obligation? Is the State conceived as an entity in itself? But the assertion could be made by someone who did not conceive of the State as existing apart from the total of its citizens. In this
case, the statement does not mean simply that good is conferred on some human beings, and by implication, a majority, when the maxim is observed. It means also that some individuals have an obligation to perform certain duties and it is good that this should be done. A similar conclusion applies to the second statement, "It is good that human personality should be respected."

But why is it good? This is a more difficult question than appears at first glance. It may be said that a society which habitually respects human personality achieves a higher degree of intrinsic value for its citizens than one in which this is not the case. Again, it would probably be agreed that it is better to have a social situation where persons co-operate harmoniously owing to natural sympathy and affection, than because of any sense of duty. So a society in which spontaneous observance of respect for personality obtained would be better because it achieves its quantum of value without any deduction for the negative value chargeable for the feeling of constraint. It may be said that noble action (the obeying of an ethical impulse) produces an intrinsic value of its own over and above the value directly resulting. This is correct; it is the added value accruing to the person acting ethically referred to above on page 22. But it may be interpreted more realistically as the value resulting from the sense of joy or well-being brought about by effective expression of innate
capacities in harmonious participation in society.

The question must be asked whether ethics are good. Would the supersession of ethical obligation by spontaneous choosing of the course of action leading to the maximum of intrinsic good not mark a higher stage of human development?

Suppose we consider two societies which are identical except that in the first, part of the total intrinsic value enjoyed results from ethical action, whereas in the second all action involving others arises spontaneously. The respective balance sheets might read:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Balance Sheet</th>
<th>Intrinsic value conferred by agents</th>
<th>Added value from exercise of ethical feeling, enjoyed by agents</th>
<th>Less account sense of constraint felt by agents</th>
<th>Nett value realized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td>100 Units</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td>100 Units</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This accords with what we should expect. It would not be reasonable that the society acting spontaneously in an admirable manner would not have more intrinsic value than the other.
But this is to restrict unduly the meaning of ethical value. Even in the most advanced societies conceivable there would be ethical value. Treating others well is ethical even when the coercive sense of obligation is overcome. Indeed the sense of constraint when exercising one's duty indicates failure to achieve the maximum integration of personality. When the sense of obligation is not felt, except by introspection, the deed done spontaneously is still the reflection of an obligation. It is not possible to do more than one's duty. If a certain course is felt to be the best under the circumstances, it is right to do it; in other words, there is an obligation to do it. So ethics presumably will never be superseded even in the highest mode of life which can be envisaged; what could happen would be that the inner and outer harmony, that is of individuals and of society, would be so highly advanced that no clash would occur. But if, in some unusual situation, there were question of some necessary or suitable action not being done, it would immediately become the duty of the person concerned to do it.

So far we have discriminated two elements in the idea of good in the sentence, "It is good that human personality should be respected", as follows:

(a) The intrinsic good resulting to others. This is the more important factor.

(b) The added intrinsic good accruing to the person who acts ethically.
A purely naturalistic theory could stop at this point. But we must ask whether there is a third element. The traditional aura of sanctity or awed respect accorded ethical value in itself, will cause those for whom a metaphysical ethical principle has taken the place of God, to believe that if the value realized is the result of ethical action, then by reason of that very fact and regardless of the life experience of all the persons concerned, it attains a higher degree of value than it would if no one had to act ethically.

Now a naturalistic position can be chosen and yet recognition be given to the fact that the ought contains an obstinate element difficult to dispose of finally. When I witness commendable action I can make a judgement that it is good. Since I am under no obligation myself, the judgement would seem to be objective. And yet I seem to judge that in addition to the intrinsic value realized by the recipient and the performer of the deed, it is in some sense good that the action should have been performed. It is good in itself. Perhaps this is merely a subtle projection from the realization that intrinsic value is gained. Or it might be a reflection of my unconscious satisfaction at living in the kind of society I want to live in where such action takes place. But as a matter of record the feeling that an absolute character pertains in such situations can not be completely dismissed.
THE NATURE OF INTRINSIC VALUE:

Although not central to our problem, an indication should be given of the nature of intrinsic value. An adequate theory of value, it would appear, must combine the approaches of eudaemonism and perfectionism. Self-realization of the individual and his happiness are complementary. The greater the degree of self-realization, so we must believe, the greater the happiness secured; and the experiencing of happiness must involve self-expression of the personality. The criterion, in brief, must revolve around the concept of human welfare which embraces the idea of both happiness and self-realization. It is the enhancement of mature, effective human living. Value must be an expression of life which is the ultimate fact.

Value is not synthetically added to life, but is an integral component thereof. We perforce must accept existence as a good. If we question the value of life we at the same time question the existence of value. If we go on living we have voted in favour of life's being more good than bad. We have in the past recognized certain things or experiences as good; to that extent we accepted life as worthwhile. But when life is rejected, then value

2 Although the term "hedonism" is sometimes extended from that of pleasure to include the wider concept of happiness, it seems preferable to use the specifically apt term "eudaemonism".
is rejected. We are not talking of the person who sacrifices his life for an ideal; nor of the case where the suicide is carried out because of the shame or loss of honour (so regarded) which would come to relatives -- here there is an ethical reason for the act, even though it may be erroneous. But if the taking of one's life is done solely because of the subject's own concerns, perhaps because of unendurable physical pain, then the act might be the result of rational balancing of pluses and minuses. The quantitative assessment reveals a lack of intrinsic value and life, the vehicle of value, is no longer worthwhile.
CHAPTER III

THE RELATION BETWEEN ETHICAL VALUE AND CULTURE

Next we come to the relation between ethical value and culture. It is my contention that a valid meaning can be assigned to the statement "Ethical value transcends culture." The question of the thesis is, therefore, answered in the affirmative. If ethical value transcends culture, then all human creatures are in the final analysis influenced by the same basic ethical principle. Ethical value is a basic function of human nature, regardless of the specific form of culture in which it is manifested. In other words, a naturalistic and realistic view of human nature is able to regard it as comprising an element which is ethical and will express itself in some form or another regardless of the cultural environment. Men as human beings will necessarily live in relation to each other within certain limits of acceptable conduct.

The ought expresses the ethical principle and it is necessary to probe to the ultimate semantic root of this term. The following definitions should make clear the distinction to be drawn between the ethical ought and the social ought.

The ethical ought: The ethical ought is of the nature of a law which men must follow if they are to be true to their nature as members of the human species.
The social ought: The social ought is a rule of conduct imposed implicitly by society and varies from one society to another.

Commentary on the Ethical Ought:

There would seem to be a universalism implicit in the ethical imperative; it is an inescapable, inherent tendency of man to establish certain effective relations with all other life and is not an arbitrary rule of conduct which he is free to discard as soon as he questions the authority of his culture. The fact that the ethical sense is manifested in a variety of moral codes does not explain away the ethical sense itself. Man is a creature who is impelled by his own nature to formulate an ethical code of some kind or another by which to live. Man has a capacity, indeed a need, to behave according to what he believes to be right. Ethical obligation, of course, is not a separate faculty in the sense of arising from a specific organ or avenue of transcendental intuition.

The ethical ought is an obligation to foster what is right. Whatever is right is so not because the person's conscious desire claims it, nor because in an unconscious, subtle, but inevitable way it furthers the life of society, but because it is a natural and inescapable concomitant of life. That is, in paying attention to the fact that he exists (and in dealing with the problem of ethical value
we assume that man does have an individual existence) man unavoidably finds himself involved in the experience of ethical value. It can not be reduced to custom, social convention, habit, or individual desire.

Further, the ethical capacity is one which will make sacrifices. The feeling (and we have suggested earlier that refined introspection is admissible) is that the law to be followed has a validity which transcends the moulding influence of society. A concept such as "higher ethical truth" seems to have meaning. The word "higher" here would seem to connote an escape from imprisonment within the self; the activity has relations with more of the total life manifesting in the universe. The reason the scope of the law is enlarged is not because society impels this action; the requirements of society, when carefully considered, fall far short of what imaginative ethical action requires.

Ethical value, then, must be seen as an evolving capacity of men, as will be set forth more explicitly in the chapter on evolutionary ethics. The area of obligation is extended from one's own group to include neighbouring and related groups and eventually all humanity. This process accompanies the intellectual comprehension of the wider ethical possibilities.

There is also something of an aesthetic nature about ethical value. Just as an artist might cringe at
some disproportion in painting or music, so one of the components of the ethical action is a sensitivity to right proportions in conduct. Another element is the intellectual sense of the fitness of things. Just as an engineer might feel that some clumsy arrangement of parts violated sound principles of mechanics, so an ethically sensitive person often feels a sense of violation. There is something congruent and attractive to see performed that action which is appropriate in a given situation. But there would seem to be a factor in ethical conduct over and above these, conduct which is more than that seen to be fitting in a given situation. It is the sense of something done from a generous motive; something given beyond what the strict requirements of the situation demand. It must be stripped of all selfish elements. It is not the giving which ministers to some unconscious need for fulfilment in order to overcome an inferiority complex. What is meant is a genuine giving elicited by pity, unselfish love, or a strong desire to protect or save someone, or to give life greater meaning to a person in need.

The accusation might be levelled that conscience is a species of neurotic compulsion. It is far easier to admit intellectual error, difficult though this be, than to abandon obstinate ethical concepts. I would suggest that there is a healthy form of conscience which is radically different from psychasthenic disorder. In
neurotic compulsion, when there is insight into the condition, the compulsive drive is felt as an affliction, as a burdensome imposition, escape from which would be welcome; ethical compulsion may be felt as inflicting a difficult course which may be troublesome, but it is regarded, nevertheless, as being right and proper in a manner which the promptings of the neurosis never possess.

Commentary on the Social Ought:

The fact of the great disparity of customs, institutions and procedures in different cultures has the effect of suggesting very persuasively that the ethical prompting is instilled by society. It is created by the culture and wholly determined thereby, being of the nature of an automatic reaction between the individual and his society. It is a matter of convenience and ease of living, although this need not rule out what we would call unselfish action. The human species can be trained to be unselfish. Is an effective and wisely planned system of rewards and punishments a matter of pure common sense and does it take away the ethical character of the act? That is, is the child taught that it is to his advantage to conform and to consider the rights of others in conjunction with his own? The person who acts ethically is merely acting in the way he has been taught; he is following a habit instilled in him in childhood. He refers his non-self-regarding conduct
to an ethical impulse which, however, is only the idealization of the pattern impressed on his mind by his training. Conscience is the result, not necessarily of fear; it may be of the desire to please. Since social anthropology provides the illuminating insight that man's very nature as a functioning individual depends on his thousand ties and binds with the life of the social group, his sense of social obligation is intimately linked with the life of the group.

The social ought might alternatively be described as the psychological ought, since the sense of obligation is affected so greatly by childhood training.

The Interaction of the Ethical and Social Ought:

It is abundantly clear that the ought actually experienced is a complex entity arising from the interaction of an individual's inherent capacities, the training he receives, and the value-ideas of the society in which he develops. Ethical conduct is compounded of basic human nature and the cultural influence. The reason for taking the hereditary factor as of prime importance is that it is the indispensable foundation for all moral conduct, while the influence of training and society merely mould it to a certain pattern. The term ethical for the ought may, therefore, be retained even if it is not viewed as grounded
in a transcendental power. It is worth emphasizing that an ethical ought can be valid in a naturalistic setting.

The reasoning about the ethical and social ought has a close parallel with the old problem of heredity and environment. Both are necessary for the production of good organisms, but the overwhelming emphasis on environment which obtained some years ago is now balanced by recognition of the importance of heredity. Unless the genetic structure, the "formal cause", is adequate, the best environment will not produce good results. In a certain fundamental sense the hereditary factor is prepotent. All the training in the world would be futile if man were not an ethical animal.

**Meaning of "Transcend":**

Having distinguished between the ethical ought and the social ought, we may now explain in what sense ethical value transcends culture, as promised in the previous chapter. Our main contention is, as indicated above, that ethical value has its locus of functioning on the plane of humanity and not on the level of a particular culture. The ethical imperative in its fullest manifestation comes from human nature and not from social training. For man as a species there is an absolute loyalty; the early loyalty to the restricted group expands in the process of evolution into loyalty to all life. The good is an instinctive propulsion, an inescapable, inherent tendency to
establish effective and harmonious relationship with all other life. The good imperative, as we have indicated, must be supplemented by knowledge. Man is concerned with a dynamic given element of his essential self; to this extent the command is absolute. Man makes a mess of his ethical potentialities because, for one thing, of his ignorance.

Ethics transcend culture in the sense that the loftiest ethic applies to the Republic of Humanity and not to any specific culture. The planning of Utopias is not an utterly futile pursuit -- it does have an influence in the lives of men. If a large part of the population were adequately educated to comprehend their membership in the human race, the general standard of behaviour could be improved rapidly. The Republic of Humanity includes those dead who have pioneered the way to a better order of society as well as those in the future. The fighters for liberty in past centuries and in modern concentration camps are members. Imaginative as well as active participation in such struggle is open to all sincere thinkers who see beyond the limits of their own time and place.

To summarize briefly, ethical value transcends culture because the following would appear to be true: Society is possible because man is an ethical creature; not man is ethical because his society makes him so.
Ethical Relativity:
The acceptance of the ought as social or psychological in character leads to ethical relativity. In broad terms, two forms may be distinguished.

(a) Extreme Ethical Relativity: This arises from the view that the ought is solely a social one, that value is determined completely by the culture. The results of a thorough ethical relativity are not pleasant to contemplate. What would ultimately prevail might conceivably be ethical chaos, a complete breakdown of ordered society, or else the subjection of society to an arbitrary rule imposed from above. The complexities of modern industrial civilization necessitate a more developed ethic of mutual understanding and harmonious co-operation on personal, national, and international levels.

Ethical relativity, I think, in its practical judgement comes to this, that the ethos of a specific culture sets limits to the ethical development within it. But imaginative thinkers and occasional ethical geniuses seem to have the capacity to transcend the limits of their culture and extend the area of ethical obligation to others. This reveals what seems to be a fatal objection to the extreme relative position, namely, the fact that ethical progress seems to be a meaningful concept. It would rule out any question of one ethic being better than another. The talk of progress is meaningless if one ethical system
is as good as another. No criterion could be found for judging between one culture and another. But if a truly humanistic ethic is adopted, one applicable to planetary man, then the criterion can be found. It would lie in the realization of more of man's potentialities. To the sceptical query as to what value lies in realizing more of latent capacities, it must be said that all experience and judgement suggest that life can be richer and express more meaning in one context than another; the fact of continuing with the business of living carries as logical corollary the impulsion to extract the utmost value possible from that life.

If complete ethical relativity is a fact, what meaning could be given to the admonition; "Do what you think is right and don't worry about what anybody says"? Does it imply that the subject makes his ethical evaluation and considers that he can better perceive what the social requirement is than other men in the society? But if the ethical impulse is merely a product of society how could this injunction have any meaning? Must we not conclude that ethical relativity breaks down in attempting to deal with conduct which follows what seems to be a higher prompting than the culture enjoins? Why, we must ask, is habit, or what society expects of one translated into an ought at all? Does it arise out of a tension between my own desires and what I must do to win the approval and regard of society or those members of it whose opinion I value, or good estimation I want to
retain? But I find that although I do what I feel is right and know it will please others, I do not do it solely for that reason, but principally because I know it is the right thing to do. Perhaps man seeks approval fundamentally because he is an ethical being.

The fact of culture borrowing indicates supra-cultural factors. It is not a valid rejoinder to assert that the adoption of an ethical custom from another culture enables the borrowing society to realize potentialities not previously perceived, just as the material environment may be more efficiently exploited if information from another culture is utilized. For one thing, the very capacity to make judgements as to the superior merits of some ethical habit of another society indicates a function of the mind transcending the limits of the first society. Next, the fact that conduct can be modified in the light of ideas and customs adopted from without indicates a flexibility not consistent with complete relativity. For example, natives in primitive societies sometimes exhibit a shrewd and penetrating insight into the activities of missionaries. Outward forms are observed in order to please the missionaries. Dr. Gordon Brown of Toronto gives an amusing instance. In Samoa the natives bathe naked in public, but in deference to the teachings of the Christian missionaries they will, if bathing openly at some village bath place, cover themselves if a missionary appears.
There is, however, genuine borrowing. One instance is Gandhi adopting the ethic of non-resistance from the West and applying it in an advanced degree which would appear extravagant in so-called Christian countries. Also, Nehru and Rajagopalachari and other leaders in India who have borrowed the concepts of freedom and democracy from Western civilization.

Some one said that men face two inexplicable facts -- the problem of evil and the problem of good. The theist has to face the first. We may assert that the extreme ethical relativist has to face the second.

Recently I watched three small children cutting bread and showing great concern to cut the slices straight. The eldest little girl about eight years old said, "You should give yourself the worst." When I asked her why, she replied immediately and with complete assurance, "Because it's not very nice if you don't." In ultimate analysis and as a practical judgement regardless of culture, it will not be very nice for humanity if it does not act ethically.

(b) Moderate Ethical Relativity: Man has an ethical capacity which may be moulded by environment and culture. Therefore, the ethical character is relative to the culture.

This is not far removed from the position adopted herein. The difference appears to lie in the respective
emphasis placed on heredity and environment. The moderate ethical relativist stresses the latter; in this thesis the hereditary endowment is considered the prime, inescapable factor. Man has a destiny to realize, although he finds that destiny implicit in his own nature and not in the stars.

What is the Criterion for Right Action?

This thesis deals principally with the fact that man responds to ethical motivation, which is the supremely important fact in viewing the human scene. However, a suggestion should be given of what should constitute right action.

It is to be noted that we have spoken of ethical value in the singular. This follows because we are concerned with the fact of obligation. I am forced to conclude that there are no specific ethical values. When we spontaneously regard some particular valuable action, such, for example, as respecting personality, as an ethical value, we are registering in linguistic usage the coalescence of two separate elements: first, the intrinsic value to the person most vitally concerned who has enjoyed enhancement of his existence because others have respected his personality; second, the ethical factor involved in this condition by some person who acted ethically in respecting that personality. So there are not different ethical values for different cultures. What are different are intrinsic values
and the conduct involved in achieving them. Intrinsic values may differ from culture to culture; ethical value does not change except in the ends to which it is directed. But is this not all that we mean by saying that ethical value is relative? The answer is no because the central fact is the ethical nature of man, the capacity to follow the ought. Of necessity the end of the ethical impulse will depend on the nature of the culture and various personal and social circumstances. This is to be expected if man's ethical nature is subject to growth.

In all situations there is potentially a right course of action. It is right not because the best human judgement so decides but because the objective facts -- all the objects and events constituting the total situation -- make it so. The objective facts pertain to the world experienced by man (but not necessarily as experienced by man) and not to a transcendental realm. The reason the objective facts are related to what constitutes rightness for man is that these three: life, intrinsic value, and ethical value, are intimately and indissolubly connected. They are ultimate criteria for a finite judgement which is all man can make. It, therefore, follows that my duty is bound up with my life-experience and it becomes my duty to promote human welfare. An ethical corollary of this is the sovereign worth of human personality.
We must believe that there is an objective situation from which omniscience could deduce the right course of action, or we meet an irrational element in life. I do not believe that there is an irrational element. If men maintain effective relations with other people they will find mystery in the universe but not irrationality, it seems to me.

It may be interposed that frequently incompatible ethical claims produce conflict which defies resolution. In reply, first, I would say that a completely impartial tribunal could render a valid decision in many of these cases, although human intransigency may refuse for a long time to come to accept such judgement. We may note that international law is as yet inchoate. Second, if mankind is not able to resolve difficult conflicts, that merely registers the fact of man's present ignorance and finite limitations.

The utmost achievable practically is what a mature unprejudiced person in possession of all relevant knowledge would judge to be appropriate. In any particular situation the decision will be fallible and depart from complete objectivity. Conduct is wrong ethically if a person does not use his intellect to the best extent he can. But we judge the character of an ethical act not purely by motive, nor solely by result, but by a combina-
tion of the motive and the resources of knowledge the person had at his command. This indeed would hold under either an absolute or a relative absolute ethic.

In visualizing an ethical economy we ask these questions:

Why is it better to use the material resources of a country to best advantage?
Because more human good results. All men would agree this is desirable -- assuming equitable distribution and proper integration with other values of life.

Why is it better to make things as beautiful as possible?
In order to maximize the amount of beauty in the world. Again greater benefit accrues to human beings. And again all men would agree this is desirable.

Why is it better to act ethically?
Still again, because the sum total of human happiness and well-being would be greater. And still again, all, or nearly all, men would agree.

It is uneconomic, unaesthetic, and unethical not to utilize all the potentialities of the physical environment and of man's nature.

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CHAPTER IV

THE INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOLOGY ON ETHICS

The findings of psychology have had an enormous influence on ethical thought. Much light has been shed by studies of the nervous system and the mechanisms of behaviour. The revelations of psychoanalysis concerning the existence and preponderant effect of unconscious motivation have been of paramount importance. The question arises whether psychologists could devise any kind of experiment to throw light on the nature of the ought.

One possible approach might be through hypnotism. It seems that unconscious memories of early life dating back to infancy can be elicited under hypnosis. The famous case cited by Dr. Morton Prince is illustrative. A man, by this technique, was able to recall the numbers of houses on a certain street in Boston along which he had been taken as a baby before he could have learned numbers or counting. The houses had subsequently been torn down but his recollection of the numbers was verified from civic records. Whether such reporting could bring to light information as to how the sense of obligation to others arises -- whether it is felt purely as an instruction from parents and teachers, or whether as an innate prompting, is a matter of conjecture only, at the present stage. Quite possibly
this method would never be accurate enough in recalling mental states to give certain knowledge. Perhaps the techniques of psychoanalysis would provide more certain data. A doctor in the United States, E. Pickworth Farrow, in a book to which Sigmund Freud wrote an approving foreword, recounts his ability to go back in memory to the age of six months; he was thus enabled to discover feelings of rage which he experienced against his father. It may not be beyond the bounds of possibility that some acute self-analyst could use the same technique of free association to discover whether his feeling of obligation was entirely imposed from without, or whether he discovered an inner subjection to ethical direction. On the other hand, it might be that if the ethical sense requires maturation, perhaps by the incorporation of a developed intellectual element, the fullest recovery of pristine impressions would not provide a solution.

Since a child has to be trained early to attain first rank as a musician, when the innate musical capacity is present, is it not possible that a child's ethical sense should be developed early? Perhaps there is an optimum period for instilling ethical ideals which embrace a wider sphere than the prevailing ethos requires, as there is to

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learn certain skills. It is an old truism, attributed to the Jesuits, that if the religious training of the child is controlled for the first few years, the child will retain the precepts implanted for the rest of his life. Under what conditions will later influences override the early training in certain cases? Is there a process of maturation at work which in some instances will reinforce the original training and in others allow it to be neglected? It may not lie beyond the eventual competence of psychologists to throw light on these problems.

In an essay entitled, Science, Humanism and the Good$^4$ dealing with value in a generic sense, Professor Philip Blair Rice draws attention to recent psychological researches into the neural factors concerned with feelings; feelings and emotional states have physiological correlates. Rice states that recent experiments suggest that hedonic tone (that is, pleasantness or unpleasantness) is a direct function of stresses in the central nervous system, but that the exact conditions are not yet known. Pleasantness in many instances seems closely connected with the release of tension, but sometimes, however, with increased activity. There are also experiments referred to which indicate that

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pleasantness is correlated with smooth functioning in the central nervous system.

As psychological science advances on this front, possibly John Stuart Mill's contention that there are different qualities of pleasure will be substantiated. Or it may be shown that pleasures of all types differ, as far at least as the physical evidence is concerned, merely in degree of intensity. Assume the latter to be the case; would this definitively dispose of the problem of qualitative pleasures? Or might it not be that pleasures qualitatively different all have the same physical correlate? A meticulous study of the physical organism would reveal only that pleasure of a certain intensity and duration was being experienced, but would give no indication of the nature of the pleasure.

Ethics is concerned primarily with hedonic tone as it is experienced and not in its neural constituents. For practical questions of conduct, the conscious aspect of the emotion or feeling is the only important one. People lived through all the experiences of life and evolved appropriate rules, without knowing anything of the intimate relation between the mental aspect, so-called, of emotion and the physical aspect. Getting back to man's enjoyment
of value, this does not lie in the particular configuration of the physiological organism but in the conscious impress on the personality. It may be stated that a certain minimum of bodily harmony must exist for pleasure to exist. This is perfectly true but the bare statement does not go beyond the Greek ideal of a sound mind in a healthy body.

Accepting, then, that value has a physical correlate, what are we to judge regarding ethical value? Does the inner sense of owing allegiance to a moral law carry with it a correlation with some condition of the physical organism? If so, could this be measured? Would the ethical imperative be experienced in a pure state or always accompanied by an emotional component? If the latter, could the nervous system be actuated in differing ways? How could this be experimentally investigated? Would the value, the feeling of well-being which sometimes accompanies the performing of one's duty and which is an accession of intrinsic value to the performer, register in the neural processes and obscure any effect of the ethical prompting? It is abundantly clear that to set up controlled experiments would be of the utmost difficulty. If, in spite of the complexity and difficulty of the task, it should be established that a physiological correlate for ethical obligation does exist, then, since this would presumably be a component of man as a species,
it could be concluded that ethical value does transcend culture. If such correlation should not be established, then the problem remains as before.

This inadequate examination of the possibilities of psychology in relation to ethics has been made for the reason that since ethical problems remain unsolved after so many hundreds of years of study, any department of investigation which may assist their resolution is at least worthy of attention. The subject will be further dealt with in the chapter on evolutionary ethics.
CHAPTER V

EVOLUTIONARY ETHICS

We find suggestions for the solution to our problem in the fact that man's ethical nature has gone through a long process of evolution as well as his physical organism. Instead of seeking the origin of the moral sense in a transcendental realm, we seek it in the course of the evolutionary process.

Prince Kropotkin in his two volumes, Mutual Aid and ETHICS: Origin and Development, asserted that nature is not amoral, but that the factor of struggle is balanced by the fact of mutual aid. Kropotkin indeed states that mutual aid is the predominant fact in nature. He denied the connection of morality with religion and metaphysics and ascribed its source entirely to the natural sphere. For him the three elements of morality are mutual aid, justice or equity, and self-sacrifice, which he finds arising in the natural order. In opposition to Thomas H. Huxley in the latter's famous Romanes Lecture in 1893 (in this Huxley opposed the realm of Nature or the cosmic order on the one hand to the ethical on the other), Kropotkin, referring to the lecture, states that Huxley is by this very opposition forced to acknowledge the existence
of the ethical principle outside of nature. But since this did not accord with Huxley's philosophy, he retracted this point of view in a later remark in which he recognized the presence of the ethical principle in the social life of animals. In his Ethics, which he did not finish, Kropotkin suggests that in the very structure of man and of all social animals, there are causes impelling them preeminently toward that which we call morality. Social life, he states, came before the self-assertion of personality; "We", not "I", was the central fact in consciousness; the "I" was absorbed by the clan or tribe; in this Kropotkin finds the root of all ethical thought. He recognizes the importance to ethics of the question of the source of the feeling of obligation of which men are conscious and his manuscript concludes thus:

The fact is, that while the mode of life is determined by the history of the development of a given society, conscience, on the other hand, as I shall endeavour to prove, has a much deeper origin, namely in the consciousness of equity, which physiologically develops in man as in all social animals.

What Kropotkin is asserting is that the moral elements in man's nature are his as a natural species.

We may, therefore, conclude that if the basic elements of

6 Ibid., p. 13.
7 Ibid., p. 60.
8 Ibid., p. 338.
morality come into existence in the development of man as a natural species, then they will be ingrained in him as a member of his species and not as a member of his society. A horse is a horse regardless of what continent it is found on and regardless of how it got there, whether by natural means or by being transported by man. Likewise, man is a man and an ethical creature by virtue of the nature he has evolved, regardless of the particular part of the earth's surface he lives on.

Charles Darwin gave a fundamental impetus to the naturalistic search for ethics. He referred to the altruistic element in evolution and found the foundation of moral feeling "in the social instincts which lead the animal to take pleasure in the society of its fellows, to feel a certain amount of sympathy with them, and to perform various services for them."9 The social instinct, he says, is "an impulsive power widely different from a search after pleasure or happiness."10 Darwin dealt with the crucial ethical problem of duty which derives from the social instinct. It is made clear that mutual sympathy, leading eventually to ethical action in man, is an important factor in the lives of animals below man and is part of the animal inheritance of the latter.

10 Ibid., p. 163.
L. T. Hobhouse, an evolutionary naturalist in his philosophical position, made important contributions to ethical theory in his study of primitive morals and their development. He acknowledged the strong influence of sympathy in the basic formation of ethics, but did not consider it adequate. He wrote:

... it is not sympathy alone that draws men together. Men have need of each other, physical need, and also a moral need, for which sympathy is too simple an expression. 11

He recognized permanent mental qualities in humanity:

Thus when we come to human society we find the basis for a social organization of life already laid in the animal nature of man . . . His loves and hates, his joys and sorrows, his pride, his wrath, his gentleness, his boldness, his timidity -- all these permanent qualities, which run through humanity and vary only in degree, belong to his inherited structure. 12

Another evolutionary naturalist, of major importance in ethical theory, is E. A. Westermarck, who amassed a huge amount of anthropological data and came to the conclusion that society is the birthplace of the moral consciousness. Moral judgements are based on emotions which lack objectivity and the particular questions involved derive from the particular social context in which they arise and not from any absolute ethical principle. The first moral judgements expressed emotions felt by society at large.

12 Ibid., p. 10.
Men have a tremendous need for the approval of their fellows and from this arise the ethical sentiments. In general, Westermarck denies ultimate validity to any particular moral judgement. His chief conclusion, therefore, is the sceptical one of ethical relativity. This brings us to the heart of our problem.¹³

A contribution of major significance to the resolution of this issue is made by Julian Huxley, the biologist and grandson of Thomas H. Huxley. In 1943 he delivered the Romanes Lecture in England, which he entitled Evolutionary Ethics. In this he followed Kropotkin in showing that his grandfather in the Romanes Lecture of fifty years before in 1893 had been wrong in presenting the ethical process as contradicting the cosmic process -- cosmic nature, the world external to man, is the enemy of the ethical nature man finds himself possessing. Julian Huxley likewise shows that this is a false opposition; the ethical factor in life arose within the natural evolutionary process. In a study of ethics written subsequently and published in 1947, Julian Huxley brings together the findings of science, notably of genetics and psychology, bearing on the problems of ethics, and combats the extreme view of ethical relativity. In opposition to Westermarck, to whom he pays tribute for the

¹³ Edvard A. Westermarck, Ethical Relativity, New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1932.
scope and suggestiveness of his work, he writes as follows:

... systems of ethics are definitely correlated with the major types of society in which they are found. This relativity, however, does not imply mere arbitrariness and lack of objective validity for ethics. But in order to disentangle essential correlations from unessential variations, we must think in terms of direction rather than of static and immutable standards. Here, it seems, Westermarck was confused by the multiplicity and variety of the valuable facts of moral natural history which he himself had done so much to discover.\(^{14}\)

We note here that there is a relativity regarding ethics which it would be erroneous and stupid to deny, but it is essential that we be clear as to where the relativity lies. It is my contention that the relativity lies in the mode of expression of the ethical principle and not in the principle itself. The emphasis on direction rather than on existing status is of primary significance. It is often said that it is better to know where one is going than where one is at some particular instant. The significant thing is not any specific code in which the ethical march has been arrested, but the universalist goal.

One of Julian Huxley's main points, which, of course, has been stressed by other thinkers, is that for mankind social evolution is now more important than

biological evolution. Huxley says:

... the realization that with the advent of man, evolution had reached a new level, in which the biological agency of natural selection, operating through the mechanisms of heredity, had been largely suspended by the specifically human agency of social selection operating through the mechanisms of tradition.¹⁵

We thus see that man's development, including his ethical progress, is oriented about a universal focus, the sum-total of his resources as a planetary species. Huxley well says:

However, ethics do not merely vary at random; they also evolve. That fact provides our clue. Our ethics evolve because they are themselves part of the evolutionary process. And any standards of rightness and wrongness must in some way be related to the movement of that process through time.¹⁶

We come now to a most important point. Julian Huxley derives the sense of right and wrong from the conflict in the infant between love and hate for the mother during the period from one to three years of age. He writes:

... the fundamental point -- that man is inevitably (and alone among all organisms) subject to mental conflict as a normal factor in his life, and that the existence of this conflict is the necessary basis or ground on which conscience, the moral sense, and our systems of ethics grow and develop.¹⁷

Huxley coins the term "proto-ethical mechanism" to serve instead of the traditional term "conscience" or the Freudian "super-ego". The proto-ethical mechanism, he states, "is an

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 18.
¹⁶ Ibid., p. 131.
¹⁷ Ibid., p. 4.
intellectual construction, deduced on scientific grounds, like the atom or the gene." The critical time for its formation is in the early part of the baby's second year of post-natal life.

The author cites recent studies of so-called "moral defectives" — children who lack any normally operative moral sense. He says:

In the majority this is due not to any hereditary defect of mental make-up, but to the absence in the infant's life of a mother or effective mother-substitute during the crucial period from about one to three years old. Without a mother, no strong love focused on a personal object; without such love, no conflict of irreconcilable impulses; without such conflict, no guilt; and without such guilt, no effective moral sense. It is not entirely clear whether Huxley is dealing with the proto-ethical mechanism in relation to our own society or as the manner in which conscience became incorporated in the inherited structure of man. But he emphasizes that both heredity and environment are essential ingredients in the formation of the moral sense:

For while it seems certain that environment...is necessary for the formation of an effective moral sense, yet it is at least equally certain...that differences in moral sense may often be due, wholly or in part, to differences in inherited (genetic) predisposition.

18 Ibid., p. 121.
19 Ibid., p. 31.
20 Ibid., p. 154.
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in early months. This will be dealt with in the next chapter.

The author gives an illuminating picture of an ethical system which, being sanctioned by scientific findings, might be achieved by mankind. Any system which repudiates universalism and reverts to group ethics must be condemned. He advocates an international order, a global ethics; to achieve global unity is the major ethical problem facing mankind; anything less will neither realize the potentialities of human nature, nor enable man to resolve the lethal tensions which threaten him. The following passages must be read in the light of the fact that they are written by a scientist of the 20th century who repudiates intuitional ethics and a divinely guaranteed moral order.

...the evolutionary moralist... can tell us that the facts of nature, as demonstrated in evolution, give us assurance that knowledge, love, beauty, selfless morality, and firm purpose are ethically good. 24

It is to be noted that this estimation of ethical values parallels closely the insights of past universalist ethics. It is based on the assumption that life is good, that the supreme values are integral to the life-process, and that these values thereby receive their certification as the highest goods for man. It might be said that Huxley's judgement in this passage is freighted with residues of traditional

24 Ibid., p. 234.
ethical aspiration and, therefore, embodies a considerable element of faith. This, however, is justifiable, since there is a reasoned basis for the aspiration and it is implicit in the writer's whole approach that future study must be made to bring further proof of the validity of these conclusions. This final quotation presents an epitome of the author's attitude to the ethical issues of contemporary society.

The evolutionary point of view...establishes the reassuring fact that our human ethics have their roots deep in the non-human universe, that our moral principles are not just a whistling in the dark, not the ipse dixit of an isolated humanity, but are by the nature of things related to the rest of reality -- and indeed that only when we take the trouble to understand that relationship will we be able to lay down ethical principles which are truly adequate. Furthermore, while to the evolutionist ethics can no longer be regarded as having any absolute value, yet their relativity is neither chaotic nor meaningless; ethics are relative to a process which is both meaningful and of indefinitely long duration -- that of evolutionary progress.25

If man follows the promptings of his own nature he will be led to the necessity for a global ethics. This important fact, it seems to me, invalidates the contention of the complete ethical relativist. Man's success as a species depends, not on limited moral codes appropriate for societies in an early phase of development, but on ethical principles applicable to all men. What we were led to postulate on theoretical grounds, arising out of

25 Ibid., p. 256.
introspective reflection, is substantiated by the findings of modern science. Indeed, we may say that the ethical insights of the past have been substantiated by inductive science in the 20th century.

In introspection, we could not eliminate the strong suggestion that our feeling of ought could not be adequately accommodated to a societal environment; it carried the stamp of a wider amplitude. It is of great importance that a thinker of the stature of Julian Huxley should provide scientific evidence to support this view. Even though we may not accept in its entirety his conclusion that the basis of the moral sense is childhood conflict, we must recognize that we have in this theory a reasonable explanation of the origin of the sense of obligation without resorting to mystical or supernatural explanations.
Anthropological studies of the last two or three decades have thrown much light on the relation between childhood training and the nature of the personality pattern established in differing societies. Society imposes certain patterns of behaviour on children and thus establishes norms for adults. Abram Kardiner says there is a dialectic, or reciprocal relationship, between the basic personality structure (the term he employs) imposed by a particular society on its members and the institutions of that society. He refers also to a group basic personality structure constituted by the common denominator of personalities, which is the focal point of cultural integration. The society shapes the individual and the individual in turn shapes the society. If this dialectic exists, then the individual is not the automatic reflex of the societal forces. There is a vast wealth of anthropological data available concerning man's relation to his culture and the presence in human attitudes and actions of the biological inheritance is given ample recognition. So long as this is present, it follows necessarily that there can be no complete relativity. Mention will be made here of two of the studies which are of exceptional value.

The first study is of three primitive forms of society in New Guinea, made by the noted anthropologist of the United States, Margaret Mead, and described in her book, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* and also in her recent work, *Male and Female*. She started from the hypothesis that differences in temperament between the sexes are culturally determined. All three societies studied are very small in numbers and exhibit the most marked differences in childhood training and in their resultant personality traits.

The first group is the Mountain Arapesh, a poor, mild, undernourished people who are gentle, non-aggressive, and non-violent. They are responsive and co-operative, and although there is never enough to eat, each man spends a great part of his time helping his neighbour. The Arapesh treat their babies as soft, vulnerable, precious objects; they are brought up with loving care and the mother never refuses the breast in feeding the baby. This lavishly affectionate treatment results in the gentleness of the entire people mentioned. The society is characterized as one in which both male and female reveal what are commonly regarded by us as feminine personality traits.28

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27 The Arapesh people live in three environments, on the beach, on the plains, and in the mountains. It is the last group which possesses the personality traits referred to.

The second society studied was the Mundugumor, until recently cannibalistic, a violent and aggressive tribe, with every man acting for himself — in marked contrast to the Mountain Arapesh. Children were not wanted and babies were treated callously, and deprived of affection. This led to hostility between father and son, antagonism between the sexes, and the general aggressive pattern of behaviour indicated. This is summarized as both male and female showing what are commonly regarded as masculine traits.29

The third group investigated was the Tchambuli, an agricultural people numbering only some 600 in all. The upbringing of the children is marked by differentiation between the sexes; the boys are given less consideration than the girls and are taught to be submissive. The women perform the main economic functions while the men wear ornaments and go in for artistic pursuits. The result is a society where the men display what we call feminine traits, and the women masculine activity.30 Margaret Mead said this was the only society in which she had worked in which little girls of ten and eleven were more alert, intelligent, and enterprising than little boys.

It is considered that Margaret Mead substantiated her hypothesis to a considerable degree in spite of possibly

29 Ibid., pp. 53 - 54, 420 - 421.
30 Ibid., pp. 54, 97 - 98, 424 - 425.
having over-simplified the facts to fit her theory. And there must, of course, be mentioned a general neglect of the part played by the fundamental biological differences between men and women. In any event, the diversity of temperament from what is usually regarded as normal is most remarkable.

The second study is the artistically written work by Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, in which she compares three cultures each ruled by one predominant motivation. The assumption here is that each society has a pattern of culture which moulds the personality of its members who each live according to the dominant configuration. The society rewards certain traits, or punishes by withholding approval.

The first culture examined is that of the Pueblo Indians of the South-west part of the United States. They are non-authoritarian, non-aggressive, living in harmonious co-operation with each other. They are moderate and sober in their customs and their pattern of association is described as Apollonian, borrowing a term from Nietzsche.

The second culture investigated is that of the Kwakiutl Indians of Vancouver Island, whose pattern is designated as Dionysian. They were fiercely competitive and strove for prestige by elaborate potlatches, and extravagant boasting. They were aggressive, danced to exhaustion
in their ceremonial dances and indulged in symbolic cannibalism, which probably replaced the real practice of an earlier period. They underwent ecstasies of trance experience and manifested tendencies to paranoid delusions of grandeur.

The third group is the Dobus of Melanesia, a primitive group living on an island off New Guinea. Hate and suspicion are the dominant marks of this culture. There is bitter competition for the limited "garden magic" available and no advantage can be gained, so they believe, except at some one else's expense; the idea of co-operation is foreign to them. They are sorcerers and much feared by their neighbours. Their hatred and distrust extend to marital relations and they find no affection in marriage and sex relations.

This brings us up squarely once more against the problem of ethical relativity. The essence of the extreme relativistic view is that there is no way of judging between cultures ethically; that one is as good as another because each can only be judged from within. Do not the foregoing instances of tremendous cultural diversity destroy the position we have adopted? First, we will deal with cultures which exhibit suspicion and hatred to an extreme degree. These are not adequate cultures for humanity and can be rejected on the ground of failing to maintain their existence. Of the Dobus, Dr. Reo Fortune
made the comment, and it was described as his only value-judgement as a scientist, that he wondered why they continued to live when their life was marked by such hate-ridden conditions. He doubted whether in the long run the culture was viable. Turning to the Mundugumor tribe, we find that Margaret Mead was of the opinion that their habits of hostility were such that the survival of the group was threatened. There was almost no tribal solidarity and if the society had not capitulated in its customs to the religious mission working amongst it, its existence would not have long been maintained. A certain minimum of co-operation and other-regarding activity is apparently requisite for society to survive.

Our second comment is that objective evaluation of cultures is not beyond the competence of man. The social scientist should be able to shed the prejudices and subjective influence of his own culture and assess its merits on a realistic basis. On this assumption, then, we might ask whether a visitor from some other galaxy would not judge our own Western culture, in its ideal and potential form to be sure, to be of a higher order than any we have referred to above. Of a higher order because it realizes more of good for its individual members and suggests the possibility that a form of human society may eventually arise in which the ethical concept and its expression will be of a higher order than the utmost we can now conceive.
A. L. Kroeber suggests three criteria for judging the relative merits of cultures. First, in proportion as a culture frees itself from reliance on magic and superstition it may be said to advance. Second, a lessening of the obtrusion of physiological or anatomical considerations into social situations, including blood or animal sacrifices and preoccupation with the dead body, likewise shows progress. Third, advance in technology, mechanics and science.  

Next, let us take a less extreme argument, namely, that cultures are comparable, but that our culture in fact can not be adjudged as better than certain others. Perhaps the Pueblo, for example, all things considered, lived a better existence than we do with our tensions, wars, and dread of the future. There is an appeal in this argument. If not the Pueblo mode of life, then some other simple, harmonious existence close to the soil and the visible aspects of the natural order, carries its appeal as presenting a welcome alternative to the fret and fever of present industrial existence. Nevertheless, this will be rejected on reflection as a temptation to escape the difficulty and challenge of facing and finding solutions to present problems. Not only primitives with their love of adventurous living can live dangerously. Civilized man can, too, in the ways afforded by his culture. Moral equivalents for war will presumably

exist for as long as can be contemplated at the present
time, assuming man will be satisfied with substitutes for
the real thing.

One way of ranking our culture, in its ideal
form, as highest is to consider its complexity. Mere com-
plexity in itself, of course, is of no assured value, but
if the complexity is ordered and integrated the culture
should be a richer one. The world community envisaged by
internationalists does not embrace a dull uniformity of
cultural expression but, to use the happy expression of
I. K. Frank "a world orchestration of cultures." This
cultural symphony would combine many differing themes in a
harmonious whole. Analogously, a culture comprising many
personality types would be richer than one developed around
one cultural theme only, such, for example, as the Pueblo.

In making comparisons with more simple cultures,
there are three considerations which would seem to weight
the scales heavily in favour of our ideal Western culture.
First, increasing control over disease. The horrible inci-
dence of disease on some primitives is a fact many people
have no conception of. Albert Schweitzer writes movingly
of the shocking suffering caused the African natives by
hernia as well as many loathsome tropical diseases.

Second, the removal of ignorance and superstitious
fears. The mental burden caused by dread and apprehension
of the unknown forces of the universe is for many primitives and many people even yet in civilized communities, an intolerable one. Knowledge is one of the indispensable attributes of a worthwhile existence for man; we come back to this once again. Witchcraft and the treatment of insanity come under this heading.

A third point which might be mentioned is the increasing control over the environment and the possibility of assuring an adequate food supply and other material requirements for all members of society. This should also be ranked as an advantage, in respect of those societies subject to want and privation.

I suggest with humility but with assurance that no one who realizes the promise Western culture holds would choose to live in any other society. If he himself would not choose otherwise, he can not conscientiously pronounce some other culture better for other men. This statement is made in the full consciousness that our civilization may have been -- and may in the future prove to be -- less true to its ideals than many another simpler society of the past. It is not a manifestation of cultural bias, I hope, since it is based on a survey of the potentialities of our way of life rather than on present actualities.

L. T. Hobhouse said he was not certain whether our civi-
lization was better than some others.32 It quite probably is not in practice. Dr. Brock Chisholm in a recent broadcast said there are civilizations in the East which show more gentleness and understanding than ours. But knowledge and the other values of the mind are needed to constitute an advanced civilization. Bertrand Russell described the good life as one based on knowledge and guided by love. An open culture is better than a closed one. Ours is open to self-criticism and learning from the experiences of other cultures and its aspirations point the way to a higher form of human association than any civilization has yet achieved.

Of course, a judgement that some other way of life was, or is, better for a certain people may be made on the basis of the circumstances and knowledge applicable to that people. This, however, would register the fact that in the estimation of the person making the judgement the other way of life is less advanced. But if the more primitive people could be given our knowledge and vision how could they be assigned to a less promising culture which we would not choose for ourselves?

More primitive cultures copy Western man's customs, use his tools, and adopt his ideas. The clash of cultures has produced many great tragedies but more sensitive repre-

sentatives of our civilization now seek to integrate simpler societies within modern industrial civilization without violating their existing patterns of living or sacrificing their artistic forms. It may well be that if its full implications can be realized, the final influence of Western democracy on other peoples will be beneficent.

It is to be observed that throughout this chapter, in comparing different cultures what we are assessing are varying degrees of intrinsic value. In the absence of data as to the precise influence of the sense of obligation, societies must be compared on the basis of the intrinsic values realized by them. Since, as we have previously noted, there is an intimate connection between ethical value (the ethical ought) and the intrinsic value achieved by following the admonitions of conscience, it is not illegitimate to adopt this procedure. If a society exhibits a high degree of intrinsic value, it may for practical purposes be assumed that the ethical imperative natural to man is being realized to an accordant degree.

If we accept the conclusion stated earlier that ethical value applies to planetary man, the problem then presents itself whether, in spite of the radical diversity in cultural forms, any regularities appear in the main modes of expression of the ethical injunction. To this question we turn in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER VII

IS THERE A COMMON ETHICAL PATTERN IN ALL CULTURES?

If it is true that all men respond to a basic ethical impulse, it is to be expected that its expression in conduct will be marked to some extent by a pattern of regularity. The investigation of common patterns of human living should throw light on man's growing knowledge of himself.

There are some two hundred cultures extant in varying stages of development. If we could establish agreed criteria of the minimum ethical standards required for a truly human society, it should be possible to study these existing cultures, as well as the twenty or so historical civilizations, in relation to the criteria and thus ascertain whether a basic regularity does, on the whole, exist. If philosophers found from a detailed investigation of existing anthropological data that certain information pertaining to ethical development were missing they might suggest questions to anthropologists for their future studies amongst primitive peoples. If certain regularities appeared to be indicated, supplementary data necessary for conclusive findings might be gathered by workers in the field. A fruitful collaboration could be established between philosophers and anthropologists in the study of human conduct.
Doubtless such an undertaking could scarcely be carried out by one person within any reasonable period. As an alternative to a collective enterprise, a single investigator might classify existing cultures into a limited number of categories on the basis of such considerations as dominant personality pattern, fundamental ethos, prevailing emotional attitudes, and then study two or three from each category. It may be noted, however, that quite possibly societies could not be thus classified until they had been studied. The division into separate groups of cultures might have to be done on the basis of geography, personal judgement, or generalized interpretation of readily available data. For instance, Margaret Mead in her study of cultures in New Guinea selected those to be investigated on the basis of information received from government officials concerned with administration.

The following four criteria are suggested as expressing the essential marks of ethical conduct worthy of mankind:

1) Reverence for Life: Human life (other life need not be considered in the present study) is not to be taken wantonly or unnecessarily. An absolute command against killing might be described as merely a mechanical rule; ethics require judgement and responsibility, not the automatic compliance with an authoritarian command, even though that command be from a moral authority. In any case, life
to be a fitting criterion must be of a certain quality. The criterion must be not mere quantity of life, but life of a quality which has worth for its own sake.

(2) **Honesty**: This is necessary for a stable society.

(3) **Truth Telling**: Telling the truth by most of the people most of the time would also seem to be necessary for an ordered society.

(4) **Respect for Personality**: The concept of the dignity and supreme worth of each human personality is the highest principle of ethics. The other three criteria above can be subsumed under this general rule that human personality should be respected. For instance, this criterion over-rides that of reverence for life. Mere duration in time is not in itself the highest good. The one single human activity which deserves unhesitating condemnation is unnecessary and unprincipled cruelty. All violation of personality involves cruelty, physical or mental, in some degree. Other important aspects of existence traditionally considered moral affairs, such as marriage, sex and family relations are basically unimportant so long as the above criteria are observed. Obviously customs, social etiquette, ceremonials, forms and attitudes, artistic expression, as well as clothing styles and personal adornment vary widely from culture to culture. Such are not of major significance in their bearing on ethics, and provide diversity and richness in the total life of mankind. The four points, however, would appear to be the minimum standards enlightened people would now regard as necessary.
Economic exploitation is, of course, a major concern but can be included under Point (4) Respect for Personality. Also under this heading would come the active helping by a society of those unable to provide for themselves.

In addition to the main investigation of patterns of behaviour, two special lines of inquiry might be as follows: (A) whether there are many "shame" cultures, as Ruth Benedict describes Japanese society, or whether this is a rare development among men. Can one sanction, shame or guilt, be rated as superior to the other? Which issues in the better adjusted and happier society? (B) Is there a correlation between observance of the four criteria and the success of the social group? Is there evidence to indicate whether societies have long endured which ignored them?

In lieu of such detailed investigation, some observations can be made based on a rapid and inadequate survey of some 25 cultures. Such examination reveals tremendous diversity of moral customs. There is no practice


In a "shame" culture the major sanction for good behaviour is external. The feeling of shame resulting from non-conforming conduct can not be relieved by confession. In "guilt" cultures, of which ours is one, the sanction is an internalized conviction of wrongdoing. A person may suffer from guilt though no one knows of his misdeed. Confession will relieve the sense of sin. Regarding the Japanese, however, the author suggests that they sometimes react as strongly as any Puritan to a private accumulation of guilt.
too bizarre, no perversion of rational motive too grotesque, to have been followed by some human group somewhere. If, however, all the facts are viewed in the light of the evolutionary process, picturing man as passing through a long ethical development with a gradually growing sense of the worth of human personality, a greater pattern and coherence enters the record. There is a reason lying behind cruel and exploitative practices -- ignorance, poverty of material resources, fear of supernatural forces.

It must be remarked that this study produces a strong feeling of the poor quality of existence lived by most inhabitants of what we unthinkingly call backward cultures. With the exception of some of the Indian tribes of North America and some of the Polynesian groups, which realized a life of dignity, a verdict is easily rendered that our own way of life with all its faults is superior in quality of life and motivation to other societies. Our own civilization has its dark sides but it includes in addition the concept of progress and possesses the knowledge and latent power to transform the blackness into a worthy life for all human beings.

A commentary on the four criteria follows:

(1) Revere for Life: There is much wanton and merciless killing, though usually against peoples outside the group. The employment of magic to bring about the death of enemies is widespread. The Melanesians are inferior generally in
their conduct to the Polynesians and some of them employ hired assassins to secure revenge for real or imagined injuries. 34 The Aztecs went to war for two chief reasons, to take captives as victims for sacrifice to the gods, and to extend their territory. If a real cause was not found, one was invented or a quarrel was picked. 35

On the other hand, there is much evidence of gentleness and respect for life. Prince Kropotkin states that when travelling in Siberia he often noticed the care which his Tungus or Mongol guide would take not to kill any animal uselessly. 36 The religious sect in India, the Jains, will not take life of any kind, including insects. Amongst the Todas of southern India, a tribe of pastoral buffalo herders, crime seems to be absolutely non-existent and there is no recorded case of a murder or theft. 37

While more data would be needed to substantiate it, it would seem a not unreasonable hypothesis that a social need lies behind all killing which is sanctioned by any cultural group. If the evolutionary concept applies to morals, we should not expect to find a clearcut pattern regarding killing amongst all peoples. As the ethical concept grows the area in which killing is socially sanctioned becomes less. In our own society duelling has died out,

36 Kropotkin, Ethics, p. 59.
penology tends to abolish the death penalty, and war is considered a crime by numerous people. The Incas of Peru sought with success to substitute animals for human beings in sacrifices. Amongst primitives, murder, and other crimes, are punished in most societies, if not in all. The social need which lies behind much killing applies in two chief ways -- in the economic sphere on account of a limited food supply, and in connection with superstitious fears and the propitiation of unknown powers. These may be illustrated under four headings.

(a) **Infanticide**: Abortion and infanticide are common in all societies. Economic considerations probably play a large part in the motives for killing girl babies. Of the Polar Eskimos, living in northwest Greenland less than 1000 miles from the Pole, it is reported that although they greatly desire offspring, parents are frequently forced by circumstances, the lack of adequate means of support, to destroy children. Infanticide is common amongst the very primitive tribes of central Australia. One of the causes is an interesting one. Since the groups move about from place to place in search of food, a mother can hardly carry two infants in addition to her other load. Therefore, if a child is born before the next older is able to walk, it is put to death.

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38 Ibid., p. 443.
39 Ibid., p. 211.
40 Havemeyer, *Ethnography*, p. 117.
In Tasmania, the inconveniences of nomadic life, the want of food, and sometimes the desire to spare a daughter a wretched lot, were amongst the causes of infanticide.\textsuperscript{41}

(b) Gerontocide: Travellers have stated that the nomadic Lapps wandering with their reindeer herds in northern Europe, killed the old people as recently as the closing years of last century, when a hard winter reduced the food supply to a dangerous point. The intention was to preserve the existence of the group and the old people accepted their fate calmly when there was not sufficient food for all to survive.

(c) Cannibalism: Practically all the Congo peoples in Africa are, or were, cannibals and eat human flesh because they like it. Not infrequently families who are friendly exchange the bodies of dead relatives to be eaten.\textsuperscript{42} The reasons lying behind cannibalism are numerous and complex. The practice is often ritualistic, or adopted for reasons of prestige, or because of supernatural fear. Sometimes there is a genuine need for food and it is possible that this was the principal reason in the origin of the practice.

(d) Head-hunting: The Negrito head-hunters on Luzon Island in the Philippines believe that each family must take at least one head per year or suffer misfortune from sickness, starvation, or death.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., p. 136.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., p. 59.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., p. 179.
Hobhouse mentions that the Dyaks of Borneo, who are courteous and hospitable, are also murderous head-hunters.⁴⁴ One of the reasons for the practice of head-hunting in Borneo was so that those who were once the enemies of the head-hunters might thereby become their guardians.⁴⁵ Wise Dutch administrators in recent years have succeeded, after earlier failures, in wiping out the practice by substituting a symbolic act which satisfies the needs of the natives.

These instances give some evidence to substantiate the hypothesis that social need lies behind much of primitive killing. It is seldom done for pure desire for killing in itself.

(2) Honesty: Some degree of honesty, it would appear, is necessary for ordered society. There is a sect in India which is reported to accept stealing as legitimate, but this is not a widespread state of affairs. In Lacedemonia clever thieving was admired.⁴⁶ In South Africa, the Bushmen were professional cattle thieves and periodically raided the herds of their neighbours, chiefly the Hottentots. This practice at one time threatened their survival, for their

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⁴⁵ Havemeyer, p. 206.
depredations aroused vigorous reprisals. Many peoples, however, are found to be honest, including the Iroquois and many other Indian tribes, and the Dyaks of Borneo. Amongst the Semang, a race of true pygmies, in the Malay Peninsula, each adult male owns several wild trees which no one else molests. It is probable that respect for the possessions of others is more general than otherwise amongst peoples of the world.

(3) Truth Telling: According to L. H. Morgan, who made a careful study of the Iroquois, this fine people had a deep love of truth and regardless of the consequences would speak what was true at all times. In Samoa there is an interesting cultural form -- artistic lying. It is considered a social accomplishment to create verbal facts; the lie, however, must be credible or it will be regarded as inartistic. But this could not extend to all areas of life. In winning an existence from nature the Samoans have to observe the truth. For example, if they see a school of fish approaching, there is no lying; the segment of life in which lying is recognized as an art and socially accepted is only a small part of the whole. There is also the case of Arabs described by T. E. Lawrence. At feasts, the Arab chieftains would make extravagant promises which they subsequently would not keep. It was accepted and known that the promises were not intended

48 Murdock, p. 93.
49 Havemeyer, p. 263.
to be observed. But this is not deliberate deception. The complicated business of social life can not be carried out without some degree of mutual understanding and this is impossible unless truth telling prevails over lying.

(4) Respect for Personality: The absolute worth of personality during its time-span -- which, it is to be noted, is not the same thing as the absolute worth of life in a durational process -- sums up and expresses all other ethical criteria. It is far from realization, either among primitive peoples or in our own civilization. It is necessary only to refer to the inferior position accorded women with particular emphasis on such practices as suttee in India, to slavery, to child labour, to widespread cruel practices; examples would be superfluous. As far as cruelty is concerned, the historic civilizations have probably a worse record than primitive societies. The treatment by the white race of African natives, and of the Indians of North and South America, is an unbelievable record of callous infliction of extreme pain, humiliation, and mental suffering.50

Apparenty in Chaucer's time in England it was the accepted thing to beat one's wife. A man who did not do so would be considered as failing to do his duty. If we regard such action as a violation of personality and, therefore, as unethical, is such judgement merely a prejudice of our

culture, or does it denote an ethical perception lacking in an earlier and ruder age? Could we say that men in Chaucer's time should have treated their wives more as human beings? Or should it not be acknowledged that in the context of that particular society, with its existing knowledge, tradition, and social arrangements, the beating of wives was natural and proper? As far as judging action is concerned, men must be judged according to the ethical principles available to them. But was it better for that society that women should have received the treatment they did? Surely, the sum total of human happiness and dignity would have been greater if greater respect for personality had been required by the existing mores.

The influence of individuals who are ethically in advance of their time varies considerably at different periods. In many instances objective conditions must achieve a certain optimum before ethical insights can be translated into practical living. The attempt to limit child labour is an example. Again, the abolishing of slavery over large parts of the earth became a reality only when economic conditions and trends of industrial development made it feasible and led to greater economic efficiency. But the fact remains that the better way of living was previously envisaged by prophets and teachers, and practised quietly by individuals in their own lives. Other ethical advances can be brought about by individual action. The improvement in the treatment of mentally ill persons in the United States brought about by the work of
Dorothea Dix in the nineteenth century, provides an example of the way an individual conception of how human beings should be treated can bring about a radical change in the attitude of society to a large group of its members. Here the individual changed society; not society the individual. Possibly no great economic or material obstacles existed to a more enlightened position of women in Chaucer's time; great changes in outlook, and perhaps of religion, might have been necessary, but some personal example might have been effective in ameliorating the condition.

It is clear from the foregoing survey that no definitive pattern of conduct emerges. But it is, nevertheless, a reasonable hypothesis that men in confronting other men naturally behave towards them within certain limits of acceptable conduct, when not prevented by various obstacles. Winning a living is primary and this would over-ride any natural tendency to altruistic behaviour. When the difficulties of environment and uncertainties of food supply threaten physical existence, it is virtually impossible for all but a few extraordinarily ethical persons not to act in harsh ways. The principle of social need explains many habits which are undesirable even to the group concerned. The practice had a sound reason underlying it in its origin, but it frequently is continued when no longer required on account of inertia. Some origins are lost in antiquity; some are unearthed by anthropologists.
The Zulus in Africa spent much time and trouble in arriving at what they considered justice. A well-known anthropologist, Radcliffe-Brown, said that in his opinion all men have a sense of justice. The following judgement coming from an ethical philosopher who made a detailed study of the evolution of morals, is worthy of note and gives support to the hypothesis suggested in the previous paragraph:

Indeed, the comparative study of Ethics, which is apt in its earlier stages to impress the student with a bewildering sense of the diversity of moral judgements, ends rather by impressing him with a more fundamental and far-reaching uniformity .... when all is said and done, we can hardly deny to any race of men or any period of time the possession of the primary characteristics out of which the most advanced moral code is constructed.

The conclusion can be drawn that the variations in man's conduct do not indicate any fundamental barrier to a better ethical order. Man has deep, unconscious, aggressive tendencies, but knowledge offers increasing ability to control and re-direct these destructive propulsions. It may be that such aggressions can never be eliminated; possibly the dynamic character of man's temperament stems from psychic conflict. This aggressive element, however, need not, on the evidence, be regarded as an intractable factor forbidding the hope of achieving a better ethical way of life for all humanity.

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51 Havemeyer, p. 39.

52 Hobhouse, Morals in Evolution, pp. 28 and 29.
CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is possible to say, in spite of the dismal prospects facing society today, that the human species really has a good chance of getting somewhere worthwhile, if the objective factors of technology and natural resources, and the subjective factors of knowledge, insight, and emotional maturity are fully utilized. We have sought to maintain that ethical value, the moral imperative, is the expression of a capacity natural to man as a species; it can be manifested fully only under the conditions of mature development indicated. It may be that the ethical principle will never be fully developed in all men, but possibly those who do feel the highest promptings will set the ethical tone and standard for their society. Since then, ethical value is an expression of the nature of man, and humanity is greater than any specific culture, we may conclude that ethical value transcends culture.
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