USE OF THESES

This copy is supplied for purposes of private study and research only. Passages from the thesis may not be copied or closely paraphrased without the written consent of the author.
I hereby declare that this dissertation is of my own composition and that all sources used in the preparation of the work have been acknowledged.

(Russell G. Wells)
FREEDOM AS A PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT

BY

RUSSELL GRAHAME WELLS

A Thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts in the School of General Studies within the Australian National University for the Degree of Master of Arts

JUNE, 1968
* Contents *

Introduction. 1

I. The Facts and Their Interpretation. 5

1. The State of Illusion 6
   (i) Mystification by Rejection 8
   (ii) The Normal Socialization Process 18
   (iii) Some Characteristics of Mystified People 30
   (iv) The Nature of the Illusion 34

2. The State of Disillusionment and Disorientation 40

3. The State of Reconciliation and Commitment 48

II. The Significance of the Facts. 52

1. The Self 53

2. The Good Life 75

3. Morality and the Good Life 84
   (i) The Proposed Justification of Moral Action 84
   (ii) Two Alternative Views of the Justification of Morality:
       (a) The Hobbesian or "self-interest" View 94
       (b) The Deontological View 106

4. The Law of Service 113

Bibliography 120
INTRODUCTION

This essay is an enquiry into the significance of a phenomenon which I have called "Mystification". A person is mystified when he has come to regard himself as something he is not; and in consequence, feeling that his actions must be fitting to this image of himself, he does not act in terms of what he wants, but rather in terms of what he thinks he wants. Therefore he is not free; for freedom consists in doing what one wants.

It is helpful to think of a parable of the nineteenth century Hindu saint, Sri Ramakrishna. A tiger cub, whose mother had died in giving it birth, was adopted by a herd of goats, who suckled it with their own offspring. It learnt to make a bleating noise and to eat grass, and it grew up to be slim and meek on this diet. One day the herd of goats was attacked by a fierce old tiger, who was appalled at this abnormal specimen, and, seizing it by the scruff of the neck, carried it off to his lair. There he forced it to eat raw flesh. At first the young tiger was sickened; but when he tasted blood, he felt an unfamiliar gratification and reached eagerly for more. He felt elated and intoxicated, and then opened his mouth in a huge yawn, as if he had awoken from a long sleep. He stretched his

1Following R.D. Laing in his "The Divided Self". 
Capacities, however, strive for expression; and some people experience ever-increasing Absurdity, Shame, and Isolation. Absurdity is the experience of acting in a way which would satisfy one's apparent wants, and yet failing to be satisfied even though the apparent want is satisfied. Shame is the experience of not having been "true to oneself". Isolation is the experience of making only superficial and formal contacts with other people.

If these experiences become so intense as to be intolerable, a person may manage to prescind from his inauthentic existence, and to begin a process of Self-discovery. This is the transition to the second stage, which is the State of Disillusionment and Disorientation. In this stage, a person becomes open to primitive experience which has often been forgotten since childhood. This may be exhilarating or frightening, and is probably both of these. If it is not too frightening for too long, it will be maintained and accepted as authentic experience and an expression of the person's true nature. It may be said of a person at this stage that he has become reconciled to himself, and committed to doing what he really wants to do. He may be thought of as having come to see the world without too many prejudicing preconceptions and generalizations and of being able to actualize his
wants without fear. To the extent that a person is thus reconciled and committed (i.e., has achieved the third stage), he is free in the sense with which we are concerned here.

This process is not one with a definite beginning, a definite sequence of events, or a definite end called "freedom", even though that is how it must be presented for the purposes of clarity. Nor should it be regarded as a once-in-a-lifetime process which guarantees freedom thereafter. Rather it is a recurrent cycle, for Self-actualization is an endless process and is indeed a kind of growth. Every completion of the cycle is a preliminary to its recurrence; and we might say that what a person becomes reconciled and committed to is the repeated experience of uncertainty, the repeated discovery of self-deception, and the acceptance of this state as natural, desirable, and essential for further growth.

Now all the foregoing is an interpretation and a "placing" of the indisputable facts of Absurdity, Shame and Isolation, for the purpose of drawing out their significance. It will be contended here that the "freedom-cycle" indicates something so fundamental about human nature that it enables conclusions to be drawn about the basis of morality and the Good Life.
I. THE FACTS AND THEIR INTERPRETATION
People see the same things in different ways. Not only is this true with well-known cases of ambiguous drawings, it is true also for all kinds of experience. My present concern is to apply it to the way in which people can experience themselves in relation to their environment.

For the present purposes, we can distinguish between those who see the world as a basically hostile, or at best a dubious environment, and who regard themselves as potentially self-destructive, because of their dangerous hidden tendencies; and on the other hand, those who regard the world as a curious and interesting place where they can taste even the bitterest or driest experiences with a kind of detached interest. The first description is, in my terms, a description of a person who is in the State of Illusion, or, as I shall also call him, the product of mystification of his experience. The second description is of a person who is not mystified in this way, but who has a secure identity derived from a source beyond the immediate pressures of the environment.

Because we are interested here in the State of Illusion, we shall concentrate on the mystified person. In what respects is he mystified, or, in what does this illusion consist?
As I briefly mentioned, it consists in his coming to believe that he is less than he is. Every person is born with certain capacities and needs - and there is, as far as I can see, no relevant ground on which a distinction between these has to be drawn. These needs and capacities are the primitive basis for his experience of the world and his interaction with the world. If in expressing these inner tendencies he finds satisfaction and security, then he will be free to develop his abilities and to explore his environment; but if he meets overwhelming punishment or withdrawal of the bases of his security, he will cease to express those tendencies which bring such consequences upon him, and will instead deny and eventually forget those parts of his innate capacities. He will come to understand that he is less than he in fact could be. He will deny the existence of certain tendencies in himself; and indeed, he will deny, for his own safety, the existence of those experiences which stimulate such tendencies. In this way, his experience will be destroyed, and his concept of himself will be reduced.

How precisely can this come about?
(1) Mystification by Rejection

Somerset Maugham wrote a short story about the relationship between two old men in a sanitorium. For years they had bickered, and to all appearances they hated one another. Then one of them died, and the other's grief was astonishing. Yet the story rings true. There was, between these two people, a kind of understanding and responsiveness, only manifest when it had ceased.

This story illustrates the peculiar nature of a real personal relationship. It is conceivable that instead of staying in the situation which so obviously produced constant pain for both people, one or both should have simply left the field in indifference. But this did not occur because each person was not indifferent to the opinion of the other, and each recognized that the other's anger was a recognition or acknowledgement of him as he was. This acknowledgement by one person of even another's undesired traits is a need basic to all people. I shall call this need to be recognized for what one is, the need for recognition.

With this in mind, let us look at the way a person's experience can be destroyed, and his self-concept stunted, from a very early age, by means of the failure to have this need satisfied.
A healthy child is greedy, messy, curious, disobedient, and in many ways a nuisance to his parents. But for all that, the parents who love their child are — strange as it may seem — pleased that the child is not a mirror-image of themselves, but has a "will of its own". They are pleased, that is, to see that their child is a unique person rather than a compliant and obedient puppet. It is not suggested that there are any parents who sincerely reward a child's "naughtiness", for naughtiness is that which is inconvenient to the parents, and perhaps even unsettling or disconcerting, and to behave as if it is otherwise would be a sham. But however trying the parents find their child, there is usually nothing that the child does which would provoke the parents to cease caring about him. The very fact that they stay in the game, rewarding the child with approval for "being good" and manifesting displeasure for "being naughty", is a basic way of showing that they recognize that everything the child does, both good and bad, is nevertheless an expression of his nature, and that they will not give him up as a basically worthless object.
However, sometimes a parent is so insecure, or that is, so uncertain of his own identity, that he uses the child to confirm his own picture of himself. Such a parent is pleased to see his child respond in predictable ways which he dictates; but he cannot tolerate action initiated by the child which is not in conformity with this picture. He has in mind a preconception of the ideal child and the ideal parent. He, of course, is the ideal parent; but he needs the perfect "fall-guy" to perpetuate this image. There will be, in such a relationship, a tendency for the parent to refuse to acknowledge those aspects of his child which call for an unpremeditated response which may be incompatible with his self-concept. It has been decided by the parent that his child is never "naughty", and if naughtiness becomes manifest, then it is not "really" the child who is naughty.

From the child's point of view, this lack of recognition is terrifying, because it induces doubt about his own existence. A child has no basis for a definition of himself except through the reaction of the important people in his environment, the chief person being his mother. If he cries for food, he is fed: this is a response by his mother elicited by him, and thereby he knows that he has a certain power over her, that he is
a person acting of his own accord, and that he has a place in the world, and that this world is not indifferent to him. To the extent that people, in particular his mother on whom he is at first wholly dependent and who represents the world for him, respond to him, he gains a sense of identity, of being an agent who is not entirely helpless. But if on the other hand he finds that when he does certain things his mother is unresponsive, and does not even get angry but behaves as if he is not there, then he has no basis for a sense of his own existence when he behaves like that. He comes to regard himself as a person only when he behaves in such a way as to elicit some response. The rest of him does not exist, or exists only for him and for nobody else. He experiences himself as a split person, as two selves: one for presentation to the outside world, the "good" compliant self who behaves as prescribed and recognized; and one which is hidden and degraded, which he dare not present even if he is aware of it, and this not because it brings painful consequences but because it brings no consequences at all - except perhaps a laughing off.
It is difficult to understand exactly what is so terrifying about this experience of not existing as a significant agent, although there is no doubt that it is the most horrifying of all experiences, as the reports of schizophrenics show. Perhaps it is horrifying because the world is suddenly seen as alien and of an uncertain nature, which does not pronounce judgment one way or the other. It is often said that the fear of the unknown is the most terrifying of all fears, worse even than the worst imaginable consequences. It is when the consequences do not occur that the fear of the unknown arises. A simple case of this is the well-tried technique of a headmaster to keep a schoolboy waiting outside his study, not knowing what to expect; which is usually reported to be worse than the beating which is eventually administered.

The peculiar thing about this whole process is that it builds up an illusion. The illusion consists in the pretense that the parent recognizes the child, but that this recognition is sometimes withdrawn. However, recognition, if it exists at all, is not the kind of thing that can be withdrawn. Recognition of a person is recognition of everything about the person, and not just of certain selected aspects. Pseudo-recognition is a

1 See R.D. Laing, "Politics of Experience", chs. 10 and 11.
better way of describing this latter case, which is a case where it is not the child who is recognized, but the mask which he has been forced to wear. Pseudo-recognition is a manifestation of the opposite of recognition, which is fear. The mother who cannot recognize the real person in her child is striving to maintain a self-image which is threatened by the spontaneous action of her child. Consequently she cannot trust the child, but has to programme him in detail in advance. Probably, she is herself the product of the mystification process to which she is subjecting her child. Presumably she has some reason for wanting to maintain her own self-image, and for using her child to confirm it, and there is reason to think that this self-image is guarded so zealously because she became afraid of expressing those tendencies which brought frightening consequences. If this is true, it means that we have a situation in which a mother who is afraid of her own impulses, hides behind a mask which she is afraid to take off, and it is this mask which deals with her child. The child cannot be expected to know the difference between an authentic response by his mother and an inauthentic one, and acts towards this mask as if it is a face. He initially acts as a person, i.e., spontaneously and without repression, for this is all he can do; but in the face of
a frightening lack of response he withdraws and allows his own face to be obscured by the mask of the "good" (i.e., mother-reflecting) child. He has never come into real contact with another person, but only with another person's mask; and he has been given to understand that he is nothing more than a similar mask.

We can see here the truth of the observation that a person is incapable of recognizing another person to just the extent that he is incapable of recognizing himself; or in other words, that to the extent that he is afraid of acknowledging and expressing his own nature, he is afraid of acknowledging and responding to another person as a real person. We can see also that a person is incapable of recognition of himself to the extent that he is not recognized by others. This seems to be a vicious circle, but it can be broken; for there is always the chance of being recognized by someone in spite of himself, and of his being able to accept this recognition however slowly.

The foregoing description is probably the most extreme case of mystification that could ever occur between a parent and a child. In such a case it would be true to say that there was not even a secret acknowledgement between the people concerned. But there are other cases where a secret acknowledgement is present, but is deeply hidden, and appears not to be present.
can be illustrated by the following

"...en used to play together. The
in the event of a disagreement,
ply threatening to go home,
The older child was invariably
uch apparent indifference; but one
her elders, she called the bluff of
ad, saying, "Very well then, go home!" -
younger one replied in astonishment,
want to play?"

This case, each person wanted the company of the
r, but one pretended that getting her own way was more
important than the other's company. It is conceivable that
threat to "be indifferent" could occur between a child
and a parent, even if the parent is not indifferent. The
parent might pretend that there are bounds beyond which
she would not tolerate the child in the house, in order
that the mere threat of separation might frighten the
child into not crossing those bounds. Or, more likely,
she actually pretends to become indifferent to the child
when he does certain undesired things. If her act is
convincing, she will not only enforce compliance; she will
also destroy the child's experience of himself and falsify
his picture of the world. She will enforce compliance
because of the great fear of being unrecognized which the
child will feel; but she will destroy the child's experience of himself because as long as he does not see that she is bluffing, he will come to deny his tendency to do the forbidden thing; and this because he was not recognized as a person when he gave expression to that tendency, and he is not in a position to affirm that his desire is part of himself.

Obviously the whole picture presented to such a child is absurd. If a mother is not indifferent to her child, and does acknowledge him as a real person even when he is "bad", how can she sincerely threaten to "be indifferent"? Indifference is not something which can be switched on and off at will: you are either indifferent or you care. To pretend otherwise is to misrepresent the whole nature of a love-relationship; it is to portray it as something as fleeting as approval or disapproval. Approval and disapproval, being based on what a person does, must be conditional on what he does; but recognition is not based on what he does, but on what he is. Even if a person does everything wrong, yet it is possible to acknowledge him as a consciousness and react appropriately to him, even if the reaction is almost entirely one of anger; but even anger is an acknowledgement that one is dealing with a person, and not just an inconvenient object.
If a child is treated as a thing which has value to his parents under some conditions but not under others (if he does X but not if he does Y), then he comes to regard himself as worthless in himself, but able to acquire value by complying with his parent's wishes. Again we may expect him to experience himself as split into two selves - an obedient, compliant self for presentation to the outside world, and a hidden, degraded self. This hidden self is feared, because to express it may bring dissolution. Thus, as in the previous case, the result is a person acting in terms of a self-image which is not of his choosing but was imposed from without, by frightened people.

Why would parents who love their children commit this violence upon them? Perhaps it is because they are themselves the victims of it to some extent and need the security that a puppet provides; although they are not so bad in this respect as those parents who have never loved their children at all, and use them purely for this purpose. But perhaps it is that they fear for their children's survival in the outside world, the mass society which imposes its own impersonal rewards and punishments, and which is the "reality" in terms of which the parents act, and of which the child must be taught to act. They are like those beggars who maim their children in order to fit them for the begging profession.
(ii) The Normal Socialization Process

There are many frightening things in the world. Not only can a person feel cut off from genuine contact with his own immediate family (say), but even given this contact, there is still the threat that the whole family will starve. The demands of the wider society make themselves felt so insistently and insidiously that each person, even in a secure social unit, will try to enforce the standards of the wider society on the others in the social unit. That is, we are all puppets to some extent. Not only do parents portray to their children the frightful consequences of social deviance, but they frequently play the part of an official spokesman of the society by punishing, rewarding, exhorting, commending, and condemning various kinds of behaviour.

The impression given to anyone brought up in these circumstances - i.e., just about everyone - is that he has to be very careful indeed about the way he behaves, and even about the way he thinks and the things he wants. If he does not do the "right" thing, then his happiness will be seriously impaired, e.g., by being beaten, deprived of various pleasures for a time, shut in a gaol and so on. In other words, happiness is presented as the sumnum bonum. There is no place for unhappiness in the
world-view so presented, and the good life is the most "successful" one, the one bolstered by the largest number of the strongest providers of security and the most impenetrable defences against unhappiness. The possibility that experiences of suffering, of boredom, of "dryness", of shame, may be necessary to the growth of insight, and may be indications that such development is taking place, is not considered. The aim has become happiness, which sounds reasonable enough, until you realize that it has become "happiness at any cost"; thus, it appears that we act from "self-interest", but a brief consideration of how we do act will throw considerable doubt on this view. It appears to some writers that the search for happiness - the sort of happiness that depends on secure circumstances - has become bogged down in building bulwarks to safeguard the circumstances necessary for happiness. This becomes a kind of ingrained habit, so that even the wealthiest people in a society typically do not luxuriate in their wealth but rather invest it again: and much more so the worker without capital who, anxious to emulate the powerful, is entirely captive to the "work ethic". It is indeed odd to consider that each person thinks himself to be following his own self-interest, yet no style of life could be more futile. This is because
The "self" in the interest of which modern man acts is the social self, a self which is essentially constituted by the role the individual is supposed to play and which in reality is merely the subjective disguise for the objective social function of man in society. Modern selfishness is the greed that is rooted in the frustration of the real self and whose object is the social self. While modern man seems to be characterized by the utmost assertion of the self, actually his self has been weakened and reduced to a segment of the total self - intellect and will-power - to the exclusion of all other parts of the total personality...

He seems to be driven by self-interest, but in reality his total self with all its concrete potentialities has become an instrument for the purposes of the very machine his hands have built.

If it often occurs that people are cast into a mold, it seems that a similar kind of mystification is taking place to the kind that occurred in the cases of apparent acknowledgement-withdrawal, similar in that the person is represented to himself as less than he is; in this case, he is given to understand that "you can't beat the system", and indeed that in view of the penalties of trying to - social isolation, economic deprivation, loss of prestige - he doesn't even want to. What he thinks he wants is to act in terms of the system, in the hope of getting to a position so impregnable that he will at last be able to stop working for the system and have "fun".

Again the situation is paradoxical in appearance. How could anyone get to the stage of believing that he wants to be something which he does not want to be?

A child's environment is limited, and there are few things which are of very great importance to him. But some things are of paramount importance, for instance—if he is very young—food and comfort. He is completely dependent upon his mother to provide these things, and, should they be for any reason withheld, we can expect the experience to be very frightening indeed for the child. Continual treatment of this kind successfully conveys the idea that the child is in someone else's power— for there is no more immediate or convincing proof of this fact than to be made to suffer by that person. The child's basic feeling of security will suffer by these means; and, as we saw¹ this is the cause of deficiency-motivation as distinct from growth-motivation.

It may be a bit far-fetched, for all I know, to suggest that there are many parents in the world who, intentionally or by negligence, make their children physically suffer or actually withhold basic necessities from them, such as food. But it is certain that many of them resort to a system of rewards and punishments intended to influence a child's thought and action, and in addition

¹See pp. 10-11 above.
portray the outside world as extremely threatening. In other words, many children are brought up on the principle that their behaviour, even their desires, can be manipulated according to the principles of pleasure and pain, together with threats of these in the wider society later on, and even for eternity in heaven or hell — these latter concepts being fundamentally misunderstood as pleasure and pain states. Being good is associated with pleasurable rewards, and being bad is associated with punishment or deprivation. Being good usually means being obedient and industrious, and being bad usually means being inconvenient and disobedient. Being good will assure you of a "good future" later on, because employers value obedient and industrious employees, but being bad can lead only to the gutter or the prison, since nobody has any use for layabouts and dreamers.

All of which is true. But there are other ways of conveying this information about society than to take the part of its proponent. It is possible to portray the society as something which exists purely for a person's interest, rather than the other way around; in other words, the society is to be manipulated for my ends, and not me for its ends; and all care must be taken by my guardians that in training me to cope with the world, I do not emerge having lost sight of my own goals, and
having substituted instead the standards suggested by my employer, or my prime minister, or some other authority who would like an extra pawn in his game. It is possible, in other words, to be entirely realistic about the hypocritical and ruthless character of "society", and yet not to assign paramount importance to it, and certainly not to the extent of coming to believe that the real self is being expressed only when a person is acting in a "socially acceptable" way. As Laing says, "there are good reasons for being obedient, but being unable to be disobedient is not one of the best reasons". ¹

As in the cases of apparent love-withdrawal, here again we find a person being made afraid, and thus acting in ways designed to avoid the source of the fear, to the exclusion of other possible ways of acting, as for instance all those ways of acting called "bad", i.e., being a dreamer, being lazy, being disobedient, and perhaps even being unconventional or creative - this latter tendency being specially catered for by most schools. Instead of these tendencies toward spontaneity, we find that people are told frightful stories of what happens to the disobedient and the unconventional, in the (usually justified) hope that they will bend all their efforts to serving the "common good", a mythical entity, and also

¹ R.D. Laing, "The Divided Self", p. 167.
reaping society's rewards and even perhaps the eventual commendation of God Himself in the words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant". The hope is that people will become "realistic", i.e., come to see that pleasure is the only good in life, and therefore should be striven for; and that everything other than facts and events and objects which play a part in building up the conditions for pleasure is, because useless for this purpose, irrelevant to human life and to be ignored.

If the foregoing is a true description, we can see that there are forces at work on all people, especially in the empiricist, utilitarian tradition, which direct our attention to restricted parts of life, and with this is associated a diminished experience of ourselves. This, like the withdrawal of recognition, is a case of mystification of experience. The effect of this kind of mystification is made the same as the other, viz., it focuses our attention upon those things which are necessary for survival. It conditions our perception in such a way that we can only experience those aspects of a thing which are useful to us; and we deny, forget, or refuse to see anything which is likely to upset our picture of ourselves as conscientious and obedient (or whatever our image is). Experiments have been performed to discover whether people actually had what was called
"perceptual defence". In these experiments, a series of four-letter words was flashed on a screen so fast that the subjects could reasonably have claimed not to have been able to read them. Some of the words were obscene. It was found that a significant number of the subjects failed to "see" the obscene words, though they had no such trouble with the others. It may have been that the subjects "saw" the words, but prudently refrained from writing them down with the others; but it may have been (and since the experiment was designed to show this, probably it was) that the subjects did not admit even to themselves that they had seen anything taboo.

The restriction of the ability to experience the world and oneself in any but conventional ways is reinforced by the learning of language. Language is, among other things, the embodiment or encapsulation of a number of concepts found useful to a culture; and the changes in fashion among the concepts used will reflect the preoccupations of the culture. Concepts not currently useful will be forgotten, and although they may still be recorded in the dictionaries or in old writings, they will be incomprehensible, as will their synonyms. For example, for us, most religious discussions are meaningless, though this was not always so. Once there was a definite and easily grasped meaning to the words, "grace", "faith", 
"repentance", "salvation", "sin", but now these words are for us the relics of an outworn superstition and nothing more. There are many things which I do not see because there exists no concept for them. To clarify this, I can do no better than to quote the following comments:

In his study of "Memory and Childhood Amnesia" Schachtel gives a particularly illuminating account of the way in which language inevitably reflects the dominant preoccupations and the limitations of a society. By such reflection it restricts perception and experience unless refreshed by innovation. Certain kinds of experience may be buried or lost because the culture provides no language through which they can be expressed. He dissent from Freud's view that early childhood experiences are forgotten because they are so largely concerned with sexual desires later repressed or censored. He advances the hypothesis that these experiences are forgotten because they are of an immediate and diffused nature for which the categories and verbal signs of the conventional adult world, notably in contemporary Western society, provide no means of expression. As the child becomes more socialized, he becomes less capable of entering fully and vividly into the kinds of experiences that were open to him earlier, and, since customary verbal categories are unsuitable, less able to lay hold of any media of recall.

There follows a quotation from Schachtel:

...the...categories of memory...are not suitable vehicles to receive and reproduce experiences of the quality and intensity typical of early childhood...

---

Adult memory reflects life as a road with occasional sign-posts and milestones rather than as the landscape through which this road has led... The capacity to see and feel what is there gives way to the tendency to see and feel what one expects to see and feel, which, in turn, is what one is expected to see and feel because everyone else does. Experience increasingly assumes the form of the cliche under which it will be recalled because this cliche is what conventionally is remembered by others.  

It is possible to question the proposition that my conceptual scheme imposes restrictions upon my ability to experience, yet there is evidence that some experiences are completely irreconcilable with any normal conceptual schemes, and hence that to the extent that conceptual schemes are held to by us, as ways of interpreting and classifying the world, to that extent we shall make it difficult to have these experiences; nevertheless these experiences are possible to human beings; from which it follows that the conceptual structure upon which we depend to render the world manageable probably also restricts one of our own capacities, viz., the capacity to see things as they really are, in all their aspects. That there are such experiences can be attested by any book on mysticism, where the core of the mystical experience will be usually described as perception of the world as a unity, such that everything is identical with everything else, and yet,

in some other sense, not identical with anything else. Many mystics stress the feeling of "oneness" which they have, as if the usual distinction between self-here and that-there had somehow dissolved. One of the ways in which this kind of experience is spoken about is by way of intentional contradiction, especially when speaking of the "identity of opposites", probably the most shocking aspect of the experience of "unity in multiplicity", for example:

Black does not cease to be black, nor white white. But black is white and white is black. The opposites coincide without ceasing to be what they are in themselves.  

Stace comments:

And this is stated to be, not merely a series of words, but what someone physically saw. This is shocking. But anyone who intends to read this book should get accustomed to shocks. Any writer who is honest about mysticism, as well as familiar with it, will know that it is utterly irreconcilable with all the ordinary rules of human thinking, that it blatantly breaches the laws of logic at every turn...  

This restriction of our experience would appear to cause a felt lack in many people, such that we can speak, not only of a capacity to see things as they are, but a need to do so. There are some accounts (in Stace) of people whose lives were "meaningless" or "empty", and who,

---

1 Rudolf Otto in "Mysticism East and West", quoted in W.T. Stace, "Mysticism and Philosophy".

after an "extrovertive mystical experience" (a dropping of the perceptual categories for a while), reported a feeling of fulness, meaning, etc., instead. It would appear then that to perceive things whole is a need, such that

(i) its absence breeds illness
(ii) its presence prevents illness
(iii) its restoration cures illness;

or that is, it is a deep want of the person which is denied expression; and hence, because it is denied, a person is not free to do what he wants.

Thus, we may say that the socialization process, as we know it: (i) induces a fear of the consequences of deviance out of proportion to those consequences, and, in view of the consequent loss of freedom (through being cut off from one's wants), actually more detrimental to a person than the consequences of deviance themselves; (ii) induces a false picture of the Self as a person who is motivated by pleasure and pain alone, and who therefore is beholden to the sources of pleasure and to those forces purporting to defend one from pain; (iii) precludes us from experiencing the world as we could, since we are predisposed (by the inordinate concentration on need-fulfilment) to concentrate only on "useful" aspects of it, and since this tendency is reinforced by the imposition of conceptual categories through language.
(iii) Some Characteristics of Mystified People

Let us now sum up the distinction between mystified people and those who are not mystified.

1. The mystified person may be regarded as a negatively-motivated person, because he is mainly concerned with making good his deficiencies. We have seen that he is a person who lacks satisfaction of certain basic needs, in particular the need to be recognized as a person rather than as a thing for the use of others. To the extent that he is mystified, i.e. regards himself as something he is not (for example, a puppet for the satisfaction of his parents or the social machine, or an organism entirely motivated by rewards and punishments), to that extent he inappropriately directs his activities towards goals the attainment of which will fail to satisfy him. But the more desperate he becomes, the more frantic his striving becomes. He feels more and more a need which he does not understand - an unpleasant state of tension, which appears to him as something to be avoided. He is deficiency-motivated because he is concerned, not with the expression of his real nature, but rather with avoiding the desire to express it; for it is this expression which has been so fearfully penalized. Therefore many impulses which spontaneously arise in him he will regard as a nuisance or
a threat, and will concentrate on denying them, repressing them or avoiding them. It is only to be expected that a person who has had unsatisfactory experiences in trying to gratify his wants and who cannot now be sure of gratification will experience himself as explosive and self-destructive.

But if past experience has been reassuring and the present situation is secure, then the states of tension caused by the appearance of impulses and feelings will be welcomed to consciousness, because they are pleasurable tensions. "It is simply inaccurate to speak in such circumstances of tension-reduction, implying thereby the getting rid of an annoying state. For these states are not annoying".¹ This latter case might be called a case of a "growth-motivated" person, or a "Self-actualizing" person.

2. This being so, it is not surprising that Self-actualizing people find that most of their activities are rewarding, rather than the more obviously pleasant ones. As Maslow says:

Activity can be enjoyed either intrinsically, for its own sake, or else have worth and value only because it is instrumental in bringing about a desired gratification. In this latter case it loses its value and is no longer pleasurable when it is no longer successful or efficient. More frequently,

¹A.H. Maslow, "Toward a Psychology of Being", p.27.
it is simply not enjoyed at all, but only the goal is enjoyed. This is similar to that attitude toward life which values it less for its own sake than because one goes to Heaven at the end of it. The observation upon which this generalization is based is that self-actualizing people enjoy life in general and in practically all its aspects, while most other people enjoy only stray moments of triumph, of achievement, or of climax or of peak-experience.

3. Although everyone is in fact equally dependent upon the environment to satisfy his needs, the mystified person feels more dependent upon it, and focuses his attention on manipulating it for his own ends. This contrasts with the growth-motivated person, whose experience is not overwhelmingly frightening, and who concerns himself more with realizing his own "higher" goals of Self-development. In the first case, the person can be expected to be more dependent upon the desires of those outside him to determine his activities — he is more "other-directed" or "heteronomous"; in the second case, the person is more "self-directed" or "autonomous", or more "psychologically independent" of the environment. We can expect this kind of person to develop his own style of life and his own personality to a greater extent, since he is less amenable to pressures to conform.

---

1 A.H. Maslow, op. cit. p. 29.
4. The mystified person will be unable to regard other people in an "admiring" and unmanipulative way, because he will look upon them as need-satisfiers, e.g., as love-providers or security-providers. He feels the need of recognition and real contact, but he falsely believes that this can be obtained by forcing them to recognize him. In fact, of course, this tends only to drive them away, since they too need to be recognized in all their aspects, rather than used as love or security providers. As a security-provider, one person is about as good as another; but people regarded in all their aspects differ greatly in the admiration they deserve.

It should be pointed out that these two "types" of people are presented purely for the purposes of explanation. It is not that some people have attained a state of freedom in which they do anything they want, actualizing their real natures, whilst others, less fortunate, are still lost in the labyrinths of mystification. Freedom and Mystification are not states, but rather processes or activities in which one finds oneself engaged. From time to time, everyone behaves in a "mystified" way, and at other times in a "free" way. "Attaining freedom", or finding the real Self, is an activity without an end, because the Self is not a thing; it is a force which seeks expression. "To be oneself" is to allow that force to flow freely.
(iv) The Nature of the Illusion

In the foregoing I have tried to show how a person might come to regard himself in a false way, and to interpret his experience in a false way — in such a way as to bolster the false and inadequate image he has of himself. Let us begin by considering the nature of this illusion.

There are two ways in which a person might misinterpret an experience. In the simplest case, he might look at something which is a long way off and is a relatively large object and yet so misinterpret the perceptual cues as to think that it is a relatively small object which is closer than in fact it is. This kind of illusion is familiar to everyone, and can be easily corrected by the person himself by a few simple tests. For example, in this case he might move to the side and discover that the object which he took to be close and small does not behave in the normal way with respect to the laws of perspective; consequently he will immediately realize his mistake and come to see the object as distant and large. But there is another way in which a person can be mistaken, viz., if he is totally hallucinated about what he sees. I do not believe that this actually occurs in cases of seeing things, but it is conceivable that it should, and because
I shall want to apply the concept of total hallucination to a person's experience of himself, it will be advantageous to construct a simple perceptual example.

Suppose someone sees a distant and large object as close and small. Then suppose he moves to the side and finds that the angle of vision with respect to that object does not change as much as we normally expect it to change when this is done with a close object. At this point most people would instantly realize that they have made a mistake. But the totally hallucinated person does not admit this. If he has some compelling reason not to admit his mistake, he will have to falsify the nature of all perspective changes; and so for all other tests he might carry out to prove his original interpretation correct. For example, if he reaches out to touch the object and fails to do so, he will (if he wants to maintain his original interpretation enough) have to say that he is touching it, or that it is intangible though visible, or that his arm is shorter than it in fact is so that he wouldn't expect that test to work, and so on. In this way we can see that any attempt to show up the mistake will be without weight for him, because he will have to falsify more and more experiences which conflict with the first one. In other words, it has become impossible to falsify his original picture, since everything
in his experience is systematically misinterpreted to bolster it. Obviously, if anyone does this to the nth degree of consistency, he will find it difficult to survive, because he will act in the world so ineffectually as to be unable to satisfy even his own bodily needs. But if a person is totally hallucinated, he will have to say that he is satisfying them. Mere phantasies will not of course keep him alive; but if he is put in a psychiatric hospital, say, his inability to look after himself will not cause death, since there will be others who look after him. Alternatively, he could deceive himself so as to interpret percepts correctly enough to satisfy his bodily needs, and later pretend that he did not experience anything contrary to his interpretation-system. That is to say, he can either distort his experiences, or deny them altogether. Probably both of these devices will have to be employed.

I shall say of this kind of person that he is not open to experience, because he will accept only those experiences which support his picture of the world, and no others. In this respect he differs from the person who simply makes an isolated mistake and can correct it when contrary evidence comes to hand. The totally hallucinated person will need to maintain a rigid mental "set" in order to keep his picture intact. He will need to label and
classify all new experiences into pre-arranged categories, and if any should fail to fit into any categories then those experiences will just not be accepted into consciousness. We might say, then, that for the totally hallucinated person experience is stereotyped.

In a sense, the totally hallucinated person (who is, as far as I am concerned, merely a constructed type for the purposes of clarification) is like the mystified person we have been discussing in the previous section. This is because for both of them, no evidence can show them their mistakes. The mystified person is, as I see him, unable to conduct any test which could show him that he is mystified, and his experience is systematically misinterpreted by him, in such a way as to perpetuate his errors. For example, take the person who has never been accepted as he is, and who in consequence, thinks he is what he has been told he is. To be specific, let us take the following case.

Suppose someone was born in the worst kind of industrial slum of drunken parents, and from his earliest days, had to live by his wits. He always felt that it was only by being shrewd and calculating that he was able to survive at all. Thus, as a measure of indispensable security, he was forced to stifle all kinds of natural feelings, for example of trust or generosity. Anyone
treated him with generosity was immediately suspect - his immediate reaction being, "What does he want out of this?". This reaction instantly poisoned the relationship. The other person might begin to doubt his own motives, and to act in the only way that the suspicious person understands; he might even feel forced to demand something in return for his generosity in order to make any contact at all. If this should occur, the original picture of people held by the suspicious person would be confirmed. And even if the generous person were not to doubt himself, the suspicious person could still nurture the secret thought that he was the victim of some plot, despite all appearances; for after all, every confidence man knows that he has to appear to be a friend if he is to take his victim unawares.¹

This is an example of how a mystified person's experience is stereotyped. Because the world is seen as hostile, it is best to be on the safe side by treating it as hostile. But this attitude ensures that nothing could ever be seen as anything but hostile; and when the incident with the generous man is passed, the suspicious man could excusably breathe a sigh of relief saying, "My word, that was a close shave. Nearly got caught there!". In other words, the false interpretation is self-validating.

¹This example adapted from H.A. Williams' "The True Wilderness", p.69.
Everything works to confirm the picture; everything which is contrary to it can be distorted or denied.
2. THE STATE OF DISILLUSIONMENT AND DISORIENTATION

How could a person leave this first stage, considering that it is so self-validating? My own view is that he is forced out of it, if he is, by the encounter with absurdity, shame, or isolation. He has begun to circulate on a side-track, where everything is the same. Time and again he has justified the reasonableness of his defensive system, yet there seems so little of satisfaction or even interest behind the walls which not only shut the world out, but shut him in as well; and not only shut him in, but, by isolating him from a grasp of reality, cause his consciousness to circulate upon itself, to set up dialogues with itself to prove its own existence. Typically the dialogue is between the Self and the self-image. Thus he sometimes identifies himself with the image he projects, and sometimes he repudiates this identity. In sum, he is "schizoid", a state which is essentially unpleasant:

The term schizoid refers to a person the totality of whose experience is split in two main ways: in the first place, there is a rent in his relation with his world and, in the second, there is a disruption of his relation with himself. Such a person is not able to experience himself
"together with" others or "at home in" the world, but, on the contrary, he experiences himself in despairing aloneness and isolation; moreover, he does not experience himself as a complete person but rather as "split" in various ways, perhaps as a mind more or less tenuously linked to a body, as two or more selves, and so on.

This state is experienced in varying degrees depending upon the degree of mystification to which a person has been subjected. The extreme case is that of the chronic schizophrenic, but more usually this experience is one of depression or boredom, perhaps together with a dimly suspected vision of something more fulfilling, or even of a conviction that there must be something more - a faith born of despair. There may be a vague memory of some real contact, or of genuine spontaneity, however remote. We can imagine various responses to this situation.

For instance, a patient of the psychiatrist Carl Rogers reported as follows:

You know, it seems as if all the energy that went into holding the arbitrary pattern together was quite unnecessary - a waste. You think you have to make the pattern yourself; but there are so many pieces, and it's hard to see where they fit. Sometimes you put them in the wrong place, and the more pieces misfitted, the more effort it takes to hold them in place, until at last you are so tired that even that awful confusion is better than holding

1R.D. Laing, "The Divided Self", p.17.
on any longer. Then you discover that left to themselves the jumbled pieces fall together quite naturally into their own places, and a living pattern emerges without any effort at all on your part. Your job is just to discover it, and in the course of that, you will find yourself. You must even let your own experience tell you its own meaning.

Another reaction could be simply that of saying No, that is, the refusal to reduce our ideal of the good life to the tedious facts of this state of absurdity, despite the fact that all the evidence points to its supremacy and continuation. It seems that this was the reaction of some existentialists to it.

But although it is possible to stop short, to stay in the stage of absurdity, it is also possible to imagine a kind of transcendence of it. If a person has not been too hopelessly maimed, there is always the chance of a way out; but this chance can only come to those who have put off their old self-deceptions and defences, at least by "saying No". This is essentially an heroic act; yet not a decision for those who make it, rather a choice between the inauthentic and safe, and the authentic and perilous, where there is no question of which is the more desirable, and hence, of which must be chosen. For example, a case where two friends are engaged in a power-struggle, each trying to get his own way, a struggle so

---

intense that the whole relationship is jeopardized. We can imagine here that the people concerned, once they perceive this possibility, will realize that their struggle is absurdly out of proportion; for what is the point of winning the struggle if you kill the opponent who gives it any meaning it ever had? Saying No consists here in refusing to perpetuate the farce, in at least calling a truce in order to examine your own motives and sincerity, and in prescinding from the whole idea of dominance-submission, or "power games".

This kind of insight, that a person is acting against all he really wants, can permeate every aspect of life. If a person is fortunate, it can result in asking, of anything with which he associates himself, "Is this really what I want to do?", and if he believes that it is not, then he will not do it.

It is of course possible to make mistakes in answering this question; but we can imagine that sometimes, more often than before, the ever-increasing consequences of these mistakes will be detected more quickly, faced more squarely, and admitted to be mistakes, than before the "breakout".

In other words, the person has come to accept responsibility for his actions and his style of life, whereas formerly he was content to pass on this responsibility to external forces: I was only doing my job,
I was acting under orders, I was under pressure, it is the way I was brought up, and so on (mauvaise foi). Now, the considerations are expanded to recognize the possibility of quitting the job, of disobeying orders, of working to get above a restrictive upbringing. Less and less does he look to others for approval and disapproval, decisions and choices. He recognizes that the only question that matters is: "Am I living in a way which is deeply satisfying to me, and which truly expresses me?".

It may also be expected that a person in this state will not only be disillusioned about the value of the old self-image, by realizing that it costs more than it is worth; it is possible that he will be disoriented as well. This is because the rigid categories according to which he structured his relationships with the world, as well as those according to which he distorted and repressed his own spontaneous feelings to fit his own self-image, will collapse with the repudiation of that self-image. He may, for example, come to see that it is not the case that everyone is hostile to him, or that all negroes are fools, as well as seeing that not all trees have green leaves and brown trunks, and so on. Moreover, he will not say that he is always considerate or always a liberal voter, or indeed that he is always consistent and of a fixed nature.
In other words, he may become more open to experience, so that it is no longer stereotyped; and he will become more liable to regard himself as a process rather than as a fixed and static entity.

This whole train of experiencing, and the meanings I have thus far discovered in it, seem to have launched me on a process which is both fascinating and at times a little frightening. It seems to mean letting my experience carry me on, in a direction which appears to be forward, toward goals that I can but dimly define, as I try to understand at least the current meaning of that experience. The sensation is that of floating with a complex stream of experience, with the fascinating possibility of trying to comprehend its ever-changing complexity.¹

At first the unfamiliarity of this way of life may be frightening, but, as I said at the beginning (p. 3), if it is not too frightening for too long, it will be maintained. As a person becomes more at home in it, he may be expected to appreciate its immense advantages over his previous inauthentic existence. This is not to say that he will be any "happier", in the sense that life will be more pleasurable and less painful. But it does mean that he will be more satisfied than before, such that even experiences which were previously avoided as the essence of all evil, such as experiences of sadness, unhappiness, anger, tragedy, shame, even boredom and a feeling of

inauthenticity, will be accepted as conducing to a fuller life. This is because it becomes evident that certain kinds of suffering have a meaning, i.e., can be used as clues to the complete life, if correctly apprehended. Anyone who has lived to this point, and who can understand the whole process, may be expected to see how futile it was to try so desperately to defend himself against unhappiness, and even how useful the resulting feelings of absurdity or shame were in producing greater insight.

If a person adopts this view towards his life, if he is fortunate enough to have been able to see the use of absurdity, that is, of being disillusioned and disorientated, then it can be said of him that he has become "reconciled" and "committed". He has become reconciled to his own nature, in that he accepts his spontaneously arising feelings and allows them free expression, rather than repressing them. And he has become committed to doing what he wants to do, not only in the sense that he can see how much more preferable that is to his previous behaviour in accordance with the old self-image, but also in the sense that he associates himself with his actions, or accepts responsibility for them. We might say that he has become reconciled to himself as he really is, and committed to doing what he really wants.
In this achievement freedom consists. Freedom is always "freedom to do what you want" — this is always implied whenever we talk about someone's being free with regard to anything. For example, a person is politically free if and only if he can do those political actions he wants to without restraint; if he was subject to automatic execution for expressing a heterodox opinion, then he would not be politically free. Just so, he is physically free only if he can perform the physical acts he wants to perform; but if he is locked in a jail, or tied up, or otherwise restrained from doing what he wants, he is not physically free.

The sort of freedom which is the subject of this essay is concerned with internal restraints, the kind imposed by a person on himself, because he did not trust himself, and this because he was never trusted. But now, because of the process I have described, the person who emerges is free of these restraints, that is, can do what he wants — or if he can't, it's no longer because of inner restraints.
3. THE STATE OF RECONCILIATION AND COMMITMENT

It may be thought rather odd that the description of Stage II - The State of Disillusionment and Disorientation - seems to have rendered unnecessary a further description of Stage III - The State of Reconciliation and Commitment. This last stage seems to have disappeared into the second. Why is this so?

Let us consider the nature of the attainment of freedom. We saw that it was attained by accepting everything about oneself: not only the desires and urges thrown up into consciousness, desires which previously were taboo and to be denied; but also by accepting the experiences of disillusionment and disorientation as natural, inevitable, salutary, and necessary for further growth. In other words, nothing has changed, but one's faith has been strengthened.

We may regard the "Stages" in the achievement of freedom as a kind of journey which a person undertakes. At the beginning, the hero-to-be does not know he is hero-material at all, being in the state of Illusion. But, as this state brings about its own destruction, in the form of an experienced listlessness instead of the promised
contentment and stability, the hero experiences the "call to adventure". If the call is answered, the hero sets out by choosing the stern path of refusal to perpetuate his own inauthenticity, a period that might be looked upon as a kind of spiritual discipline. This is perhaps what Eliot had in mind in the words:

From wrong to wrong the exasperated spirit
Proceeds, unless restored by that refining fire,
Where you must move in measure, like a dancer.

It would appear to the traveller that he is like a person leaving the solid ground of accustomed routine, to board the ferry boat across a turbulent river to some farther shore (— a Buddhist image); or like those innumerable heroes of myths, charged with the performance of perilous labours, at the end of which there lies a fabulous treasure. But as he approaches the goal, he begins to revise his picture of the entire quest; because it gradually becomes apparent that the point of the whole process is not to attain some treasure at the end, but rather to see that the treasure is present all the time, that it was at his feet or in his hands, but that he could not recognize it. The Buddhists believe that Enlightenment exists only for the unenlightened, but that for the Enlightened One there is no Illusion and no Enlightenment.

T.S. Eliot, "Four Quartets", pp.54-5.
The meaning that I assign to this is as I have tried to describe above in all the foregoing: that there is no final achievement of freedom; rather

There is only the fight to recover what has been lost
And found and lost again and again...¹

Thus, as I see it, there is no ultimate goal such that when it has been achieved, all striving is at an end, and one understands all. On the contrary, what appeared to be the end is found to be only the beginning; each increase of insight is only a preparation for a new struggle, for a new and higher-level blindness, a revelation of how much still lies ahead. If there is anything which can be called enlightenment, or freedom, or Self-realization, it consists in coming to see that the blindness, the life struggle for insight and freedom, is a glorious and a happy one; it consists in seeing that your blindness is in a sense chosen by you again and again as a kind of discipline which alone makes possible and confers value upon the transcending of this state.

At the end of his novel "Steppenwolf", Hermann Hesse writes:

I knew that all the hundred thousand pieces of life's game were in my pocket. A glimpse of its meaning had stirred my reason and I was determined to begin the game afresh. I would sample its tortures

¹Ibid. p.31
once more and shudder again at its senselessness. I would traverse not once more, but often, the hell of my inner being.

One day I would be a better hand at the game. One day I would learn how to laugh.

Before leaving this section, I should stress that the person who reaches the Third Stage has achieved something which he didn't have before, namely, a new and more positive attitude. The point of the above is only to show that it was not what he originally thought it would be. When he began his journey, he was still able to think only in terms of the rewards and punishments to which he had been conditioned; consequently he conceived the end goal as the achievement of a contentment which the old life had failed to provide. But this is not what he in fact gains. Instead, he gains insight - the understanding that happiness and unhappiness, of the kind that he used to regard as all-important, are not the primary realities of life, but are on the contrary, unimportant in some way. The important thing is to be committed to living fully, i.e., realising his true nature, even though this involves being vulnerable to all kinds of perils undreamt of before.

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FACTS
The foregoing discussion is presented as a description and systematization of certain facts of human experience. If my descriptions have been accurate ones, if, for example, the concepts of mystification, absurdity, and freedom are truly applicable to certain experiences, and if they are connected in the way I have maintained, then a number of conclusions can be drawn. These conclusions will enable us to understand what is meant by The Good Life, and what morality is.

1. THE SELF

The first conclusion we can draw from the description of the achievement of freedom is that there is something about people that can be perverted. For this, after all, is what mystification is - the creation of an image of oneself in terms of which one acts, such that one becomes inauthentic. If we can talk about a person being inauthentic, it follows that we are able to give some meaning to the concept of a person being authentic. We might say that there is a "true" human nature.
How is this "nature" to be understood? The description which most obviously springs to mind is that "true" human nature is what a person perceives when he has a true or adequate self-image, as distinct from a false or inadequate one. This would imply that some picture of the Self is a "true" one as distinct from a "false" one, just as a sketch of a person's face might be a more or less accurate one. This would suggest that the Self, of which one can have a true or false image, is a kind of thing which has certain characteristics which can be either adequately or inadequately perceived.

This would be a misunderstanding of a very fundamental kind. The Self is not a thing. It is rather a force— "that central inner force...which is the deep source of growth"¹, or "the pregnant, potential, not-yet-differentiated stuff of personality, moving always toward higher integration and fuller manifestation".² Therefore, there can never be a "true" or "adequate" self-image, since any image is inadequate. To "be oneself" is to allow the inner force to flow freely, rather than to impose fixed structures upon its expression, or to attempt to determine its direction. For what is the nature of mystification? The only characterization of it which I have given is the adoption of preconceptions and the

²Ibid., p.251.
maintenance of prejudices about the way a person is. And this, after all, is what is meant in any talk of a "self-image". The person who believes that he has at last conceived a "true" image of himself, might be tempted to say, "At last I see what I really am. I am X, Y and Z. I shall henceforth direct my actions in a manner fitting to those qualities". But, however exalted the qualities X, Y and Z are, the result is always a preconception about what he should do, how he should feel, and so on. Any spontaneously arising impulse not consistent with a person characterized by X, Y and Z, will instantly be perceived as a threat, something to be denied. But this is just another form of mystification. The free man, by contrast, is one who has cast off all that. He is no longer dependent on images of himself, but instead is content to accept himself as he is. He is not locked in a struggle against spontaneity, a constant attempt to control himself; he has no fear about his impulses; he is prepared to "let go" and see what happens.

This, by the way, is an opportune time for considering the notion of "self-control". Everyone is familiar with the experience of "struggling with himself": he feels he "ought" to do a certain thing, but he also feels disinclined to do it, or vice-versa, and so on. This might be taken to support the kind of picture of the Self
in which one part, perhaps called "Reason", or perhaps "The Will", can control the other part or parts, which might be called "the appetites", or "the emotions". In addition, the controlling part of the Self, whatever it is, actually controls itself. This, I suspect, is what is frequently meant by "self-control": not only does one part of the Self control the rest of the Self, but also the "controller" is completely self-directing.

Now this picture is a misconception, in my opinion, first because it arises from a mystified person's self-analysis, and second because if followed to its logical conclusion it refutes itself. To take the first point first, let us consider the nature of this analysis of the Self. To make divisions between controller and controlled within the Self has no point, unless it is felt that there is a failure of control, or a difficulty experienced in controlling oneself. If, whenever I decided consciously - with the reason or the will - to do something, I never experienced the slightest disinclination, misgiving, or internal difficulty about doing it, then I should have no reason for considering the question of whether or not the conscious "controller" was in fact a controller. Indeed, there could arise in my mind no question of a division between a controller and a controlled within the perfect unity called "me": because I should have no experience of
division. If my consciousness (and a controller implies a conscious controller, since unconscious control is tantamount to no control) never experienced a resistance to its decrees, then how could the concept of an internal force in opposition to another, ever arise? Only if I consciously decide to do something and find resistance from within, could I conceive of a resistant element. Indeed, the whole concept of Self and the World outside can gain content only because the Other (taken here as the outside World) offers resistance to my actions. In the present case, the Other seems to have got "inside" me, since that appears to be the source of the resistance.

Consider the following case. A person is considering how to spend a free evening alone. He has no pressing duties, and it is simply a question of amusing himself. He decides that of all the things open to him tonight, he most of all wants to go to a particular film. Nevertheless he doesn't go. This situation, which is odd to say the least, can be represented as follows:

(i) I wanted to go to the film.
(ii) Nothing was preventing me.
(iii) I didn't go to the film.

Now I suggest that these three propositions form an inconsistent triad, so that any two imply the contradictory of the first, thus:
I wanted to go to the film; (i)
Nothing prevented me; (ii)
Therefore, I did go to the film. \(\sim(iii)\)

and again:

Nothing prevented me going to the film; (ii)
I didn't go to the film; (iii)
Therefore, I didn't want to go. \(\sim(i)\)

and finally:

I wanted to go to the film; (i)
I didn't go to the film; (iii)
Therefore, Something prevented me. \(\sim(ii)\)

The last case is the one which interests us here. If we suppose that the person who wanted to go, but didn't even make the initial moves towards this end, was not prevented by any \textit{external} factor, such as being locked in his room, then the conclusion can only be that he was prevented by some \textit{internal} factor which opposed the realization of his consciously formulated want.

Only if he is worried by this - and the fact that a want is unfulfilled constitutes the worry - may he then begin to postulate the existence of various parts or divisions within himself. And the type of division that he will be prone to make will be that between consciousness and unconsciousness. For the original want is conscious, but it is resisted by something which, while not external to him, is not conscious.
Now this battle within oneself is characteristic of the **mystified** person. Recall that the mystified man is one who imposes images upon himself; these images, to be "imposed" at all, are necessarily possessed consciously (though not necessarily articulately or systematically); but what seems to oppose them is unconscious. Hence the following division:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consciousness</th>
<th>Unconsciousness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Image</td>
<td>No Self-Image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason</td>
<td>No reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will-power</td>
<td>No will-power</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The conscious part of the Self is conceived of as acting in accordance with a self-image, by means of rational deliberation about how to actualize this self-image (which dictates conscious wants), and enforcing the obedience of the unconscious by means of will-power, the psychic policeman.

This whole picture, which is a very common one, is the result of an attempt to understand the implications of the experience of the mystified person, which is an equally common type of experience. But it is clear that only mystified people would make such an interpretation of mystified experience. A "de-mystified" person, if he were to observe the behaviour of a person who believed that his consciousness should be the master of the soul,
would be inclined to describe him thus: "That person consciously identifies himself with the image of himself which he has accepted, and consequently thinks that fulfillment consists in actualizing this image. Because he is in fact more, and other, than what he takes himself to be, he will experience resistance, in the form of akrasia or disturbing phantasies, or acute schizophrenia, etc. This is why he so values will-power and self-control, since he believes that only by their exercise can he be a worthwhile person".

Clearly the mystified person cannot think of himself this way, because, confused by his self-image, and its absolute prescriptive power, it is self-evident that he is right, and that the only answer to akrasia is more will-power. By contrast, the "de-mystified" man thinks in terms of the authentic as against the inauthentic functioning of consciousness. He does not think of "me", meaning conscious me, on the one hand, constantly locked in a battle against turgid and primeval forces of the unconscious on the other, thereby dissociating himself from anything about him which does not fit his conscious image. Rather he thinks of both conscious and unconscious as himself, and if he discovers an internal battle, he takes this as a sign that he has misunderstood his wants, and is trying to impose an ill-fitting prescriptive image upon
himself. To the de-mystified person, the whole idea of analysing the Self into conscious/unconscious is not specially important, except as it illuminates the division between authentic/inauthentic. To be authentic is to do what you want, without trying to tell yourself what you want or what you should want. To be inauthentic is to try to embrace wants which are appropriate to a self-image, but which may or may not be possessed by the person. The mystified person sees himself as deciding what he wants (though he is in reality subjecting himself to a self-image); the "de-mystified" person discovers what he wants.

This brings us to our second point about the picture of consciousness as a controller, namely that it is self-refuting. According to the view we are considering, the consciousness, reason, or will controls and directs the whole person, and is itself entirely sovereign, that is, is not controlled or directed by anything whatever or any combination of things. The underlying idea here seems to be that since freedom precludes restraint of any kind, it must be that if there is to be any real freedom for a person, he must be free not only from external restrictions upon his actions, but also from internal pressures upon the rational controller, who must be genuinely sovereign.
Thus, freedom exists only to the extent that the ultimate controller in the Self is entirely its own master. Let us consider more specifically what this means. We might begin with a crude view of the components of a genuine action, which would be fairly acceptable to most people, whatever their view. We might say that an action is behaviour consciously designed to realize some conscious want.¹ The want is conscious, that is on this view, the conscious controller espouses the want, and then deliberates rationally about the way in which the want should be fulfilled, or, to put it another way, the controller deliberates about the way in which the end (fulfillment of the want) should be achieved. Having decided these things, the controller hands down his resolutions to those executive parts of his domain who see to it that recalcitrant members are coerced into obedience or acquiescence, and the action is performed.

Now it is clear (if we go along with this picture) that the process begins with the acceptance of a want into consciousness. It is important to notice that, since according to the view we are considering consciousness

¹We need not at this stage go into the various senses that can be given to the word "want" here, nor need we qualify this rough characterization with controversial refinements. My purpose at this point is to secure agreement to this description of action, in the hope that everyone will understand it in the way that enables him to accept it.
must be **completely** sovereign, the want is not something already in consciousness, but rather is chosen by the consciousness, or, as I said above, "espoused" by consciousness. If this were not so, then who knows what the consciousness might find itself wanting to do next? And the whole idea of a sovereign controller suddenly "finding itself" in a state of wanting something is a little jarring to say the least. Indeed, such a situation sounds disconcertingly like the one we most want to avoid, namely, where the unconscious forces, bubbling about unseen like some dubious witch's brew, thrust up a seducing vision to beguile the rational and conscious mind, which latter entity falls to this non-rational temptation for the millionth time in succession. The only difference is that if we say that the wants originate in the consciousness, without being chosen by consciousness, we have imported a little bit of the unconscious into the conscious; but the end result is the same, namely to make any talk of the sovereignty of the conscious quite obviously spurious.

Therefore we are left with the conclusion that the conscious, rational controller within the Self actually chooses the wants for the sake of which it will initiate action. And presumably it chooses them according to some rational principle. Now this is where the difficulty comes in. What basis or method can you possibly have for choosing
between wants? The only method that I can think of, or the only basis I can provide, is completely dependent upon other, subsuming, wants. Thus if a person were to "decide to want" to take Vitamin A, we might say that this want, which he has contrived to stimulate within himself, is a rational want, chosen rationally by him on the basis of the facts that Vitamin A promotes good health among men over sixty, that he is a man over sixty, and that he wants good health. But this only shows that the wanting for good health justifies the wanting for Vitamin A. It does not show that the rational consciousness has rationally chosen the want for good health. Indeed it sounds as if the want for good health is one of those things that the controller "finds himself" with; and hence discovers himself not to be so ultimate a controller as he supposed. Although, of course, perhaps this is not the case; for perhaps some rational means of arriving at the want for good health can be found also. This, in my opinion, is already in the sphere of the implausible, not only because there are likely to be found very few people who have ever proceeded in this manner of making a decision (although that is the fact), but more importantly because the whole idea of a rational choice to do something presupposes the existence of a goal for the sake of which the choice is made. That is, it is only if a
want is first present, that there can be any question of rational choice, since rational choice is choice of the best way to act, given that want. If it were possible to conceive consistently of a decision to do something which did not satisfy any want of the agent - a conception which I believe can only be held if one blinds oneself to its necessary implications - we could only regard this as the very paradigm of what is irrational.

In sum then, it can be seen that the view we are considering is involved in a dilemma, each of the horns of which is contradictory to the first principles of the view itself. For if the consciousness is the ultimate controller, then either the wants are prior to the initiative of the controller, in which case the controller is not the ultimate controller, or else the consciousness is doomed to an idiotic fluctuation between wants which it successively espouses for no reason at all. And this latter alternative is far from the original intention of anyone who wishes to propound this view. For the original intention was to explain how a person is capable of acting in the way he thinks he "ought" to act, as in accordance with some image of himself as a person who does things of a certain kind in a consistent way. If there were no store set by the self-image and its consistent actualization, the problem of self-control would never have become a
problem, and hence the whole conceptual structure of controller/controlled, consciousness/unconsciousness would never have arisen. This is because there would be in fact no means of grasping, and no reason for inventing, the distinction between various parts of the Self. Only if the conscious intention is found to be not actualized, not even attempted, is there any cause to suspect some internal resistance.

In addition to this difficulty of accepting the second horn of the dilemma, there is the question of where the "espoused" wants do originate. One obvious answer which suggests itself is that they originate in some sense from within the person, but, ex hypothesi, not in consciousness. But this would mean that they originate in some unconscious part of the person, which again brings us back to the picture which a proponent of the view would wish to avoid, for this would mean that consciousness is merely the servant of unconsciousness.

Faced with these difficulties, a proponent of this view may be inclined to accept the first alternative, that a person's wants are prior to his conscious choice, so that all action is necessarily directed towards the satisfaction of these pre-conscious wants. And this conclusion, in itself quite acceptable and in my view correct, when seen in the context of "conscious control versus unconscious
motivation", will drive a person to accept determinism as against freewill, however reluctantly he comes to this conclusion. And his reluctance is entirely reasonable in view of the common experience of "decision". For it is a fact of human experience that we do decide to do things, and that as a result of these decisions we actually do those things.

I believe that this puzzle can be quite easily solved. In the first place, I think that it is clear that we must accept the first horn of the dilemma, namely, that wants are the primitive sources of action and do proceed consciousness, that a person does "find himself" wanting various things, that he is never in a position to choose between the original wants which are the ultimate sources of action. This however does not mean that we have to despair of the prospect of free-will, and conclude that a person can never be free, especially in view of the various experiences of free action as against those of unfree "action" in which a person experiences himself as pushed and pulled about by forces within himself which he cannot understand and cannot control. On the contrary, it has been my intention throughout to show that only the person who can accept and recognize his genuine wants and act in accordance with them is free in any meaningful sense.
This means that we must give up the picture of the person as a sovereign consciousness striving to impose a series of "shoulds" upon "the rest". If we are to talk in terms of consciousness and unconsciousness at all, which is sometimes useful but not obligatory on my view, then we do have to regard consciousness as properly an instrument of something beyond itself - i.e., in the "de-mystified" man, consciousness becomes an instrument of that which is more than consciousness.

When I say that consciousness is properly an instrument of something more than itself, I mean that the proper business of consciousness is to facilitate the expression of the Self, which includes both consciousness and all that is not conscious about the person. It is improper or inappropriate for consciousness to try to impose anything upon the Self or to direct its expression. It is in this sense that consciousness is not a controller. It can set itself up as one, but in that case it misdirects and leads to an alienation of purposes from behaviour, and a consequent sense of absurdity.

Now the Self, which includes both the conscious and the unconscious, or as we might prefer to say, the person in his totality, is self-controlling, but not consciously so. If control is thought of as conscious control, it does not
exist in fact, though many people are very often under the illusion that it does. Conscious control can exist in a sense, in the sense that consciousness can thwart Self-expression in action; but this kind of control does not issue in actions, but rather in non-actions or pseudo-actions. If by "self-control" is meant, not the control of the Self by consciousness, but just that a person is not just a passive "stimulus-response" creature which can only react to external stimuli, but rather has "springs of action" within, independent of the environment to some extent, then people are obviously capable of self-control.

The pseudo-actions which are the result of a conscious attempt to direct oneself by imposing preset wants are called pseudo-actions because they are the acting-out of pseudo-wants, the kind of wants that a person might be tempted to tell himself he has thought up all by himself in accordance with rational principles. But real wants do not originate in conscious. Only pseudo-wants do that. And even pseudo-wants do not really do it, but only appear to do it: for in reality they are the wants originally suggested and imposed by social or personal pressure.

It may be questioned whether consciousness cannot, in fact, originate wants, by as it were conjuring them up at will. It is possible to think of some not uncommon cases of the following kind. Suppose a man has a servant, and he
discovers that the servant has been negligent in some way. It was only a small thing, and the man is not really annoyed about it; but he feels that he really ought to display anger and displeasure to the servant, because if he does not, the servant may be inclined to lapse in his duties in more serious things. The man therefore, having thus reflected in a fairly rational manner, decides to "get annoyed"; or we might say, he chooses to want to vent displeasure on the servant, even though he has been up till now as cool as a cucumber about the whole thing, and has experienced not the least desire to shout and behave sternly. There is no doubt that this sort of desire can be drummed up inside oneself.

This might be regarded as a case in which consciousness, the little man inside, having rationally deliberated about the matter, decided to originate the want in accordance with which action would be performed. But if we look more closely, we observe some interesting features. If we ask, what was the nature of his rational deliberation, we find that it was something like this:

(i) I want the servant not to be negligent in my service

(ii) If I get angry with this small misdemeanour, negligence will be discouraged

(iii) Therefore, I shall get angry.
And we notice that his deliberation itself was based ultimately upon another want, namely the desire that the servant should conscientiously serve him. And if we trace this want back to its basis, and this in turn to its basis, we shall discover an illuminating fact. For consider: for the sake of what does the man want his servant to be conscientious? Perhaps to maintain his house in impressive condition, perhaps to enjoy that unique satisfaction of being another man's master. And what is desirable about these things? It is that the admiration of his visitors and the obsequiousness of his servant will serve to enhance his own conviction of himself as a superior man, and generally to bolster his own self-image and confirm him in the comfortable belief that he is what he appears to be. And finally we may ask, why should he want to confirm his own self-image? Well, why does anyone maintain a self-image? As I have explained, the self-image is seen as that which preserves the identity from annihilation, than which there is no greater horror.

The following observation should be drawn from this: that although the series of consistent wants is composed entirely of pseudo-wants, of which the clearest case is the lowest, where the man consciously imposed a want on himself, nevertheless the ultimate want was a genuine one, that of preserving the integrity of the personality. The
strange thing is that preserving the self-image is not the way to do this, as we have seen; and since all the lower and increasingly particular wants are means towards this penultimate want (of preserving the self-image), they too are irrational or inappropriate, in the sense that action in terms of them does not conduce to the fulfillment of the basic want which is at the root of all the others.

Now this should lead us to a further speculation, in my view, namely that all action and all pseudo action has at its basis a genuine want of the person, and that without this genuine want no action is possible. Thus all pseudo-wants are parasitic on genuine wants. We may even speculate that all wants whatever are for the sake of some central and genuine want. If this were so, we could not only describe in the most general terms the greatest good for man, as that towards which all things tend; but we could, perhaps, with a good deal of thought and perceptive observation, delineate more specific guidelines for the realization of that greatest good. It is indeed not implausible to imagine that there may be a central good towards which not only man, but the entire universe, strives. But these questions, which are of the highest importance, must be postponed.

It should not be supposed that the above in any way suggests that consciousness is merely a passive experiencer of what goes on inside. This is most certainly not the case.
It is rather that consciousness is essential to action, properly so-called, and plays a key role in it. The higher functions of logical deliberation are the exclusive function of consciousness, and are being constantly exercised in thinking about the best thing to do, given the wants of the person. And they are also invaluable in the discrimination between what is a real want and what is a pseudo-want. It is in consciousness that the lessons of the ever-recurring "freedom-cycle" are distilled and interpreted, providing consciously understood guidelines for authentic behaviour.

Our conclusion regarding self-control is therefore as follows. If the person is regarded as a unity, then it is clear that he can be self-controlling, and he will be self-controlling (or autonomous) to the extent that he is free of self-images. But if, having experienced internal struggles, we are inclined to postulate divisions within the Self and to identify the Self with the self-image consciously held, then we must conclude that what this view calls the Self is incapable of self-control and that all its actions are determined.

1De-mystification, v.s., stages 2 and 3.
It is worth noting that the origin of the difficulties of the view we have been considering lies in the "myth of the little man inside", sometimes called the "ego-myth". The conscious controller is the little man inside, and it is this entity which is supposed to be independent even of its own wants. But this view, as we have seen, is absurd. The conclusion which suggests itself here is that a person is not separate at all from his wants, indeed that the deep source of action and Self-expression, namely the person's wants, are the Self. Or we might express this by saying that what a person really wants and what he really is are one and the same. This may seem a strange way of putting it, but not so strange really if we recall Karen Horney's description of the Self as "that central inner force...which is the deep source of growth", and as "the pregnant, potential, not-yet differentiated stuff of personality, moving always towards higher integration and fuller manifestation". These descriptions of the Self fit very well into the conception of genuine and deep wants. On this view there is no place for a little man inside, no room for the ego-myth. The ego is seen to be illusory, merely a self-image imposed upon a person from without, according to the fearful processes of mystification.

---

1"The Self", pp.253, 251.
2. THE GOOD LIFE

From the foregoing we can conclude that people are capable of being split into two selves, a true and a false. We have seen that the true Self is the same as the real and subsuming wants of the person, and that the false self is parasitic upon the true Self, or that is to say, pseudo wants are parasitic upon real wants. This implies that freedom, in the sense we are concerned with, consists in actualizing these real wants, and not in actualizing the pseudo wants or (which amounts to the same thing) trying to "control oneself" as described above.

Now it is my concern at this stage to show that freedom is desirable, and indeed that it is so ultimately desirable that all things should be evaluated by reference to it. It is my contention that the Good Life consists in being free, and indeed that morality, which is customarily taken to be an integral part of the Good Life, derives whatever claim it has on our behaviour from the extent to which it conduces to freedom.

We may approach this matter by first of all considering the notion of a reason for acting. We may begin by thinking about what is ordinarily meant by this notion,
and subsequently refine it in view of the distinction between real wants and pseudo wants. My own view is that a person has been given a reason for acting in a certain way if and only if he has been shown the way to something he wants. At this stage, I shall make no use of the distinction between real and pseudo wants, but only establish the conceptual connection between a reason for acting and being shown the way to something perceived as a want by the agent.

Suppose there is a confidence man who has tricked many people into investing their money in the false belief that they will probably receive a profit from their investment; and suppose that I, being shocked by this practice, try to give him a reason for returning this money to them. I might say to him, "You really ought to give that money back, because many of your victims are poor and have invested their life savings in this fraudulent enterprise. Their sufferings far outweigh the selfish pleasure you are likely to obtain". It would not be surprising if he did not consider this to be a reason for mending his ways, because he can claim, with considerable plausibility, that he does not want to alleviate the sufferings of the gullible, whereas he does want to increase his own wealth.
This example suggests, firstly, that I offered my compassionate considerations to him in the hope that they would be understood by him to realize something he wanted—the alleviation of the sufferings of the poor; but secondly, that these considerations were not accepted by him as reasons for doing anything, because he did not perceive the anticipated results as realizing any want of his.

If I should perceive this, I might present other considerations to him which do appear to him as reasons for acting in the way I suggest. I might point out to him that unless he returns the money, I shall myself expose him to the police, which would have the result of losing him his ill-gotten gains, and of getting him a substantial prison sentence. This would present itself to him as a reason for acting, because it makes reference to what he does perceive as wants: he wants to avoid the results I point out to him.

Thus it can be seen that when a person has a reason for acting, he has good grounds for believing that he can get something he wants (or avoid something he does not want) by acting in the relevant way. Reasons for acting are sometimes regarded as rather conventional considerations which have a kind of logical force, but this view by no means
captures the essence of the concept. In the above example, it might be said that I first presented one such consideration, a moral one; but I did this because I believed that this sort of consideration usually does show people the way to something they seem to want. But in our example, this did not happen, and the consideration which was effective was the second one. In other words, a reason for acting must be relevant to the wants perceived by the agent to be wants which he has, and not wants that most people have, or that someone else has. The agent, after all, is the one who has to perform the action; and a genuine action is one with which the agent associates himself. Or in other words, the ends for the sake of which the action is to be performed must be ends desired by the agent, for if they are not, there will be no action in any real sense. And if would be ridiculous to suggest that if a person has reasons to act in a certain way, and no reasons for not acting in that way and if nothing is preventing him, he may yet fail to act. This may be brought out by considering one of the inconsistent triads of propositions given previously:

1. I wanted to do X;
2. Nothing prevented me from doing X;
3. I did not do X.

---

1. This view is presented by Kurt Baier in "The Moral Point of View".
2. See p. 57.
We have seen from this, then, that if a person has good grounds for believing that a certain action will satisfy a certain want of his, then he has been given a reason for acting. We have seen too that unless he has such grounds, he has not been given a reason for acting, despite the fact that any number of other people may consider that a reason has been given. Therefore we have established that the notion of a reason for acting is the same as the notion of seeing how to get what you want.

But we have seen that there is a distinction between what a person really wants and what he might falsely think he wants, i.e., between real wants and pseudo wants. Therefore we might refine our conclusion as follows: a person has a genuine reason for acting if and only if he has good grounds for believing that he can satisfy a real want of his by performing the action. The action which results from having a genuine reason for acting will be therefore a genuine action, in that the person associates his real Self with it. But in the case of pseudo wants, we can say that he has a pseudo reason for acting if and only if he believes he can satisfy what is in fact a pseudo want by doing whatever it is. His resultant behaviour will be then a pseudo action, for what he associates with the "action" is not himself, but only his image of himself. To satisfy a pseudo want is not to satisfy the person who performs the
pseudo action; for the person is identical with his real wants, and not with his pseudo wants.

Now when we say that an action is justified, we might mean one of two things. If an alderman in a council meeting supports a certain motion, he might argue in its support that if it were carried, certain goods would accrue to the residents of the locality. This he would claim to be justification for his supporting the motion. But let us suppose that he personally does not care one way or the other whether the motion is carried or defeated, as far as the matter under discussion is concerned, and that he supported it only because he was bribed to do so by interested parties. In this case we should say that what he claimed to be the justification of his action in supporting the motion was in reality only a rationalization of it to fool his colleagues and collect the bribe. Privately he might say that his real reason was the money which would accrue to him. This is one way in which the term "justification" is used.

The other sense in which it is used may be illustrated as follows. A person might do something because he sincerely believes that it will satisfy a want of his, and when asked to justify what he did, might produce the real reason for his doing it - "I did X because I wanted Y, and X brings about Y". Thus, "justification" would be genuine
justification here, and not merely rationalization, because it adverted to his real reason for performing the action. But even here, there is an ambiguity. For a person could produce his private reasons for doing a thing, and yet they could be pseudo reasons, i.e., reasons in terms of something which was a pseudo want. In this case, I should not wish to say that his action was really justified, because it did not advert to something he wanted, but only to something he thought he wanted. In this case, he is again rationalizing, not, as before, because he adverted to a want which he knows not to be his own, but because he adverted to one which he thinks to be his own but which is not. Because the distinction between rationalization and justification is so useful in this context, I propose to restrict the use of "justification" to those cases in which a real reason — one in terms of the agent's real wants, not his professed wants or his pseudo wants — can be given for an action. Thus, to use the term correctly in this sense, I shall have to say that only genuine actions, in which the agent is trying to satisfy a real want of his, can be justified.

Having established that a person has a real reason for doing something if and only if he believes that he can probably get something he really wants by doing it, it may be pointed out that if a person has no reason for doing a thing, then it cannot be called a good thing for him to do;
for surely the only grounds we can have for calling something a "good" thing to do, is that there is something good about doing it. And this can hardly be said if there is no reason for doing that thing rather than doing something else, or even doing nothing at all. It is often felt that moral actions are by definition good actions, and that morality is supposed to have a claim on our behaviour. These two supposed characteristics of moral behaviour can be integrated and understood on the view here presented. If we say that an action is as good as the reasons for its performance, and if we say that the reasons for its performance are as good as the wants intended to be satisfied by it are important to the agent, then it will follow that if moral actions are good actions, they will have a claim on our behaviour. For consider again the series of propositions:

(i) I wanted to do X;
(ii) Nothing prevented me;
(iii) I did not do X.

If (i) and (ii) are true, (iii) must be false; from which it follows that a genuine want, if the agent is not prevented from its realization, must issue in action in accordance with that want. Therefore, if moral actions are good actions, then they will have a claim on our behaviour, which is to say that we will make some effort to perform
them, and that it will be a willing effort. It remains to be seen, of course, whether moral actions are always good actions.

These considerations will help us to consider the nature of the Good Life and the basis of morality. Let us first of all consider the conclusion we reached regarding the justification of actions. We established that the only actions which can be justified (in the sense I have chosen to give to this term) are those which realize a genuine want of the person who performs them. And if we couple with this the observation⁠¹ that what a person really is is the same as what he really wants, we can conclude that Self-realization, or doing what one wants (which is what is meant by being free), is the end of all justifiable action. This conclusion can be paraphrased without doing violence to it, in my opinion. We might say that the only good things for a person to do are those which are Self-realizing. It is clear from this that the Good Life, by which is meant the way of living preferable to all other ways of living, consists in doing what one really wants.

¹See p. 74.
3. MORALITY AND THE GOOD LIFE

(i) The Proposed Justification of Moral Action

With this in mind, let us consider the notion of being moral, supposedly essential to the Good Life. Morality is usually taken to refer to the relations between man and man, its highest precept being, "Do unto others as you would they do unto you", or at least, "Do not do to others what you wouldn't want them to do to you". Is this in fact necessary to the Good Life? If what I have so far said is correct, the only reason for doing anything, including any moral thing, is that it realizes some genuine want of the agent. If moral action does not do this, therefore, then there is no reason to perform it, it is not "good" action, it is not justifiable action, and it can only be pseudo action.

There are basically two possible orientations for a person's life. Either he directs his efforts towards bolstering his self-image, in the misguided but plausible belief that thereby he will gain a secure sense of identity and agency in the world (i.e. what might be called ontological security); or else he directs himself to the realization of his genuine wants, not needing to convince
himself of his ontological security. Needless to say, in reality these clear-cut divisions would never be found, but they are useful for the purposes of clarity.

Now it is clear that the first orientation is basically egoistic, since the person's basic concern is about his own security and because he believes that his security has to be created by himself, and that it can only be created by bolstering the myth of the ego. The second orientation is also concerned with the person's ontological security, since nobody is exempt from this basic and genuine concern; but it is not egoistic, since far from striving to find security by confirming his own self-image, the person whose life is so orientated is suspicious of all images.

An egoistic person can never be a properly moral person, even though he can perform the "acts required by morality", because the end of moral action is the good of the other; but the egoistic person is not interested in the good of the other, except as it conduces to the perpetuation of his own self-image. Indeed, it sounds here as if the very self-image is that of a person who performs the acts required by morality and who thereby thinks to acquire the characteristic, "moral person". Thus the person who performs the acts required by morality, simply because they are required by morality, is not performing moral acts, but only what appear to be moral acts, for he does not associate
himself with the ends for the sake of which moral action is properly performed and in virtue of which moral actions acquire their specifically moral nature.

It should be evident from all that has been said, that to describe a person as egoistic and to describe him as mystified are the same thing, for the basis of both descriptions is the desire to maintain the self-image. Let us now recall what was said in Section I about the way in which a person can be mystified. It was there suggested that the basic cause of mystification is lack of recognition by other significant people, for example, one's parents. And we suggested that the cause of this, in turn, was the others' inability to recognize themselves. It was suggested that a mother who is, above all, striving to maintain an image of herself is afraid of recognizing any spontaneous behaviour by her child which might call for a response from her which is prohibited by her self-image; and the child, in the face of a frightening lack of response, himself comes to not only repress that kind of spontaneous behaviour, but also deny the existence of the want of which that behaviour is an expression.¹

What is really happening here? The mother is locked into her own false self system, and is concerned to maintain it above all else. But this means that she has no ability to sympathize with the child, or at least, that

¹See especially pp.12-14 above.
this ability is in abeyance. To say that I sympathize with another person is to say that I feel his feelings, for instance that I suffer when he suffers or rejoice if he rejoices. This is a partial breaking down of the barriers which separate two individual selves. If this breakdown were complete, it would amount to an actual identification of myself with the other. The reason why a mystified person is incapable of sympathy is that, to the extent that he concerns himself with the maintenance of his own self-image, he is unable to identify with another person. He is not concerned to put himself in another person's place because his concern is to keep himself in his own place.

If the hypothetical child we considered were given sympathy, it is reasonable to expect - unless of course my whole picture in the first section is fundamentally wrong - that he would be recognized as he is, and therefore could accept himself as he is. And when we say that his mother sympathized with him, we mean that she perceived his wants as if they were her own. Her actions towards him would then be moral actions in the true sense, because she would be acting for the sake of the satisfaction of his genuine wants, not for the sake of the wants she imputes to him, nor for the sake of "being a moral person". She would simply be a moral person. It is because in the
case we constructed the mother is mystified that she is not capable of morality. Therefore we can conclude that egoistic action is characteristic of the mystified person, and that moral action is possible only for the person who is not mystified. To put it another way, we might say that truly moral action proceeds from sympathy with the other person, but only those who are not mystified are capable of this sympathy.

But the question we set out to answer here is whether moral action really is necessary to the Good Life, or that is, whether it expresses a genuine want which everyone has. This has not yet been answered, for all we are in a position to say is that everyone has a need to be treated in a moral way, for otherwise his own Self-realization will be stunted. We have as yet no reason to think that anyone has a need to reciprocate this treatment. I believe that there is such a need in everyone, nevertheless, since it appears that people need each other in order to be themselves, and sympathetic actions do tend to bind people together. They conduce to an atmosphere in which each person feels that he can do as he wants and still be accepted for what he is; therefore there will be no threat to his ontological security and consequently no need to build up a false-self system.
This is not a very strong reason for thinking that moral action is necessary for everyone's Self-realization. There are, or at any rate there have been, mystics who live in isolation from all human company, and of whom it is claimed that they have realized themselves to a supreme degree. I should not wish to dispute this claim. But it can still be asserted that for that vast majority of mankind who remain in society, moral action is a necessary part of the Good Life.

Having concluded that moral actions are better than egoistic ones, it should not be concluded that anyone should set up morality as an ideal, to which he should strive to make his behaviour conform, for this would be another form of mystification, a setting up of another self-image as of the "moral person". In saying that morality does seem to be a necessary part of the Good Life for most people, I mean only that it appears to be expressive of the Good Life, an unpromeditated result of being a free man, arising from his ability to sympathize with other people. Indeed, it may be necessary for many people to decide not to perform the acts required by morality unless they feel like it, in order to make the transition from a mystified state to a free state. The most blatant selfishness - taken in the egoistic sense of that term - may be necessary to the establishment of one's
own sense of autonomy as distinct from the identity forced upon one. In saying that moral actions are better than selfish ones, I mean only that moral behaviour is, in fact and for most people, necessary to the Good Life; and that the free man, who alone lives the Good Life, is not self-consciously moral. The self-consciously moral person is more concerned about his self-image than about other people, and hence is not deeply moral at all.

It should be noted also that there is no reason to claim that moral action is part of the definition of the Good Life, or that the two concepts are in any logical way related to one another. It required the use of a number of facts about mystified people, interpreted in a certain way, to establish that morality and the Good Life were connected.

The justification of morality which I have given, such as it is, depends upon my previous contention that no action is justifiable unless it satisfies a genuine want of the agent. This must be admitted to be an odd kind of justification, as justifications of morality go. For when someone claims to be able to justify morality, we usually expect him to give us compelling arguments in favour of "doing the moral thing", or of "adopting the moral point of view", such that the unregenerate, if they weigh these arguments with an open mind, will perceive
their rationality and strive to "be moral" thenceforward. But according to the view presented here, such justifications are fundamentally misconceived, since there is no prospect of justifying anything to anyone who does not consciously have a want which can be satisfied by doing the recommended thing. In other words, the only kind of justification of which morality admits is not a prescriptive one but more like a description of the reasons why people, who are truly moral, are so. It is admitted that a person can appreciate, in an intellectual way, if he were moral he would satisfy some genuine and deep want of his. He can even force himself to do the considerate thing for another person when he is least inclined to do so, i.e., he can if he chooses perform the acts required by morality. But, as I said before, they will not be genuine moral actions, since they do not proceed from any genuine concern for the other. And no amount of conscious decision and resolution to be considerate will make a person considerate, especially if his decision is based upon the rather selfish desire to save his own soul.

Thus, I should say that if anyone asks seriously, "Why should I be moral?", if he asks it because he doesn't already know and would sincerely like to know, he cannot be given an answer which will move him to be genuinely
moral. The nearest thing that can be given in answer would be the example of those people who, being free, found themselves being moral as part of their free action. For when a genuinely moral action is performed, it can then be justified in terms of the agent's genuine reasons for doing it; but it is not the case that this kind of justification will then become a genuine reason for someone else to imitate the action. And this is the case even if the imitator can see that lack of moral action on his part may drive others away, whose acceptance he needs in order to accept himself, and thereby be enabled to recognize and satisfy his own genuine wants. That would be a purely intellectual understanding of the situation; but the achievement of freedom, as described in the first section of this essay, does not consist in a purely theoretical exercise, but in living out all the disadvantages of self-imagery; and with this is associated the first-hand experiences of despair, absurdity, and shame. The person who hopes to attain freedom by logical reasoning deceives himself that freedom can be achieved without pain, and cheaply; but it seems that it is the most expensive thing of all, strikingly similar to what Christ called "the kingdom of heaven":
Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

My own view is, therefore, that attempts to justify morality, if undertaken with the intention of advocating moral behaviour from everyone, will not realize that intention, since this kind of justification in advance is always a matter of preaching to the converted. It seems to me that if anyone cannot see any point in being moral, the only realistic recommendation which can be made to him is that in that case he shouldn't try to be so, and the same applies to those who see the point of morality in an intellectual way, but do not experience their theoretically apprehended genuine wants with any sense of immediacy. For any other recommendation would tend to emphasize the value of intellect and will-power, to the end of maintaining an inauthentic way of life. Such a result is not in the interests of the person to whom the recommendation is made, and seems calculated to postpone the natural breakdown of an inauthentic life.

\[1\] Mathew, 13: 44-46.
(ii) Two Alternative Views of the Justification of Morality

There is some danger that the justification of morality which has just been presented may be confused with either of two distinct views of the matters both of which are inadequate. One of these views is that morality can be justified only by an appeal to "self-interest", where this expression is taken to mean, not "in the interest of the real Self" (as I have called it), but rather "in the interest of (what I have called) the self-image". The other view holds that morality admits of no justification at all, since being moral, if it is an end at all, must be an ultimate end, hence not be justified by any appeal to a higher end: we should be moral purely for the sake of being moral.

(a) The Hobbesian or "self-interest" view

Let us first consider the view that moral action may be justified by appealing to self-interest. This view is exemplified by Professor Baier who employs an essentially Hobbesian argument. He begins by presenting us with two different worlds. The first world is Hobbes' "State of Nature", in which nobody can trust anybody else: "It is

\[1\] In his book "The Moral Point of View", ch.12.
too risky to hope that other people will refrain from protecting their own interests by the preventive elimination of probable or even possible dangers to them".\footnote{\textsuperscript{1}P.311. Baier, op. cit.}

That is, since everyone values his own (egoistic) security to a supreme degree, there exist only two motives for anyone to do anything, namely, fear and hope of gain. In such a world, life is plausibly asserted to be "nasty, brutish, and short". "It is obvious", says Professor Baier, "that everyone's following self-interest leads to a state of affairs which is desirable from no one's point of view."\footnote{\textsuperscript{2}P.311. Ibid.} In the second possible world, however, everyone acts "morally" with regard to everyone else. Obviously the social advantages for each person are greater, by and large, in the second world than in the first. Therefore, the best way to each person's self-interest is for each person to be prepared to sacrifice immediate self-interest on some occasions. In other words, the reason why I should be moral is that if everyone, including me, is moral, then we are all, including me, better off that way than any other way. The justification of morality, on this view, is that it best serves individual self-interest.
A number of criticisms can be made of this view, but first let us be clear about a number of assumptions it makes. Firstly, when it is asserted that there is no possibility of mutual trust in the state of nature, this is supposed to be because only the motives of fear and hope of gain exist. And the whole point of talking about what would have been the case in a state of nature, can only be that it is a way of talking about the basic, or innate, nature of human beings. No social theorists have ever claimed that such a state ever existed, or at any rate, none of their arguments are supposed to stand or fall on any such claim. If this is true, the only point of talking in these terms is to try to isolate, conceptually, what man is really like before the influence of society upon him. Some authors who advocate the same point of view have chosen to talk about the infant before he can discriminate himself from his environment. For example, two sociologists begin their analysis of "the Socialization Process" by saying, "The infant has only one reason for doing anything: pleasure"\(^1\). They explain that to start with the infant has two advantages: (i) "the social fabrication process begins there, and (ii) "at least two of the 'reasons' for conforming (or deviating)...are

conspicuously absent in the infant, and we must understand how they come into existence. These "reasons" (subsequently called "motives") are "a sense of morality and a sensitivity to others' opinions," and they are themselves products of the first socialization experiences. The present essay also begins with the infant, for the same reasons. Thus, the Hobbesian talk of a "state of nature" is to be understood as assertions about the fundamental motives of people.

Secondly, we should note that since fear and hope of gain (which are two sides to the same coin) are the only innate springs of action, it follows that all human action can be reductively explained by pointing to their existence and to nothing else.

The criticisms I wish to make of this view are as follows.

1. If it is put forward as a justification of morality, as Professor Baier wishes to present it, it fails in its intention, because it is not morality that it justifies, but "enlightened egoism". According to this view, all action, including moral action, is performed either for the sake of avoiding something nasty or for the sake of gaining something pleasant, from the point of view of the agent. But truly moral action, as distinct from the

\[ \text{Ibid.} \]
performance of "acts required by morality", is not undertaken for these reasons, and is indeed performed not for the sake of the agent's welfare at all, but purely for the sake of another's welfare. Now it must be admitted that if fear and the hope of gain are the basic motives, then moral action in this sense is impossible, for in the last analysis, the agent always has his egoistic interests in mind; and unless moral action served these interests, it could never be performed. Such a conclusion is not intended by a proponent of this view, since this view is supposed to give us reasons for being moral, and this could hardly be attempted by anyone who held moral action to be impossible, as a matter of psychological fact.

Since it must be held, by anyone who intends to justify moral action, that moral action is possible, it must also be held by such a person that there must be another basic "spring of action" which is not connected to the agent's egoistic interests. This can only be sympathy, for it is only by positing this factor that we can say that someone else's welfare can assume any importance for the agent, and thus be an ultimate spring of action. Therefore the assumption that fear and the hope of gain are the only two innate springs of action must be denied.1

2. In presenting two possible worlds for our consideration, one being the state of nature, and the other being the more desirable world where life is not "nasty, brutish, and short", it seems that there has been forgotten a Third possible world: one in which everyone performs the acts required by morality, except me. If I am clever and courageous enough to behave ruthlessly to other people without suffering the direct retribution of society and without causing the downfall of society, then my self-interest is best served by frequently not performing the acts required by morality. And if self-interest is the ultimate justification for doing anything, then I ought not to do "moral" things. Again this view fails to justify morality.

3. We come now to criticisms of the view under consideration which make specific use of concepts introduced in this essay, and in particular the concept of a real Self as distinct from a self-image. Let us suppose that there is a real Self, and that this is to be understood as identical with the genuine wants of a person. It will then follow that the best thing for a person to do will always be to realize this Self in action, since this amounts to actualizing the genuine wants of the person, than which nothing could be more desirable as I
have tried to show.\(^1\) Now one thing we can say about Self-realization is that it is certainly not achieved by a person's performing actions which are not the expression of felt wants (genuine or pseudo wants, in this case). That is to say, if a person decides in an intellectual way that he ought to behave angrily, when in fact he is not angry, then, while he may succeed in looking convincingly angry, and may even work himself into a rage to facilitate this performance, he is not then acting genuinely, from a genuine want, but only pseudo-acting, from a pseudo-want. And he will do this only in order to put forward (to himself and to others) a self-image - to convince his spectators (including himself) that he is a certain type of person, which he is not. Of course, if he is pretending to be a certain kind of person in the full knowledge that he is only pretending, then he could be acting genuinely, for the sake of some other thing which he really wants to achieve, though he keeps it secret. But if he is trying to convince himself that he is really like that, then he is frustrating the realization of his Self. And the view we are considering requires of people that they try to become a certain type of person, because it purports to give people reasons for being moral, even if they feel no desire for another's welfare.

\(^1\)See above pp.75-83.
What the "self-interest" view requires of people is that they behave towards one another as if they were motivated by genuine sympathy, and hence genuinely desired the welfare of the Other. But it is not allowed that they actually do have such interests, since all their actions can be reductively explained by pointing to the two innate motives of fear or hope of gain. This means that people should set up an image of themselves as sympathetic people. They are encouraged to do this by presenting unpleasant consequences for them if they don't (the state of nature and its chaotic retributions) and pleasant consequences if they do (the social benefits of security in an orderly society). Moreover, they are not encouraged simply to pretend to be moral, but actually to be moral. We can only suppose that they must convince themselves that they are moral and hence sympathetic people, even though there is not the slightest possibility of their being so. They must concentrate on building up a self-image as of moral people, and therefore, should they find themselves disinclined to do their moral duty at any time, they must simply repress this feeling, that is, they must "control themselves". All this is supposed to bring them security from the attack of other people, and quite obviously it will help in this regard, given that nobody ever does anything for nothing on this view. Self-control
and control of other people's behaviour are therefore the way to the fullest and most satisfying life. The best life then consists in being a successful, and sincere, hypocrite, who strives to make himself into something he can never be.

Now if the Self exists, as I believe it does, then what is asserted to be the best life on this view is very far indeed from the best life in fact; for given that the best life consists in doing what you really want, it can only be detrimental to the best life for a person to do what he tells himself he wants but what he in fact does not want. This would amount to exalting a self-image at the expense of Self-realization.

Since the "self-interest" view does purport to be presenting moral behaviour as essential to the best life, and since it completely fails to do this if the existence of the Self (as distinct from the self-image) is admitted, the only way to make the view tenable is to deny the existence of the Self.

It certainly would not help the "self-interest" view to deny the existence of the Self. For in the absence of the Self, there would remain only what I have called the self-image. The person would be nothing other than what he thought he was, and his only wants would be his felt wants. Should he manage to generate a want to be moral,
should he come to think of himself as a moral person, then it would follow that he really was a moral person. But this would mean that he would be really capable of desiring the welfare of another without any ulterior motive in terms of fear or hope of gain. And this would be a complete denial of the basic principle of the "self-interest" view, namely that fear and hope of gain are the only human motives to which all others can be reduced.

But as well as this, the denial of the Self would involve the denial of the whole system of interpretation of experience presented earlier in this essay. It would mean that the distinction between genuine and pseudo wants would vanish, and with it the whole phenomenon which I have called Mystification. This is because the phenomenon of Mystification is supposed to be the process whereby a person, under various kinds of pressure, comes to deny certain innate wants that he has (that is, he denies the existence of the real Self) and identifies himself with certain other wants which he believes he has or ought to have. Thus far, there is no ground for objection: that which has been denied so far is only a method of interpreting certain experiences, and it may be that this interpretation is wrong. But we must remember that the concept of Mystification was invoked as an interpretation of certain experiences, and if we deny the existence of
any phenomenon of Mystification, we are left with the task of giving some other interpretation of these experiences. The experiences to which I refer are:

(i) The experience of absurdity, where a person feels that what he does is meaningless for him since although he appears to be doing the things he wants, he does not obtain the expected satisfaction, indicating that what he thought he wanted was in fact not what he really wanted; and where a person's experience is unutterably boring because it is so stereotyped;

(ii) The experience of shame, where a person feels that he has not been "true to himself" because he has acted weakly from fear, or under various kinds of social or emotional pressure, and to which he might refer by saying, "I was not myself then";

(iii) The experience of isolation, where a person can be in constant physical contact with others and yet feel a lack of any real intimacy, communication, or ability to sympathize with them, as if he were always dealing with his bank clerk or having some other formal and stereotyped encounter, indicating the existence of both masks and faces and the possibility of personal contact on both levels.

It was only by setting up the concepts of Mystification, genuine wants as distinct from pseudo wants, and the Self as distinct from the self-image, that these experiences
were rendered intelligible. And similarly, only by the use of these concepts can we understand what is happening when a person moves into the stage of Disillusionment and Disorientation, and later into the stage of Reconciliation and Commitment. The three stages of the "freedom-cycle", which each involve well-attested human experiences, depend for their understanding on the assumption that the Self exists.¹

If the Self is denied, how are these facts of experience to be understood? How, for instance, can we interpret the fact that sometimes people act in accordance with what they think they want and even feel themselves to want, can satisfy this apparent want, and yet feel dissatisfied and futile at the end of this process? I can explain this by using the concept of a pseudo want, deriving from and parasitic upon a real want; but how can it be explained if one allows only one kind of want, and says that all felt wants are genuine wants simply by virtue of the fact that they are felt wants? It is plain that if a person has a felt want, and if this felt want is a

¹That these experiences are well-attested needs little proof. To list only a few of the authors whose works are cited in the bibliography, not to mention the innumerable writings of theologians, poets, novelists, existentialist philosophers and others not cited there, is proof enough: Lynd, Jung, Laing, Campbell, Hesse, Zimmer, Fromm, Watts, Eliot, Williams, Rogers, Maslow.
genuine want, he must feel satisfied at satisfying the want. But what if he doesn't feel that characteristic satisfaction? If we can't appeal to a pseudo-want, saying that in satisfying that a person can nevertheless fail to satisfy himself, the only path open that I can see is to say that a person acted on the basis, not of a "false" want, but of a false belief that he wanted whatever he believes he wants. It is as if he introspects inaccurately, just as he could see inaccurately. But if we press this analogy with ordinary perception, we shall have to admit the possibility of complete hallucination with regard to introspecting wants, just as we admit it with regard to ordinary perception. In the case of introspecting a want, this would mean that we must allow as a possibility that a person could act on the basis of a want which did not exist, which is very odd if not completely impossible. In my view, a theory which allows so implausible a conclusion is an equally implausible theory.

(b) The Deontological View

The other view of the justification of morality which I shall consider (though far more briefly) is that view which holds that morality cannot be justified, not because it has nothing to recommend it, but because it somehow recommends itself. This view has it that moral action must
be undertaken for its own sake, and for no other reason: only in this way can we be sure that it is pure moral action.

In other words, moral action cannot be justified "in advance", as the last view tried to justify it; nor can it be justified "in retrospect", as my view claims it can be; nevertheless, we ought to be moral.

Now I should wish to ask, what does it mean to say that we ought to be moral, if not that some reason can be given for being moral? The proponents of this view would say that "You ought to be moral" means "You morally ought to be moral", which is self-evidently true and therefore stands in need of no further substantiation. But it is perfectly clear that this interpretation of the original proposition (which at first looks quite meaningful) must be wrong. For there is no reason to interpret "ought" as "morally ought" here, or anywhere else. All "ought" statements of the form "You ought to do X" are merely suggestions of reasons to someone for doing whatever X is, as in "You ought to see this film, (because) I'm sure you'd enjoy it". Certainly there is no suggestion of what one "morally ought" to do here.

But even if there is some reason for interpreting "ought" as "morally ought" in this case, such an interpretation would completely frustrate the force of the
claim that we ought to be moral. For to interpret "ought" as "morally ought" is indeed to end up with a necessarily true proposition, which, like all necessarily true propositions, has no power to engage its hearer unless he is intent on learning about the correct use of words. If we interpret "ought" as "morally ought", we can move from "You ought to be moral" to "It is moral to be moral" with very little pain; but such a result fails to tell us why anyone should be moral.

In my opinion there is not a single "ought" statement which it is possible to make, of which it makes no sense to ask "Why?" in response. For example:

A: You ought to go to the film.
B: Why ought I to go to the film?

And again:

A: You ought to be moral.
B: Why ought I to be moral?

In neither case is B's answer obviously absurd. The only people who think it is absurd in the latter case are those who support the deontological view under consideration, saying that it simply amounts to the ridiculous question, "Why ought I to do what I ought?". Therefore, they say, the question is unanswerable, just as "Why is a circle a circle?" is unanswerable.¹

¹Surprisingly enough, Professor Baier supports this view in addition to the Hobbesian view. ("The Moral Point of View", chs.3,6,12, and the Preface.) Indeed his main thesis seems to result from an attempt to amalgamate these two views.
Some philosophers seem to have realized that such a view completely fails to say anything of importance, and certainly makes no appeal to those who have no intention of being moral, and they have therefore tried to give to the ideal of moral action some kind of logical force, which will recommend it to even the least altruistic person, provided only that he is rational. Pointing out that morality is epitomized in the precept "Do unto others as you would they do unto you" (or, negatively, "Do not do to others what you would not have them do to you"), these philosophers have maintained that anyone who fails to consider the interests of others to as great a degree as he considers, or would have others consider, his own, is acting according to a principle which admits of exceptions without logical justification; so that nobody who held such a principle could be called "rational", since no rational man commits logical inconsistencies. It is contended that unless one can show a relevant difference between one's own case and that of another person, then one is logically obliged to act in such a way as not to favour the interests of either party, one is obliged to "cut the cake down the middle".

These considerations might be expected to cause concern to those people who were worried about being rational and logically consistent, but not to anyone who
prefers cake to a belief in his own rationality. And even those who are worried about their rationality might retain their self-respect while acting ruthlessly and selfishly, since not only are principles unnecessary before an action can be rational, but even allowing that they must be considered to be behind every rational action, it is still possible to point out relevant differences between people: there is always a relevant difference between the agent considering an action and anyone else, namely that the agent wants to achieve the satisfaction of his own wants, which is different from the satisfaction of anyone else's wants. Surely the most relevant of all differences: And so the Categorical Imperative ("Act only according to that principle which you could consistently will to become a universal law") fails to bolster the deontological view of morality.

It must be admitted that the deontological view and my own have something in common, namely, they both say that the question "Why should I be moral?" is unanswerable. But while this is a crucial failure in the deontological view, it is not a failure in mine, since I have never claimed that anyone should (or "ought to") be moral, or anything else, whereas the deontological view says we should be moral, but refuses to say why. There are, on my view, very few cases where a question of the form "Why
should I do $X$?" admits of an answer, given that the questioner does not already know the answer when he asks the question, as I have explained. Those cases where an answer can be given to this kind of question are those cases in which a person cannot see how doing $X$ will get him something he wants, and where the answer to the question is a kind of technical advice - a pointing out of causal connections of which the questioner was not aware. In the odd case of the question "Why should I be moral?", such advice cannot be given. If it were, it could only be of some such form as, "If you act morally, you will achieve the satisfaction of wants which otherwise you will not satisfy". But this is useless advice, even if it were true, since, as I have said before,\footnote{Pp.89-90 above.} anyone who believes it, and \underline{tries to "be moral" in the belief that something will happen}, is bound to be disillusioned; and this because it is impossible to be moral by trying to be moral.

Having concluded that the two alternative views of the basis of morality - the "self-interest" view and the deontological view - are inadequate, I may now sum up my own position about moral action. I should say that moral action is necessary to the good life, because it is the acting out of deep wants which everyone has, namely the want to "die to the ego", to present himself as he \underline{is} to
others and to accept others as they are. This is among other things a way of saying that sympathy is a basic spring of action in people and that it enables true contact to be made between people; and this is necessary for Self-realization. But there is, on my view, no basis for injunctions to be moral which has any foundation in our concept of the Good Life.
4. THE LAW OF SERVICE

In this essay, we have had occasion to distinguish between the Self and the self-image. It has become clear that the actualization of the Self is the highest good, and that the greatest obstacle to this is the persistent temptation to actualize the self-image instead. The self-image, we have had occasion to believe, is the provider of an illusory security, seeming to promise safety from the fearful influences about us which threaten our annihilation should we escape from this mold into which we are cast. Because the self-image seems to provide this security, we cling to it, and defend it against all threats, as for instance the threat of another person's real Self being presented to us. This would be a threat because it might require us to step out from behind our masks in order to make contact with him, a contact we crave but dare not admit. The costs of maintaining the self-image are enormous, for we find that we must distort one aspect of reality after another in order to keep our picture of ourselves intact. Hence we find that our experience of reality is stereotyped, that our actions become absurd or unfulfilling, that we experience a
persistent feeling of shame which, however much we try to justify ourselves, remains as an unspoken accusation. We become vaguely conscious of Sin; this term being understood to mean

...not, as we thought,  
Deeds that must be punished, but our lack of faith,  
Our dishonest mood of denial,  
The concupiscence of the oppressor.

It is because the "self-interest" view of morality presupposes that the self-image is all there is about a person, that it takes its pessimistic view of man's nature, holding that fear and hope of gain are all that do, and all that even can, move us. Hence its scarcely concealed emphasis upon a style of life that is grasping, egoistic, and manipulative of other people, all of which are the deadly enemies of Self-realization.

It is because the self-image is so destructive of the Good Life, that all religions and indeed all myths and fairytales emphasize the necessity of "ego-death", by which is meant the throwing-off of the oppression (and the security) of the self-image. Only by doing this is it possible to actualize the Self, which is to do what one really wants.
The experience of really "being oneself" is often accompanied by a feeling of exhilaration, or, as we might more precisely put it, a feeling of ecstasy. By ecstasy is not meant simply a joyful feeling, but quite literally a "standing outside oneself". This is because the Self, being nothing other than what a person wants, has as its prime interest purely the object of the want: the Self, unlike the self-image, is not self-interested. Its concern lies beyond itself, in the activity through which it finds expression. Thus the Self-realizing person, who alone is free, as we are using that term in this essay, is not preoccupied with how he behaves, but simply with the excellence with which he performs the appropriate activity.

A caution should be added here. Although many have testified to the experience of ecstasy, warnings are frequently heard about the danger of this experience. It is asserted to be dangerous because it is accompanied by a feeling of exhilaration in its initial stages, and this feeling is frequently mistaken for the essence of the experience, whereas in fact it is merely a transitory "by-product" of it. Those who do take this feeling as the summmum bonum naturally strive to retain it, and, having lost it, to regain it. This is, of course, merely a new form

---

1See C.S. Lewis, "The Pilgrim's Regress", A.H. Maslow, "Towards a Psychology of Being".
of mystification, the form referred to on p. 55
It means that a person has identified himself with the new
and emergent form of his personality, seeking to rigidify
it in order to ensure its integrity. But the Self, being
a spontaneous force, admits of no fixity, and the
anticipated gains of preserving one of its passing forms
turn to dust in one's hands.

We can say then that the correct view of Good Life is
that it consists in Self-realization, and that the Self-
realizing man is one who is entirely engaged in his
creations, and not in himself at all. (Or at any rate,
his concern for himself extends only to considering how
to perfect himself as an instrument for expressing the
Self.)*

I cannot render this notion better than it has been
expressed by Hermann Hesse, in his novel "The Journey to
the East". He writes:

I asked the servant Leo why it was that artists
sometimes appeared to be only half-alive,
while their creatures seemed so irrefutably
alive. Leo looked at me, surprised at my

*It is undoubtedly possible to approximate to this ideal
more and more; but for my part I should not wish to
assert that it is ever finally attained. I should rather
agree with Iris Murdoch, who said that we are "benighted
creatures sunk in a reality whose nature we are constantly
and overwhelmingly tempted to deform by fantasy".
(Encounter, No. 38, Jan. 1961, p. 20: "Against Dryness".)
question. Then he released the poodle he was holding in his arms and said: 'It is just the same with mothers. When they have borne their children and given them their milk and beauty and strength, they themselves become insignificant and no one asks about them any more'.

'But that is sad,' I said, without really thinking very much about it.

'I do not think it is more sad than all other things,' said Leo. 'Perhaps it is sad and yet also beautiful. The law ordains that it shall be so.'

'The law?' I asked curiously. 'Which law is that, Leo?'

'It is the law of service. He who wishes to live long must serve, but he who wishes to rule does not live long.'

'Then why do so many strive to rule?'

'Because they do not understand. There are few who are born to be masters; they remain happy and healthy. But all the others who have only become masters through endeavour, end in nothing.'

'In what nothing, Leo?'

'In a sanitorium, for example.'

This enquiry into the nature of freedom as a personal achievement, which now I shall conclude, has been intended as a practical enquiry. It took its rise from certain human experiences, seeking to discover their significance and their practical implications for human life. In view of this, someone might be inclined to ask, "How is one

supposed to live according to this view? What is one supposed to do?"

In my opinion, the answer to this question is given by Leo in the above excerpt. He says that so many people "strive to rule" because "they do not understand". The Good Life can be lived, therefore, only by those who possess the understanding which such people lack. What is this understanding, and how is it to be achieved?

The understanding is that which is gradually achieved by a person's repeated experience of the "freedom-cycle". It is possible that the lesson of the "freedom-cycle" will be learned by those who live through it. This lesson has been expressed in many forms: it is portrayed as a series beginning with pleasure, progressing to pain, and culminating in fruition; or as life, death, and resurrection; or, as here, as illusion, disillusionment, and reconciliation and commitment.

As to what one can do to gain this understanding, there is in the first instance nothing that can be done. All striving without understanding is a form of grasping, or a vain attempt to command what cannot be commanded. But as all egoistic activity leads to frustration, absurdity, shame and isolation, it tends to negate itself, thereby indicating the way to the Good Life, which consists in devoting oneself to the creative activity manifesting the
Self. And if a person is fortunate enough to live through the freedom-cycle, the only thing he can do is to try to understand the changes he discovers in himself. To the extent that he succeeds, he is thereby able to allow the transformation an easier, less ego-obstructed passage the next time.


BERNE, E.: Games People Play (Andre Deutsch, 1966)

BYATT, A.S.: Degrees of Freedom: The Novels of Iris Murdoch (Chatto & Windus, 1965)


ELIOT, T.S.: Four Quartets (Faber and Faber, 1959)

FORDHAM, F.: An Introduction to Jung's Psychology (Pelican Books, 1959)

FROMM, E.: The Fear of Freedom (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1942)


The Journey to the East (Peter Owen Ltd. and Vision Press Ltd., 1936)


MACMURRAY, J.: Freedom in the Modern World (Faber & Faber, 1948)


ROGERS, C.R.: What it Means to Become a Person (Also in The Self - see previous reference)


STACE, W.T.: Mysticism and Philosophy (Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1961)

STORR, A.: The Integrity of the Personality (Penguin Books, 1963)

TAYLOR, R.: Action and Purpose (Prentice-Hall, 1966)


   This is It (John Murray, 1961)


WILLIAMS, H.A.: The True Wilderness (Constable & Co. Ltd., 1955)

The position can be illustrated by the following story. Two small children used to play together. The younger one discovered that in the event of a disagreement, she could get her way by simply threatening to go home, pretending indifference. The older child was invariably reduced to tears by such apparent indifference; but one day, encouraged by her elders, she called the bluff of the younger child, saying, "Very well then, go home!" — Whereupon the younger one replied in astonishment, "Don't you want to play?".

In this case, each person wanted the company of the other, but one pretended that getting her own way was more important than the other's company. It is conceivable that the threat to "be indifferent" could occur between a child and a parent, even if the parent is not indifferent. The parent might pretend that there are bounds beyond which she would not tolerate the child in the house, in order that the mere threat of separation might frighten the child into not crossing those bounds. Or, more likely, she actually pretends to become indifferent to the child when he does certain undesired things. If her act is convincing, she will not only enforce compliance; she will also destroy the child's experience of himself and falsify his picture of the world. She will enforce compliance because of the great fear of being unrecognized which the